from their exalted position of veneration  
by the people, the persecution did not extend to them: perhaps they remained, as  
possessed of superior firmness and devotion.  
But this latter reason is hardly applicable,  
after the command of our Lord ‘When  
they persecute you in one city, flee to  
another.” Matt. x. 23. Stier refers their  
remaining to an intimation of the Spirit,  
to stay and strengthen those who were left.  
Mr. Humphry cites an ancient tradition,  
mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, and  
by Eusebius from the Apocryphal work  
called the Preaching of Peter, that the  
Apostles were ordered by our Lord to remain at Jerusalem twelve years. But this  
could not be the case, as we have Peter and  
John going down to Samaria, ver. 14.

**2. devout men**] Whether Jews or Christians, is not certain. Ananias is so called,  
ch. xxii. 12, and he was a Christian. Olshausen thinks that, if they had been  
Christians the term *“brethren”* would  
have been used: but this does not seem by  
any means certain: we can hardly reason  
so minutely from the diction of one section  
in the narrative to that of another, especially in the case of a section so distinct  
and peculiar as this one. Besides, *“brethren”* in this very general sense does not  
occur till ch. ix. 30. Probably they were  
pious Jews, not yet converts, but hearers  
and admirers of Stephen.

**3. made havock of**] The word so rendered is properly used of wild beasts or of hostile  
armies, devastating and ravaging.

**4—12.**] PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL IN SAMARIA BY PHILIP.

**4.**] So then  
resumes the subject dropped at the end of  
ver. 1, and determines this verse to be the  
opening of a new section, not the close of the former.

**preaching the word**]  
Here first we become acquainted with the  
missionary language so frequent in the rest  
of the book: and we have the word, an  
abbreviated expression very familiar among  
Christians when the book was written, for  
the fuller one which must have prevailed  
at first, *“the word of God.”*

**5. Philip**] *The deacon:* not *one of the Twelve:*  
this is precluded by vv. 1 and 14. And  
it is probable, that the persecution should  
have been directed especially against the  
colleagues of Stephen. Philip is mentioned  
again as *the Evangelist*,—probably from  
his having been the first recorded who  
preached (*evangelized*) the word,—in ch.  
xxi. 8,—as married, and having four  
daughters, virgins, who prophesied.

**the city of Samaria**] Verbatim as John iv.  
5, in which case it is specified as being  
Sychar (Sichem). As the words stand  
here, seeing that *Samaria* (vv. 9, 14; ch.  
ix. 31; xv. 3) signifies the *district*, I should  
be inclined to believe that Sychem is here  
also intended. It was a place of rising  
importance, and in after-times eclipsed the  
fame of its neighbour Samaria, which latter  
had been, on its presentation by Augustus  
to Herod the Great, re-fortified and called  
Sebaste. It still, however, bore the name  
of Samaria.

**them**] The inhabitants,  
implied in the word *city*.

**6. gave heed...**] If this place was Sychem, the  
narrative in John iv. will fully account for  
the readiness with which these people received *‘the proclamation of the Christ’*

**7.**] According to the reading in the  
genuine text, which is too strongly upheld  
by manuscript authority to be rejected for  
the easier ordinary one, the literal rendering  
is as follows: **For in the case of many who**