them from Rome, ch. xviii. 2, had at this  
time been enacted) they excite jealousy  
against them: for as far as religion was  
concerned, the Romans had affinity with  
any nation rather than the Jews.

**21. teach customs**] “Dio Cassius tells us  
that Mæcenas gave the following advice to  
Augustus: ‘By all means and in every  
way yourself reverence the Divinity after  
your country’s manner, and compel others  
to do so: and all who follow strange customs in this matter, both hate and punish:”  
and the reason is alleged, viz. that such  
innovations lead to secret associations,  
conspiracies, and cabals, which are most  
inconvenient for a monarchy” (Conybeare  
and Howson, i. p. 356).

**22.**] The multitude probably cried out tumultuously, as  
on other occasions (see Luke xxiii. 18;  
ch. xix. 28, 34; xxi. 30; xxii. 22, 23),—and the magistrates, without giving the  
Christians a trial (ver. 37), rent off their  
clothes, viz. by the lictors.

**24. the  
stocks**] In the original only **the wood**.  
Eusebius mentions, speaking of the martyrs in Gaul, that their feet were stretched  
*to the fifth hole in the wood.*

**25.**]  
Not as A. V., ‘*prayed and sang praises*,’—but, as in margin, **in their prayers, were  
singing praises,** or, **praying, sing praises.**The distinction of modern times between  
prayer and praise, arising from our attention being directed to the *shape* rather  
than to the essence of devotion, was unknown in these days: see Col. iv. 2.—“Their legs in the stocks pained them not,  
whose souls were in heaven.” Tertullian.  
The prisoners (in the outer prison) were  
*listening* to their singing, when the earthquake happened.

**26. every one’s bands  
were loosed**] i.e. of *all the prisoners* in  
the prison: see below (ver. 28), “*We are***all** *here*.” Doubtless there were gracious  
purposes in this for those prisoners, who  
before were listening to the praises of Paul  
and Silas; and the very form of the narrative, mentioning this listening, shews  
*subsequent communication* between some  
one of these and the narrator.—Their  
chains were loosed, not by the earthquake,  
but by miraculous interference over and  
above it. It is some satisfaction to find,  
that few, even among the rationalist Commentators, have attempted to rationalize  
this wonderful example of the triumph of  
prayer.

**27. was about to kill himself**] The law was, that if a prisoner  
escaped, the keeper was liable to the intended punishment of the fugitive. Mr.  
Howson notices, by the examples of Cassius,  
Brutus, Titinius, and many of the proscribed, after the battle,—that Philippi is