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SACRED
Biography and History,

OR,

Illustrations of the Holy Scriptures.

CONTAINING

Descriptions of Palestine, Ancient and Modern;

LIVES OF THE

Patriarchs, Kings and Prophets,

AND OF

CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES.

WITH NOTICES OF THE MOST EMINENT REFORMERS, LUTHER,
MELANCTHON, CALVIN, &c.

AND SKETCHES OF THE RUINS OF THE CELEBRATED CITIES,

PALMYRA, NINEVEH, JERUSALEM,

AND OTHERS MENTIONED IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.

EDITED BY

OSMOND TIFFANY,

Author of "The American in China," "Brandon, or a Hundred Years ago," &c

Illustrated with numerous Beautiful Steel Engravings.

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P R E F A C E .

THE Publishers have been convinced for a long time past that a work of this kind was much needed and would be welcomed. It is an indisputable fact that many books relating to sacred history and character are singularly dull, and repel instead of attract the reader. While, therefore, it has been their aim to collect material from the best sources, they have also aimed at making a popular and readable work.

Attention is asked in the first place to the Table of Contents, which presents a rich and varied feast, and then the reader may examine the pages of the work, sure to find something in reward for his critical examination of them.

The most striking and interesting episodes of the Old Testament have been chosen ; the lives of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, will be found fully illustrated, and the exquisite story of Joseph, perhaps the most touching and beautiful narrative in the whole compass of literature, sacred or profane, will be found in detail.

Of the Kings, Saul, David and Solomon appear in these pages, each of whom were mighty in their day and generation, and each of whom by their lives present special instances of warning to those disposed to wander from the true and narrow path that leads onward toward eternal life. Of the Prophets it has been thought sufficient to introduce only the

four greatest, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, with a critical account of the books they have left behind them.

The Life of Christ will be found complete, of that character which will fully satisfy the religious inquirer, and is followed by accounts of the Apostles and other celebrated personages connected with the mission of our Saviour. Accounts of the greatest of the Reformers have been added, and also valuable information on the state of some of the most famous ruined cities of the East, derived from the best and most recent authorities—Botta, Layard, etc. The Publishers, in conclusion, have only to express their conviction that the present work will prove one of the most readable, comprehensive, and reliable of the American press.

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PART FIRST.

PALESTINE AND ITS EARLY PEOPLE.

PALESTINE.

PALESTINE formerly denoted the whole land of Canaan, bounded on the north by Syria, on the east by Arabia Deserta, on the south by Arabia Petrea, and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. It extended about 140 miles from north to south, between $31^{\circ} 10'$ and $33^{\circ} 15'$ of north latitude, and was of very unequal breadth. It was originally occupied by the Canaanite nations, who were conquered by the Israelites under Joshua. From this period to the Babylonish captivity, it was called the land of Israel, and the name Palestina was restricted to the maritime tract extending southward from Joppa to the frontiers of Egypt, inhabited by the Philistines, which was successively subjected to the kings of Israel, Syria, Egypt, Persia, and Macedonia. After the return of the Jews from Babylon, the whole country from Tyre to Egypt was recognized in the enumeration of the Roman provinces by the name of Palestina, consisting of four provinces, viz., Judea, Samaria, Galilea, and Perea. In modern times, the term Palestine denotes a Turkish pachalic, which includes the territory between the pachalic of Damascus and the Mediterranean Sea; and between two lines drawn from the sea-coast, the one southward of Gaza, and the other north of Joppa, so as to comprise only the country of the Philistines, together with a portion of Judea and Samaria. But the name is generally employed to denote the whole of what is called the Holy Land, and was formerly comprehended in

the Roman province of Palestina. It is generally divided into the following districts : Gaza, Hebron, Elkods, or Jerusalem, Naplos, or Naplousa, or Nablous, Harite Jouret-Cafre-Kauna, Nazareth, Japheth, and the country beyond Jordan.

As this work proceeds, we shall give more extended notices of the land of Palestine, but it will be sufficient in this place to observe, that after the taking and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 72, Judea ceased to be the residence of the Jewish people, of whom only a small remnant was left in the country. These scattered relics of the once renowned tribes of Israel having again raised the standard of rebellion against the power of Rome, the emperor Hadrian completed the desolation of their capital, and built another city on its ruins, which he called *Ælia Capitolina*. In the reign of Diocletian, the name of Jerusalem was almost forgotten ; but the scattered bands of the Jewish race were often attempting to make head against the succeeding emperors of Rome. After the unsuccessful project of Julian to reassemble the nation, and rebuild the city of Jerusalem, there is little recorded in history of their state and that of their native land, till the year 501, when they openly revolted, in the reign of Justinian. Jerusalem was taken by Chosroes, king of the Persians, in the year 613 ; but was recovered by Heraclius in 627. Nine years afterward, Palestine was subdued by the caliph Omar, the third in succession from Mohammed ; and in consequence of the contentions which arose among the rival dynasties of the Mohammedans, the country was involved in troubles and calamities for more than 200 years. In 868, Palestine was overrun by Ahmed, the sovereign of Egypt ; but was again brought under the dominion of the caliphs of Bagdad about the beginning of the tenth century. Passing repeatedly through the hands of various invaders, but remaining chiefly in the possession of the caliphs of Egypt, Palestine was occupied by the Fatimites of Cyrene in the year 1078, when the crusaders appeared on its frontiers ; and Godfrey of Bouillon was elected king of its captured metropolis in 1099. Saladin, the conqueror of Asia, wrested the greater part of the Holy Land from the hands of the Christian princes in the year 1188, and the Baharite sul-

tans of Egypt completely expelled the remaining crusaders in 1291. In 1382, the Circassian Mamelukes having usurped the supreme authority in Egypt, became masters of Palestine; but in 1517 the Turks of Constantinople, under Selim, extended their conquests over all Syria and Egypt.

The beauty and fertility of the Holy Land, so much celebrated in ancient times, both by sacred and profane writers, are scarcely discernible in its present desolate and neglected condition. The culture of its finest plains has long ceased. Its springs are buried beneath heaps of rubbish. The soil of the mountains, formerly kept up by terraces and covered by vines, is washed down into the valleys, and its eminences, once crowned with woods, have been stripped bare, and parched into barrenness. This melancholy change is not owing to any deterioration of the soil or climate, but to the degeneracy of the inhabitants, who groan under the most intolerable oppression, and are exposed to every kind of pillage. But still there are many delightful spots to be seen, which confirm the accounts of its ancient fruitfulness, and prove its capability of being rendered a plentiful and populous country. The plain of Zabulon is everywhere covered with spontaneous vegetation, flourishing in the utmost luxuriance. The plain of Esdraelon is a vast meadow, covered with the richest pasture, and the country around Rama resembles a continued garden. The variety and beauty of the different kinds of *cardenas*, or thistle, are sufficient indications of a fertile soil. The new globe thistle particularly (the stem and leaves of which are of a dark but vivid sky-blue color) grows to such a size in many parts of Palestine, that some of its blossoms are nearly three inches in diameter. The soil is often sandy and mixed with gravel, and in some places, such as in the neighborhood of Tiberias, it is black, appearing to have been formed by the decomposition of rocks, which have a volcanic aspect. The crops principally cultivated are, barley, wheat, maize, cotton, linseed, and sesamum. The water-melons of Palestine excel those of any other country in the world. The country is very full of wild animals. Antelopes especially, are numerous. The chameleon, the lizard, serpents, and all sort of beetles, are frequently to be seen.

The inhabitants are a mixture of Christians and Mohammedans, often difficult to be distinguished from each other. The former occupy the valleys of Libanus under Maronite bishops; and the Druses, who have a religion peculiar to themselves, possess the mountains of Antilibanus. The country is often overrun by plundering tribes of Arabs. The population is so very thin, and the aspect of the country so desolate, that a doubt has been thrown upon the accounts of its population in ancient times, which, from the statements of Scripture, can not have been less than six millions. This would allow a proportion of 800 to 900 to every square league, which is thought altogether incredible. But in the time of the emperor Vespasian, it is described by profane writers as actually containing six millions of inhabitants. The present mountainous country of the Druses has been estimated to contain forty thousand fighting men. The mode of living in eastern countries is favorable to the support of a numerous population, on less produce than in other quarters of the world. The fertility of the country is acknowledged to be very great, and the cultivation of the land is known to have been carried in former times to the utmost extent. The limestone rocks and stony valleys were covered with plantations of figs, vines, and olive trees. The hills were formed into gardens from their bases to their summits. The sides of the most barren mountains were rendered productive by being formed into terraces, whereon the soil was accumulated with astonishing labor. There are still many vestiges of this extraordinary cultivation, sufficient to prove that not a spot was neglected, and that the most unpromising situations were rendered fertile by the labors of industry.

PALESTINE'S EARLY PEOPLE.

The history of the Hebrews may begin most properly with the call of Abraham, which, according to Hales, took place in the year of the world 3258, after the deluge 1062 years, and 2153 years before the birth of Christ. The ages which had passed since the deluge, concurring with the still long duration of human life, had again replenished with people

the regions around the original seats of the human race. That most wonderful event, the confusion of tongues, which occurred six hundred years after the deluge, must have greatly accelerated, and even compelled more energetic movements than had previously taken place.

The descendants of Shem appear to have extended themselves gradually over the regions east and north-east of the river Tigris ; the children of Japhet spread themselves into Asia Minor, whence it was their ultimate destination to be impelled into Europe, and to fill the length and breadth of that continent. The posterity of Ham remained in chief possession of Mesopotamia ; they also formed settlements at the head of the Persian Gulf and Arabia, and in Canaan ; they established empires in Assyria and Egypt ; and, as their numbers multiplied, they advanced into Ethiopia and other remoter parts of the African peninsula.

The history of Japhet's race is a blank in the early accounts of the Scriptures, and that of Shem's is little more. The sacred historian confines his notice to one family of Shem's descendants ; and the intercourse of that family with the races of Ham is the circumstance which evolves far more information concerning their early history and condition than we possess concerning any of the other descendants of Noah. From all that history tells, they appear to have been the first authors of the arts of civilization and social life. But, remembering the other races of which authentic history takes no occasion to speak, this need not be positively affirmed. That, however, very important advancements had, even in this remote age, been made by the posterity of Ham, appears very plainly in the early intercourse of the Hebrew patriarchs with Egypt.

A division of the posterity of Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, left the Arabian shores of the Red Sea, and settled in the country whose history we have undertaken to write ; and they gave to it the name of their father, from whom also they are, collectively, called Canaanites. They manifestly were not very numerous at the time this history opens. They did not by any means fill the country, but lived dispersed, in detached and independent clans ; and, contented

with the use of such lands around their towns as they needed for their own subsistence, they beheld without jealousy powerful emirs, even of the race of Shem, establish themselves in the plains and feed their cattle in the vacant pastures. The time for territorial contests had not yet come, and probably the settled Canaanites regarded the presence of the Bedouin sheiks as an advantage, relieving them from the need of attention to pastoral affairs, by affording a ready market where they might obtain milk, butter, cheese, meat, and skins, in exchange for their surplus corn and other vegetable produce ; and they appear to have been quite sensible of the advantages of an open traffic with the pastoral chiefs.

Their language was the same as that of Abraham and the other patriarchs, who at all times speak to them without the medium of an interpreter. This was also true ages after, whenever any communication took place between the descendants of Abraham and the Canaanites or the Phœnicians. They were divided into a number of small, independent communities. Every town, with a small surrounding district, and probably some dependent villages, appears to have been a sovereign state, acknowledging the control of no superior, but being in alliance with its neighbors for common objects. The vale of Siddim alone, smaller than one of our ordinary counties, is known to have contained five of such states. It appears to have been the plan, as the population increased, to establish new cities and new states on ground not previously appropriated ; in which case, the tendency to consolidate numerous small states into a few large ones would not, in ordinary circumstances, arise till the country was fully peopled. We may well be astonished at the prodigious number of small states which the Hebrews found in Palestine on their return from Egypt ; but we do not, with some, infer that they were equally numerous in the time of Abraham. On the contrary, it seems more rational to suppose that, in the long interval, the towns and states went on increasing with the population. That towns and states were as numerous in choice localities, such as the fertile vale of Siddim, in the time of Abraham, as in that of Joshua, we can well understand ; but not so in the country at large. It seems also

that the states, though fewer, were not larger at the former date than the latter, the extent of ground which they divided being proportionably smaller.

And the comparison, perhaps, holds further; for the *meleks* or kings of these tiny kingdoms do not appear to have been more than chief magistrates, or patriarchal chiefs with very limited powers.

All the states in the vale of Siddim had kings, and all we know of them is that they were the military leaders in war. From the answer of the king of Sodom to Abraham, waiving all claim to the goods which the patriarch had recovered from the Mesopotamian spoilers, without any reference to the wishes of his people in this matter, we may infer that, as might be expected, the *melek* had higher powers in all war-like matters than were allowed to him in the affairs of peace. The only other act of a Canaanitish king which we meet with implies nothing in this respect. This was the act of Melchizedek, the king of Salem, who brought refreshments to Abraham and his party when he returned from the slaughter of the kings.

The mention of this remarkable person leads us to observe that there is not in Scripture the least indication that the Canaanites were idolaters in the time of Abraham, or indeed at any time before the house of Israel went down into Egypt. The king of Salem is expressly declared to have been a priest of the Most High God; and whenever suitable occasion offers, it appears that the Canaanites knew and revered the God of their fathers. It is true that they knew not this God as Abraham knew him; and it is more than likely that, with some exceptions, such as that of Melchizedek, they had sunk into that state of indifference, and of ignorance concerning God's characters and attributes, which was but a too suitable preparation for that actual idolatry into which they ultimately fell. But that there was any positive idolatry in the time of Abraham, or before the patriarchs left the land, we see no reason to conclude. If we look at the remarkable case of the destruction of Sodom and the cities of the plain, we can not fail to observe that idolatry is nowhere alluded to as one of the crimes for which the inhabitants were punished

They were punished because they were "sinners before the Lord exceedingly," and because there were not among them any righteous or just men. What the character of their sins was, we know. The repugnance of Isaac and Rebekah to the marriage of their sons with Canaanitish women, has often been alleged as a proof that they were by that time become idolaters, even by many who allow that they were not such in the time of Abraham. But the cited case proves nothing whatever, and could only have been adduced from that ignorance of the manners of the East which is now in a course of removal. The ideas of the patriarchal emirs required that their sons should marry into their own families, and this would have been frustrated by marriage with Canaanites. If this argument for the idolatry of the Canaanites be applicable to the time of Isaac's latter days, it must be equally applicable to the time of Abraham, for he was as anxious as Isaac could be that his son should obtain a wife from the house of his fathers in Padan-aram. But this argument is used by those who confess that the Canaanites were *not* idolaters in the days of Abraham.

We have little information concerning the social condition, arts, and occupations of the Canaanites at this early date. That "the Canaanites by the sea," that is, the Phœnicians, had already taken to the sea, and carried on some traffic with the neighboring coasts, is very likely, but more than we can affirm. But we know that the people of Canaan lived in walled towns, in the gates of which public business was transacted. They cultivated the ground; they grew corn; and, as they had wine, they must have cultivated the vine; which they probably did upon the sides of the hills, terraced for the purpose according to that fashion of vine culture which has always prevailed in that country. Some find in the Perizzites a body of Canaanitish pastors, moving about with their flocks and herds, without any fixed dwelling. But as all this is founded upon a doubtful etymology, we shall lay no stress upon it. Doubtless the Canaanites had cattle, and paid some attention to pasturage; but the presence, in their unappropriated lands, of pastoral chiefs like Abraham, who, by making it their sole pursuit, enjoyed peculiar advan-

tages in the rearing of cattle, and could offer the produce of their flocks and herds on very easy terms to the settled inhabitants, was likely to prevent the latter from being much engaged in pastoral undertakings. Of their military character at this early period we know little, and that little is not much to their advantage. They were beaten in every one of the warlike transactions of this age which the Scriptures relate, or to which any allusion is made. Doubtless every adult male knew the use of arms, and was liable to be called upon to use them when any public occasion required.

They had arrived to the use of silver as a medium of exchange, and that the silver was weighed in affairs of purchase and sale involves the use of the scale and balanced beam. In what form they exhibited the silver used for money we know not with any certainty; they certainly had no coined money; for even the Egyptians, who were far before the Canaanites in all the arts of civilization, continued long after this to use circular bars, or rings, of silver for money; and, most likely, the silver money of the Canaanites bore the same form.

The description of the burying-ground which Abraham bought for 400 shekels of silver of Ephron the Hittite, may perhaps inform us concerning the sepulchres in which the Canaanites liked to bury their dead. It was a cave in a spot of ground well planted with trees.

Seeing that there will hereafter be frequent occasion to mention by name the several tribes of Canaanites inhabiting the land, and that some of them are historically connected with the early history of the Hebrews, it will conduce to the clearness of the ensuing narrative, if, in this place, these tribes be enumerated, and their several seats pointed out.

While the whole of the nation, collectively, bore the name of Canaanites, as descended from Canaan, there are occasions in which the Scriptures apply the name in a special manner to a part of the whole. Thus, in Exodus iii. 8, we read, "the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites;" and so in other places, except that the Gergashites are sometimes also named. We know that there were many tribes not included in this list of names, and the question is,

to which or to what portion of those unnamed, the name of Canaanites is here given. The question is thought a perplexed one, and there appear some serious objections to all the explanations which we have seen. We therefore satisfy ourselves with the notion, that this is merely a method of summary statement to avoid the frequent repetition of a long list of names : that, first, "the Canaanites" are put for all those clans not intended to be particularly enumerated ; and then follow the names of those tribes which were best known to the Hebrews, and of the most importance to them. This view is confirmed by our observing that the tribes *not* named, and which we, therefore, suppose to be included under the name of Canaanites, are precisely those most remote from the early Hebrews, and with whom they had the least to do. That they are in other texts described as situated "at the sea," corresponds with the same intimation. In a general sense, it will, under this explanation, be found to embrace, primarily, those several branches of the posterity of Canaan which settled on the northern coast, and were, collectively, known in general history as the Phœnicians. The matter appears to have been thus understood by the Seventy ; for they render the Hebrew in Josh. v. 1, for "kings of the Canaanites (which were by the sea)," by "kings of the Phœnicians : " and many ages after, the names were interchangeable ; for the woman whom one Evangelist (Matt. xv. 22) calls "a woman of Canaan," is called by another (Mark vii. 26) "a Syro-Phœnician woman."

Whether the families of Canaan, in migrating to the country to which they gave his name, were headed by his sons, from whom they took their own distinguishing names, or removed after their deaths, does not by any means appear. The question does not seem of much importance, except as it might help to fix the time of the first occupation of the country ; and we allude to it merely that no forms of expression which we may incidentally use, should be considered to involve the expression of any opinion on the subject. There is, however, sufficient evidence that the Canaanites had been a good while settled in the land, and we are repeatedly assured

in Scripture that the Hittite city of Hebron was founded seven years before Zoan in Egypt.

The Hebrew patriarchs, during their sojourn in Canaan, never approached the borders of the Phœnicians, and, consequently, *they* are not mentioned in the history, unless under the name of Canaanites. Indeed, we should not have been assured that the Phœnician tribes were descended from Canaan, were it not for the genealogy in Gen. x., which gives us a list of his sons, and assures us that all their families settled in Canaan. In this list the name of Sidon occurs first, as that of Canaan's first-born son. He was the father of the Sidonians, the chief of the Phœnician tribes; and the great commercial, and very ancient city of Sidon, the mother of the still greater Tyre, was called after him. The list includes other names which can not but be considered as those of families which, along with the Sidonians, history comprehends under the Phœnician name. Such are the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, and the Zemarites, whose territories seem to have extended along the coast, northward from the town and territory of Sidon.

The ancient Phœnician city of Arca probably took its name from the Arkites, and, therefore, will serve to indicate their situation. Arca stood nearly midway between Tripoli and Tortosa, and about five miles from the sea, among the lower ranges of Lebanon, fronting the sea-board plain. Here, on a situation commanding a beautiful view over the plain, the sea, and the mountains, Burckhardt found ruins, which he supposes to be those of Arca, consisting of large and extensive mounds, traces of ancient dwellings, blocks of hewn stone, remains of walls, and fragments of granite columns. To the north was a hill, apparently artificial, still bearing the name of Tel Arka, and on which the temple or the citadel probably stood in former times.

In the parts adjoining was an ancient city bearing the name of Sin, and which, in connection with other circumstances, may be thought to indicate the situation of the Sinites. This city had, so far back as the time of Jerome, long been ruined by war; but the site on which it once stood still retained this ancient name.

The Arvadites are said by Josephus to have occupied and given their name to the small island of Aradus, called Arpad and Arphad in the Scriptures*, and the inhabitants of which are by Ezekiel mentioned along with the Sidonians, as taking an active part in the maritime commerce of Tyre. This island, which is about one league from the shore, and not above a mile in circumference, ultimately became the port and chief town of this enterprising and prosperous section of the Phœnician people; and there was a time when even Romans regarded with admiration its lofty houses, built with more stories than those of Rome, and its cisterns hewn in the rock. All this, except the cisterns and some fragments of wall, has passed away; but Arvad is still the seat of a town, and, being a mart of transit, its inhabitants are still all engaged in commerce. Though the island was the favorite seat of the people, as their wealth and peace were there safe from the wars and troubles of the continent, and their shipping needed not to hazard the dangers of the coast, they were by no means without possessions on the main land, for their dominion along the shore extended from Tortosa, which lay opposite their island, northward to Jebilee. They were, therefore, the most northerly of the Phœnician people.†

The Zemarites are mentioned next to the Arvadites, and, correspondingly, they are usually, and with sufficient reason, placed next to that people, southward, on the coast, where, twenty miles to the south of Antaradus, and four miles to the north of Orthosia, close upon the shore, was a town called Zimyra, to the site of which the name of Zumrah is still given.

The Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, and Zemarites, are scarcely mentioned *historically* in the Scriptures: and, were it not for the tenth chapter of Genesis, it would be unknown to us that they claimed a common origin with the other inhabitants of Canaan. Indeed, their territory can scarcely be considered as within the limits of Canaan proper; and their distance, as well as their being ranked in the general Phœni-

* 2 Kings, xix. 13; Ezek., xxvii. 8.

† See Josephus, i. 6, 2; Strabo, v. 15; Pococke, ii. 27; Volney, ii. 148; J. S. Buckingham's Arab Tribes, 523.

cian body, with which the relations of the Jews were neutral, and sometimes amicable, secured them a happy exemption from that notice in the sacred records, which would have resulted from such hostile acts as took place between the Jews and the other Canaanitish tribes.

This much may at present suffice concerning the Phœnicians, whose historical importance is of later date than the times of which we now more particularly treat.

Next to the Zemarites, the Hamathites are mentioned in the list through which we are passing; and, on several accounts, we were disposed to include them in the preceding statement as one of the Phœnician tribes; but, as our information concerning the Phœnicians makes it difficult to regard them otherwise than as a people inhabiting the coast, which the Hamathites did not, it seems as well to notice them separately.

Their situation is determined, without any difficulty, by that of the city of Hamath or Hamah, so called after them, and which, after having borne the Greek name of Epiphania, imposed upon it by the Macedonian kings of Syria, has now resumed its ancient name. It is situated sixty miles inland from the Mediterranean, eastward from Antaradus, and not less than 100 miles to the north of Damascus: it was, therefore, distant from the country known to the patriarchs; and, although its territory appears to have reached to some extent southward, it was not involved in those wars which attended the conquest of Palestine by the Hebrew people. Yet, although scarcely more noticed, historically, in Scripture than the kindred tribes which have already passed under our notice, it happens that the *name* of Hamath is of very frequent occurrence there. This is because the territory of the Hamathites lay on the extreme northern border of the Promised Land, whence "the entering in of Hamath" is often mentioned as a point to which the extreme line of northern boundary was drawn. But this boundary appears to have only ceased to be nominal during the reigns of David and Solomon, whose dominion, doubtless, extended to the borders of Hamah, if it did not include a part or the whole of the Hamathite territory.

Hamah is one of those few very ancient towns which still exist as places of some note. It is situated on both sides of the Orontes ; and is, for that country, a well-built and comfortable town, the population of which is estimated at 30,000. The town has still, in one sense, a territory, being the seat of a district government, which comprehends 120 inhabited villages, and over seventy or eighty which have been abandoned.

We have taken the names of the above tribes in the order which their relative situations in the north rendered the most convenient. The remainder we shall go through in the order in which the Scriptures enumerate them.

This brings us to the people called "the children of Heth" and the Hittites. They were settled in the southern hills about Hebron and Beersheba. The Hebrew patriarchs had their encampments much in that part of the country, and appear to have lived on good terms with their Hittite neighbors, by whom they were treated with respect and consideration.

The Jebusites, who are more noted in later history than in that of the patriarchs, were seated among the hills to the north of those which the Hittites occupied. Their territory extended to and included the site of Jerusalem, of which, indeed, they appear to have been the founders ; but whether before or after the date at which this history commences, we have no means of knowing. But, in a later day, we find them there in a city which they called Jebus, from which it was not until the time of David that they were entirely expelled. That they were able to maintain their post so long in the very heart of a country which the Israelites had subdued, warrants the conclusion that they formed one of the most powerful of the Canaanitish clans.*

The Amorites appear to have been the most powerful and widely spread of the Canaanitish nations. The prophet Amos poetically describes the strength and power of the Amorite, by telling us that his "height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks." It is, indeed, likely that here, as is certainly the case in other places, such

* Gen., xv. 21 ; 2 Sam., v. 6, 1 Chron., xi. 4.

as Gen. xv. 16, the Amorites are taken by a synecdoche of eminence for all the Canaanitish tribes ; but by this fact their superior importance is just as strongly intimated. As this sometimes renders it doubtful whether the proper Amorites may be particularly intended or not, and as they were, moreover, of a remarkably encroaching disposition, it is not quite easy to fix their original seats with precision. It would seem, however, that they were first settled among the mountains to the west of the Dead Sea and of the southern part of the Jordan. While the Israelites were in Egypt, the Amorites crossed the Jordan, and, dispossessing the Moabites and Ammonites of the country between the rivers Jabbock and Arnon, established there an independent kingdom, which the ensuing history will bring conspicuously under our notice. The original seats of the tribe to the west of the Dead Sea and the Jordan were not, however, vacated, but the old and new settlements, separated by the river and the lake, do not appear to have had any dependence on each other. Indeed, it may be important to bear in mind that, in the early ages of which we speak, when the pressure of circumstances drove forth part of a tribe to seek new settlements, the *now* familiar idea of the necessary relations of dependence and subjection on the part of the offset towards the government of the original body, was one that never entered the minds of either. It was a discovery of later ages. This had its advantages ; but it had the counterbalancing disadvantage, if it be one, that, seeing that the separation was in every way effectual, and that the emigrants had no right to look to the parent body for protection and support, they were obliged at the outset to be heedful that their own separate resources were adequate to the objects they had in view. Hence, emigrations by tribes or sections of tribes seeking new settlements were only made by large bodies of men, which contained in themselves every provision then thought necessary for independent existence, conquest, self-protection, and self-support. This cause and this effect acted reciprocally on each other, the effect reacting to perpetuate the cause by which it was produced. The strong and vigorous offsets, expecting no assistance and intending no subjection, took care to put them-

selves above the need of help ; and that they did so, prevented the parent state from entertaining any notion that assistance might be called for, and, as a consequence, that subjection might be proper. This was the state of things at the beginning. Colonies had thus no infancy or adolescence, during which it was needful that they should lean upon the parent's supporting arm, till they grew to the full stature of a nation. Yet the several branches of the same family were not unmindful of one another. The relations of the several states springing from the same source, to each other, and to the parent state, appear in general to have been those of friendship and alliance, with a greater readiness to coalesce for common purposes than was usually shown among unrelated tribes.

This statement, though intended for larger application, is introduced here for the immediate purpose of showing how there came to be an independent Amoritish kingdom in the country beyond Jordan.

At the time of the Hebrew conquest, the Amorites had not only extended eastward beyond the Jordan, but westward towards the Mediterranean. The allotment of Dan, and the western portion of that of Ephraim, extended over the plains and valleys west of the central hills, and their western border approached as near to the sea as the previous occupation of the coast by a powerful people would allow. But we learn from a very instructive passage* that both the tribes had to contend for this portion of their domain with the Amorites. The Ephraimites, though the most successful, were not able to drive them out, as was their object, but were obliged to be content with making them tributary : but the Danites were entirely kept out of the plain by the Amorites, and obliged to confine themselves to the mountains, in consequence of which a body of them were ultimately compelled to seek out a remote settlement in a part of the country unappropriated by any kindred tribe.

We have been drawn into these anticipatory details by the desire of making the position of this important member

* Judges, i. 34-36.

of the Canaanitish family clearly understood. It will, however, be borne in mind that much of its relative importance was the growth of a later age than that at which this history commences.

Of the Girkashites very little historical notice is taken; indeed, we know little more of them than that their name occurs in the list of the nations by which the country was occupied. It is supposed that they were seated along the upper Jordan, and more particularly upon the eastern borders of the lake of Gennesareth. This conclusion is founded chiefly on the fact that this district continued, even in the time of Christ, to bear the name of "the country of the Gergesenes." That we do not meet with them in history among the nations which warred against the Hebrews, the Jewish writers account for by telling us that they evaded the contest, as one from which they had no hope, and emigrated to Africa, where they ultimately settled in a country which from them took the name of Gurgestan.

The Hivites, also called the Avim, are said to have been originally settled in the advantageous district afterwards occupied by the Philistines; on their expulsion from which by that people, they were unable to obtain situations for the whole of their body, and therefore separated, one part of them settling to the north of the Jebusites, in what afterwards became the finest portion of Benjamin's lot, and where, on the return of the Israelites from Egypt, they were in possession of the "great city" of Gibeon, and other important towns. The other portion withdrew to the more vacant territory beyond Jordan, and established itself about Mount Hermon. Some think that the Hivites originally on the coast were wholly destroyed by the Philistines; and that these other settlements—the existence of which is undisputed—had been previously established, and remained undisturbed by that event. But the account which we have given seems to result more clearly from a comparison of the several texts which bear on the subject.*

We have now gone through the list of the families which

* Deut., ii. 23; Josh., ix. 17; x., 2; xi., 3; xiii., 3.

are expressly described in the tenth chapter of Genesis, as being descended from Canaan, and as occupying the country which received his name. The list is very valuable, if only as enabling us to know, when the name of any clan occurs, whether or not it belonged to the common Canaanitish stock, or was derived from some other source, which knowledge sometimes throws a light upon the transactions in which we find them engaged.

CHAPTER I.

ABRAHAM.

IN the district of northern Mesopotamia, which is called in Scripture "Ur of the Chaldees," being apparently the large and fertile plain of Osroene, dwelt a wealthy pastoral family, descended, in the line of Heber, from Shem the son of Noah. The living head of this family was Terah.

This man had three sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abram. Of these sons the last-named was the youngest, having been borne by Terah's second wife, fully sixty years later than Haran, his elder brother. Haran died prematurely in the land of his nativity, leaving one son named Lot, and two daughters called Milcah and Sarai. According to the custom of those times, the two surviving sons of Terah married the daughters of their dead brother; Milcah becoming the wife of Nahor, and Sarai being married to Abram.

Abram, the youngest son of this family, is the person—the one man—with whom the history of the Hebrew people commences; for on him the Almighty saw proper to confer the high distinction of setting himself and his future race apart among the nations, in fulfillment of the great object which we have already indicated.

The fame which this appointment has brought upon the name of this great patriarch has produced much anxious inquiry into that part of his history which transpired before our more authentic and undoubted records introduce him to our knowledge, which is not until he was sixty years of age. The traditions of the Jews and Arabians speak much of his early life; but our certain information offers only the few facts of parentage and connection which we have just supplied.

All accounts out of Scripture, and not therein disagreeing

with Scripture, state that Abram was of purer faith than his countrymen, and on that account left or was obliged to leave his native land. This may be true or not; for although Scripture states his proceeding as the result of an immediate command from heaven—we know not, from the same authority, what previous enlightenments, what line of conduct, what difficulties, what past or present thoughts, prepared the patriarch to receive and to be guided by the divine command. There were such, doubtless; and even the command has the tone less of an original suggestion than of an authoritative interposition to decide a question which “the father of the faithful” had entertained, but found it difficult to determine.

It is not clear from Scripture that the father and surviving brother of Abram had by this time been brought over to his religious views. Its slight intimations seem to imply that they had not: nor does their going with him, when he departed from Ur of the Chaldees in obedience to the heavenly call, necessarily imply their participation in his religious sentiments, since various other considerations are supposable which might have influenced them, and they might even have recognized the authority of that divine Being who spoke to Abram to direct his and even their own course, without being convinced, as Abram was, of his *exclusive* claim to honor and obedience.

So the whole house of Terah departed with Abram from the land of the Chaldees, and proceeded until they arrived at “Haran,” or, more properly, “Charran” (as in Acts vii. 2), where, for some cause not declared to us—but probably the increasing infirmities of Terah, together with the temptations of a rich pastoral district for their flocks and herds—they were induced to abide many years. After fifteen years, the father of Abram died in Haran, at the then reasonable old age of 205 years.

Abram was then at the ripe middle age of seventy-five years, when the divine command, made to him fifteen years before, was renewed, with a slight but significant variation of its terms. The first command required him to leave his country and his kindred, or his natural connections, in the general sense, and was not considered necessarily to involve a

separation from his immediate family ; but the second call was more precise and stringent, requiring him to leave not only his country and his kindred, but also his "father's house." The divine intentions being confined to his posterity, which as yet had no existence—for he had no child, his wife being barren—it was judged right to isolate him completely from all such natural and social ties as might interfere with this object. This was hard to bear, and God knew that it was ; and, therefore, although it was designed that his faith should be tried to the uttermost, and made manifest as an example to his posterity and to the people of future ages and distant lands, these trials did not come upon him in one overwhelming command, but were made successive, after intervals of repose—rising one upon another, as his trust grew progressively stronger in that great Being, the special object of whose care he had become. We shall see this throughout the history of this patriarch.

When the patriarch received his first call, the circumstances in which he was then placed, and the privilege of being still permitted to remain with all those who were, by natural ties, dearest to him, probably made the commanded migration indifferent or even desirable to him, and therefore no promises with reference to the future are held forth to encourage his obedience. But now, when he seems to have been more prosperously and happily situated, saving the recent grief of his father's death, the command to depart is accompanied, for the first time, by that high promise which was destined to cheer and bless his remaining life. This call and the annexed promise are thus given in the scriptural narrative:—"Then the Lord said unto Abram, Depart from thy land, and from thy kindred, *and from thy father's house*, unto the land which I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing ; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee ; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen., xii. 1-3.)*

The land to which he was to go is not named, either on

* The passage is here given as translated by Dr. Hales, more precisely than in our public version.

this or the former occasion ; but the difference in the form of expression may have sufficed to intimate to Abram, that the country appointed for his sojourning would now be more distinctly indicated to him.

So Abram separated himself from the household of Nahor, his only surviving brother, and departed, not at that time knowing the point of his ultimate destination, but relying upon the guidance of the divine Being whose command he was obeying. Lot, the son of his dead brother Haran, and brother to his wife Sarai, joined himself to him. For this no reason is given, but may be found in the fact, that while Abram remained without issue, Lot was his natural heir ; besides, it appears that Lot entertained an *exclusive* belief in the God of Abram, which there is some ground for suspecting that Nahor and his household did not. Lot had a household and property of his own, and the united parties must have formed a goodly pastoral company, such as may still be often met with crossing the plains and deserts of the East in search of new pastures. We are told that they went forth, "and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran," which last clause applies to the "little ones" of their households—being the children which had been born of their slaves during the fifteen years of their stay in Haran.

Those who are, from reading or traveled observation, conversant with the existing manners of the Asiatic pastoral tribes—as the Arabians and the Tartars—can easily form in their minds a picture of this great migrating party. Under the conduct of their venerable emir, and the active direction and control of his principal servants, we behold, from the distance, a lengthened dark line stretching across the plain, or winding among the valleys, or creeping down the narrow pathway on the mountain-side. That in this line there are hosts of camels we know afar off, by the grotesque outline which the figures of these animals make, their tall shapes and their length of neck ; and that the less distinguishable mass which appears in motion on the surface of the ground is composed of flocks of sheep, and perhaps goats, we can only infer from circumstances. On approaching nearer,

we find that all this is true, and that, moreover, many of the camels are laden with the tents, and with the few utensils and needments which the dwellers in tents require; and, if the natural condition of the traversed country be such as to render the precaution necessary, some of the animals may be seen bearing provisions and skins of water. The baggage-camels follow each other with steady and heavy tread, in files, the halters of those that follow being tied to the harness of those that precede, so that the foremost only needs a rider to direct his course; but nevertheless women, children, and old men are seen mounted on the other burdens which some of them bear. These are slaves, retainers, and other persons not actively engaged in the conduct of the party, and not of sufficient consequence to ride on saddled dromedaries. Such are reserved for the chiefs of the party, their women, children, relatives, and friends, and are not, unless it happen for convenience, strung together like the drudging animals which bear the heavier burdens.

For the youths and men of vigorous age, the slaves and shepherds, there is active employment in directing the orderly progress of the flocks, and in correcting the irregularities, friskings, and breaches which sometimes occur. In this service they are assisted by a stout staff, crooked at one end—the origin of the pastoral and episcopal crook—which, however, is but sparingly used by those most accustomed to the flocks, their familiar voices being in general quite sufficient to control and guide the sheep; and of their voices they make no stinted use, but exert them liberally in the incessant utterance of loud cries and shouts, reproaches, warnings, and encouragements. The feeble of the flock are very tenderly dealt with; the progress of the whole is but slow, on account of the lambs, and the ewes great with young; and some of the shepherds may be seen bearing in their arms the weaker lambs of the flock, or those which had been lately weaned. The men engaged in these services are on foot, though a few of the principal may be on camels, or, preferably, on asses, if there be any of those animals in the troop. The whole conduct of the oriental shepherds supplies many beautiful allusions and metaphors to the sacred writers of the Hebrews

—as where the prophet says that the good shepherd “shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” (Isa., xl. 11.)

We have introduced this short description of the pastoral migrations with the view of enabling the reader to form some idea not only of this migration of Abram and Lot, but of the various other removals which are so frequently mentioned in the history of the pastoral patriarchs.

Nicolas of Damascus, an ancient author cited by Josephus, states that Abram, coming from the country of the Chaldeans, *which is above Babylon*, with a large company, tarried for a season at Damascus, and reigned there, before he went into the land of Canaan. He adds that the name of Abram continued to be very famous in all the region of Damascus, in which there was a place still called Beth-Abram (the house of Abram). Justin, in his extravagant account of the origin of the Jews, also numbers Abram among the kings of Damascus. There is nothing in Scripture to countenance this story, which is probably based on some tradition that Abram encamped for a while near Damascus, in his way to Canaan: even this we do not know; but it seems not unlikely, as that city lay on the most convenient route from Haran to the land of Canaan, and as the subsequently favored domestic of the patriarch, whom he on one occasion describes as having been “born in his house,” is, in another, called by him *Eliezer of Damascus*.

The history in Genesis gives us no account of this journey, which is the same afterwards made by Jacob, and the longest ever made by the Hebrew patriarchs. We are only told, with inimitable brevity, that “they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” It would, to us, have been interesting to follow the route which was on this occasion taken. But, in our existing want of information, it is only necessary to observe that some writers tell us needlessly of the frightful deserts which Abram crossed in this journey. But we need not necessarily conclude that the present great desert of Syria was a desert then. And, if it were, seeing that flocks of sheep can not, like a herd of camels, be conducted across a parched desert, destitute of herbage and

of water, as the deserts of Syria and Arabia are during summer, it will follow that the transit was made, if at all, in the early spring, when, from the recent winter and vernal rains, the Syrian desert, at least in its northern part, becomes a rich prairie, covered with fragrant and nutritive herbage. But no situation which has been assigned to Haran requires that the patriarch should at all cross this desert in journeying thence to the land of Canaan. Proceeding westward from beyond the Euphrates, he would skirt this desert on the north, and then, turning southward, he would follow the course of the mountains which border it on the west, being with little interruption most of the way in the enjoyment of the fine pastures and abundant waters of the plains and valleys which border, or are involved among, the Syrian mountains.

Arriving at last in the land of Canaan, the patriarch was arrested by the rich pastures of Samaria, near the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim ; and in the beautiful valley of Moreh, which lies between these mountains, and where the city of Shechem was not long after founded, Abram formed his first encampment in the land.

Not long after his arrival, the Lord favored the patriarch with a more distinct intimation of his intentions than any which he had hitherto received, by the promise that he would bestow on his posterity the land into which he had come. From this time forward Abram and the other patriarchs were constantly taught to regard the land of Canaan as the future heritage of their children.

Abram testified his gratitude and adoration by building there an altar unto Jehovah, who had appeared unto him.

A pastoral chief has no other alternatives than either to remove frequently to the new pastures which his flocks and herds require, or, retaining his household long in one place, to send forth his flocks, under the charge of trusty persons, to distant pastures. The former was the course which Abram took. His next recorded removal was about twenty-four miles from the plain of Moreh, southward, toward the vale of Siddim, where the valleys of the hilly country north of the plain of Jericho offer fine and luxuriant pasturage. In this district the patriarch pitched his tent near a mountain on the

east of the place then called Luz, but to which, in a later day, Jacob gave the name of Bethel. There also the patriarch "built an altar to Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah."

When the exhaustion of the pasturages rendered further removals necessary, we learn that his progress was southward.

In those days there arose a famine in the land of Canaan, doubtless caused—as scarcity usually is caused in that country—by one or more seasons of excessive drought. It is the peculiar felicity of Egypt that its soil does not need local rains to awaken its productive powers, which are called into most vigorous operation by the periodical overflowings of the river Nile. There may be scarcity even in Egypt, for the river sometimes fails of its due redundance ; but this happens but rarely, and when it does occur, the causes which produce it are to be found in the droughts of that remote country in which the river rises, or which it traverses in the early part of its course. But as these remote droughts which stint the water of the Nile and produce scarcities in Egypt—which has itself no adequate rains in its lower country, and none in its upper, to compensate for this want—are seldom so extensive as to have any serious influence in the countries which border on that land in which the river *terminates* its course, it follows that there is seldom any coincidence between the scarcities of western Asia and those which occur, with comparative rarity, in Egypt. Thus that singular country has, in all ages, been regarded as the granary of western Asia, not only from the extraordinary fertility produced by the periodical inundation of its soil, but from the circumstance that it might be expected to furnish a supply of corn at the very time when other countries were consumed with famine-producing droughts.

It is interesting to learn that this was the state of matters in the time of the patriarchs, who on all occasions looked towards Egypt, whenever a scarcity of corn was experienced in the land of Canaan.

So now, Abram, being in the south of the Promised Land, heard that there was corn in Egypt, and determined to proceed thither with his household. Josephus adds that he also

wished to ascertain the religious sentiments of the Egyptians, and to teach them or to be taught by them ; which is consistent enough with the traditionary history of Abram's earlier life, but has no warrant in Scripture.

Arriving on the borders of Egypt, the patriarch had an opportunity of making comparisons between the Egyptian women and his own wife, greatly to the advantage of the latter. She appears to have been a very fine woman ; and, under the present circumstances, her comparatively fresh complexion, as a native of Mesopotamia, gained by the contrast with the dusky hue of the Egyptian females. It is true that Sarai was at this time sixty-five years of age ; but this age is not to be estimated by the present standard of life, but according to the standard which then existed, by which the wife of Abram could not seem to her contemporaries of more advanced age than a woman of thirty or thirty-five appears to us.

Knowing the attraction of his wife's beauty, and being perhaps aware of some recent circumstances in Egypt which were calculated to awaken his apprehensions for the result, the heart of Abram failed him, in the very point in which the hearts of all men are more weak and tender than in any other, and he resolved to take shelter under an equivocation. He therefore said to his wife—" Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon : therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, ' This is his wife : ' and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister : that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee." (Gen., xii. 11, 13.) This was accordingly done ; and we are instructed by this, and other similar incidents, that the men who figure in the history before us as the best and holiest in aggregate character, were not such immaculate representatives of ideal perfection as shine in common history and romance, but as true human beings, " compassed about with infirmities," as all men are, and tempted, as all men are, by their passions, doubts, or fears ; and by such temptation too often drawn aside from the right path. The whole of the sacred book offers to us not a single character exempt from

temptation ; and it tells us of only One whom all temptation left “without sin.”

It appears that Abram did not over-estimate the effect which the beauty of Sarai was likely to produce upon the sensitive Egyptians. The attractions of the fair Mesopotamian stranger were speedily discovered, and became the theme of many tongues. She was at last seen by some of “the princes of Pharaoh ;” and the report of her beauty becoming, through them, the talk of the court, soon reached the ears of the Egyptian king.

In Europe the tendency of civilization is to procure increased respect from the governing powers for the personal liberties and privileges of the people, and for the rights of property and the sanctities of private life ; but this rule has ever been reversed in the East, where the most civilized nations have always been those in which the natural immunities of man have been the least regarded, and in which no natural or social privilege existed on which the sovereign despotism might not, if it so pleased, lay its iron hand freely. Here we have a very early instance of this. Egypt had doubtless at this time reached a higher point of civilization than any other country of which the sacred history takes notice—and here we read of the first act of despotism which that history records. Abram was, in the first place, afraid that he should be slain for the sake of his wife, for which reason he reported her as his sister ; but no sooner did the reputation of the beauty of this alleged sister of a powerful emir—a stranger taking refuge in the country—arrive at the ears of its sovereign, than he sent to demand her for his harem. This is what the sovereigns of the most “civilized” oriental states often do, as a matter of royal right, when stimulated by the sight or rumor of a beautiful female among the sisters or daughters of their subjects ; and the present case is a remarkable evidence of the early existence of this most offensive privilege of oriental despotism. It is evident that the patriarch had no appeal from the authority which made this grievous demand ; and yet could not himself have been a willingly consenting party. That Abram was not the subject of the Egyptian king, but a newly-arrived stranger of distinc-

tion, rendered this a still stronger act of despotic power than it might otherwise have seemed ; and it was probably from this consideration that Pharaoh sought to pacify or propitiate the patriarch by making him valuable presents, suitable to his condition as a pastoral chief—such as “sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels.” Some reflection has been made upon the conduct of Abram in accepting these presents ; but those who are acquainted with the usages of the East know that he dared not refuse them.

So Sarai was taken to the house of Pharaoh. This lamentable result of his weak equivocation did not so far rouse the patriarch’s faith or courage as to make him avow the actual relationship between her and himself. But at this juncture it pleased God to interfere to prevent the evil consequences which human means could not well have averted, by inflicting on Pharaoh and his house “great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” What these plagues were we are not clearly told ; but probably some grievous disease of such a nature as, joined to some intimation to that effect, rendered it manifest to him that the infliction was intended to prevent or punish his designs upon the wife of another man. On this the king sent for Abram, and, after rebuking him with some severity for the dissimulation of his conduct, which had placed all parties in a dangerous position, desired him to take his wife and leave the country, at the same time giving orders to his people to facilitate his departure.

By the time the patriarch returned from Egypt to the land of Canaan the scarcity which had driven him thence appears to have ceased. He retraced his steps through the southern part of the country, and at last arrived at the place between Bethel and Hai where his tents had been before ; and at the altar which he had formerly built upon one of the neighboring hills he again enjoyed the satisfaction of “calling upon the name of Jehovah.”

Since Abram and Lot were formerly encamped in the same place, their substance had been greatly increased. We are now told that “Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.” The royal gifts of the king of Egypt had no

doubt contributed considerably to the increase of his previous stock of cattle ; and as the precious metals are mentioned among the articles of his wealth immediately on his return from Egypt, they were most likely obtained in the same country, either by the gift of the king or from the sale of the produce of his flocks to the townspeople. This is, indeed, the first occasion on which the precious metals are mentioned, in all history, as articles of property and wealth—that is, as shown by subsequent transactions—as the representatives of value. Lot, who had hitherto been the constant companion of Abram's migrations, was also rich, having great possessions of “flocks, and herds, and tents.” That he also is not said to possess silver and gold is a rather remarkable omission, and may be significant.

Their united pastoral wealth was so great that it became manifest that the two parties could not remain together much longer. There is not, indeed, any scarcity of water in the district in which they were then encamped ; but the land unappropriated by the Canaanites in that part of the country was insufficient to furnish free pasture to all their flocks and herds ; and hence quarrels about the choice and rights of pasture arose between the shepherds of Abram and Lot, who were probably more zealous about the separate interests and rights of their masters than they were themselves. Lot, however, does not in his general character appear to have been at all indifferent to his own interests ; and the generous and disinterested proposal which Abram made to prevent all future difference or difficulty, looks very much like an answer from him to some remonstrance or complaint which his nephew had been making. He said, “Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen ; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee ? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me : if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right ; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” In the life of a Bedouin pastor the concession of a choice of pasturage to another chief is the most extraordinary act of generosity which he can possibly show, in consequence of the large interests which are involved ; and, under all the circum-

stances, it becomes almost sublime when the claims of the party to whom the concession is made to the right of selection are only equal, or, as in the present case, inferior to those of the conceder. An English grazier may have some idea of this, but it is only by a Bedouin that it can be fully appreciated.

Lot made no scruple of availing himself of the advantage which his uncle's liberal proposal gave to him. From the heights on which they stood the vale of Siddim offered a most inviting prospect. It was well watered everywhere, which alone is a great advantage to the possessor of flocks and herds, which, with the exuberant vegetation which resulted from it, with the prospect of fair cities here and there, gave it the aspect of a terrestrial paradise. The low, broad, and warm valley, fertilized by the fine river which passed through it, also suggested a resemblance to the rich valley of the Nile, from which they had lately come. Lot, beholding all this, made choice of all the plain of the Jordan for his pasture-ground, and soon after removed to it with all his possessions. We are told that "he pitched his tent toward Sodom," or made the neighborhood of that city his head-quarters, not probably caring so much as Abram might have done about the depraved character of the inhabitants; for he could not well have been ignorant of the fact that the men of Sodom were notoriously "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."

Now at last, by the operation of circumstances, without any immediate command from God, Abram was brought to that state of complete isolation from all his natural connections which the divine purpose, to preserve his future race apart and unmixed, rendered necessary. But, although this present separation, which left the patriarch, more completely than before, alone in a strange land, was not immediately caused by the divine interposition, no sooner had Lot taken his departure than the Lord again manifested his presence to Abram, to cheer and encourage him by the renewal, in more distinct terms, of the promises formerly made to him. To the childless man was promised a posterity countless as the dust, the future inheritors of the land in which he dwelt,

which land he was now directed to traverse in its length and breadth, to survey the goodly heritage of his children, and to take, as it were, possession of it in their behalf.

In obedience to this direction, Abram broke up his camp near Bethel and departed, proceeding first towards the south. His next encampment was formed about a mile from the town of Arba (afterwards called Hebron), in the fair and fertile valley of Mamre, where he pitched his tent under a terebinth tree, which became in after ages famous for his sake

The patriarch was still at this place when his history brings us acquainted with the first warlike transaction of which any record remains.

It appears that, in this age, the Assyrian power predominated in western Asia ; and we should not wonder if it be ultimately discovered that even the "Shepherd kings" of Egypt were Assyrian viceroys, which discovery would throw great light on several circumstances in the lives of the patriarchs. Be this as it may, we learn that, some years before the date at which we are now arrived, an Assyrian force had crossed the Euphrates, and made extensive conquests in Syria. This force appears to have been composed of detachments from the several small nations or tribes which composed or were subject to the Assyrian empire, each commanded by its own *melech* or petty king. Of these kings, one named "Chedorlaomer, king of Elam," probably Elymais, appears to have been left viceroy of the conquests west of the Euphrates. This chief, in the end, resolved to carry his arms southward, and with this object took with him, not only the warriors drawn from his own clan, but those commanded by three other of such "kings," namely, Amraphel, king of Shinar (or Babylonia) ; Arioch, king of Ellasar ; and another called Tidal, who, from his title, "king of Goïm," or, if we translate the word, "of peoples," may seem to have ruled a mixed people or union of small tribes. Although the history only requires the mention of the vale of Siddim, we think it wrong to infer from thence that no other district of southern Syria was involved in the consequences of this expedition. The intermediate country, particularly on the coast of the Jordan and the country beyond, possessed by the Horim of

Mount Seir, probably experienced its effects, although we only read that the four commanders made war with the five petty kings of the plain, being Bera, king of Sodom ; Birsha, king of Gomorrah ; Shinab, king of Admah ; Shember, king of Zeboim ; and the unnamed king of Bela, afterwards called Zoar. Being defeated, these five kings were made tributary to Chedorlaomer, whom we have supposed to have been viceroy of the Assyrian conquests west of the Euphrates ; and in this state of subjection they remained twelve years. But, in the thirteenth year, some unrecorded circumstance encouraged the kings of the plain to withhold their tribute, in which act we may reasonably conclude that other districts of southern Syria concurred. The year following, Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him undertook a new expedition to punish the revolvers ; and that they did not proceed at once against the kings of the plain, but went to the countries beyond the vale of Siddim, and only noticed it on their return northward, seems to us to give a very clear sanction to our conclusion—that other neighboring districts were also subjugated by the Assyrians thirteen years before, and participated in the revolt of the thirteenth year. And this conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that the mere incidents of this expedition would seem to have been far more important than what we must otherwise suppose to have been its sole or principal object. Coming from the north, the Assyrian commanders traversed the country east of the Jordan, overthrowing in their way the gigantic races by which that country appears to have been inhabited. The river Jordan at this time flowed on in a widened stream, beyond the vale of Siddim to the eastern arm of the Red Sea ; and continuing their progress southward, along the eastern borders of that river, the invaders smote the Horim who dwelt in the caverns and fortresses of Mount Seir. Where they crossed the Jordan we know not, but we next find them returning northward along its western border, reducing the tribes who inhabited the verge of the wilderness of Paran, on the south of Palestine, namely, the Amalekites, and such of the Amorites as abode on the south-western borders of the vale of Siddim. Arriving at last at that vale, the five kings by whom it was ruled went

forth to give them battle. But they were defeated and fled. Now the vale of Siddim was of a bituminous nature, and its surface was in consequence much broken up into deep pits and fissures, into which a large number of the natives who had been in the battle were, in their flight, driven by the victors. Those who escaped, knowing that the towns offered no safety, fled to the neighboring mountains. The conquerors then proceeded to ravage the cities of the plain. In this they met with no opposition, as all the adult population fit to bear arms had been defeated in the battle. They took all the movable property and provisions and departed, carrying away with them as captives the women, children and other people whom they found in the towns. That they did not burn the towns and destroy the people, indicates that the usages of war were less barbarous in this age than they afterwards became—perhaps because war was as yet a new thing, and human life continued to be regarded as a thing too precious—even to those who held it in their power—to be needlessly sacrificed.

Among the prisoners was Lot, who, it appears, had relinquished the custom of dwelling in tents, and the peculiar character of a nomade shepherd, and had taken the first step into the usages of settled life, by dwelling in a fixed abode, in a town, sending forth his shepherds to the pastures with his flocks and herds. The evil city of Sodom was that in which he had his residence ; and for this choice of an abode he suffered on more than one occasion. As a stranger, he had probably not been expected by the king of Sodom, or had declined to go forth to the battle ; and his servants, who alone could have rendered his aid of much consequence, were probably abroad with his cattle. Be this as it may, Lot, with his family and goods, were among the spoil with which the conquerors departed northward, from the vale of Siddim on their homeward march.

The news of this calamity, which had befallen his nephew, was borne to “Abram the Hebrew” by one of those who had escaped. The patriarch was then still encamped in the valley of Mamre ; and he acted on this occasion with all the decision and promptitude which attend all the operations of a

nomade chief. He instantly called out all of his people who were able to bear arms*, and in whom he could most confide—these were the servants who were “born in his own house,” or camp, than which they knew no other home, and were attached to their master as to a father. The number of these was 318; and when we make a proportionable addition of slaves bought by himself† in the course of his life, and those presented to him by the king of Egypt, on whose naturally weaker attachment to him the patriarch did not on this occasion make any claim, we obtain a much clearer idea of his wealth and the extent of his establishment than without this incidental statement we should have been able to realize.

Three Amoritish chiefs, brothers, by name Mamre (from whom the valley took its name), Eshcol, and Aner, who were friends and allies of Abram, joined him with their clans; and we need not suppose that they did this *entirely* out of regard to the patriarch, as is usually stated, seeing that they also had an interest in the matter, for the tribe to which they belonged had, as we have seen, been smitten by the Assyrians.

The four nomade chiefs, having united their forces, hastened in pursuit of the four conquering kings, and overtook them about the place which was in the after-times called Dan, near the sources of the Jordan. The assault was exactly in such style as still prevails among the Bedouin tribes, which avoid, whenever possible, a clear open fight with a superior or even an equal force, but rather seek their object by sudden surprises and unexpected attacks; opportunities for which are easily found by the neglect, even to infatuation, of employing sentinels and scouts. So Abram, overtaking by night the forces which he pursued, or rather, probably, delaying till the night season his advance upon them, divided his people so that they might rush in at once upon them from different

* Whenever this expression, “able to bear arms,” is used in the early chapters of the history, it must always be understood to mean all the adult males not disqualified by sickness, accident, or age. Among nomade tribes, to this day, every male is versed in the use of arms from childhood, and takes his part in the military operations of his tribe. This also continues to be the case, even in the first stages of settled life.

† That Abram had purchased slaves appears in Gen., xvii. 12.

quarters, and by overturning the tents and creating all possible confusion, suggest to the enemy, thus roused from their rest, exaggerated ideas of such numerous assailants as it must be hopeless to resist. The slaughter, as such affairs are managed by nomades, is not generally great, and was probably the less on the present occasion, from the fear which the pursuers must have been in, of injuring, in the darkness of the night, those whom they came to deliver. Struck with a panic, the Assyrians fled, leaving behind them all their spoil ; and, lest they should have leisure to reflect and rally, Abram chased them about eighty miles, as far as a place called Hobah, to the north of Damascus.

His victory over Chedorlaomer was won, not in open fight, but by a sudden surprise in the night season. He soon afterward returned to his encampment in the valley of Mamre, and Lot to his abode in Sodom.

It appears very likely that the patriarch was troubled by some apprehensions of the return of the Assyrians, in greater force, to avenge their defeat ; for to some such fears would seem to have been addressed the encouraging words which the divine voice afterwards spoke to him : “ Fear not, Abram : I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” But the heart of the patriarch was then faint from the thought of promises long postponed, and hopes long deferred, and he ventured to give expression to his feelings, and asked, Where was his hope of reward, when posterity was still withheld from him, and he saw no other prospect than that he should have to adopt his house-born servant, Eliezer, of Damascus, as his heir. This, while it hints the existence of a custom of adoption still very common in the East, is remarkable for its omitting to notice any claims which Lot might be supposed to have in preference to Eliezer, and, perhaps, intimates that the estrangement between the uncle and nephew was greater than appears ; or that some usage or custom, which we can not detect, operated to oppose the succession of Lot when the separation of his clan from that of Abram had taken place.

The Lord only rebuked his distrust by new promises. He assured him that no adopted son, no blood relation, should be his heir, but his own very child ; and again he was drawn

forth and bade to look on the stars of heaven, and count them if he was able, for his seed should be as numerous as they. On this, Abram's wavering faith in the divine promise was strengthened, and he again believed. The Lord then proceeded to remind him that he had been brought from a far country to inherit the land in which he dwelt : and was assured that he should inherit it indeed. His faith again started at this, and he asked, "Whereby shall I KNOW that I shall inherit it?"

In those days, when men would make a most solemn covenant with each other, they proceeded thus : they took one of every kind of beast or bird used in sacrifice, being a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. The beasts they divided, and laid the pieces opposite each other, at such a distance that a man could pass between them ; but the birds, being small and of the same kind, were not divided, but placed entire opposite each other. Then the party making the agreement or covenant passed between the pieces, declaring the terms by which he bound himself to abide. As this was the strongest and most solemn method Abram knew of contracting a binding obligation, God thought proper to make use of it on this occasion.

The patriarch was directed to make the customary arrangements, and having made them, he remained till evening watching the carcasses, to protect them from injuries by beasts or birds. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram ; and lo ! an horror of great darkness fell upon him." Then it was that God made a larger and more distinct declaration of his intentions than the patriarch had hitherto received. He was informed that his early descendants should be afflicted four hundred years in a strange land, after which they should be brought forth from that land with great riches, to take possession of the promised country, the utmost limits of which, even to the Euphrates, were now defined, and the existing nations specified whose domains they should possess. Many reasons might seem obvious for the delay of which Abram is now first warned ; but the only one assigned on this occasion is, that the iniquity of the nations to be dispossessed was "not yet full ;" by which we are disposed to un-

derstand that they had not yet cast God utterly from their knowledge, into whatever errors of practice and opinion they had fallen. To Abram himself it was promised that he should be gathered to his fathers in peace, and buried in a good old age. The sun was now set, and it was dark, when the patriarch saw a cloud of smoke, like that of a furnace, accompanied by a flame of fire, pass between the severed parts to ratify the covenant ; and by that fire the victims were probably consumed.

Sarai, the wife of Abram, desired a son no less fervently than her husband. But she had been considered barren before she left Mesopotamia ; she was now seventy-five years of age ; and she had waited ten years since their hearts were first gladdened by the promise of an heir. She therefore thought the case was hopeless as regarded herself ; and began to reflect that, although a son had been promised to Abram, it had not been said, and did not necessarily follow, that this son should be the fruit of her own womb. Explaining these views to the patriarch, she prevailed upon him to resort to a custom of the time, of which there are still some traces in the East, under which the man takes a secondary wife, whose children become his undoubted heirs, equally with any other children he may have ; and if the woman is the slave or attendant of the chief wife, or is provided by the chief wife, the children are, in a legal point of view, considered hers ; and, in the same point of view, the condition of the actual mother remains unchanged, though in practice it necessarily sustains some modification from the operation of the feelings arising from the connections which are formed, especially when her children are grown up. The female whom Sarai proposed to Abram as her substitute was her own handmaid, a woman of Egypt, named Hagar, who may be supposed to have been one of the female slaves whom the king of Egypt gave to the patriarch.

In due time it was known that Hagar had conceived ; and the prospect of becoming the mother of Abram's long-promised heir had a mischievous effect upon her mind, leading her to treat her mistress with disrespect. Sarai, through whose preference and management all this had been brought about,

was stung to the quick by this treatment, and complained of it to Abram with some sharpness, insinuating that, without some encouragement from him, Hagar durst not be so impertinent to her. The patriarch himself, respecting the rights of his wife, and displeased at Hagar's presumption (which those who know any thing of oriental women of her class, will believe to have been very coarsely and offensively manifested), reminded Sarai that the Egyptian was still her bondservant, and that her authority was sufficient to prevent or punish the treatment of which she complained. Being thus assured that he would not interfere, Sarai proceeded to a more unsparing exercise of the powers with which she was invested than the raised spirits of the Egyptian bondmaid could brook ; and she therefore fled, directing her course towards her own country. It is a terrible and a perilous thing for a woman, alone and on foot, to pass the desert which lies between the land of Canaan and Egypt ; and we know not how one might do it and live. Nor did Hagar accomplish this enterprise ; for she was as yet but upon the borders of the desert, and was tarrying for refreshment and rest by a well of water, when an angel of God appeared to her, and persuaded her to return and submit herself to her mistress, encouraging her to obedience by the assurance that the child she then bore in her womb would prove a son, whom she was directed to name Ishmael [God attendeth], because the Lord had attended to her affliction. She was also assured that this son should be the parent of a numerous race ; and that while in his character, as typifying that also of his descendants, he should be wild and fierce as the desert ass—his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him—he should never be expelled or rooted out from the domain which God would give to him. Thus instructed and encouraged, Hagar returned to her master's camp in the valley of Mamre ; and in due season brought forth a son, to whom, in obedience to the angel's direction, Abram gave the name of Ishmael.

After the birth of Ishmael thirteen years passed away, during which it would seem that both Abram and Sarai were satisfied to rest in the conclusion that the son of Hagar was the long-promised and divinely-appointed heir of the patri-

arch. They had the less doubt of this, seeing that Abram was now on the verge of 100 years old, and the age of Sarai was only ten years less.

During the heat of the day the interior of the tent is usually close and oppressive ; and the Bedouin likes then to sit near the entrance, on the shady side, that, while protected from the sun, he may enjoy the comparative freshness of the open air. Abraham was sitting thus, when he saw three strangers approaching, who bore the appearance of wayfaring men. Exactly as a Bedouin would do at the present day, the patriarch no sooner saw them than he hastened to press his hospitality upon them. For the reason we have just stated, he did not ask them into his tent, but invited them to sit under the shade of his terebinth tree, until victuals should be got ready for them, and water brought to refresh their feet and cleanse them from the dust of travel. To be allowed thus to entertain strangers is the first personal ambition of the less-corrupted Bedouins ; and so sincerely do they feel that they are the favored parties, and so deep the shame to them of having their hospitality rejected, that we are not—as our differing customs might suggest—to suppose that the patriarch on this occasion proceeded in a manner unusual to him, although there was that in the dignified appearance of one of the three strangers, which, while it led Abraham to single him out as the proper person to be addressed, may have induced him to accost him as “my lord,” and to “bow himself towards the ground” more reverently than was his wont. This dignified stranger graciously accepted the invitation of the patriarch, and desired him to do as he had said.

The manner in which Abraham proceeded to provide an entertainment for the strangers, and the expedition with which this appears to have been accomplished, afford us much instruction, and serves to show very clearly that the main usages of nomade life are unchanged to this day. The preparation of bread, even to the grinding of the corn, is the exclusive work of women ; and as the bread is made merely as the temporary occasion requires, and none is kept on hand from one day to another, a baking of bread always attends the arrival of a stranger. Abraham, therefore, hastened into

the tent to Sarah, and desired her to make ready quickly three measures of fine flour, and to knead it and bake cakes upon the hearth. He then hastened to the herd, and took from thence a calf, "tender and good," which he gave to one of his young men to slay and dress; and this indicates the antiquity of another Bedouin custom, of slaying an animal for the entertainment of a stranger arrived in camp; and also shows that even then the Orientals had no objection to meat which had been cooked before the vital warmth had departed from it. Abraham had only promised to bring "a morsel of bread to comfort their hearts;" but now, with the bread, he brought the calf, with some of those preparations of butter and milk, for which pastoral tribes have in all ages been renowned. Having brought the meat, he sat not down with them to partake of it, but according to a still subsisting method of showing respect, he stood by his visitants under the terebinth tree while they ate.

Sarah remained in the tent. The women do not generally make their appearance on such occasions; and it is considered in the last degree impertinent for a stranger to take any notice of their existence, or to make any inquiries about them. Abraham must therefore have been not a little startled when the seeming principal of the strangers abruptly asked him, "Where is Sarah thy wife?" and that the stranger should know her by a name so recently imposed, may well have increased his surprise. He answered, shortly, "Behold, in the tent." On which the stranger, by declaring that Sarah should in nine months become the mother of a son, revealed his high character to the patriarch; and, accordingly, he is, in the remainder of the account, distinguished by the ineffable name of JEHOVAH. As they were sitting just outside the tent, Sarah herself, who was within it, heard what passed, and she laughed incredulously to herself, knowing well that not only had she ever been barren, but that she was past the time of life at which all the women of her day ceased to bear children. On this the Lord asked why she had laughed, and why she was incredulous, for was there any thing too hard for the Lord? and he ended in repeating the terms of the assurance he had just given. Sarah, being afraid, and knowing that no

one could have heard her laughter, ventured to deny that she had laughed, but was stopped by the rebuke, "Nay, but thou didst laugh."

Soon after, the strangers arose and departed, directing their course toward the vale of Siddim, and Abraham went with them a part of the way. As they proceeded, the Lord condescended to make known to him the object of the present motion towards Sodom, which, speaking after the manner of men, as one who needed to examine and inquire before proceeding to judgment, he does in these words: "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; AND IF NOT, I WILL KNOW." The other two then went on in advance towards Sodom, while Abraham remained alone with the Lord. The patriarch knew what interpretation to put upon the last ominous words; and the character of the inhabitants of the plain was too well known to him to permit him to cherish a hope for them as matters now stood. He therefore, having himself had large experience of the Lord's tender mercies, ventured, although feeling that he was but "dust and ashes," to draw near and speak to him on their behalf. It was not possible, he knew, but that the Judge of all the earth should do right; and, therefore, far must it be from him to slay the innocent with the wicked. But, yet more, the patriarch urgently desired that, for the sake of only a few just men in Sodom, the whole city might be spared. He named fifty; but after this request had been granted, his recollection of the intense corruptions of Sodom made him anxious to reduce the number to the lowest possible limit; and therefore, by successive petitions, all readily yielded to him, he gradually brought down the number to ten, for the sake of which small number of righteous men the Lord declared that even Sodom should not be destroyed.

The Lord then departed on his way, but not—at least not in bodily form—to Sodom; and Abraham returned to his tent in Mamre.

The wicked city of Sodom having finally rejected every invitation to repentance, and laughed to scorn and outraged

the messengers of the Most High God, was at length suddenly destroyed. It will not, however, enter within our province to detail here the story of its annihilation.

Not long after the destruction of Sodom, Abraham removed from the valley of Mamre, where he had lived so many years, and proceeded southward towards the desert border of Palestine, and encamped near a place called Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. What occasioned his removal at this particular juncture does not appear ; but it has been with sufficient plausibility conjectured that he could not bear the stench which at that time arose from the sulphureous lake where the cities of the plain had been.

In the next chapter we shall trace the subsequent career of Abraham to his death and burial.

CHAPTER II.

ISAAC.

THE joy, so long expected, and so long delayed, came at last ; and at the date specially appointed by God, being exactly one year from the time that Abraham entertained the angels under the terebinth tree, Sarah gave birth to a son. To this son the name of Isaac was given, with a joyous feeling which suggested to Sarah a more pleasant application of the name than in the circumstances which gave the first occasion for it. She nourished the infant from her own breast, probably not less than three years ; and a great feast signalized the day on which the heir of the promises was weaned.

In consequence of the changes and modifications of feeling and expectation which the event quite naturally occasioned, the birth and growth of Isaac did not bring unmixed satisfaction to the family of Abraham. Sarah, a woman on the verge of old age, unexpectedly gratified with a son, naturally enough threw the whole force of her affections upon him, to the gradual neglect and ultimate dislike of Ishmael, to whom, as her actual blessing, she appears to have been considerably attached before her greater blessing in Isaac came. Of Hagar's feelings we know nothing positively, but from our previous knowledge of her, we can readily conclude that it was with no pleasant impressions that she saw the consequence of her own son, now growing up to manhood, much diminished, and many of his expectations superseded by the young stranger. The mind of the rough youth himself appears to have been somewhat irritated by the comparative neglect into which he had fallen ; and he seems to have occasionally manifested unkind feelings towards the child by whom this had been unconsciously produced. The patriarch himself appears to have been the least altered of the three. The sturdy character of

Ishmael was not likely to be displeasing to a pastoral chief ; and while the heart of Abraham was large enough for both his sons, each of whom he was willing to see in the several stations which Providence had assigned them before their birth, it is probable that his first-born still possessed a higher place in his affections than the infant Isaac had yet won.

An occasion soon occurred on which the operation of these different feelings was manifested. At or not long after the great feast which Abraham made when Isaac was weaned, Ishmael grievously offended Sarah, probably not for the first time, by some derision or ill-treatment of the young heir, to which Hagar appears, in some way or other, to have been a party. The wrath of Sarah was warmly excited, and she passionately insisted to Abraham that Hagar and her son should both be sent away, declaring that “ the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac ;” which is probably leveled at some intention which Abraham was known to entertain of dividing his actual property between his sons, leaving to Isaac the heirship of those higher hopes which belonged to him. Such an intention was in itself so proper and customary, that in a later age it was applied to such cases by the law of Moses. The demand of Sarah was very grievous to the patriarch. But God, who, on a former occasion interposed to prevent a separation, and obliged Hagar to return to the mistress from whom she had fled, now indicates his high approval of the course which the displeasure and passion of Sarah had suggested. This difference of procedure is evidently another instance of the operation of the divine intention of keeping the chosen race alone and apart from even collateral combinations. Yet He, who knew well the nature of those affections which He has implanted in man to bless and cheer his existence, gave not his sanction to this harsh requirement without words of kindness, followed by the renewed promise—“ And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, *because he is thy seed.*”

To mark the alacrity of obedience which the patriarch ever manifested when his course was indicated by a clear command from God, we are told that he “ rose up early in the morning ” to set forward the bondwoman and her son upon

their way. We are not told of the explanations and farewells which passed on this occasion ; but it is preposterous to suppose there was any thing harsh in this dismissal. We doubt not that Abraham's household knew that he was in the habit of receiving directions from God, by which his measures had been at all times directed ; and that he had trained up all belonging to him into the habit of feeling that when such a direction had been received, nothing further remained to be considered. Abraham may or may not have told Hagar of Sarah's demand and her cause for it ; but, questionless, he did tell her of the divine command, of the necessity which it imposed upon him, and of the promise with which it was attended ; and Hagar's own submission, on a former occasion, to a command from the same supreme authority, sufficiently intimates that she could not but feel the obligation of obedience under which her master lay. Furnished with a skin of water, and with such provisions as travelers take with them, she departed with her son from the tents of her lord, and his father, and wandered in the desert of Beer-sheba. Here her supply of water was soon spent ; and the young Ishmael, less inured than his mother to privation, grew faint from thirst and weariness, and seemed likely to perish in the deserts which were his promised heritage. There was no remedy but water ; and water his mother saw none, and expected not to find there. The case was hopeless in her eyes. That the lad might not die in her sight, she laid him down under the shade of one of the desert shrubs, and withdrawing herself to some distance, she sat down upon the ground and wept aloud. The moans of the child and the cries of his mother were not unheard in heaven ; and the pitying voice of the angel of God called to her, saying, " What aileth thee, Hagar ? Fear not ; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand ; for I will make him a great nation." The attention was thus guided to a distant well, to which she hastened to fill her vessel, and returned to give the lad drink. All was well with them then. They soon after met with a party of Bedouin pastors to whom they joined themselves, and remaining in the deserts, Ishmael soon distinguished himself by the expert use of the favorite weapon



of that early age, the bow—he “became an archer,” and acquired a character in conformity with that which the divine predictions had assigned to him. In the East the mother usually takes all but the entire direction in the marriage of her son; and, agreeably to this usage, as soon as Ishmael became of proper age, Hagar procured a wife for Ishmael out of the land of Egypt, to which she herself belonged. We may now leave them and return to the tents of Abraham.

The Jewish doctors count up ten trials of Abraham’s faith and obedience. Nine of these we have told. The tenth and last was of all these the most terrible, and from which, proportionably, the character of the patriarch came forth with the greater splendor—with the resplendence of gold refined in many fires. He had dwelt many years in Beer-sheba, and his son Isaac had reached the age of twenty-five years, when the astounding command came that he was to immolate this son—the heir of the promises—as a sacrifice to Jehovah. It being the design of God to render the patriarch an eminent example to all his future posterity of unquestioning obedience, whereby he might worthily claim the title of “The Father of the Faithful,” every circumstance was accumulated which seemed calculated to render obedience more difficult to him. Even in the requirement itself, the proposed victim is indicated by a variety of tender appellations, rising in their value by an admirable climax from the first to the last, every one of which must have entered like iron into the soul of the patriarch: “Take now *thy son*, thine *only son* Isaac, whom *thou lovest*—and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”

We do not imagine that the idea of a father sacrificing his son to God as a burnt-offering was new to Abraham. In after times we know it was but too common; and it appears probable that in those times which lie beyond the reach of our knowledge, the notion had crept in, that as the life of a son, and especially of the eldest, the only, or of a very dear son, was the most valuable and precious offering in their power to present, it must needs be the most acceptable and meritorious in the eyes of the gods they worshiped. Hence, as the most sensible of the Jewish writers conjecture, Abra-

ham understood that this highest sacrifice, by which, as he knew, the heathen manifested their zeal for their false gods, was required of him as a test of his zeal for the true God. But how he could reconcile such a command with the promise of a numerous posterity through this very Isaac, might not appear very evident, did we not learn from the New Testament, that so confident did he feel that this promise would and must be accomplished, that he believed that God would restore Isaac again to life after he was sacrificed. Curbing, therefore, the force of his paternal emotions, he, with the usual alacrity of his obedience, "rose up early in the morning," and made the necessary preparations for the journey and for the sacrifice, directing the ass on which he usually rode to be saddled, and the wood required for a burnt-offering to be cleaved. He then departed with Isaac, attended by two of his young men. On the third day they arrived within a distant view of the place which God had appointed for this awful act ; and it proved to be that Mount Moriah on which, in after ages, the temple of Solomon was built ; and this site was probably selected with a prospective reference to that circumstance, as well as to the mysteries of which the neighborhood was to be the scene in ages to come.

Here, while the place was still some way off, Abraham alighted from his ass, and fearing lest the young men might be disposed to interfere, or, perhaps, apprehending that the act which he was about to execute might, through such witnesses, be drawn into a precedent, he directed them to remain there with the ass, while he and Isaac went yonder to worship. The father and son passed on in silence, Isaac bearing the wood which, unknown to him, was destined to consume his own body, and Abraham taking the knife and a vessel containing the fire with which the wood was to be kindled. As they thus proceeded, it occurred to Isaac to ask the natural but, under the circumstances, very trying question—"My father, . . . Behold, the fire and the wood ; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering ?" To this Abraham only answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." But as they proceeded, or when they arrived at the top of the hill, the patriarch must have explained to

his son that he was himself the victim which God had provided ; and that the pious and dutiful youth then bowed in submission to the will of God and the desire of his father is evinced by the circumstances ; for any act of compulsion was morally impossible by an old man of one hundred and twenty-five years upon a vigorous youth of twenty-five years, whose strength is evinced by his ability to carry all the wood required for such a sacrifice ; and his submission must have been founded on the conviction that his father was right in that which he was doing. The altar was built ; the wood was disposed properly upon it ; Isaac laid himself down upon the wood ; and lest the weakness of the flesh should shrink in this fiery trial, he submitted to be bound : and then the patriarch—with feelings which a fond father can understand without any description, and which none else would understand if described—lifted up his hand to smite the life which was doubtless far more precious to him than his own. The trial was complete. The uplifted arm was arrested, and the intense feelings of that solemn moment were calmed in an instant by a most welcome voice from heaven, which cried : “ Abraham ! Abraham ! . . . lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him ; *for NOW I KNOW that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me.*” And as the patriarch heard these words, his eyes fell upon a ram which had been caught in a thicket by its horns, and joyfully recognizing in this the victim which God *had provided* for a burnt-offering, he hastened to offer it on the altar in the place of his son Isaac ; and never, surely, from the beginning of the world till now, was a religious act performed with such released feelings as those which attended this sacrifice. In memory of this event, and with a happy allusion to his own ambiguous answer to the question of Isaac, as well as to its most unexpected accomplishment, he called the name of that place JAHOH JIREH —*the Lord will provide.*

This act of perfect obedience being consummated, it pleased God to reward the faith he had thus proved, and not found wanting, by the renewal of all his former promises, in terms so express and so strong, and confirmed by the highest

of all possible sanctions—"By Myself have I sworn"—that the patriarch could not but receive it as a firm and settled matter ; and hence it does not appear that any further promise was made to him during the remainder of his life. Cheered by this promise, Abraham returned happily to Beer-sheba with his son, whom he had, as it were, received again from the dead, and who must now have become all the dearer to him, for the signal proof he had given of his pious resignation and filial piety.

After this twelve years passed away, during which we only know that Abraham received news from Mesopotamia, informing him that the family of his brother, Nahor, was in a flourishing condition, and that he had many children, and some grand-children. During this time, it appears, also, that Abraham removed his camp from Beer-sheba to his old station in the valley of Mamre, or at least to some place near Hebron. Here, at the end of the twelve years, Sarah died, at the age of 127 years ; and it is remarkable that she is the only woman whose age, at the time of death, is mentioned in the Scripture. At this time, and probably from the time of her becoming a mother, Sarah occupied a separate tent from that of her husband. And now, when her death was announced to him, he left his own tent, and sat down at the door of hers, "to weep for her," this being the mode of proceeding which custom required.

The death of Sarah raised a new question, which hitherto there had been no occasion to consider. It has been an ancient custom among the Bedouin tribes not to bury their dead just where they happen to die, but to have a burial place within their respective territories, to which they bring the bodies of such of the tribe as die within its district. In conformity with this custom Abraham now wanted a suitable burial-ground, appropriated to the special use of his family, and in which the remains of all of that family who died in the land of Canaan might be laid. He therefore applied to the Hittites, dwelling in Hebron, to obtain the permanent grant of a piece of ground proper for this purpose. The account of the interview is curious and interesting, from the light it throws upon the position of Abraham and the man-

ners of the time. The wealthy and powerful patriarch appears to have been popular with the Hittites, or was rather, perhaps, regarded by them as one whom it was their interest to oblige. He was received with great attention and respect, and when his wish was understood, the choice of all their sepulchres in which to bury his dead was readily and freely offered to him. On this the good patriarch rose up and bowed to the children of Heth, and then proceeded to explain more clearly the object he had in view. He wanted a family burial-place for a permanent possession, and there was a field, called Machpelah, well planted with trees, and with a good cave at the end of it, which would exceedingly well answer his purpose, if the owner, one Ephron, then present, could be induced to sell this property to him. This person, without waiting to be pressed, readily, and with much tact, answered for himself: "Nay, my lord, hear me; the field *give I thee*, and the cave that is therein, *I give it thee*; in the presence of the sons of my people [as witnesses] *give I it thee*: bury thy dead." Now this looks very fair; but the readiness of the man, the tone of the whole speech, with the parade of "give—give—give," so much reminds us of certain passages in our own oriental experience, that Ephron and his speech find no favor in our eyes. We are convinced that, with all this apparent generosity, the man had a keen eye to his own interests, and saw clearly that it might be a more profitable thing to lay the emir under an obligation, than to sell him the ground outright. Besides, if Abraham was, as seems to be the case, a much more important person than Ephron himself, he could not have received this land as a present, according to the usages of the East, without making a more considerable present in return. It seems to us that Abraham quite understood all this. He rose, and after bowing generally to the congregation, addressed himself particularly to Ephron, and insisted on paying for the field with money; and this person, seeing him resolute, at last named the price. "The land is worth four hundred shekels (weight) of silver;" but still, in exact conformity with the character we have assigned him, he takes care to add, "What is that betwixt me and thee?" As he had thus been brought to name a sum in

the presence of so many witnesses, Abraham immediately weighed out the quantity of silver he required, and thus closed the bargain with a degree of address, which shows that he was a judge of character, and knew how to deal with such persons as Ephron. Thus was acquired the first possession of the Hebrew race in the land of Canaan—that possession a sepulcher.

There is not in the East any grief like the grief of a mother for her son, or of a son for his mother ; and there were circumstances calculated to give peculiar intensity to the mutual attachment of Sarah and Isaac. The grief for the loss of his mother, acting upon the quiet and passive character of Isaac, must have been very strong ; and it was probably the sense of privation and continued distress which he manifested that put it into the mind of Abraham, about three years after Sarah's death, of providing a wife for his son, who was then about forty years of age. In meditating such an object, a Bedouin chief would naturally first think of keeping up the family connection, by seeking for his son a wife from the household of his brother ; and, in fact, the young man is held to have the first claim to the hand of any female which the house of his uncle will supply. To the influence of such feelings was, in the case of Abraham, added an anxiety to keep pure and unmixed the race which God had chosen. This explains the strong interest which Abraham and the other patriarchs took in providing wives for their sons from among their own connections. On the present occasion, Abraham called his trusty old servant, Eliezer of Damascus, and made him take a solemn oath to go to the family of his brother Nahor, in Mesopotamia, and bring thence a wife for Isaac, if one willing to come could be found there, giving him entire authority to conclude the marriage—which, in itself, is a remarkable illustration of the ideas on which oriental marriages are usually concluded.

Eliezer departed with a train suitable to the importance of his mission, and calculated to impress a proper notion of his master's consequence upon those to whom he was going—consisting of ten camels, with a proper proportion of attendants, and with valuable presents for the damsel and her friends ; it being

then, as now, the custom of the East to purchase the bride from her friends at a high price, as well as to make presents to herself, instead of the bride bringing a dowry to her husband.

It would seem that Nahor's family still lived in the town (Charran) where Abraham left it. Like Lot in Sodom, they lived in a house—and, so far, had relinquished the character of the pure pastoral nomades who dwell in tents, although the flocks were still sent out to distant pastures under the care of the younger branches of the family, and of shepherds whose mode of life was like that of the Bedouins. Or, which is as likely, if not more so, the head establishment lived in a house only from the latter end of autumn to the spring, spending the rest of the year in tents—a practice which still prevails among some of the pastoral tribes of western Asia.

How many days Eliezer's journey took we know not ; but it was towards evening when he arrived in the vicinity of his place of destination. His intimate acquaintance with Bedouin habits then suggested to him the measures which seemed best calculated to insure the object of his journey. In that age, as now, the duty of drawing water from the wells devolved upon the young women of every Bedouin household ; and the sheikh's own daughter is not above taking her share in a service which is not by any means considered degrading—so much, otherwise, indeed, that the young women find much employment in meeting at the well, and talking together of their small affairs. When Eliezer reached the well, the time of the evening had nearly arrived at which the females are wont to come forth to draw water ; and he knew that among them he might expect to see the destined bride of his young master. He therefore allowed his camels to kneel down, in their usual posture of rest, resolving to remain there, as one who tarried for leave to give water to them from that well. While thus waiting, he prayed to the God of his master Abraham to give him good speed that day ; and, being deeply impressed with the responsibility of the duty he had undertaken, he ventured to propose a sign whereby the kindness of her disposition should be made to indicate the female appointed to be the wife of Isaac. He was yet speaking,

when the young women came to discharge their evening duty. To one of them his attention was particularly drawn by her great beauty ; and as she was returning from the well, with her pitcher on her shoulder, he ran to meet her, with the request that she would allow him to take a draught of water from her vessel. She said, " Drink, my lord ;" and with the utmost alacrity lowered her pitcher from her shoulder to her hand, to give him drink. When he had finished, she hastened again and again to the well, emptying her pitcher into the trough, to give the camels water ; while the admiring stranger pondered in his mind whether this, being the sign he had required, did not sufficiently indicate the future bride of his master's son. To assist his conclusions he took from his treasures a nose-jewel and a pair of bracelets, both of gold, and presented them to her, asking, at the same time, whose daughter she was, and whether her father's house afforded room where his party might lodge. To his great joy, her answer proved her to be the very woman of whom Abraham had already heard in Canaan—namely, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, one of the sons of Nahor. She also told him, not only that there was room for his party, but also chopped straw and corn for the camels. The good old servant, now convinced that he had found the right person, bowed his head, and blessed, aloud, the God of Abraham, who had thus led him to the house of his master's brethren. No sooner had these words fallen from him, than Rebekah ran home to tell all this to her friends.

All this time Nahor does not seem to have been alive—at least his name does not appear in any part of this transaction ; and although Bethuel, the father of Rebekah, still lived, the management of all affairs appears to have fallen into the hands of his son—the keen and active Laban—who no sooner caught the meaning of his sister's hurried statement, and saw (as the narrative is careful to add) the valuable presents which had been given to her, than he hurried forth, and warmly invited Eliezer into the house. There, with the usual promptitude of eastern hospitality, a meal was ready for him and his companions by the time they had attended to their camels and washed their feet. But the faithful servant was too much



interested in the result of his mission to sit down and eat before he had declared his errand. This he did in a precise and simple narrative of what has already been related—in which, however, he, with much address, was mindful to let his audience know of Abraham's great wealth, and of the prosperity with which he had been favored. So Laban, in his own name, and that of Bethuel, declared that the visible traces of divine direction in this matter left them without an answer ; and then, without taking the trouble to consult Rebekah, added, "Behold, Rebekah is before thee ; take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." On this the overjoyed steward bowed his head in thanks to God. Then he drew from his store of precious things, ornaments of gold and silver, and costly garments, and gave them to the elected bride ; and also to her brother and mother he made the valuable presents which they were entitled to expect. The next morning Eliezer rose early, and, rather unexpectedly, required permission to return to his master with the bride. They wished him to tarry a few days ; but as he persisted, and Rebekah professed her willingness to go at once, no further opposition was made.

Women in the East consume but little time in preparing for even an extensive journey ; and Rebekah, being soon ready, was dismissed by Laban with the very characteristic oriental blessing, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." The nurse is a very respectable and influential personage in an eastern household, and often accompanies the young female she has nourished to the new home which marriage gives her, and where she becomes her chief adviser and confidant. So now, Rebekah's nurse and some of her damsels were sent with her. They were mounted on camels, and departed, Eliezer and his men leading the way.

It was eventide when the party arrived in the neighborhood of Abraham's camp ; and the contemplative Isaac had walked forth into the fields to meditate, and was the first to discover the advancing camels. He walked on to meet them ; and his destined bride, observing him approach, asked Eliezer who he was ; and hearing the answer, "It is my master," she

dismounted from the camel, and enveloped herself in the vail of a bride, by which Isaac might distinguish her from the others, and would know that the mission of his servant had not been unavailing. Having learnt from Eliezer all that had taken place, Isaac took Rebekah to the tent of his mother, Sarah, which belonged to her as the chief woman of the tribe. He loved her, and she became his wife. Then, first, he began to feel comfort since his mother's death.

All the circumstances of this expedition are, like others in the patriarchal history, eminently illustrative of the condition of life to which they belong ; and they abound with such strong and finely-discriminated traits of character and natural feeling, that the writer who wishes to leave upon the mind of the reader distinct and characteristic impressions of the ages and the conditions of life through which his history leads, may well be reluctant to submit the details which lie before him to the curtailment and condensation which his limitations may require.

Soon after Isaac's marriage, Abraham, remembering that he was to be "the father of *many* nations," took to himself a second wife, Keturah, who was probably one, perhaps the chief, of the handmaids who had been "born in his house, or bought with his money." By her he had six sons, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah ; all of whom before his own death, thirty-seven years after, he sent with suitable allowances into the country east and south-east of the Promised Land, where they became the founders of Arabian tribes, some of which are often noticed in the Jewish annals, and some remaining traces of whose names may to this day be discovered in Arabia. Thus Abraham disposed of his sons by Keturah in his own lifetime, lest at his death they should be disposed to interfere with the superior claims of Isaac, and, probably, lest any of them should settle in the land of Canaan, which was that son's destined heritage.

While thus Abraham was becoming the father of many nations, the beautiful wife of Isaac proved to be barren. "Of all the patriarchs," says Bishop Hall, "none made so little noise in the world as Isaac ; none lived either so privately or so innocently : neither know I whether he approved himself a bet-

ter son or a husband ; for the one, he gave himself over to the knife of his father, and mourned three years for his mother ; for the other, he sought not to any handmaid's bed, but in a chaste forbearance reserved himself for twenty years' space and prayed. Rebekah was so long barren." After this she conceived, and brought forth twins, whose fortunes were predicted before their birth ; for their struggles, as if for superiority, in her womb, engaged her attention, and she entreated God to show her what this might mean. The answer was, that two nations, two manners of people, were in her womb ; and that of these the one people should be stronger than the other, and the elder should serve the younger. When they came into the world, the first-born exhibited a very hairy appearance, on which account the name of Esau [*hairy*] was given to him ; the other had hold of his brother's heel in the birth, and received the name of Jacob [*heel*] from that circumstance. Characteristic instances, these, of the manner in which, as now, among the Bedouin tribes, names were imposed upon children with reference to any unusual appearance they exhibited, or any little incident that occurred at the time of their birth.

Nothing further is recorded of Abraham till he died (B.C. 1978), at the age of 175 years, "an old man, and full of years." His body was deposited beside that of Sarah in the cave of Machpelah, which he had bought of Ephron the Hittite ; and it is very interesting to note that the wild son of Hagar united amicably with the placid Isaac in rendering the last of duties to their common father ; and as the act of burial in the East very speedily follows death, this leaves us to infer that Ishmael had been summoned from the desert to receive the dying blessing of the patriarch.

Isaac himself died at what was even in those early times considered the good old age of 180 years. Following the plan adopted in this work, other events of his life, being much bound up with the history of Jacob, will be given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

JACOB.

ESAU and Jacob were fifteen years of age when their grandfather Abraham died. As the lads grew up, they manifested characters as different as those of Ishmael and Isaac had been. Esau was the Ishmael of this generation, but Jacob was not the Isaac. Esau cared little for the more quiet and inactive duties of pastoral life, but he was abroad in the open country, where his careless and impulsive character found a congenial, because active and excitable, employment in hunting and shooting down with his arrows the gazelles and other wild animals which that region offered. Jacob, on the other hand, was a plain and quiet man, not taking any interest in such hunting excursions as those of his brother, but remaining for the most part at home among the tents, and acquiring much knowledge of the shepherd's unostentatious and humble duties. The character of Esau, rather than that of Jacob, is the one in which a Bedouin father is most likely to take pride ; and hence it is no wonder that Isaac had much more regard for Esau than for his brother, the more, perhaps, as the former was enabled to show his father frequent and acceptable marks of his affection and respect by bringing for his eating the more choice game that he had killed. Isaac was also willing to regard his first-born as the heir of the promises ; for although we see no reason to agree with those who think that Rebekah did or could conceal from him the communication concerning them which she had received from God before their birth, yet that communication, as interpreted with the bias of his affection for Esau, might not seem to him very clearly to establish the divine intention to assign to his youngest son the same preference which he had himself obtained over Ishmael. But this intention seemed very

clear to Rebekah herself, who interpreted the Lord's answer to her by the light of her own affection for Jacob. He was *her* favorite. She proved a somewhat crafty and unscrupulous woman, and Jacob's natural disposition, till he got advanced in years, lay rather in the same direction ; and, besides this bond of sympathy between them, his more gentle and congenial character, together with his being more constantly at home, naturally recommended him to a higher place in his mother's affection than that which the more boisterous and careless Esau occupied. Jacob knew from his mother the superior destiny which awaited him ; and, at her suggestion, kept himself on the watch for an opportunity of getting from Esau a formal transfer or relinquishment of the higher natural claims which he might be supposed to derive from the accident of a few minutes' earlier birth. Such an opportunity was not long wanting.

Jacob was one day preparing a savory pottage of lentiles, which, or the mode of preparing which, was a novelty in that part of the country, having been lately introduced from Egypt. While he was thus occupied, Esau came in from a severe day's hunting, famishing with hunger and faint from fatigue. Under such circumstances the coarsest fare would have seemed pleasing to him ; but the savory smell and tempting reddish appearance of the pottage was absolutely enchanting. The uncivilized or semi-civilized man is a child in his appetites at all times ; and the hunger of such a man is a madness. Jacob was too sharp a youth not to know this, and he did not over-estimate the importance of his pottage when, on Esau's begging passionately for a share of " that red—that red " (not knowing its name), he demanded his birthright as the price of the indulgence. We incline to think that he had before been teased on this point, at less favorable moments, and had resisted ; but now he was in the state of one who would deem all prospective benefits and privileges cheap, in comparison with the present good of a cup of cold water. He therefore exclaimed fretfully—" Behold, I am at the point to die : and what profit shall *this birthright* do to me ? " Seeing his brother so ready to take the bait, Jacob was not content with a mere off-hand agreement, but to make

the bargain secure would not part with his pottage till it was confirmed by oath ; Esau then got his mess.

When, at the age of 137 years, Isaac's eyesight had failed, and other infirmities of age had grown upon him, he imagined that the day of his death could not be far distant, and prepared to confer upon his first-born, in a formal blessing, that full inheritance of the promises made to Abraham, which he desired him to possess, and which he unadvisedly deemed himself qualified to bestow. He accordingly said to Esau, "Take thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison ; and make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat ; that my soul may bless thee before I die."

This did not escape the ears of Rebekah, who, finding that her husband was at last about to bestow on Esau what she herself considered the due of Jacob, immediately, with the ready ingenuity peculiar to her sex, thought of a device whereby this plan might be frustrated, and the important blessing diverted to the son she better loved. She proposed this plan to Jacob ; but even he was startled at its boldness, and urged some objections ; but as these were not objections of principle, and only arose from fear of the consequences of detection, they were easily removed by his mother, who was very willing to take all the consequences on herself, and he then submitted to her direction. He went and fetched two good kids from the flocks, with which Rebekah hastened to prepare savory meat, such as Isaac loved. She then produced a dress belonging to Esau, for Jacob to put on ; and, when he was clad, fastened about his hands the skins of the goats, to imitate the hairiness of Esau ; and then she gave him the savory mess, with bread, to take to the blind old man. This was a deservedly anxious moment to both Jacob and his mother ; for they had two fears—one, lest Isaac should detect the imposture, and the other, lest Esau should return before all was over. But all took effect according to their wish ; for although some probable doubt about the fitness of his own course made Isaac guarded and suspicious ; and although his ear, sharpened by blindness, enabled him to detect the difference of the voice, and the quickness of the assumed Esau's

return excited his surprise, the feel and fresh smell of the dress which Jacob wore, and the hairiness of his hands, lulled his doubts, and he received the savory mess which the deceiver brought, and afterwards drank the wine which he offered. Then he said, "Come near now, and kiss me, my son; and when Jacob went near to kiss him, he said, 'See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed; therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine; let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren; and *let thy mother's sons* bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee.'"

The design having thus succeeded, Jacob left his father; and he had scarcely departed when Esau returned from his hunting, and, with the game he had killed, prepared such savory meat as his father loved, and bare it to him. We may imagine the consternation of Isaac when the well-known voice of his beloved son exclaimed, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me." He trembled very exceedingly, and said, "Who? where is he who hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? *yea, and he shall be blessed.*"

The impetuous Esau was aghast at this intimation; he cried, with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me, also, O my father!" To which Isaac could only reply by reminding him that his brother had come with subtilty, and taken the blessing intended for him. This called to Esau's mind his earlier wrong; and, adverting to the double meaning of his name, he said, "Is not he rightly named *Jacob*? for he hath *supplanted* me these two times;" but again he returned to the single point in which his hope lay, and exclaimed, "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" This must have reminded Isaac, perhaps with some compunction, that in blessing, as he supposed, his first-born, he had not, intentionally, kept in view any blessing for his youngest son. Now, convinced of an overruling control which precluded him from recalling the blessing he had unknowingly

given to Jacob, he answered, "Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants ; and with corn and wine have I sustained him : and what shall I do now unto thee, my son ?" But Esau, fairly overpowered, and incapable of taking in any but one broad idea, persisted in his right to an equivalent blessing, if not exactly the one intended for him. "Hast thou but one blessing, my father ? bless me, even me also, O my father ! And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept." The blind old man must have been deeply tried, not only in witnessing this affliction of his son, but to feel that his wishes and hopes for him had been brought to nothing. But then, or just before, he received such a clear impression or vision as to his son's future lot as enabled him to gratify his wish. "Behold, thy dwelling shall be remote from the fatness of the earth, and from the dew of heaven ; by thy sword shalt thou live, and thou shalt serve thy brother : but the time will come when thou shalt prevail, and shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

Isaac was too much humbled by the consciousness of his own share in the wrong-doing, and by the certainty he now possessed that Jacob was the real heir of the blessing he had obtained, to harbor any resentment, or to make any complaints ; on the contrary, while Esau was still the beloved of his heart, he began henceforth to take unusual interest about one whom he now recognized as the peculiar object of the divine favor. But as for Esau, his resentment was fierce and deep, and only to be appeased by blood. He knew that all the blessings promised to Abraham must descend in the line of Isaac, who had no sons but himself and Jacob ; and, therefore, while in slaying his crafty brother he would gratify the hatred he now felt towards him, he inferred that he should by the same act become the heir of all. Him, therefore, he determined to destroy ; but out of regard to his father, whom he sincerely loved, he determined not to execute his purpose while he lived—the rather that his end seemed then, to himself and others, to be at no great distance—though he actually lived above forty years after these trying events.

The blunt and open character of Esau disqualified him from keeping his own secret. His intention transpired, and

was reported to Rebekah ; who was seriously alarmed, and proposed to Jacob that he should proceed, secretly, to her brother Laban, in Mesopotamia, and remain with him a little while till Esau's resentment should subside.

In proposing the plan of Jacob's journey to Mesopotamia to Isaac, his wife thought it right to spare him this new trouble ; and therefore she merely stated what was doubtless one of the reasons which made the journey the more desirable in her eyes, though it was not the only one or the principal. She reminded him of the marriage of Esau to the daughters of Canaanites, and what a serious calamity it would be if Jacob, now the recognized heir of the promises, should be led to follow his brother's example. As his shrewd wife suspected, Isaac caught at this, and himself proposed the very plan she had herself arranged. He sent for Jacob, and charged him not to take a wife from among the Canaanites, but to proceed to Padan-Aram [Mesopotamia], and there seek a wife among his cousins, the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. He ended with the broad and cheerful recognition of Jacob as the heir of the promises, and blessing him as such.

Jacob proceeded on his long journey to Mesopotamia, making, in the first place, for the fords of the Jordan, which river his course obliged him to cross. On the second or third evening he arrived in the neighborhood of a town which bore the name of Luz, on account of the numerous almond trees which grew there ; and here he determined to spend the night.

Having procured from the neighboring town such refreshments (including oil) as he needed for his present relief and for his use in the morning, he lay down to rest, placing a stone under his head for a pillow. He appears to have been in a dejected state of mind, occasioned by the recent separation from his father and mother, the prospect of the toilsome journey before him, and the uncertainties of his future lot. But now he was cheered by a dream which conveyed to him a lively notion of the watchful providence of God, and assured him of the divine protection. He beheld the similitude of a ladder, which seemed to connect earth with heaven ; and on this ladder he saw the angels of God descending and as-

ceding, proceeding on and returning from the missions entrusted to them by One who appeared above, and who, at last, spoke to Jacob himself, and, after announcing himself as the Jehovah of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, proceeded to recognize him as the heir of the promises, and to renew to him, in express terms, the covenant made with Abraham ; and then, mercifully compassionating his depressed state and forlorn condition, the divine vision added, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land ; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Jacob, who had not before been favored with any manifestations of that Jehovah of whose greatness and goodness, and of whose especial regard for their race, he had often heard Abraham and Isaac speak, awoke with deep awe, and exclaimed, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not." And then he added, with some terror, "How dreadful is this place ! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." In allusion to what he said on this occasion, the place was thenceforward called Bethel [*the house of God*] by himself and his descendants, in which name the more ancient one of Luz was soon lost.

Jacob proceeded on his journey, and in due time arrived at the famous old well of Charran, where Eliezer had first seen Rebekah. Here he found some shepherds of that place waiting with their flocks. Being himself well versed in all the usages of pastoral life, he was struck that they did not at once water their flocks ; but, on inquiring the reason, was told that different flocks were entitled to water from that well, and that the well could not be opened till they were all on the ground, or rather, till all the shepherds of those flocks were present. Continuing to talk with them, he learned that they knew Laban, that he was well, and that his home flock was kept by his daughter Rachel, for whose presence they were then actually waiting before they opened the well. While they were thus in talk, Rachel came with her sheep, and the kind stranger—the forlorn son of a wealthy house—hastened to render a mark of civility and attention which was probably not less acceptable to her than were the ornaments of gold

which her aunt had received from his father's servant at that place ; with the ease of an accomplished shepherd, he removed the stone from the mouth of the well and watered her flock for her ; and when he had done this, he drew near to her and kissed her, and told her, with many tears, that he was her own cousin, the son of Rebekah, her aunt. Rachel ran to bear these tidings to her father, who instantly hastened to meet his sister's son, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him into the house.

During Jacob's stay he had not been unobservant of Laban's two daughters. The eldest of them, Leah, was afflicted with a disorder in her eyes, but seems in other respects to have been an agreeable and sensible woman. The other, Rachel, whom he had first seen at the well, was very beautiful, and as she participated in the care of the flock, there were more points of sympathy between her and Jacob, and he saw more of her than of Leah, who, as the eldest daughter, was much engaged in the household affairs. On all these grounds it was natural that the heart of Jacob preferred Rachel ; indeed, he loved her deeply.

To the fair and even liberal proposal of Laban, his nephew therefore made answer, that he only desired that Rachel might be given to him for wife ; and that, seeing he had not wherewith to pay for her the price which custom required, he was willing to give his services for seven years, as an equivalent. Laban readily closed with this proposal ; and the arrangement thus made, is, to this day, not unusual in Syria with young men who have nothing but their services to offer the family from which they desire a wife.

Usage required that a month should pass between the formation and completion of such an agreement ; and when the month was expired, Jacob demanded his wife. On this, Laban assembled a large party of his friends, to keep the wedding-feast, which, it seems, even at this early date, lasted during a week. On the first evening, Laban led his veiled daughter to the chamber of her husband, which was left in darkness : thus it was not until the morning that Jacob discovered that the wily Laban, instead of giving him his beloved Rachel, had brought him his less favored daughter,

Leah. This was enough to throw a meeker man than Jacob into a passion ; but, on being reproached with his conduct, Laban coolly answered, that it was not the custom of the country to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder. This is so conformable to oriental ideas, that it is very likely to have been true ; but it was his duty to have told this to his nephew when the agreement was made, instead of forcing upon him, for a wife, a woman he did not wish to marry, in the place of one whom he truly loved. But his real object was to get rid first of his least attractive daughter, as well as to secure a longer claim upon the valued services of his sister's son. Accordingly he added, that, when he had completed the matrimonial week due to Leah, there would be no objection to his taking Rachel also, provided he would undertake to serve another seven years for her sake. Circumstanced as he was by the guile of Laban, Jacob was compelled to agree to this ; and we are touchingly told that the further seven years which he served for Rachel, "seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

To Jacob's former indifference towards Leah, was now added the disgust which her evident participation in the fraud practiced upon him was calculated to inspire. But it turned out that Leah had a ground of exultation over her favored rival, in the fact that she bore four sons to her husband, while her sister was barren. Finding this to be the case, Rachel bethought herself of giving to Jacob her handmaid, named Bilhah, whom she had received from her father on her marriage, under the notion that the children which this woman might bear would be counted as hers. It will be remembered that Sarah had given her handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham, under a similar idea. The plan so far succeeded, that Bilhah became the mother of two sons, both of whom received from Rachel names expressive of her exultation. Leah, finding how her sister's plan answered, and that she had herself ceased to bear children, persuaded Jacob to take also *her* handmaid, Zilpah, and by her he had also two sons ; then Leah herself recommenced bearing, and had two sons and a daughter. At last the cries of Rachel herself were heard in heaven ; her womb was opened, and she conceived and bare a son—Joseph,

the favored and beautiful, who fills so large a place in the history of the patriarchs. Thus the fourteen years passed away, during which Jacob must have been much disturbed by the bickerings and heart-burnings of his wives ; and at the end of which he found himself the father of eleven sons and a daughter.

After Jacob had sojourned many years with Laban, being frequently imposed upon, as he had been before, by this rapacious and unprincipled man, he determined to return to his native place ; which he finally did, in spite of the determined opposition of his father-in-law.

Although he had good reason to dread the displeasure of Esau on his return, yet we learn that the heart of the sturdy hunter had become softened, and on seeing Jacob approach he ran to meet him, fell on his neck, embraced, and kissed him, when both lifted up their voices and wept.

Jacob, at last, after several delays, crossed the Jordan, and settled first at Shechem, passing about eight years here. In this place his daughter Dinah was ravished by Shechem, the son of Hamor, which led eventually to a terrible revenge on the part of Jacob's sons against the Shechemites. He, soon after this revenge, which greatly displeased him, departed from Shechem for Bethel, staying there a brief season. On journeying further south, he lost his best beloved Rachel, after she had given birth to a son, Benoni. Here, also, Reuben, his eldest son, caused him further grief by corrupting Bilhah, his handmaid. He then journeyed on to Mamre, being present at the death of his father Isaac. His brother Esau, who was also present, then departed on his return to the land of Seir, leaving Jacob encamped in the valley of Mamre.

It seems very likely that, while Isaac lived, Jacob was careful to keep his flocks at a distance, under the care of his sons, lest, if his own and his father's were together, Esau, when he came to claim his inheritance, might be led to fancy that his brother had already enriched himself out of Isaac's property. Be this as it may, it is certain that, whenever we hear of Jacob's flocks and herds, they are always at some place distant from the valley of Mamre. So now, two or

three years after his arrival at that place, we find his sons with the flocks northward, near their former station at Shechem.

The sacred historian, whose example we have followed, conducts the life of Isaac to its close before he commences the long history of Joseph, although its earlier scenes took place not long after Jacob's arrival at Mamre. This story of his beloved son is so intensely interesting ; it is so surprising, and withal so natural ; it is so perfect, every minute detail bearing so importantly on the ultimate result, that the most simple story in the world might, in one point of view, be taken for a labored production of such consummate skill as would, in a fiction, immortalize its author's name ; and the whole is withal told with such unaffected simplicity and natural pathos, that through half the world the story is impressed from very infancy upon the hearts of countless thousands, and its circumstances are in every place as familiar as household words. While the Jew takes pride in the glory of Joseph, and the Christian admires the wisdom and power of God which his history displays, the Moslem is never tired of calculating the personal qualities which he ascribes to him—his form polished as the box tree and erect as the cypress, his locks falling in ringlets, his forehead shining with immortal beams, his eyebrows arched, and his eyelashes shading his sleepy eyes, his eyes beaming mildness, the eyelashes darting arrows, his lips smiling and shedding sweets, his words "dropping honey," and his pearly teeth, between his ruby lips, like the lightning playing upon a western sky.

A story thus familiarly known, and which can not be told in other words than that of the original historian without great injury to its force and beauty, it does not seem desirable to relate more in detail than may be necessary to carry on the historical narrative, unless when it offers circumstances which seem to need explanation, or which appear calculated to throw light upon the manners and institutions of the time.

We shall now proceed with the exquisite story of Joseph, giving, also, according to our plan, a sketch of the latter years of Jacob.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH.

THERE were many obvious circumstances which might concur in rendering the first-born of his Rachel particularly dear to Jacob. He was the offspring of many prayers, his birth had been the subject of unbounded joy, and his father had beheld him as the constant object of maternal tenderness to his beloved wife. When she died, Joseph was also probably the only one of the household who could fully sympathize with Jacob, and mingle tears with him ; for to the others Rachel appears to have been more an object of jealousy than love. It seems also that Joseph was distinguished above all his brethren by his wisdom and his engaging disposition, if not by his superior beauty. These causes had their full effect. Jacob did love Joseph exceedingly ; and was at so little pains to conceal his partiality, that he bestowed upon him a much finer dress than any of his brothers wore—"a coat of many colors." The other sons of Jacob, some of whom were not much older than Joseph, seem, upon the whole, to have been a wild and headstrong set of men, with less respect for their father than we usually find in the East. They were displeased at his partiality for Joseph ; and their consequent dislike of the youth himself grew to absolute hatred when they learned to regard him as a spy upon them, from finding that, on his return home, after having been out with them in the distant pastures, he was in the habit of telling his father about their evil courses. Joseph also began to have dreams, which were easily interpreted to promise to him some future superiority over them all ; and these dreams, which he freely related to them, served much to strengthen the aversion with which he was already regarded by his brothers. Even Jacob himself became grave when one of these dreams seemed to intimate

that not only his other sons, but himself, should, at some future day, bow down before Rachel's son. That dream, in which Joseph thought himself engaged with his brothers in binding sheaves in the harvest field, may possibly intimate that Jacob had begun to follow the example of Isaac in paying some attention to agriculture.

Jacob's sons were thus engaged in their fields at Shechem, and as they had been for some time away, Jacob resolved to send Joseph, who was at home, to inquire of their welfare and bring him word again. He went.

When he approached, his brothers knew him afar off by his coat of many colors, and said one to another, "Behold this dreamer cometh!" and, after some conference among themselves, they came to the resolution of murdering him, and of telling their father that he had been slain by some wild beast. "And we shall see," said they, "what will become of his dreams." But Reuben, whose own recent crime against his father made him unwilling to be a party in bringing any new grief upon him, affected a horror of shedding a brother's blood, and proposed that they should rather cast him into a deep pit, near at hand, which had been dug to receive and preserve the rain water, but which at that advanced season of the summer was exhausted. They agreed to this proposal, with the view of leaving him there to perish; but it was Reuben's intention to return in their absence and deliver him, to restore him safe to his father.

Joseph had not been long in the cistern before his brothers observed the approach of a caravan of Arabian traders, who were on their way to Egypt, bearing to the markets of that already civilized and already luxurious country the spices and perfumes of the distant East. They knew that such parties were always glad to buy up slaves in their way for the same market, and therefore it occurred to Judah that it would be more profitable to sell him than to leave him to perish, while by thus disposing of him, they might get rid of him effectually without loading their consciences with his death. To this the others readily agreed. They therefore drew Joseph out of the pit and offered him to the Ishmaelites, who agreed to give twenty shekels weight of silver for him; and the bar-



They sold Joseph to the Samaritans for twenty pieces of silver.

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gain being completed, they departed with him to the land of Egypt.

Reuben was not a party to this transaction, as he happened to be absent at the time ; and he was greatly afflicted, and, according to the oriental method of expressing passionate grief, rent his clothes, when he returned to the cistern to deliver Joseph, and found him not there. He went and told his brothers, but, whether they acquainted him with what had taken place, or left him in the persuasion that Joseph had been killed or stolen unknown to them, we are not informed. We only know that they slew a kid and dipped in its blood the envied dress of which they had stripped their brother when they cast him into the pit ; and they sent it to Jacob, saying they had found it in that state, leaving him to judge whether it was his son's robe or not, and to draw his own inferences. He knew the many-colored coat ; and drew, as they desired, the inference that some evil beast had devoured his beloved son. " And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him ; but he refused to be comforted ; and he said, ' For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. ' "

When the Ishmaelites who had bought Joseph arrived in Egypt, they exposed him for sale, and he was purchased for the domestic service of Potiphar, an officer of high rank in the court of the Egyptian king, and chief of the royal police. Instead of repining in his new situation, he applied himself with great diligence and fidelity to the discharge of his duties. These qualities are too rare and valuable in a newly-purchased slave to escape the master's notice. Joseph's conduct engaged Potiphar's attention and won his esteem ; and when he moreover found that his slave was blest with singular prosperity in all his undertakings, he raised him to his confidence, and, in the end, he intrusted the management of all his concerns to him, making him steward, not only over his household, but over his lands.

He had been ten years in the service of Potiphar, and had reached the fine age of twenty-seven years, when it happened that his extreme comeliness attracted the attention of his

master's wife. Finding him insensible to her slighter seductions and overtures, she at last came to declare to him plainly her criminal desires ; and this she did one day, when all the family were from home, in so very passionate a manner, that Joseph, not deeming it safe to stay and plead, as he had been wont to do, his obligations to his master, and his duty to his God, abruptly withdrew, leaving in her hand his outer garment, of which she had laid hold.

As might be expected, the love of Potiphar's wife was turned to bitter hatred by this affront, and she resolved to be the ruin of the man by whom her advances had been repelled. The means by which this might be effected would readily occur to the sharp invention of a resentful woman. She raised a terrible outcry ; and when those who were within hearing hastened to the spot, she declared that Joseph had made an attempt upon her virtue, but when he heard her cries he fled, leaving behind him his mantle. The promotion of a foreign slave, descended from a class of men hateful to the Egyptians, to the chief authority in the large household of Potiphar, was calculated to raise the envy and jealousy of other members of that household. This the woman knew, and, artfully appealing to feelings so well calculated to make their ears greedy for a tale to his disadvantage, she said, " See, he [Potiphar] hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us." He was by her accused of criminal intent, and thrown into prison by Potiphar.

Joseph had been about a year in the prison when Potiphar received into his custody two of his brother officers of Pharaoh's court, the chief butler and the chief cook, who had given the king some cause of deep offense ; and he, willing to show them all the attention which his duty allowed, recommended them to the especial care of Joseph.

One morning Joseph observed that the countenances of the two great officers were more downcast than usual, and on asking the reason they told him that it was because they could procure no interpretation of the singular dreams with which their sleep had been visited. He then desired to hear their dreams ; and, knowing their superstitious notions, took the opportunity of hinting that the interpretation of dreams,

when they were of any importance, did not depend on rules of art, but, to be true, must be suggested by God, who thus sometimes saw fit to convey warning and admonition. The dreams themselves, being pictures of actual circumstances, are, so far, illustrative of the usages of the Egyptian court. The butler's dream shows how a grape-sherbet, (not "wine,") was made for the royal drink. He beheld a three-branched vine, full of ripe clusters, which he seized, and pressed their juice into Pharaoh's cup, which he then delivered into the king's hand. Joseph told him that this dream signified that in three days Pharaoh would come to a decision on his case, and would restore him to his former office. "But think on me," continued Joseph, "when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for, indeed, I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

The chief cook was encouraged by this interpretation to tell his dream also. He had seemed to bear on his head three trays; the uppermost contained all kinds of baked meats for the king's table. But, as he passed across the court of the king's palace, the birds of the air came and stole them from the basket. This dream was interpreted by Joseph to signify that in three days the king would decide upon his case also; but, instead of restoring him to his post, would cause him to be hanged on a tree, where the birds of the air should come and devour his carcase.

All happened as Joseph had been enabled to foretell. On the third day from that the king's birthday occurred; and we are instructed that even at this early date birthdays were celebrated with rejoicings. Pharaoh made a feast for his great officers; and it being, seemingly, customary for him to distinguish the occasion by acts of grace and favor where they could be worthily bestowed, he now pronounced his decision respecting the two great officers then in prison. The chief butler he pardoned, and restored to his place, but, having found no ground for clemency in the case of the head cook, he commanded him to be hanged. To this account the sacred

historian adds the significant announcement, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."

After this two years passed away, and Joseph still remained in prison.

At the expiration of that time the king of Egypt himself had two remarkable dreams by which he was greatly troubled. It is still usual for the cattle in the hot valley of the Nile, when they are driven to the water, to enter the stream and stand there as long as they are allowed, solacing themselves in the cool wave. Pharaoh thought that he was standing on the bank of the river, when he beheld seven beautiful fat heifers come up out of the water, and feed in a meadow. After a while there came up at the same spot seven of the leanest and most ill-conditioned heifers that the king had ever seen, and stood beside the others on the river's brink; and, in the end, the seven fat and beautiful heifers were devoured by them. The king awoke: and when he again fell asleep dreamed that he saw spring up, on one stalk, seven good and plump ears of corn; and after that sprang up seven other ears of corn, thin, and blighted by the east wind; and by these the first were devoured. As these dreams appeared to have a certain significance and analogy not common in dreams, the king was, in the morning, more than even usually anxious to have them interpreted; but none of the interpreters and diviners, none of the "wise men," who customarily gave the interpretation of his dreams, were able to assign any satisfactory meaning to them; and their failure brought to the mind of the chief butler the dreams of himself and the chief cook in the prison-house, with the exact accomplishment of the interpretation which Joseph had given. Of this he gave the king a brief but clear account; and Pharaoh, happy in the prospect of relief from the unusual trouble of an uninterpreted dream, sent an order to the chief of the royal police to release Joseph, and send him to the palace. When this order arrived, Joseph was just allowed time to shave his head and beard, and change his raiment, and was then hurried off to the royal palace, and presented to the king. The sovereign said to him, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of

thee, that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it." But the faithful Joseph, not willing to encourage even a kingly delusion, answered, "It is not in *me* : God shall give to Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then the king, without further parley, related his dreams ; and Joseph told him that they had both the same signification, which was, that seven years of exuberant plenty were coming, and that they would be followed by seven years of the severest scarcity ever known—so severe that the land would be consumed, and the preceding years of plenty be utterly forgotten. This *principle* of the dreams being explained, the connection of both of them with the river obviously suggested to all who heard the dreams and their interpretation, that the years of plenty would result from an unusually favorable succession of those inundations by which the valley of the Nile is fertilized ; and that the ensuing years of scarcity would be caused by the failure of its waters to rise to the fertilizing limit.

Joseph, perceiving at once how the exuberant supplies of the seven fertile years might be so husbanded as to meet the deficiencies of the seven years of scarcity which were to follow, proceeded to state his views in this matter to the king, and advised that some discerning and wise men should be invested with full powers to give effect to the measures which he had suggested. The king, struck not less by the interpretation of his dreams than by the wisdom of the plans by which Joseph proposed to avert the evils which that interpretation threatened, asked the great persons then present, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is ?" And on their assent, he addressed Joseph, saying, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art : thou shalt be over my house ; and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled : only in the throne will I be greater than thou." And then, after a pause, he proceeded more formally to invest him with this high office. He drew the signet-ring from his finger, and placed it upon the finger of Joseph, conveying to him, by that act, the highest powers he could delegate, saying, as he did it, "See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." He then ordered him to be arrayed in vestures of fine muslin,

such as only royal and high persons wore ; after which he placed, with his own hands, a chain of gold about his neck. And, it being usual to promulgate with high pomp and ceremony such acts of royal favor, and make known the authority which had been conferred, the king commanded that Joseph, thus nobly arrayed, should be conducted in grand procession through the city, in the second of the royal chariots ; and that men should go before him to cry, " Bow the knee."

And that he might establish him in his position, by securing him the countenance and support of the priestly order—which was indispensably necessary to him—the king got him married to Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, the chief priest of On, better known by its later Greek name of Heliopolis—the city of the sun. This city was in all ages a sort of ecclesiastical metropolis of Lower Egypt—the prime seat of the sacred mysteries and higher science of the country ; and was, as such, the fountain from which the Greek philosophers and historians were allowed to draw the scanty information which they have transmitted to us. For these reasons, as well as because the sun, which was there worshiped, was, as in other idolatrous systems, one of the first, if not the chief, of the gods—and in Egypt the rank of the priests was proportioned to that of the gods to whom they ministered—there can be no question that the priest of On, into whose family Joseph married, was one of the most eminent and influential of his illustrious order. The marriage was, therefore, doubtless a great temporal advantage to Joseph, whatever may be said of it in other respects. By this marriage Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, before the years of famine came.

Soon after his elevation, Joseph made a progress throughout the land, in order to acquaint himself thoroughly with the materials with which he had to work, and to determine the particular arrangements which might be necessary to give effect to the measures which he contemplated.

In his tour of survey, Joseph directed the construction of immense granaries in the principal cities, and established proper officers, who were charged with the duty of buying up one fifth of all the corn produced during the seven years of

plenty, within the surrounding district, the borders of which met those of other districts, for which other cities with public granaries were the centers of collection.

Those years of famine came at the appointed time. It appears that the dearth was very general, and not by any means confined to the valley of the Nile.

The famine began to be felt very severely in the land of Canaan, when the news came that strangers were allowed to buy corn in Egypt. Jacob heard it, and determined to send his sons to bring a large quantity. He detained with him only his youngest son Benjamin, the only son of his beloved Rachel now remaining to him, and who had succeeded to the place in his father's tenderest affections which his full-brother Joseph had once occupied. Benjamin was at this time twenty-six years of age. Jacob's sorrowful remembrance of Joseph's loss made him reluctant to trust his Benjamin from home, especially on such a journey; "Lest," said he, "peradventure, some mischief befall him."

Among the foreigners who came to buy corn in Egypt were the ten sons of Jacob. It seems that, although the Egyptians themselves could purchase their corn of the officers whom Joseph had appointed for the purposes of the distribution, no strangers could obtain corn until they had received the special permission of Joseph. The sons of Jacob therefore presented themselves at his audience; and now, fulfilling at once the dreams which in their anger they had vainly endeavored to frustrate, they bowed themselves before him as "the governor over the land." Twenty-two years had passed since they sold him for a slave. He was then a mere lad of seventeen, and now had reached the staid age of thirty-nine; a great change had therefore taken place in his personal appearance, and they could scarcely have known him under any circumstances, much less now, when he appeared before them as a great Egyptian lord, surrounded by every circumstance of honor and distinction, and speaking to them through an interpreter. Little could they think that this was he whom they must have supposed, if alive, to be the slave of some Egyptian master, whose cattle he fed, or to the humblest of whose household wants he ministered. But they were recog-

nized by Joseph ; and seeing only ten of them, all of whom he knew, and that the one wanting was he whom, from his youth, he would have guessed to be the son of his mother, he appears to have apprehended that they had sacrificed him also to their jealousy of their father's only remaining favorite. He therefore acted so as to learn from them the prosperity of his father's house, and also the fate of his brother, without making himself known to them. He put on a harsh manner, and "spake roughly unto them," charging them with being "spies," come to see the "nakedness of the land."

They protested their innocence ; and, in their anxiety to repel the charge, they entered into a particular detail of the circumstances of their family : in which they afforded him the information he desired—namely, that his father was alive and well, and that his brother Benjamin was at home with him. Anxious to see his brother, and to assure himself that their statement was true, Joseph made his appearance the test of their sincerity :—"Hereby ye shall be proved : by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother ; and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you : or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies." These repeated asseverations indicated strong emotions of resentment at the remembrance of their cruelty ; and his conduct in the end proved it, for he "put them all together into ward three days." He made them taste for three days the sufferings he had undergone for three years, and probably in the very same state prison. But the third day his anger cooled, and he reversed the former sentence, and dismissed them all but one, Simeon, whom he kept as a hostage for the appearance of Benjamin. From the tried cruelty of Simeon's disposition, in the perfidious massacre of the Shechemites, he had probably been the most active against Joseph himself.

On their return home, they told their father all that had befallen them. His pathetic comment was—"Me have ye bereaved of my children : Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away : all these things are against me." The offer of the more earnest than sagacious Reuben

to undertake the responsibility of Benjamin's safety, with the addition, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee," ministered little comfort to the afflicted patriarch, who persisted—"My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Thus the matter rested for the time; at length they prevailed with him, departed again, and arrived in Egypt. One morning they made their way to the place where Joseph daily transacted his business concerning the sale and distribution of the corn. When he saw them, accompanied by a youth whom he guessed to be his brother Benjamin, the son of his own mother, he directed "the ruler of his house" to take them home to his dwelling-house, and to slay and make ready; for it was his intention that they should dine with him at noon. The steward did as he was ordered, and took them to his master's house. This proceeding occasioned considerable alarm in the minds of Jacob's sons, who thought that perhaps some pretext was sought against them, for making them bondsmen and taking away their asses, in connection with the money which was due for the last supply, and which they had found returned in their sacks. They therefore spoke to the steward, stating how the matter really stood; and he, who probably knew how they were related to his master, and what were his intentions towards them, answered them kindly, assuring them that nothing was on that account imputed to them. He also produced their brother Simeon; and, after having brought them into the house, gave them water to wash their feet, and provender for their asses.

When Joseph came home they brought him their present, and bowed themselves down reverently before him. "And he asked them of their welfare, and said, 'Is your father well? the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?' And they answered, 'Thy servant, our father, is in good health; he is yet alive.' And Joseph said, 'Blessed of God be that old man!' And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, 'Is this your younger

brother, of whom ye spake unto me?' And he said, 'God be gracious unto thee, my son!' And Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother; and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there."

He then washed from his face all trace of tears, and returned to them, mastering for a while his strong emotions. He commanded dinner to be brought; but as it was an abomination to an Egyptian to eat with a tent-dwelling shepherd, Jacob's sons were seated apart from Joseph and his Egyptian guests. They were also placed according to their seniority, at which they were greatly astonished, for some of them were so nearly of an age, that this discrimination implied a more intimate knowledge of them, in some quarter, than they could suppose that any one there possessed. When the small round tables were brought in with the provisions, Joseph conferred on Benjamin a truly oriental mark of esteem, by heaping the table which was placed before him with five times the quantity of food which the other tables bore. After the dinner they drank wine together and were merry.

Joseph had one more trial in store for his brothers before making himself known to them. He wished to make their conduct towards Benjamin a test of the present state of their feelings, and of such repentance of their conduct towards himself as would make them shrink from allowing harm to befall one whom their father so tenderly loved. With this view he directed his steward privately to introduce his silver drinking-cup into the mouth of the youngest brother's sack; and when they were at some distance from the city, to pursue them, and, after a thorough search, to bring the pretended thief back to him. All this was punctually executed: and when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, they were very far from manifesting any indifference—very far from pursuing their way, and leaving him to that slavery in Egypt, to which, in by-gone years, they had consigned his brother. They rent their clothes in bitter anguish, and all returned to the city.

When they reappeared before Joseph they fell on the ground before him; and not seeing how Benjamin could be cleared from what must seem so plain a case, they only an-

swered Joseph's reproaches by declaring that Benjamin and they were all his slaves. To this Joseph answered that such was not his intention: only he with whom the cup was found should become his bondsman; but as for the rest, they might return in peace to their father. Now was the time for Judah—he at whose proposal Joseph had been sold for a slave, on the one hand, and who, on the other, had become the surety that no harm should befall the son of his father's right hand—now was his time to redeem his character, and full nobly did he discharge that duty. We can not give his speech entire, nor need we; for who has not often turned to that most perfect pattern of natural and affecting eloquence which was ever delivered? Joseph could no longer act a part in such a scene as this—he could refrain himself no longer, but wept aloud, and made himself known to them, crying, "I am Joseph!" Being thus reassured, his brethren rose from before his feet; and he kissed them all, and wept upon them.

The rumor had reached the king that Joseph's brethren were come, and it is a pleasing evidence of the esteem in which he was held, and the regard which he had conciliated, that a domestic incident which was calculated to be a satisfaction to him was highly agreeable to Pharaoh and all his court. The monarch sent for him and authorized him to express the kindest intentions towards them, and the utmost anxiety for their welfare. He, as well as Joseph, saw that it would be best for them to come to Egypt, and he had the consideration to direct that they should be well supplied with provisions for the way, and that they should be furnished with carts, in which the aged Jacob, with the women and young children, might pass from Canaan to Egypt with more comfort than by the more ordinary means of conveyance. All this was done, and in dismissing them for their journey, Joseph gave each of them two suits of raiment, but distinguished his own brother Benjamin by the present of five dresses, with the addition of three hundred shekels-weight of silver.

We may be sure that this journey home, as their father was to return to Egypt with them, was performed with much more speed than the former. Then they had to tell their

father of one son taken from him, and another demanded ; now they had to acquaint him with the recovery of one who had long been lost, and for whom he had never ceased to mourn. Joseph had charged them to tell his father of "all his glory in Egypt;" and so eager were they to tell it, that, as they drew near the camp at Mamre, they hastened on before the carts, and told him—"Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt!" At this most unexpected and surprising news, "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." They therefore told him all the particulars, and by the time they had done so, the carts had come up to confirm their story. Then the spirit of Jacob revived, and he said, "It is enough ; Joseph, my son, is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

He soon departed, and on arriving at the confines of Egypt, sent Judah onward to the capital to acquaint Joseph with his arrival. On learning this, Joseph entered his chariot, and sped to meet his father. They met. Joseph threw himself upon the neck of his dear old father, and wept upon his neck a good while. "Now," said the greatly moved Jacob, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive!"

After the first emotions of this meeting had subsided, Joseph proceeded to explain to his brothers the further measures which were necessary. He intended himself to go and announce their arrival to Pharaoh, after which he would introduce some of them to the royal presence, and they were instructed what answers to return to the questions which the king would be likely to ask. He did not conceal from them that "every shepherd was an abomination unto the Egyptians;" and his instructions were skillfully framed with a reference to that state of feeling.

Joseph's plan for the benefit of his family having thus happily succeeded, he introduced his father also to the king; but whether immediately after or not is not quite clear. The patriarch respectfully saluted Pharaoh, in acknowledgment of the consideration and favor with which he had been treated; and the king, much struck by his venerable appearance, entered into conversation with him, particularly inquiring his

age. Jacob's answer was impressive : " The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years : few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." After some further conversation, probably, Jacob again saluted Pharaoh, and withdrew from his presence.

The seven years of famine were, in Egypt, succeeded by abundant and seasonable years ; for the wonted overflow of the great river was not withheld, and therefore the soil offered all its rich products in great plenty. After having been cherished by his son during the remainder of the famine, the aged Jacob lived to see twelve of these fruitful years. Then, seventeen years from his arrival in Egypt, the partial failure of his sight, and decay of his bodily powers, gave him warning that the day of his death could not be far off. He therefore sent for his son Joseph, and expressed an earnest desire to lie with his fathers in the cave of Machpelah, and engaged his son to promise, by oath, that his remains should not be buried in Egypt, but carried to the promised land.

Joseph left his father, satisfied with this assurance, and returned home ; but he was soon recalled by the intelligence that Jacob had fallen very ill, and seemed likely to die. This time he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. When Jacob heard that he was come, he exerted his remaining strength, and sat up in the bed to receive him ; and the cheerfulness and force of expression with which he spoke to him, and, afterwards, to all his sons, shows that the inner lamp continued to burn brightly in him, however much his outward lights and powers had grown dim. He dwelt on the glorious promises of God to him, especially at Bethel, and made mention of the death of Rachel, for whose dear sake—which had first recommended Joseph himself to his peculiar love—he now proposed to give him a very strong mark of his regard. This was, to bestow on him, through his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, a double portion—the portion of the first-born—in that rich inheritance which awaited his race. Properly, they would only divide as grandsons the single share of their father ; but he would adopt them among his own

sons, and as such they should each receive a full portion, and be counted heads of tribes, even as Reuben, or Simeon, or any other of his sons. As Jacob could not see clearly, he had not hitherto observed that the lads of whom he spoke were present with their father ; but now, perceiving that there were some persons with him, and being told who they were, he desired them to be brought nearer, that he might bless them. He kissed them, and embraced them ; and said, tenderly, to Joseph, "I had not thought to see thy face ; and, lo ! God hath showed me also thy seed." In causing them to kneel before their reverend grandfather, Joseph placed the eldest, Manasseh, opposite his right hand, and Ephraim opposite his left ; but Jacob crossed his hands, placing the right upon the head of the youngest, Ephraim, and the left upon the head of Manasseh ; and when Joseph attempted to rectify what he supposed a mistake, his father persisted, telling him that he acted by the divine direction ; and, in proceeding to bless them, which he did with great fervency and devotion, he not only preferred Ephraim to Manasseh, but gave him much the larger and nobler blessing. And how exactly this prophetic blessing of the two tribes, which Ephraim and Manasseh founded, was fulfilled, the ensuing history will show.

After this, the aged patriarch, feeling his strength fail, and that the hour of his death approached, called all his sons together, that he might, severally, by that prophetic impulse which was upon him, tell them "what should befall them in the last days." This he did in a noble poem—the most ancient which any language has preserved—then laid himself down on the bed in which he had hitherto sat up, and gently died. And when Joseph saw that his father no longer lived, "he fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him."

Joseph survived his father fifty-four years ; but nothing further of his public or private history is told us. He died at the comparatively moderate age of 110 years, but lived to see the great-grand-children of Ephraim and the grand-children of Manasseh. But before his death he sent for his brothers, and, expressing his conviction that God certainly would, as he had promised, lead them forth in due season from that coun-

try, and give them possession of their inheritance in Canaan, he strictly charged them not to leave his bones in Egypt, but to bear them away to the promised land, when the time of their departure should come. The usages of Egypt made the accomplishment of this duty easy. His body was embalmed, and kept in a coffin or mummy-case, ready for that day which no man at that time living was destined to see.

To conclude the history of Joseph, it may be as well to add here, that, when the house of Israel at last departed from Egypt, the promise made to him was not forgotten. They took his body with them, committing it to the care of the tribe of Ephraim, who bore about the precious charge many years, in all their wanderings, till they were enabled to deposit it in its appointed place, being that piece of ground near Shechem which Jacob bought for a hundred shekels of silver from the Shechemites, and which he bequeathed a little before his death to his son Joseph. This spot was included in the heritage of Ephraim ; and there, in a later day, a noble monument was erected to the memory of Joseph, which still existed in the time of Jerome.

CHAPTER V.

MOSES.

THE interval between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses is set down by Dr. Hales at sixty-five years. The history of this period is given by the sacred writer in a very few words. He commences by enumerating, once more, the sons of Jacob, and then informs us that they and all the men of their generation died before the affliction of the Hebrews in Egypt commenced. Stephen appears to intimate (Acts, vii. 16) that they were all taken to be buried in the ground at Shechem, but whether immediately after death, or whether their bodies were kept, like that of Joseph, to be carried thither at a future day, we are not told.

Meanwhile, a new king had arisen who "knew not Joseph;" and, as we read, the Israelites suffered from this monarch grievous and long-continued persecutions. The execution of the royal orders was therefore confided to men, "task-masters," who were charged with responsibilities which made them exact very strictly the services required. Thus "the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; all the service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor."

It is not to be supposed that such a people as the Hebrews, and so numerous as they had now become, submitted very patiently to such measures as these, or that the coercion which was necessary to their execution was unattended with expense and difficulty. Finding this, and observing that the more the Israelites were oppressed the more they multiplied and spread, the king determined to take effectual measures to prevent their increase, and ultimately to insure their extinc-

tion. To this end orders were given to the midwives to destroy all the male children at the birth, preserving the females—probably with a view to their being ultimately employed in the domestic service, or taken into the harems, of the Egyptians, who on more than one occasion appear to have much admired the comparatively fresh complexion of the Hebrew women. But the midwives paid no attention to the command ; and when they were charged with this neglect, they excused themselves by alleging that the superior vigor of the Hebrew women left no occasion for their assistance, and withheld the opportunity of obedience from them. On this, the enraged king hesitated no longer at a more open exhibition of his murderous design, and commanded his people to see that every male Hebrew child which might thereafter be born was thrown into the river. What horror then hung over the house of Israel, to which the abstract love of offspring was an absorbing passion, and all whose future hopes depended upon and were connected with the possession of a numerous issue ! Yet now, at this very time, when men in their weak counsels proposed utterly to root up the vine of Israel, which had already spread out its branches so widely and borne such abundant fruit—now, it pleased God to call into existence the future Deliverer, and to make the very evils to which his infancy was exposed the means of his preparation for that high office which was in a distant day to devolve upon him.

There was one Amram, a son of Kohath and grandson of Levi, who had been blessed with a daughter, Miriam, and a son, Aaron, before this time of deep affliction came. Another son was born soon after the promulgation of the king's murderous edict. Under that edict those parents who would avoid the greater horror of seeing their new-born babes torn from them, and destroyed by the rude hands of the Egyptians, chose rather themselves to commit them to the broad stream tenderly and with tears. But the infant born to Amram proved so very fine a child that his mother was struck with a more than ordinary reluctance to allow this office to be discharged. It was postponed from day to day for three months, during which his existence was kept carefully concealed. But

at the end of that time, finding that it was not possible to hide him longer, and aware that a discovery would bring ruin upon others who were as dear to her, she determined to resign him to the providence of God. She took one of the common baskets made from the papyrus, and strengthened it, and rendered it impervious to the water by coating it on the outside with bitumen and inside with the slime of the Nile. When the babe had been laid in this frail bark, it was placed among the flags which grew upon the river's brink, and the young Miriam, then about nine or ten years old, was left to watch at a distance, to see what might befall her infant brother.

Now, in the good providence of God, it happened that at this time the king's daughter came down with her maidens to bathe in the river. As they walked along its bank the princess perceived the ark, and sent one of her damsels to bring it to her. When she saw the child, its beauty and its tears touched her heart; and, although she knew that it must be one of the Hebrew children whom her father had doomed to destruction, she determined to preserve it. The little girl, who had now drawn nigh, perceiving that she was moved to compassion, ventured to ask, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And no sooner did she hear the blessed answer, "Go," than she ran to make her anxious mother the happiest of women, by calling her to be the nurse of her own lost child. "Take this child away," said the king's daughter to her, "and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." And only a mother can understand, in all their depth, the feelings of relief and thankfulness with which Jochebed yielded obedience to this command.

When the child needed a nurse no longer—probably when he was about three years of age—he was taken home to the house of the princess by whom he had been saved. The Jewish traditions give to her the name of Thermuthis, and undertake to tell us that she had long been married without being blessed with any child. Therefore, "the good lady did not breed him up as some child of alms, or as some wretched outcast, for whom it might be favor enough to live; but as her own son—in all the delicacies, in all the learning of Egypt.

Whatever the court or school could put into him he wanted not." She gave him the name of Moses, from some Egyptian words signifying "taken from the water;" and possibly not without reference to the name Amosis, which her father bore.

Moses was brought up as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and as such was instructed in all that "wisdom" of the Egyptians which was the admiration and a proverb of all surrounding nations. The value of the education which he received need not be lightly estimated.

As Moses grew up he was well acquainted with the remarkable history of his own birth and preservation, and with the history of his people. He could not be ignorant of the future prospects of the race to which he belonged; and he must have known that their bondage in Egypt was limited to a certain number of years, the term of which might seem to be at no great distance. The objects and views of the Egyptians in their oppression of the Israelites could not but be intimately known to him; and Stephen, speaking on the authority of old traditions, seems to intimate that the high hope of becoming their deliverer was not a stranger to his heart. Indeed, what we see so clearly, could not be entirely hidden from himself—that, if they were to be delivered, there was no man who, from his peculiar position and attainments, seemed so obviously designed and prepared by Providence to act in their behalf. He was forty years of age, when circumstances compelled him to take his course as a Hebrew or as an Egyptian. If, as we have suggested, his Egyptian benefactress had just then with her husband ascended the throne, it may easily be supposed that this event could not but have some effect on his position. They possibly felt that they could no longer, in their public station, and with a view to the condition of the Israelites in that country, continue to him their conspicuous favor and support *as a Hebrew*; and may, therefore, have required that he should submit to a formal act of naturalization and adoption to constitute him legally *an Egyptian*. To this there were, in his place, the highest temptations of honor and grandeur which could well be offered. But Moses heeded them not. He took his part with the despised and afflicted bondsmen. He "refused to

be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

After this refusal, the court was no longer a place for him, and it then entered his mind to go among the Hebrews ; seemingly that he might make himself personally acquainted with their condition, and observe whether there was spirit enough left in them to hail the hope of deliverance, and make an effort to realize it. Grievous were the sights he saw. The degradation of the blessed seed of Abraham, his brethren, filled his patriotic heart with grief ; while the oppressive conduct of paltry officials, who were set over their burdens, roused him to indignation. These feelings moved him, in one instance, to a deed which determined his future course. Going forth one day, he saw a Hebrew atrociously maltreated by an Egyptian officer, and, kindling at the sight, he interposed, and delivered the Israelite, by slaying his oppressor. Knowing the consequences of a discovery, he hid the body in the sand ; and since no Egyptian had witnessed the deed, he concluded that the secret was safe, and that no danger need be apprehended. Hebrews had seen it, but they could not betray him ; nay, rather, it seemed likely that so decisive and bold an act, which put him entirely in their power, and evinced his hatred of their oppression, would suffice to manifest to them that, although hitherto brought up with, and living among the great ones of Egypt, he was now ready to take his stand, decisively, with them, and for them. It was, if they so pleased to regard it, the first and kindling act of a revolt against their tyrants, and which, when they understood that he had laid aside his greatness in Egypt for their sakes, was likely, had they but the spirit, to draw their attention to him as the man by whose hand God might deliver Israel. But they had no spirit : they understood him not. Oppression had already done its work, and of nothing were they so much afraid as of any circumstance which might involve the displeasure of their masters : and so that they "did eat meat to the full," blows were easy to bear, during their time of service, and labor light. There was also a want among them of that sympathy of the part for the whole, which is another

natural consequence of an enslaved condition. The individuals who were, from time to time, maltreated, groaned, indeed : their bodies groaned, but not their souls ; and the others who beheld it, were only glad it was not their case ; and when, in turn, it became their case, endured it, looking forward to their time of holiday in Goshen. Moses himself was, perhaps, the only man of their race, who felt an enlarged sympathy for the general body of the Hebrew people. This representation of their case and character is fairly deduced from the various facts, occurring at different times, which bear upon it ; and the statement of it now will enable their occasional acts and sentiments, both in Egypt and afterwards in the desert, to be better understood.

Moses had soon occasion to see something of this. The day after that in which he had slain the Egyptian, he walked forth again, and observing two of the Hebrews striving together, he kindly and gently interposed to reconcile them, saying, "Sirs, ye are brethren : why do ye wrong one to another ?" On which the one who was most in the wrong thrust him away, sharply answering, "Who made *thee* a ruler and a judge over *us* ? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday ?" This was enough to satisfy Moses of their general state of feeling, while it assured him that the manifestation of his own disposition to act for them against the Egyptians, and between them to produce union among themselves, was received with dislike and apprehension, rather than with gratitude and confidence. It is, moreover, likely that this disclosure had taken place in the presence of some Egyptians ; and, on all accounts, it was full time for him to look to his own safety. Moses was now, probably, under the displeasure of the court ; and if he were still in some favor, he knew that the sovereign could not, with any show of decency, interfere to save a Hebrew from the consequences of slaying an Egyptian—and that, too, under circumstances which offered to the Hebrews an example of insubordination, and was calculated to rouse them to revolt. To understand the full extent of his danger, it should be recollected that the Egyptian laws against those who deprived a man of life were inexorably severe. To slay even a foreign slave was a crime

punished with death. How much rather, then, when a free-man was slaughtered ; and how much more still, when an Egyptian was slain by one of a foreign race. So far, indeed, were their ideas in this matter carried, that, to be an accidental witness of an attempt to murder, without endeavoring to prevent it, was a capital offense, which could only be palliated by bringing proofs of inability to act. Aware, therefore, of the effects of such a disclosure as that which had been made, flight was the only alternative now open to him who had refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He fled. It was well that he fled so soon : for the death of the Egyptian by his hand having transpired, it soon reached the ears of the king, and was probably related to him with every circumstance of aggravation by the jealous courtiers, who may be supposed to have been glad of this opportunity of completing his ruin. The effect was that the king resolved not to screen him from punishment, but gave orders for his apprehension.

But Moses was already beyond the reach of pursuit. He journeyed eastward upwards of two hundred and fifty miles, and only began to deem himself safe when the deserts of Arabia Petræa and both the arms of the Red Sea were between him and the Nile. In the country of Midian, on the remote border of the eastern gulf, the travel-worn and thirsty fugitive sat down, one day, beside a well of water, for refreshment and for rest. Here he met with an adventure very similar to that of Jacob in Padan-Aram. Water was scarce in that region, and the well by which Moses sat seems to have been the common property of the people in that neighborhood. While he was there, the daughters of Jethro, the sheikh of a Midianite clan, came to give water to their father's flocks. They were busy in drawing water and discharging it into the troughs for the cattle to drink, when the shepherds of other flocks came also to the well, and rudely thrust away the women to serve their own cattle first. Moses, as might be expected from him, flew to their relief, and not only drove back the churlish shepherds, but watered the flocks of the damsels for them. This led to his introduction to the hospitalities of the family to which they belonged ; and, in the end, he con-

sented to remain with them, and undertake the charge of the flocks, which he could lead far off, to greener pastures and more abundant waters than could be supplied by the immediate neighborhood to which the female shepherds were confined. Moses could not be long among them without manifesting the superiority of his character and knowledge ; and so much were the family to which he was now attached pleased with him, that Zipporah, one of the daughters, was given to him in marriage ; and by her he had, in the course of time, two sons, the eldest of whom he called Gershom, and the youngest Eliezer.

Here he remained forty years, forgotten, probably, by both Hebrews and Egyptians, or remembered only as a tradition ; and himself but little heedful now of what he had been, or of the high designs which had passed through his mind ; and brought up, as he had been, amidst the throng of cities and the pomp of courts, we may easily believe that the solitary deserts and unfrequented vales, to which he now was wont to lead his flocks, had charms for him, by contrast, which he would not willingly have relinquished to return to the scenes and circumstances of his earlier life.

Until toward the end of these forty years, the condition of the Hebrews seems to have remained much as it had been before Moses left. That it had not grown worse, and was such as we have represented it, appears to be shown from the fact that the Ephraimites were in a condition to undertake that expedition against the Philistines which proved so disastrous for them, and to which we have already alluded. But Thothmes III. appears from the sculptures to have been an enterprising prince both in the arts of war and peace. He was a great improver and builder ; a character which could not but operate unfavorably for the Hebrews by creating a great demand for labor. It may seem, indeed, to have been a sort of rule that the best kings for the Egyptians were the worst for the Hebrews. Heavier exactions upon their services appear to have been made ; and the tasks required from them were more onerous ; and the alternating periods of rest allowed to the several gangs of workmen were probably abridged, if they did not entirely cease. Never was their bondage so bitter—

their affliction so heavy as now. Their lot became too hard even for their tried patience to bear any longer. But none of their chiefs seemed disposed to risk the consequences of moving for the deliverance of Israel ; and in themselves they found no help. What then could they do ? They bethought them of crying to God—to the God whose promises to their fathers offered a large inheritance of hope. They did cry : and God heard them.

At this time Moses had led his flocks round the eastern arm of the Red Sea into the peninsula of Sinai, and penetrated to the green and well-watered valleys which are involved among the mountains of its central region. He was near the mountain of Horeb, when he beheld before him a thorn-bush on fire, a circumstance not in itself unusual in that region : but the wonder was that the bush continued to burn without being consumed, and without any subsidence of the flame. Moses advanced to view this strange sight more closely ; but, as he drew nigh, he heard a voice, from the midst of the burning bush, calling him by his name. Astonished, he answered, “ Here am I.” Then the voice cried, “ Draw not nigh hither ; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” The baring of the feet, thus required, was a mark of respect, common to all oriental nations. The voice then said, “ I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Then Moses hid his face in his robe ; for he was afraid to look on God : and thus, barefooted and with veiled face, he stood to receive the divine commands. The voice now said, “ I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters ; for I know their sorrows ; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . Behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me ; and I have also seen the oppressions with which the Egyptians oppress them : come, now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”



Moses heard this announcement, as regarded himself, with surprised and unwilling ears. "Who am *I*," said he, "that *I* should go unto Pharaoh, and that *I* should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" He bowed to the sufficiency of the answer—"I will be with thee;" but still was most reluctant to undertake an enterprise, the difficulties of which were well known to him. Great as the difficulty was of dealing with the Egyptians in such a case, *that*, to a man of his knowledge, appeared so much less arduous than the task of securing the confidence and support of the Israelites themselves—slaves in heart, as he knew them to be—and of making them true to their own cause, that the other was quite lost and forgotten in it. Even after he had been told how he was to proceed—that he was, on his arrival in Egypt, to assemble the elders of Israel, and announce his mission to them, with the assurance that they would believe him—his mind still dwelt on this most serious point. "Behold," he said, "they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, Jehovah hath *not* appeared unto thee." Then, to give him that confidence he so much wanted, as well as to enable him to vouch to the Israelites his divine commission, the Lord empowered him to work three signal wonders—the first, of turning his rod into a serpent, and of restoring it again; the second, of making his hand leprous as snow, when he first drew it forth from his bosom, and of restoring it again, when he next drew it out; and the third, of turning water taken from the river Nile into blood.

He was also instructed how he was to act with the Egyptians; but, as his proceedings were in strict conformity with those instructions, they will presently come before us in another shape. But Moses was now eighty years of age; and, although this was probably not more than equivalent to the age of sixty years in our days, the fire of his youth had subsided; and, accustomed as he had been for forty years to a quiet and solitary life, he felt sincerely reluctant to embark anew in scenes of trouble and difficulty, by undertaking the high but arduous enterprise now imposed upon him. The self-confidence of his earlier life had also passed away; and he was deeply sensible of his own inadequacy to meet the require-

ments of such a task. This he ventured to intimate, dwelling particularly on the fact that he was not an eloquent man, and that his slow and impeded utterance would divest all his statements of any weight which they might otherwise claim. Even the answer, "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say," did not satisfy one who so anxiously desired to be excused; and, without making any more objections, which he found so well answered, he distinctly begged that the Lord would be pleased to transfer his choice to some one more competent than himself for such high service. But the divine purpose was not thus to be moved. He was told that his brother Aaron, who possessed all that eloquence which he deemed so necessary, would come forth to meet him as he approached Egypt, and would be most glad to see him once more; *he* could act as the spokesman of his brother, who, through him, could deliver, with all due solemnity, the messages with which he might be charged.

Moses no longer withstood the divine appointment. His hesitation and resistance had been that of a man who was but too well aware of the heavy duties of the high office to which he was called, and who knew that they must be discharged, and was determined to discharge them. So, henceforth, we hear no more of doubt or difficulty. The youth of his mind was renewed; and, from that day to the last of his protracted life, all its powerful energies were devoted to the deliverance and welfare of Israel.

Now Moses departed from "the mount of God," and returned to Jethro. He made him not acquainted with his high mission, but requested—"Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive." Jethro answered, "Go in peace." But, before Moses went, it pleased God to relieve him from any apprehensions of personal danger from the cause which had occasioned his flight from Egypt, by conveying to him the assurance that all those were dead who had sought his life.

Charged with the highest and most arduous mission ever confided to a mortal, Moses departed from the shores of the Red Sea to return to the banks of the Nile. His wife and two sons were with him, riding upon asses. But at the cara-

vanserai, on the way, Moses was threatened with death because he had left his youngest son uncircumcised ; and Zipporah, understanding this, and perceiving that her husband was so smitten as to be unable himself to execute the act of obedience, took a sharp flint, and herself performed the operation. She was, however, so much annoyed by this occurrence, that she returned with her two sons to her father.

As the future Deliverer advanced towards Egypt, Aaron received the divine command to go forth and meet his brother in the wilderness. They met, and embraced each other ; after which Moses made Aaron acquainted with all that had happened to him, and the commission which he had received. They then proceeded together to the land of Goshen.

It appears that the patriarchal government still subsisted among the Hebrews, not having been interfered with, or, certainly, not destroyed by the Egyptians. Under this form of government, the chief authority—such as a father exercises over his grown children—was vested in the heads of tribes, and, subordinately, in the heads of clans, or collections of families. As these were generally men well advanced in years, they are called collectively “elders” in the scriptural history. On arriving in Egypt these elders were assembled, and the eloquent Aaron declared to them what he had heard from his brother, and the errand on which he was now come. They concluded by displaying the marvels which Moses had been authorized to work. The people, who, as we have seen, had already been brought to look to the Lord for their deliverance, recognized in this the answer to their supplications. “They believed : and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.”

Moses and Aaron then proceeded to follow, to the letter, the instructions which had been given in the mount.

They went to the court of Pharaoh, and were probably attended by the more influential of the elders, although we only read that the two brothers entered the presence. It also appears that the mission produced so much excitement among the Hebrews, that many of those engaged in labor left their work to watch the result.

On appearing before the king, Aaron announced that Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, had appeared to them, and had sent them to require the king to allow the Israelites to go into the wilderness, to hold a feast to Him there. Pharaoh was doubtless astonished to receive this demand. He replied, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." But the brothers still insisted on their demand, explaining, more particularly, that they wished the people to go three days' journey into the wilderness, there to offer sacrifices to their God; and intimated that the Israelites might expect to be visited by "the pestilence or the sword," unless they were obedient, which, reflectively, hinted to the king himself that he might expect to be punished if he prevented their obedience. To this the king deigned no answer, but dismissed them with a severe reprimand for putting such wild notions into the heads of the people, and calling away their attention from their work, to which they were all commanded to return.

That same day, the king, affecting to attribute this application to the too idle life which the Hebrews were allowed to lead, determined to bring down the rising spirit by making their burdens heavier upon them. "Let there be more work laid upon the men," he said, "that they may labor therein; and let them not regard vain words."

Hitherto, those who labored in the brick-fields had been furnished with all the materials for their work, not only the clay with which the bricks were formed, but the straw with which they were compacted; but now it was ordered that they should no longer be furnished with straw, but should collect it for themselves, while the same number of bricks should be exacted which they had formerly been required to supply. This was a grievous alteration; seeing that much of the time which should have been employed in making the bricks was now consumed in seeking for straw. And this burden must have become more heavy every day, in proportion as the straw thus hunted up became scarce in the neighborhood of the brick-fields. It became at last necessary to employ stubble instead of straw. This was a common enough resource when straw could not be easily procured; and old

sun-dried bricks compacted with stubble instead of straw, are at this day found not only in Egypt but in Babylonia. Under all these circumstances the work could not be done—the required tale of bricks could not be given in to the task-masters.

The sufferings of the Israelites growing continually heavier, and Pharaoh having resisted Moses and Aaron's pleading, and, in the face of the miracles they performed, refused to permit the poor slaves to depart from Egypt, then commenced the famous plagues, growing more awful and tremendous in their progress, whereby God designed to make Pharaoh *know* that which he confessedly knew not—that the God of the Hebrews was the Supreme Lord ; to give evidence to the world of his power and justice ; and so to exercise judgment upon the Egyptians for their oppression of Israel, that the very gods they feared and the elements they worshiped were made the instruments of distress and ruin to them.

The river Nile was one of the chief gods of the Egyptians, and as such was honored with feasts, and sacrifices, and rites of ceremonial worship. The king went forth one morning to its banks, perhaps to render some act of homage ; and was there met by Moses and Aaron, who, after repeating their demand, and being again refused, announced, in the name of Jehovah, the act they intended to perform, and the object, "In this thou shalt know that I am Jehovah." Then, in the presence of the king and his servants, the prophet lifted up his wondrous rod, and therewith smote the river ; and at once its holy and most wholesome waters were changed into blood, than which nothing could be more abhorrent to the Egyptians. All the waters of Egypt were derived from the Nile, and upon all these waters the change operated. Not only were all the numerous canals and reservoirs which were fed by the Nile filled with this bloody water, but *even that which had been preserved in vessels of wood and stone for domestic use*. This last circumstance is particularly mentioned in the sacred narrative, as if purposely to evince the miraculous nature of the transaction ; and has therefore been carefully overlooked by those who have sought to explain this and the other plagues by the operation of natural and (in

Egypt) ordinary causes. This calamity continued for seven days, during which all the fish that were in the river died in the corrupted and nauseous waters. Many of these fish were worshiped by the Egyptians; and fish, generally, formed a large and principal article of diet to them. This was, therefore, a great and complicated calamity while it lasted. The Egyptians loathing now to drink that water which they prized beyond all things, and held to be more pleasant and salutary than any other which the earth could offer, began to dig the ground in the hope of finding pure water. They did find it; and this gave the priests an opportunity of imitating the miracle on a small scale. Nothing could be more easy than by chemical means to give a blood-like appearance to the water of some of the wells thus formed, or to water taken from them. But this was enough to satisfy the easy conscience of Pharaoh; and we are told that "neither did he set his heart to this also."

When, therefore, according to their instructions, Moses and Aaron again bore to Pharaoh the message, "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me," they were again refused. On which Aaron, under the direction of Moses, smote once more the river, when, lo! the sacred river, together with another of the Egyptian gods—the frog—was once more made the instrument of their punishment. Myriads of frogs came up from the river, and from all the canals and reservoirs which it fed, and overspread the land. No place was free from them, from the hut of the peasant to the palace of the king. Even though the frogs were a sacred creature, a people so scrupulously clean and nice as the Egyptians, must have been terribly annoyed to find that the unseemly reptiles penetrated to all places, polluting their choicest food and most costly furniture. They found them everywhere—in their ovens, in their kneading-troughs, and even in their couches and beds.

This marvel also the Egyptian priests managed on some small scale to imitate; but as they could do nothing to *remove* the nuisance, Pharaoh began to be somewhat troubled. He sent for Moses and Aaron, and begged them to entreat Jehovah to remove the frogs, in which case he would no longer

refuse to let the Hebrews go to render him sacrifice. Accordingly, at the time appointed by himself, "the morrow," the frogs died away from the houses, the villages, and the fields, "and they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank." But when the king saw there was respite, he again hardened his heart, and refused to let the people go, regardless of the promise he had made.

Therefore Moses and Aaron were commanded to smite the dust of the earth, from which instantly rose myriads of gnats, or mosquitoes, an insect plague well known to Egypt during summer, but from which the country is free until nearly three months after the time at which this plague must have been inflicted. As these most insatiable and persevering insects form by far the greatest annoyance and distress—because the most unintermitting—to which life, in warm climates, is subject, the prospect of being exposed to it three months earlier than usual, and of being thus deprived of their usual season of relief, must have been almost maddening to the Egyptians—especially when the insects were produced in such multitudes as on this occasion. It seems surprising to find that the priests were unable to imitate this miracle; but, perhaps, the smallness of the object may, in some measure, account for this, as it may have prevented that handling and management to which serpents and frogs were subject. However, this time they confessed that there was something in this beyond their art and power—that it was no human feat of legerdemain, but that they saw in it the finger of a god, or the supernatural agency of some demon. This was, indeed, the only excuse by which they could hope to cover their own failure; and the acknowledgment was of no immediate value, since it did not ascribe the power and the glory to Jehovah, the only true God. They were not themselves prevented by it from continuing to attempt their emulative wonders; and the heart of the king remained unmollified.

Hitherto, it appears, the plagues had been common to the Egyptians and the Hebrews. We can easily understand that the latter were included in these visitations, to punish them for their participation in the idolatries of Egypt, and for their unbelief. But as this may have contributed to prevent the

Egyptians from seeing the finger of the God of the Hebrews in particular, in the calamities with which they had been visited, a distinction was henceforth made, and the land of Goshen was exempted from the plagues by which the rest of Egypt was desolated.

The next plague, being the fourth, is of rather doubtful interpretation. The word by which it is described denotes a *mixture*, whence some suppose that it consisted of an immense number of beasts of prey, of various species, by which the land was overspread. But it seems better to understand that every kind of annoying insect is intended. In the preceding plague there was one species—now there are many. There are, however, reasons which might suggest that the Egyptian beetle is rather intended. It is not said that the priests even attempted to imitate this plague. But whether so or not, the annoyance was so great that Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and proposed a compromise which had occurred to him—namely, that they should offer to Jehovah the sacrifices about which they were so anxious in their own land of Goshen, without going away into the wilderness. But Moses, with great presence of mind and clear truth, replied, that the worship of Jehovah required the sacrifice of animals which the Egyptians worshiped, and never offered in sacrifice; and that the Egyptians would certainly rise upon the Hebrews and slay them if any attempt to offer such sacrifices were made in their presence. On these grounds he insisted that the Israelites should go three days' journey into the wilderness, as the Lord had commanded. The king saw the force of these reasons; and while he gave a reluctant consent that they should go into the wilderness, he stipulated that they should not go very far away.

Moses expressed his readiness to intercede with Jehovah for the removal of this plague; venturing to add the caution, "Let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more." But no sooner had this calamity passed, than the king, heedless of this admonition, and of his own word, continued his refusal to allow the departure of the Israelites.

This second breach of faith brought down a judgment more deadly than any of those which had preceded. This was

a grievous murrain, by which numbers of the different kinds of cattle kept by the Egyptians were slain, while no harm befell the flocks and herds of the Israelites in Goshen. This distinction had been predicted to Pharaoh, and he sent to assure himself whether it had taken place. Nevertheless, his heart still remained unsoftened, and he still refused to let Israel go.

The infliction with which this obduracy was punished consisted of an ulcerous inflammation, of the most painful and violent description, which broke forth not only upon man, but upon such of the cattle as the murrain had spared. As this ulcer appeared upon the scrupulously clean persons of the priestly "magicians," as well as upon others, their humiliation was so great that they slunk from the scene, thus relinquishing even that languid show of rivalry and opposition which they had lately manifested. This was the sixth plague.

The seventh consisted of such a storm of hail as had never before been known in Egypt, accompanied by terrible thunders, and by lightning "that ran along upon the ground." Seeing that rain is exceedingly rare, and hail almost unknown in Egypt, so formidable a hail-storm as this, predicted as it was, was one of the greatest marvels that could be produced in such a climate as that of Egypt.

Still Pharaoh was obstinate with Moses, for when the old demand was renewed, the king repeated his refusal. Then the visitation of an army of locusts was threatened, which should destroy every green thing that the hail had spared. The stubborn king would not be convinced. Then came the locusts.

Taking for their appearance the very latest date which the history will allow, the arrival was so much earlier than usual, as to render it a circumstance not to be expected in the ordinary course of events ; and besides this, it should be observed that, although locusts are common in Arabia, they appear with comparative rarity in Egypt : the Red Sea forming a sort of barrier against them, as they are not formed for crossing seas, or for long flights. Yet, on the present occasion, the locusts were enabled, by the aid of a "strong east wind," to

cross that sea from Arabia ; and this is another remarkable circumstance, as the winds which prevalently blow in Egypt are six months from the north, and six months from the south. To those whom reading or travel has made acquainted with the appearance and ravages of these destructive vermin, the notice which the scriptural narrative here takes of them will seem remarkably striking and true : “The locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt ; very grievous were they ; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall there be such. *For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened ; and they did eat every green herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left : and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.*” As we are told that the locusts ate up every green thing which the hail had spared, the young crop of wheat and rye must be included. This calamity was so very formidable, that Pharaoh delayed not to send for Moses and Aaron. He avowed to them his fault, and begged for one reprieve more. He obtained it by means of a strong north-westerly wind, which in one night so completely swept the locusts away into the Red Sea, that not one could be found in all the land of Egypt. But when relief had thus been given, it appeared that the king would not allow the Hebrews to take their families and flocks, though he was still willing that the *men* should take the desired journey into the wilderness.

Therefore a new and most extraordinary plague was brought upon the land. In this land, where even a cloud seldom throws an obscuration on the clear face of the heavens, there was for three days a thick darkness—a darkness which, in the emphatic language of Scripture, “*might be felt,*” and which, we are told, prevented the people from seeing one another. Considering the rarity of *any* obscuration in the valley of the Nile, and that the sun was one of the chief of the gods the Egyptians worshiped, their consternation may be partly imagined, and is strongly represented in the scriptural narrative, by their total inaction—no one rose “from his place for three days.” All this while the Israelites in the land of

Goshen enjoyed the ordinary light of day. As we have no intimation of the agency employed in producing this remarkable darkness in Egypt, while the Hebrews had light in their dwellings, we must be content to leave this miracle in the characteristic obscurity in which, more than any of the others, it is involved.

This visitation, so well calculated to appal and terrify the Egyptians, compelled the king to relax his previous determination. He now declared himself willing to let the men and their families go, but he wished to keep their flocks and herds as security for their return. Moses represented that they were going for the express purpose of offering sacrifices to Jehovah, for which cattle would be necessary, and it could not be known till they arrived in the wilderness what number of cattle would be required. Therefore he declared in the most peremptory manner, "Our cattle also shall go with us ; *there shall not an hoof be left behind.*" But the proud king was determined not to relinquish this last and only point of security which would remain to him. Moses, perceiving his obstinacy, proceeded to deliver his last and most awful message from Jehovah, which can not be given in language more condensed or half so expressive as his own : " Thus saith Jehovah : About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt ; and *all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die* ; from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill ; and all the first-born of beasts. And *there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt*, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast : that ye may know how that Jehovah doth make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants [the counselors and nobles then present] shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, 'Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee : ' AND AFTER THAT I WILL GO OUT." Such a message delivered in so high a tone did not fail to exasperate the haughty king, who exclaimed to Moses, in sentences rendered abrupt by passion, "Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more : for in

that day that thou seest my face thou shalt die." To which Moses, with most impressive solemnity, only answered, "Thou hast spoken well. I will see thy face again no more." He then went out from the presence of Pharaoh in great anger, and withdrew finally from the court to join his own people in the land of Goshen.

His presence was necessary there to make the needful preparations for that departure which he now saw to be close at hand. And here it will be observed that the judgments exercised upon the Egyptians, with the manner in which their own affairs had been made of such absorbing importance, had, for the present, made the Israelites very tractable, and disposed to receive and follow the directions of Moses with attention and respect. It also appears that, after what had passed, Moses was now held in great honor among the Egyptians themselves, and that not only by the mass of the people, but by the chiefs and nobles of the court. This was natural. Probably they would have made a god of him, if he had been one of themselves and had acted with them or on their behalf.

It had been usual with Moses to announce a plague only the day before it came; but on this occasion four days elapsed, a circumstance which may probably have lulled the fears which the king could not but have at first entertained from the awful threat of one whose words had not hitherto in any one instance fallen to the ground.

Among the Hebrews in Goshen the most important circumstance of this time was the institution of the Passover. It was peculiar to this institution that it was founded to commemorate an event which had not yet occurred, and that so arranged that it was in the act of being celebrated for the first time, at the very instant when the event occurred which it was destined ever after to signalize. The institution was therefore established with a prophetic reference to a coming event—that event being the one of which Moses had spoken to Pharaoh—the destruction of the first-born of Egypt.

More precisely, the Passover was ordained for a perpetual memorial of the deliverance of the Israelites from the destroying angel, when he *passed over* or spared the houses of the Israelites, but destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians.

Each family had been previously required, at the beginning of the month *Abib* (which from henceforth was made the first month of the sacred year), to take a lamb without spot or blemish upon the *tenth* day of the month, to keep it up, and to kill it on the *fourteenth*, *between the two evenings*. They were to roast it entire, not breaking a bone of it, and to eat it in haste, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, standing, with their loins girded, their sandals on their feet, and their staves in their hands, after the manner and posture of hurried pilgrims about to set forth instantly upon a long journey, through a dreary wilderness, towards a pleasant land where their toil and travel were to cease. And they were also required to sprinkle the blood of the paschal lamb, by means of a bunch of hyssop dipped therein, upon the lintel, or head-posts, and upon the two side-posts of the doors of their houses, to save them from the destroyer, who, seeing this token, would *pass over* their houses without entering to smite the first-born. When these instructions were delivered, "the people bowed the head and worshiped. And the children of Israel went away and did as Jehovah had commanded," and waited in their houses for the catastrophe which was to work their deliverance.

The tremendous night was not long delayed. While the Jews were celebrating this newly-instituted feast—at midnight—the destroying angel went forth in a pestilence, and smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt—"from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle." And there was a great cry in Egypt—lamentation and bitter weeping—for there was not a house in which there was not one dead.

The effect of this dreadful blow was exactly such as Moses had foretold. The king, his nobles, and the Egyptian people, rose in sorrow from their beds that night. The shrieks of the living, with the groans of those about to die, breaking in upon the stillness of the night—the darkness of which must greatly have aggravated the horror and confusion of that hour—made the people fancy they were all doomed to destruction, and that the work of death would not cease till they had all perished. The king himself was filled with horror and alarm.

Without truly repenting his obduracy, he bitterly lamented its effects. It appeared to him that the only method of arresting the progress of the destruction was to send the Hebrews instantly away—in the fear that every moment they tarried would prove the loss of a thousand lives to Egypt. He therefore sent to Moses and Aaron by that very night—that hour—to tell them, “Get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go and serve the Lord as ye have said; *also take your flocks and herds*, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.” And the Egyptian people also, says the scriptural narrative, were urgent upon them, to send them away in haste; for they said, “We be all dead men.” In their anxiety to get them off, lest every moment of their stay should prove the last to themselves or those dear to them, the Egyptians would have done any thing to satisfy and oblige them. This favorable disposition had been foreseen from the beginning, and the Hebrews had been instructed by Moses to take advantage of it, by borrowing ornaments of precious metal—“jewels of silver and jewels of gold,” with rich dresses, from the Egyptians. On the principle that, “all that a man hath he will give for his life,” there can be no doubt that, under circumstances which made them consider their own lives in jeopardy, and when the losses they had sustained were calculated to make their finery seem of small value in their sight, the Egyptians were quite as ready to lend as the Hebrews to borrow. The women also were authorized to borrow from the Egyptian females: and we may easily believe that their exertions added much to the large amount of valuable property which was extracted from the fears of the Egyptians. With whatever understanding these valuable articles were given and received, the ultimate effect is, that in this final settlement the Hebrews received something like wages—though, as such, inadequate—for the long services they had rendered to the Egyptians.

So eager were the Egyptians to get them off, that, between persuasions, bribery, and gentle compulsion, the whole body had commenced its march before daybreak, although it was not till midnight that the first-born had been slain. They had no time even to bake the bread for which the dough was

ready, and they were, therefore, obliged to leave it in their dough bags, which they carried away, wrapped up in their clothes, with the view of preparing their bread when an opportunity might be offered by their first halt. Hurried as they were, they forgot not the bones of Joseph, which they had kept at hand, and now bore away with them. On they marched, driving before them their cattle and their beasts of burden, laden with their moveables and tents; and themselves, some, doubtless, riding on camels, some on asses; but, from the great number of these required for the women and children, most of the men doubtless marched on foot. Thus, laden with the spoils of Egypt, they went on their way rejoicing, leaving the Egyptians to the things which belong to mourning and the grave.

The Israelites finally departed, and encamped, after several days' journey, on the borders of the Red Sea.

The days which had passed had given the Egyptians time to recover from some portion of their panic; and their first feeling, of unmixed horror and alarm, gave place to considerable resentment and regret, on the king's part, that he had so suddenly conceded all the points which had been contested between him and Moses, and had allowed them all to depart; and as for his subjects, such of them as had a profitable interest in the labors of the Israelites would, to some extent, join in the king's feelings, as soon as their bondsmen took any course to intimate that they intended to escape; and the same intimation would not fail to alarm those who had "lent" to the Hebrews their "jewels of silver and jewels of gold," and who by this time had found leisure to think that they had too easily parted with their wealth.

When, therefore, the king heard that they had so moved as to become "entangled in the land," and that the "wilderness had shut them in," he hastened to avail himself of the extraordinary advantage they had placed in his hands. "He made ready his chariot, and took his people with him." He mustered not less than six hundred chariots, which are said to be all the [war] chariots of Pharaoh. This is in correspondence with the sculptures, which show that the Egyptians made great use in war of such chariots. A large body of in-

fantry was also assembled, and the pursuit commenced. Their light, unencumbered march was, no doubt, much more quickly performed than that of the Israelites to the same place.

The Egyptians, being satisfied that they had secured their prey, and that it was impossible for their fugitive bondsmen to escape but by returning to Egypt, were in no haste to assail them. They were also, themselves, probably, wearied by their rapid march. They therefore encamped for the night—for it was towards evening when they arrived—intending, probably, to give effect to their intentions in the morning.

As for the Israelites, the sight of their old oppressors struck them with terror. There was no faith or spirit in them. They knew not how to value their newly-found liberty. They deplored the rash adventure in which they had engaged; and their servile minds looked back with regret and envy upon the enslaved condition which they had so lately deplored. Moses knew them well enough not to be surprised that they assailed him as the author of all the calamities to which they were now exposed. Is it “because there were no graves in Egypt,” said they, “thou hast taken us away to die in the wilderness? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.” This is one specimen of a mode of feeling and character among this spiritless and perverse people of which Moses had seen something already, and of which he had soon occasion to see much more. One might be disposed to judge of their feelings the more leniently, attributing them to the essential operation of personal slavery in enslaving the mind, by debasing its higher tones of feeling and character, did we not know that the same characteristics of mind and temper constantly broke out among this remarkable people very long after the generation which knew the slavery of Egypt had passed away.

Moses did not deign to remonstrate with them or to vindicate himself. It seems that the Divine intention had been previously intimated to him, for he answered, with that usual emphasis of expression which makes it a pleasure to transcribe his words—“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salva-

tion of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." They were pacified by this for the present; but there is good reason to suspect that, if measures of relief had long been delayed, they would have given up Moses and Aaron to the Egyptians, and have placed themselves at their disposal. But measures of relief were *not* long delayed. When the night was fully come, the Lord directed Moses to order the people to march forward to the sea; on their arriving at which the prophet lifted up his rod upon the waters, over which instantly blew a powerful east wind, by which they were divided from shore to shore, so that the firm bottom of hard sand appeared, offering a dry road in the midst of the sea, by which they might pass to the eastern shore. At that instant, also, the pillar of fire which had gone before the Hebrews to guide them on their way was removed to their rear, and, being thus between them and the Egyptians, it gave light to the former in their passage, while it concealed their proceedings and persons from the latter.

It thus happened that some time passed before the Egyptians discovered that the Israelites were in motion. When they made this discovery, the king determined to follow. It is by no means clear that they knew or thought that they were following them into the bed of the sea. Considering the darkness of the night, except from the light of the pillar, with the confusion of ideas and indistinct perceptions of a people who had not been on the spot long enough to make particular observations, and most of them probably roused from sleep to join in the pursuit, it seems likely that they felt uncertain about the direction, and supposed that they were following some accustomed route by which the Israelites were either endeavoring to escape or to return to Egypt. They may even have thought they were going up the valley of Bedea, although that actually lay in an opposite direction. Any thing, however improbable, seems more likely to have occurred to them than that they were passing through the divided sea.

By the time the day broke and the Egyptians became

aware of their condition, all the Hebrews had safely reached the other side, and all or nearly all the Egyptians were in the bed of the gulf; the van approaching the eastern shore, and the rear having left the western. The moment of vengeance was come. They found themselves in the midst of the sea, with the waters on their right hand and on their left, and only restrained from overwhelming them by some power they knew not, but which they must have suspected to have been that of the God of the Hebrews. The marine road, plowed by the multitudes which went before them, became distressing to them; their chariot-wheels dragged heavily along, and very many of them came off from the cars which they supported. The Lord also began to trouble them with a furious warfare of the elements. The Psalmist more than once alludes to this. He exclaims, "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid:" and then speaks as if every element had spent its fury upon the devoted heads of the Egyptians. The earth shook; the thunders rolled; and most appalling lightnings—the arrows of God—shot along the firmament; while the clouds poured down heavy rains, "hail-stones, and coals of fire." It deserves to be mentioned that this strife is also recorded by the Egyptian chronologer, who reports, "It is said that fire flashed against them in front."

By this time the pursuers were thoroughly alarmed. "Let us flee," said they, "from the face of Israel; for Jehovah fighteth for them against the Egyptians." But at that instant the Lord gave the word, Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the restrained waters returned and engulfed them all.

This stupendous event made a profound impression upon the Hebrew mind at large. From that day to the end of the Hebrew polity, it supplied a subject to which the sacred poets and prophets make constant allusions in language the most sublime. Its effect upon the generation more immediately concerned was very strong, and, although they were but too prone to forget it, was more abiding and operative than any which had yet been made upon them. When they witnessed all these things, and soon after saw the carcasses of those who had so lately been the objects of such intense dread to them,

lying by thousands on the beach, "They feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses."

The Israelites, now relieved from all fear of the Egyptians, probably made some considerable stay at Ain Mousa. The district was then regarded as "the wilderness of Shur," a name of wide extent, a clear trace of which is still exhibited in the present name of Sdur.

Very soon after leaving this place, they began again to murmur against Moses and Aaron, that they had led them into the wilderness to perish, notwithstanding the miracles performed to aid and cheer them ; one of them being the fall of food in the shape of manna from heaven, and the other the smiting of the rock to obtain an abundance of water, by Moses. After a decisive victory over the Amalekites the Hebrew host encamped in peace in the wilderness at the foot of "the great mountain," which they did on the first day of the third month from their leaving Egypt.

This was the point of their immediate destination : in this place they were to behold the glory of their God, veiled in clouds—to hear his voice amid the thunder—to see his glances in the lightning—and to feel the power of his right arm when it shook the mountains.

No sooner had they arrived at this place than the operation for which they were brought there, of forming them into a peculiar nation, commenced. The first measure was to obtain from the Israelites a distinct and formal recognition of the supreme authority of Jehovah, and the promise of implicit obedience to it. Moses, who had gone up into the mountain, returned to the Israelites, with instructions to say to them, in the name of God, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people : for all the earth is mine : And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." As they were unacquainted with any other priests than those of Egypt, the words in the last sentence probably conveyed to them the impression that from among the nations of the earth it was proposed to set them apart to

his peculiar service and honor, in like manner as the hierarchy of Egypt was set apart as a distinct and honored caste from among the Egyptian people.

The cheerful and ready answer of the people to Moses, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do," was gladly reported by him to the Lord, who then answered that on the third following day He would appear in glory upon the mountain, in the sight of all the people, to deliver in person the laws to which he required obedience. Against that time the people were to purify themselves, and wash their clothes, that they might appear worthily before their King. Moses bore this intelligence to the people, and it was arranged that they should on that day come forth from the camp, and stand, in an orderly manner, around the base of the mountain; and barriers were set up lest any rash persons should break through to look upon Jehovah, and so perish.

The eventful day arrived, being the fifth day of that month, and the fiftieth after the departure from Egypt. The morning was ushered in with terrible thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud rested upon the mountain-top. There was heard a sound like that of a trumpet, but so exceedingly loud that the people trembled greatly. They were then drawn out, and stood around the mountain, "to meet with God." They found the mountain wholly enveloped in fire, and smoke, and thick darkness; for God had descended in fire upon the mountain, which quaked beneath his feet. No figure or similitude appeared, but a VOICE was heard from amidst the thick clouds, giving utterance to the words which form the Decalogue. So awful and tremendous was the scene, that all the people, and even Moses himself, feared exceedingly and trembled—the more especially when they heard that Voice which they had not deemed that mortal man could hear and still live. They drew back from the mountain, and entreated Moses that they might no more hear what they had heard, or see such things as they had seen; and desired that he would himself draw nigh, and hear what else Jehovah, their God, might say, and report it to them, and they would be obedient, "But let not God speak with us, lest we die." They then retired still farther from the mountain, and Moses advanced to the thick

darkness where God was. Then the Lord said to him, "I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee : they have well said all that they have spoken. *O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever !* For I will raise them up a prophet, from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth : and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him : and it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." After he had heard these tender expressions, which so strongly exhibit God in his paternal character, and this promise, which is replete with significance to those who believe that Jesus Christ is the "Prophet" therein foretold, Moses returned to the people to dismiss them to their tents ; after which, as required, he returned to the mountain, to receive from the Lord the fundamental laws and institutions by which the chosen people were in future to be governed.

On this first occasion Moses received a number of civil laws ; and as they referred chiefly to the settled life which the Israelites as yet had only in prospect, the promise of the heritage in Canaan was renewed, with the intimation that no sudden expulsion of the present inhabitants of that land was within the divine intention ; but that they would be expelled by degrees, in proportion as the increasing population of the Hebrews might enable them to occupy the lands vacated by the Canaanites.

Moses returned to the camp to make this communication to the people. They promised obedience to the laws, which he then communicated to them. Then Moses *wrote down* all the words which the Lord had spoken ; and, the next morning early, proceeded to build an altar at the foot of the mountain, and to set up twelve stones, corresponding to the number of the tribes. After sacrifices had been offered upon the altar, Moses took the book in which he had written down laws and promises which had already been received, and read them aloud to the people ; and when they had again declared their formal assent to the terms of this covenant, he took the blood

of the sacrifice, and sprinkled it over them, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah has made with you concerning all these words."

After this, Moses, as he had been directed, ascended again into the mountain, attended by Joshua, and accompanied by Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (two of his sons), and seventy of the elders of Israel. They entered not into the thick cloud; but, although they paused far below it, they were allowed to obtain a glimpse of that glory of the God of Israel which the cloud concealed. That which they beheld was but—speaking after the manner of men—the place of His feet, but it appeared "as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness."

They ate together, there upon the mountain, on the meat of the peace-offerings which they had lately sacrificed, and on which the people were feasting in the plain below.

Moses was then called up into the clouded summit of the mountain. Before he went he desired those who had come with him to remain there until his return, and then proceeded, with Joshua, into the cloud. To the people in the plain, the higher part of the mountain seems at this time to have exhibited the appearance of being invested by a thick and dark cloud, while from the very top arose a large body of "devouring fire." For six days Moses and Joshua remained under the cloud; but on the seventh day Moses was called to the very top, to which he went, leaving Joshua, probably, below. He there received instructions for the establishment of a priesthood, and the construction of a tabernacle, with laws concerning the Sabbath, and some other matters; and, in the end, he received two tablets of stone, on which God had written the words of those ten principal laws which he had previously proclaimed in the hearing of all the people.

Moses remained in the mountain forty days, during which he was divinely sustained, so as to feel no need of food. This long stay was probably unexpected by himself, and certainly was so by the friends he had left below, who, after some stay, how long we know not, grew tired of waiting longer, and returned to the camp. As the time passed, and nothing further was heard of Moses, the people became anxious and alarmed,

and at last concluded that he had perished in that "devouring fire" that shone upon the mountain-top. They then wickedly turned away from the true God, who had delivered them, and set up, and bowed down to the image of a "golden calf" as Jehovah.

At that very time Moses, still in the mount, was commanded to descend to the people, in language which made their sin and the divine indignation known to him. He hastened down, and in his descent was joined by the faithful Joshua, who had waited patiently for him. As they went down together, the noise from the camp reached their ears; and Joshua, whose ideas were of a military character, supposed it the sound of war. But Moses answered, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear."

When they came near enough to notice the calf and the dancing before it, the anger of Moses was so excited that he threw from his hands the tablets of stone which he had received from God, and brake them in pieces beneath the mountain, intending, probably, thereby to intimate that, in like manner, the recent covenant between God and them was broken on their part, and, in consequence, rescinded on His. Then he advanced to the golden calf, which they had made, "and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the Israelites drink of it," thus adding disgust to ignominy; for gold thus treated is of a most abominable taste.

After thus destroying the idol he proceeded to the punishment of the idolaters themselves. He stood at one of the entrances to the camp and cried, "Who is on Jehovah's side? Let him come unto me!" and in answer, all the men of his own tribe—that of Levi—gathered around him. These he ordered to go from one end of the camp to the other, sword in hand, and slay every one who persisted in his idolatry, without favor or affection either to their neighbor or their brother. They obeyed him; and 3000 men fell that day by their hands. Nor was this all; for the Lord sent plagues among the people, to punish them further for this great offense.

When the Lord had pardoned his people and received them again into his favor, he commanded Moses to hew two tablets of stone, like those which he had broken, and to present them to him on the top of the mount. It was also promised to him that, according to his humble request, he should there obtain a fuller view of the glory of the divine presence than he had hitherto enjoyed ; as full a view as mortal man could see and live, but infinitely short of the actual glories of His presence and His throne. Accordingly, as directed, he repaired to the mount with the tablets in his hands, and hid himself in a cleft of the rock. The Lord then descended upon the mountain in a cloud which hid the glory of his presence entirely from the people below, but which, as it passed by the place where Moses lay, enabled him to see as much of that glory as flesh and blood could bear : but what he did see, he, with proper and reverent reserve, abstains from describing ; only we know that as the veiled glory passed by, a voice was heard proclaiming, “Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth. *Keeping mercy to a thousand generations : forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin ; and that will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third or fourth generation.*”

Moses again remained forty days in the mount, without meat or drink. At the end of that time he received back the tablets of stone, written over with the same words which the broken tablets had contained—the ten commandments ; and this was probably intended as a token of the renewal of the covenant between God and the Hebrew people. Moses knew not that he had received a ray of that surpassing glory which had shone upon him, by virtue of which his countenance beamed with such heavenly light that Aaron and all the people, when he came down, were afraid to approach him. This light remained upon his countenance, and was so dazzling, that he found it convenient to cover his face with a vail in his general intercourse with the people, and appeared unveiled only when he drew near to God to receive his commands, and when he repeated those commands to the people, in whose

eyes his authority and importance were, doubtless, much enhanced by this splendid peculiarity of his personal appearance.

During this stay of Moses in the mount, a visionary pattern of the tabernacle or portable temple, which he had formerly been directed to construct, was exhibited to him, and he was commanded to carry into effect the instructions he had received, all proceedings thereon having been prevented by the late unhappy circumstances.

No sooner were the Israelites made acquainted with the materials which would be required for the works of the tabernacle and its contents, and for the dresses and ornaments of the priests, than they poured in, with the most profuse liberality, whatever suitable articles they possessed: so that in a very short time Moses was obliged to have it proclaimed throughout the camp, that no more offerings were to be made for the sanctuary, as there was already enough, and more than enough for every purpose. The list of the articles contributed is very interesting, not only as showing the large quantity, but the nature and quality, of the wealth in their possession, and all of which they had probably brought from Egypt. These consisted chiefly of articles in brass, silver and gold, intended to be melted down for the service required, together with precious stones, costly woods, rich stuffs, skins, oils, incense, and spices. The women were eminently distinguished on this occasion. They contributed their personal ornaments and trinkets; while their mirrors, of polished brass, were given up to form the brazen laver. Among all pastoral nations, the duty of forming into cloth the wool of the sheep, and the hair of the goat, devolves upon the women, and forms the principal occupation of their lives; and on the present occasion the women of Israel were busied in spinning, twisting, and weaving the clothes required for the hangings of the tabernacle.

Such was the earnestness of all parties, that the tabernacle, with all its rich furniture, and costly apparatus, together with the splendid dress of the high priests, and the robes of the common priests, were all completed in less than six months. The tabernacle was erected, and all things con-

nected with it disposed in proper order on the first day of the second year of the departure from Egypt. When all was finished, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; and the more public and outward sign of his presence, the pillar of cloud—that pillar which became a blaze of fire by night—rested upon it. The setting of the whole in order probably occupied a week; for it was not until the eighth day of the month that the regular services of the splendid ritual were commenced by the new high priest, who then offered upon the great altar the various kinds of sacrifices which the law required. In token of divine acceptance and complacency, a fire darted forth from that “glory” which represented the Lord’s presence, and consumed the burnt offering. When the people saw this, “they shouted, and fell upon their faces.” It was afterwards directed that the fire thus miraculously kindled should be kept up and employed in all the sacred services.

During the protracted stay at this place, Moses was favored with frequent intercourse with God, in which he received the body of laws which bear his name, and which were delivered not in any regular or systematic form, but as occasion seemed to require or suggest. At first Moses received the command from the Lord upon the mountain, under the circumstance of great solemnity, which we have recorded. After his second stay of forty days upon the mountain, it does not appear that he again repaired thither to receive the divine commands. The next form in which these awful interviews were conducted commenced before this last visit to Sinai, and appears to have continued until the erection of the tabernacle. After the sin in the matter of the golden calf, Moses, it will be remembered, removed his tent to a considerable distance from the camp, and called it the Convention tent. He seems to have resided there for a time; and if we rightly collect the meaning of the sacred narrative, after this sin had been forgiven, he returned to live in the camp, but left this tent standing, under the charge of Joshua, who was always there. Whenever Moses went to consult the Lord, or to receive his commands, he proceeded to this tent; and when he entered the tent, the pillar of cloud descended and

stood at the door, while the Lord spoke therefrom to Moses. Whenever Moses left the camp to proceed to this tent, the people came to the doors of their own tents, and followed him with their eyes until he entered the tent ; and when they saw the pillar of cloud come and settle at the door, they all arose and worshiped, every one at the door of his own tent. After the erection of the tabernacle, Moses entered it whenever he sought counsel of God ; and then he heard a Voice speaking to him from between the cherubim above the ark, in the most holy place.

The Israelites remained at the foot of Mount Sinai eleven months and nineteen days. During this time the necessary laws were given ; the tabernacle was set up for the palace of the King, Jehovah ; the regular service of his court was established ; the sanctions of the law were solemnly repeated ; the people were numbered and mustered for the approaching war ; the order of their encamping, breaking up, and marching, was accurately settled ; and the whole constitution of the state was completed.

On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year after their departure from Egypt, the Israelites were ordered to break up their encampment, and proceed on their march to take possession of the Promised Land.

Under the direction of the miraculous cloud, the ark went on in advance, to determine the line of march, and the places of encampment. When, at any time, the ark, following the movements of the pillared cloud, began to set forward, Moses was wont to exclaim, " Arise, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered ; and let them that hate thee flee before thee !" and when, under the same guidance, it rested, " Return, Jehovah, unto the many thousands of Israel !"

For nearly twelve months the Hebrews had now remained much at their ease in the Sinai valleys, without any other general labor than the care of their flocks. As soon, therefore, as they had passed beyond the pleasant and shady valleys of the peninsula, and were fairly engaged in the stern and naked desert, they began to complain of the hardships and fatigues of the journey, and of the obligation of decamping and encamping so often. At the third stage these mur-

murs became so strong that their Divine King judged some afflictive mark of his displeasure necessary ; wherefore he caused a fire (probably kindled by lightning) to break forth, and rage with great fury among the tents on the outskirts of the camp. In this the people recognised the hand of God, and interceded with Moses, at whose prayer the flames subsided. In memory of this the place received the name of Taberah [*the burning*].

The next affair, which seems to have followed the former very soon, commenced among these dangerous characters, but soon involved the mass of the Israelites. They became discontented with their manna. Pleasant though it were, the sameness of their diet disgusted them, and heedless of the necessity of their circumstances, they longed for the palatable varieties of food which they had enjoyed in Egypt. The excellent meats of that country, and the abundant fish of its river—the luscious and cooling melons, the onions, the leeks, the garlic, and other fruits and vegetables of that rich soil, they had all been accustomed to eat “freely,” so abundant were they, and so cheap. That they should grow tired of one particular kind of food, however delicious, when they had been used to such variety, and that they should look back upon their former enjoyments with some degree of longing and regret, is quite natural, and might not be blameworthy ; but nothing can more strikingly show the unmanly character which bondage had produced in the then existing race of Hebrews, than that such merely sensual impulses were able to gain the mastery over them to such a degree as utterly to blind and confound their understanding. With childish weeping and unreasoning clamor they expressed their longing for the lost pleasures of Egypt, and their distaste of the manna, which had for so many months formed their principal food. As this clamor broke out so soon after the departure from the Sinai valleys, in which they had so long been encamped, it seems very likely that they had secretly entertained the expectation that a change of scene would bring a change of food, and that they were much disappointed to find that the manna, and that only, continued to be supplied wherever they went.

The conduct of the people on this occasion was deeply displeasing to God: and Moses manifested more than usual discouragement and annoyance. His address to God on this occasion shows this, and is not altogether free from fretfulness. He rather murmurs at the heavy task which had been imposed upon him, of managing this unreasoning multitude, and declares himself unequal to it. In answer to this, God proposed to strengthen his authority by a council of seventy elders, to whom a portion of his own spirit should be formally given; and as to the people, a promise was indignantly made them, that on the morrow, and for a month to come, they should eat meat to the full. In reply to some doubts, which Moses ventured to intimate, as to the feasibility of supplying so large a multitude, the emphatic answer was, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?"

The same day came the promised supply of meat—given not in kindness but in anger. As on a former occasion it consisted of immense flocks of quails, which, being wearied with their flight across the Red Sea, flew so low and heavily that vast quantities of them were easily caught by the people. So abundant was the supply that not only were they enabled to glut themselves for the time, but to collect a quantity for future use. We are told that "they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp." This was, perhaps, to let them dry, or to allow the salt to settle before they potted them away. We are not accustomed to hear of birds being preserved in any way, but it is remarkable that Herodotus describes it as usual among the Egyptians to eat, undressed, *quails*, ducks, and small birds which they had preserved with salt. This is confirmed by the sculptures, where men are represented as in the act of preserving birds in this manner, and depositing them in jars. No doubt the Hebrews followed the same process, with which they had become acquainted in Egypt.

In the very height of their gormandizing, or, as the Scripture expresses it, "while the flesh was yet between their teeth," a grievous plague was sent among them, whereby great numbers were destroyed. It is probable that the very indulgence for which they had longed was made the instru-

ment of their punishment, and that the extraordinary mortality was, under the divine control, occasioned by the excess of the people in the use of a kind of food so different from that on which they had for so many previous months been principally fed.

New troubles and discontents continually arose, some of them even in the family of Moses himself. The immense host would not be encouraged. They often passed hours in tears, crying, "Would God that we had died in Egypt."

The general discontent and alarm soon ripened into a most dangerous insurrection, and at last they formed the monstrous resolution of appointing a leader to conduct them back to their bondage in Egypt. They, indeed, went so far as actually to appoint a leader for the purpose. "Verily this race were well worthy the rods of their Egyptian task-masters, to whom they were so willing to return," we might say, did we not consider that it was by these rods that their spirits had been broken. Spiritless, however, as they were—unfit as they were for action, and unwilling to be guided, the gross infatuation of their present course is most amazing. When they turned to fulfill their desperate purpose, could they expect that cloud would continue to guide them, the manna to feed them, and the "flinty rock" to pour forth water for them? And, if they were unmindful of these things, what reception could they expect to meet from the Egyptians—all whose first-born had been slain, and whose fathers, brothers, and sons had perished in the Red Sea on their account! They might well expect that, if their lives were spared by that unforgiving people, their bondage would be made far more bitter, and their chains far heavier than they ever had been.

When their intention was announced, Moses and Aaron fell to the ground on their faces before all the people. Caleb and Joshua rent their clothes with grief and indignation, and renewed their former statements and remonstrances; but so mad were the people that they were about to stone these faithful men, and probably Moses and Aaron, who lay prostrate before them, as well, when—in that moment of intense excitement—the glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud

above the tabernacle, arresting every purpose, and infusing a new and present fear into every heart.

From that cloud their doom was pronounced. At the vehement entreaties of Moses their lives were not swept away at one immediate stroke. But still, it should be even as they had said. All that generation—all the men above twenty years of age when they left Egypt—should be cut off from their portion in that rich inheritance which they had so basely intended to forego ; they should all die in that wilderness—all leave their bones amidst its sands and solitudes, among which it was their doom to wander forty years (dated from the time of leaving Egypt), until none of them remained alive. From this extraordinary doom, which fixed to every man the extreme limit of his possible existence, and avowedly gave time no object but their death, Joshua and Caleb were excepted. Thus the two on whom they were about to inflict death, were destined to survive them all, and to become the chiefs and leaders of the new generation, on whom the inheritance of the promises was to devolve. The other ten spies, whose discouragements had formed the proximate cause of the insurrection, were smitten by some sudden death, in which the people recognized a punishment from God.

The people were thus made sensible of the folly of their past conduct. But this conviction had not, in the first instance, any salutary operation, for they attributed this doom to the cowardice they had displayed, rather than to its real cause—their distrust of the sufficiency of their divine King to perform the promises he had made. Therefore, with some hope, perhaps, of reversing the sentence which had been passed upon them, they valorously determined to attack the enemy forthwith—for the border Canaanites had already taken alarm, and, without taking any offensive measures against so apparently formidable a host as that of the Hebrews, remained in a state of preparation on the hills, ready to guard the passes of the country. Moses earnestly dissuaded them from this enterprise, as contrary to the declared intention of God, as well as against his command, that they should withdraw from the frontier and retire into the desert. But they persisted ; perhaps from a latent desire, in their

present fit of desperation, to try whether they might not be able, even on their own resources, to arrest the doom which had gone forth against them. They were repulsed by the Canaanites with great slaughter. The ebullition of courage under which they had acted would have been but of short duration, even had it been attended with better success in the first instance. By their repulse, they were very forcibly instructed that they were, of themselves, unequal to the conquest of the country; and were hence induced to yield a sullen acquiescence in a measure, with which they would hardly have been satisfied unless this salutary conviction of their own weakness had been realized.

Thus they turned from the borders of the "pleasant land" to wander for thirty-eight years in the Arabian wildernesses.

The history of these years is very briefly told in the original narrative. In Numbers xxxiii. there is a list of the principal stations of the Israelites, from the time they left Egypt till they arrived on the banks of the Jordan. It, therefore, includes the places of their principal encampment during these years of wandering. Much pains have been bestowed by some writers on the investigation of this list, and in the endeavor to trace the various names which are there given. The result scarcely seems worth the labor. The names can not be traced; and if they could, it appears of little consequence to know at what places the Hebrew host encamped while they were wandering to and fro in the deserts, between the Sinai mountains and the borders of Canaan, without any definite purpose, save to consume the time and the people, or to seek an exchange of pasture ground.

The result of this forty years' wandering in the desert, and of that expurgation, which in its effect left but two men who were above sixty years of age, must have presented a body of men, who, physically and morally speaking, were singularly calculated for the great and arduous enterprises which lay before them.

The forty years were now well-nigh closed, and all things were ready for the advance into the Promised Land. Moses therefore knew the day of his death could not be distant, for he had been warned that it was not his privilege to lead the

people who had so long engaged his care into their inheritance, but only to behold it afar off. Indeed, his years had already been protracted to the utmost span to which man's life then reached ; but although not less than 120 years old, his eye was not yet dim nor his natural strength abated. The last acts of this able and good man we shall describe in the words of Professor Jahn, whose statements it is always a pleasure to be able to introduce :

“Moses, having directed the Hebrews thus far during his life, wished to do all in his power to preserve the knowledge and worship of Jehovah among them after his death. The people, and even the magistrates, during the forty years of his administration, were far from being thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the theocracy which he had established. They had so often rebelled, and offered sacrifice to idols, that it became necessary to have all animals slain at the altar, and under the inspection of the priests. In their journeyings through the wilderness they had carried with them portable shrines of Egyptian idols, and it was but a short time since they had been guilty of the grossest idolatry. It was evidently necessary that religion should be made to them, as much as possible, an object of sense ; that it should be so closely interwoven with the civil institution that it could be neither forgotten nor perverted ; and it was particularly desirable that the new generation should be made to perceive the nature of their polity, and the relation in which they stood to the true God.

“Moses accordingly wrote for the people an earnest exhortation to obedience, in which he alluded to the instances of the kindness, severity, and providence of God, which the Hebrews had already experienced ; he exhibited in a strong light the sanctions of the law ; he repeated the most important statutes, and added a few new ones to the code. These exhortations (which compose his fifth book, or Deuteronomy) he delivered to the magistrates as his farewell address, at a time when their minds were well prepared to receive wholesome instruction by the accomplishment of the divine promises which had already commenced. The genealogists,

each in his own circle, communicated all to the people, including the women and the children.

"That the latest generations might have a visible and permanent memorial of their duty, he directed that, after they had taken possession of Canaan, the law (or at least its fundamental principles, and the first development of its sanctions, as exhibited in Exodus, xx.—xxiv.) should be engraved on pillars of stone, plastered with lime, and that these pillars should be erected with appropriate solemnity at Shechem on Mount Ebal, or, more probably, Mount Gerizim. On this occasion the priests were to utter particular imprecations against all the secret transgressors of the law, to which the people were to assent by responding '*Amen*!' at the end of each imprecation.

"Moses then developed a second time, and still more minutely than before, the conditions on which Jehovah, their God and King, would govern them. He cast a prophetic glance into the most distant futurity, while he declared the different destinies which awaited them to the latest generations, according to their conduct in regard to the law. In full view of these conditions, and in order to impress them the more deeply on their minds, he caused the whole people, even the women and children, again to take a solemn oath of obedience; and that, not only for themselves, but also for their posterity.

"The official duties of Moses were now closed. He commissioned Joshua, not as his successor, but as a military leader divinely appointed, to be the conqueror of the land of Canaan, and to portion it out among the victors. He delivered to the priests the whole book of the law, that they might deposit it in the sanctuary with the ark of the covenant. He also left them a song, in which he represented in the most vivid manner the perverseness of the nation, their future disobedience and punishment, repentance and pardon. This song the Hebrews were to commit to memory, that they might be aware of the consequences of disobedience, and that, when the threatenings were fulfilled, they might think of the law and return to their duty. Finally, he viewed the land of Canaan from Nebo, the summit of Mount Pisgah; and then this great

man, and distinguished servant of God, was gathered to his fathers.

“By the institutions which he introduced for the preservation of the knowledge of God, he was the means of conferring an invaluable favor, not only on the Hebrews, but on the whole human race ; a favor for which no wise or good man can withhold from him his gratitude, whatever objections he may imagine can be brought against some of his laws.”

CHAPTER VI.

SAUL.

SAUL was the son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin, and was elected the first king of the Israelites. He was born 1096 B. C.

It is very important to notice that the election of Saul was by no means unconditional, or to such unrestricted regal power as is usually exercised in the East. In fact, the Hebrew monarchy, as now established, is, we believe, the only example which the history of the East can offer of a limited constitutional government. Such of these limitations as *necessarily* resulted from the peculiar position of the king, as the regent or vicegerent of a spiritual and Almighty King, have already been pointed out. But besides these, there were other conditions not so necessarily resulting from this position, but judged essential to the welfare of the state and to the objects of its institution. And these were specially and formally guaranteed ; and, together with the others, unquestionably formed what, in the language of modern politics, would be called "the constitution" of the Hebrew monarchy. We are told that after the people had accepted, with acclamations, the king on whom the lot had fallen, Samuel "told the people the manner of the kingdom, *and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah.*" It was thus deposited in the keeping of the priests, that it might be preserved safely, and that it might be at all times seen whether the king observed the conditions on which the crown had been offered to him and accepted by him. Here, then, we have not only a constitution, but a written charter. We do not indeed know what powers it conferred upon the king, or what restraints it imposed upon his will ; we only know that his authority was far less absolute than that of other ancient oriental kings. It may, indeed, with-

out difficulty be concluded, that they were conformable to those foundations for a limited monarchy which had long before been laid by Moses, who was enabled to foresee and provide for the exigency which now occurred.

After his election at Gilgal, the king returned to his own home at Gibeah, where such "presents" were brought him by the people as oriental kings usually receive, and which form no inconsiderable portion of their ordinary revenue. As the product of these offerings was probably more than adequate to the present wants and expectations of the king, who as yet assumed no regal state, the question as to the permanent support of the kingly government was not yet pressed upon the attention of either the people or the king. The discontented parties, however, "brought him no presents." Saul took no notice of their insults, but wisely "held his peace."

Very soon after Saul's election, the Ammonites, under their king Nahash, marched into the old disputed territory beyond Jordan, and laid siege to the important city of Jabesh Gilead. The inhabitants, avowing their impotence, offered to submit to the condition of paying tribute to the Ammonites; but the insulting and barbarous king refused to receive their submission on any other terms than that the right eye of every one of them should be extinguished, that they might remain as so many living monuments of his victory. Here again was a barbarity of which the Israelites were never guilty, even in thought. The people of Jabesh Gilead were so distressed that they dared not absolutely refuse even these merciless conditions, but besought a grace of seven days for deliberation. This they did with the hope that the tribes on the other side the river might, in the interval, be roused by the news to appear for their deliverance. Nor was their hope in vain. Saul no sooner received the intelligence than he at once and decidedly stood up in his position of a hero and a king, claiming the obedience of the people, whom he summoned to follow him to the deliverance of Jabesh Gilead. This call was readily obeyed; for it ran in the names of Saul *and Samuel*, and was conveyed in that imperative and compulsory form which it was not, under any circumstances, judged safe to disobey. For he hewed a yoke of oxen in pieces, and sent the pieces by

the hands of swift messengers to all Israel, calling them, by all the penalties of that well-known and dreaded sign, to follow him. All Israel obeyed with one consent. All the men, of age to bear arms, quitted their several labors, and hastened from all parts to the plain of Bezek, where Saul, numbering his army, found it to consist of 330,000 men, of whom 30,000 were of Judah, which seems rather an inadequate proportion for so large a tribe. It being already the sixth day, Saul sent to apprise the citizens of Jabesh Gilead of the help which was preparing for them, and which they might expect to receive on the morrow, being the very day they were to surrender their eyes to the Ammonites.

Accordingly, in the morning, the king, having marched all night, appeared before Jabesh, at the head of his army, invested the camp of the Ammonites, and falling upon them on three different sides, overthrew them with a great slaughter. So complete was the rout, that those who escaped were so broken and dispersed that no two could be found together.

Saul in this action displayed a large measure of those heroic qualities which the ancient nations most desired their monarchs to possess. Considering all the circumstances, the promptitude and energy of his decision, the speed with which he collected an immense army and brought it into action, and the skill and good military conduct of the whole transaction, there are probably few operations of the Hebrew history which more recommend themselves to the respect and admiration of a modern soldier. Its effect was not lost upon the people, who joyfully recognized in their king the qualities which have generally been held most worthy of rule; and so much was their enthusiasm excited, that they began to talk of putting to death the small minority who had refused to recognize his sovereignty. But Samuel interposed to prevent an act unbecoming a day in which "the Lord had wrought salvation in Israel." So harsh a proceeding would also have been rather likely to provoke than allay the disaffection of the leading tribes.

Samuel then invited the army, which comprehended in fact the effective body of the Hebrew people, to proceed to Gilgal, there solemnly to confirm the kingdom to Saul, seeing

that now his claims were undisputed by any portion of the people. This was done with great solemnity, and with abundant sacrifices of peace and joy.

Saul, now fully established as king, dismissed his numerous army ; but he retained 3,000 of their number, 2,000 of which he stationed at Michmash and Bethel, under his own immediate orders, while the other thousand were at Gibeah of Benjamin, under his eldest son Jonathan. Josephus says that these formed the body-guard of himself and his son.

Jonathan being in southern Palestine, and acting doubtless by the orders of his father, attacked and overcame with his thousand men the Philistine garrison in Gibeah. Encouraged by this success, Saul caused open war to be proclaimed, by sound of trumpet, against the Philistines ; and to assert his authority over the tribes beyond Jordan, who were but too apt to regard their interests as separate from those of the other tribes, and who might think themselves exempt from taking part in a war against a people whose oppressions had not extended to themselves, Saul directed the proclamation to be made not only "throughout all the land," but in a special manner it included those beyond Jordan. They did not disobey, but came with the other Israelites, from all quarters, to the standard of the king at Gilgal. The people generally, though destitute of proper military weapons, were much inspired by the success of Jonathan, and by their confidence in the now tried valor and military conduct of the king.

Meanwhile the Philistines were not heedless of this movement among the Israelites. No sooner did they hear of the defeat of their garrison in Gibeah than they assembled a formidable force, which seemed sufficient to overwhelm all opposition. It was composed of 30,000 chariots of war, 6,000 horsemen, and "people as the sand which is on the sea-shore in multitude." The enthusiasm of the disarmed Israelites evaporated in presence of this powerful force ; and the army of Saul diminished every day, as great numbers of the men stole away to seek refuge in caves, in woods, in rocks, in towers, and in pits. He probably thought that the aggressions of the Philistines, and their existing position as the op-

pressors of Israel, and their intrusion into the Hebrew territory, made his undertaking so obviously just and patriotic as to render a direct authorization superfluous, as its refusal could not be supposed : nor are we quite sure that in this he was mistaken. Be this as it may, Samuel was not willing that such a precedent should be established ; and therefore he had appointed to meet Saul on a particular day at Gilgal, to offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and to show him what he should do, that is, both to propitiate the Lord, as on other occasions, and to advise Saul how to act in carrying on the war. On the appointed day Samuel did not arrive as soon as the king expected. The prophet probably delayed his coming on purpose to test his fidelity and obedience. Saul failed in this test. Seeing his force hourly diminishing by desertions ; and, in the pride of his fancied independence, considering that he had as much right as the Egyptian and other kings to perform the priestly functions, he ordered the victims to be brought, and offered them himself upon the altar.

The king and the prophet then met, and Samuel highly disapproved of Saul's conduct. The king, then, aided by Jonathan, conducted the war against the Philistines with varied success, but, in the end, with glory to himself. He also waged war in turn against Moab, Ammon, and Edom.

The several expeditions of Saul against the enemies of Israel took up, at intervals, the space of five or six years. During these years, Samuel, without further interference in political affairs, continued to watch the civil interests of the people, and to administer justice between them. The authority which he still preserved in Israel was very great, and probably not considerably less than it had been at any former time.

About the tenth or eleventh year of Saul's reign, God made known to the prophet that the iniquity of the Amalekites had now reached its height, and that the time was fully come when the old sentence of utter extermination should be executed. Saul was charged with its execution ; and his commission, as delivered to him by Samuel, was expressed in the most absolute terms, and left the king no option to spare

aught that breathed. Under this supreme order, the king made a general call upon all the tribes, which brought together an army of 200,000 men, among whom there were but 10,000 men of Judah. The deficiency of that tribe in supplying its due proportion is probably not noticed by the historian on this and on a former occasion, without some object ; and that object probably was to convey the intimation that since the scepter had been of old promised to that tribe, it was discontented at the government of Saul, and less hearty than the other tribes in its obedience.

The king led his army into the territory of Amalek. There he made the most able disposition of his forces, seized the most favorable positions, and then turned his advantages against the enemy. A general action followed, in which the Israelites were victorious, and they pursued the Amalekites to their most distant and last retreats. Agag, the king, was taken alive with all his riches. Blinded by his ambition and his avarice to the danger of acting in defiance of a most positive and public command from God himself, Saul determined to spare the life of Agag, and to preserve the most valuable parts of all the booty from destruction ; but with a most insulting or weak mockery of obedience, "every thing that was vile and refuse, that they utterly destroyed." This led to serious results, and caused Samuel to part from and to denounce Saul.

When the prophet and the king separated, the former proceeded to his usual residence at Ramah, and went no more to see Saul to the day of his death. Yet as he had a great regard for a man who, with all his faults, had many good natural qualities which would well have fitted him for rule in a simple human monarchy, and who, moreover, was faithful and even zealous for Jehovah, as his God, however deficient in obedience to him as his King, the prophet continued long to mourn greatly for him, and to bewail the doom which it had been his painful duty to declare.

After fifteen years, the Lord rebuked Samuel for this useless repining, and commanded him to proceed to Bethlehem, there to anoint the man worthier than Saul, whom he had chosen to fill his forfeited place, and to become the founder

of a royal house. This was a delicate mission ; for Samuel knew enough of Saul to fear that he would not scruple to put even himself to death if the fact came to his knowledge. He therefore veiled his real object under the form of a public sacrifice, which, in his prophetic character, he had a right to enjoy. That he still retained his authority as civil judge is evinced by the alarm which his unexpected visit occasioned to the elders of Bethlehem, who “trembled” at his coming, for fear it should be not “peaceably,” but in judgment.

The family to which Samuel was sent was that of Jesse, the grandson of Boaz and Ruth, and, as such, a person of consideration in that place. Jesse was the father of eight sons, all of whom were present in Bethlehem, save the youngest, David by name, who was abroad with his father’s flock. The whole family was invited by the prophet to be present at his sacrifice. Samuel knew that the destined king was to be found among Jesse’s sons, but knew not as yet for which of them that distinction was intended. Still influenced by those general prepossessions in favor of such personal qualities as he had formerly beheld in Saul with complacency and admiration, Samuel no sooner beheld the commanding and stately figure of Jesse’s eldest son, Eliab, than he concluded that “the Lord’s anointed was before him.” For this he received the striking rebuke, “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature ; because I have refused him : for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.” It further appeared that no one of the other sons of Jesse then present was the object of the divine choice. On this, Samuel, with some surprise, asked Jesse whether he had other sons ; and learning that the youngest, a mere youth of fifteen years old, was abroad in the fields, he caused him to be sent for. When he arrived, Samuel was struck by his uncommonly handsome appearance, especially by a freshness of complexion unusual in that country, and by the singular fire and beauty of his eyes. The divine choice was at once intimated to him, “Arise, anoint him : for this is he !” As in the case of Saul himself, this precious anointing was significant only of the divine intention and choice. As Saul had returned to his

fields, so David returned to his flock. The path to the throne was to be opened by circumstances which did not yet appear. The anointing was the sign and seal of an ultimate intention. For the present, David was not more a king, nor Saul less one, than before.

The doom of exclusion had been pronounced upon Saul at a time when he was daily strengthening himself on the throne, and increasing in power, popularity, and fame; and when his eldest son, Jonathan, stood, and deserved to stand, so high in the favor of all the people, that no man could, according to human probabilities, look upon any one else as likely to succeed him in the throne. But when the excitement of war and victory had subsided, and the king had leisure to consider and brood over the solemn and declaredly irrevocable sentence which the prophet had pronounced, a very serious effect was gradually produced upon his mind and character; for he was no longer prospered and directed by God, but left a prey to his own gloomy mind. The consciousness that he had not met the requirements of the high vocation to which, when he was little in his own sight, he had been called, together with the threatened loss of his dominion and the possible destruction of his house, made him jealous, sanguinary, and irritable, and occasionally threw him into fits of the most profound and morbid melancholy. This is what, in the language of Scripture, is called "the evil spirit" that "troubled him." That it was not a case of demoniacal possession, as some have been led by this form of expression to suppose, is obvious from the effects to which we shall presently advert. Nor was it needful; for, as acting upon the character of man, earth contains not a more evil spirit than the guilty or troubled mind abandoned to its own impulses.

Not long after David had been anointed by Samuel, the mental malady of Saul gathered such strength, the fits of his mad melancholy became so long and frequent, that some remedial measures appeared necessary. Remembering that Saul had always been remarkably sensible to the influence of sweet sounds, it occurred to his friends that it might be attended with good effects, were an able musician retained at court, to play before the king, when his fits of gloom and

horror came upon him. Saul himself approved of this advice, and directed that a person with the suitable qualifications should be sought. This reminded one of the courtiers how skillfully and sweetly he had heard the youngest son of Jesse play upon the harp ; and in mentioning this to the king he also took occasion to commend David as a young man of known valor, prudent in conduct, and very comely in his person.

Saul himself, ignorant that in him he beheld the "man worthier than himself," on whom the inheritance of his throne was to devolve, received the youthful minstrel with fervor ; and, won by his engaging disposition and the beauties of his mind and person, not less than by the melody of his harp, became much attached to him. The personal bravery of David, also, did not long remain unnoticed by the veteran hero, who soon elevated him to the honorable and confidential station of his armor-bearer—having obtained Jesse's consent to allow his son to remain in attendance upon him. His presence was a great solace and relief to Saul ; for whenever he fell into his fits of melancholy, David played on his harp before him ; and its soft and soothing strains soon calmed his troubled spirit, and brought peace to his soul.

David having slain the giant Goliath, which achievement won for David the highest honor, while it filled the king with envy, the monarch now discovered that his daughter Michal was in love with him.

This was far from displeasing him, as he thought it gave him an opportunity of entrapping the son of Jesse to his own destruction. He promised her to him, but on the condition of so difficult an enterprise against the Philistines as he fully expected would ensure his death. But David, always victorious, returned in a few days with more numerous pledges of his valor than the king had ventured to demand ; and he was then married to Michal, who could not with any decency be refused to him.

In some subsequent actions against the Philistines, with whom a desultory warfare was still carried on, David displayed such courage and military skill as greatly increased his renown in Israel, and increased in the same proportion the ani-



mosity of Saul. His hate became at last so ungovernable that he could no longer confine the dark secret to his own bosom, or limit himself to underhand attempts against the life of Jesse's son. He avowed it to his son Jonathan and to his courtiers, charging them to take any favorable opportunity of putting him to death. He knew not yet of the strong attachment which subsisted between Jonathan and David—that his noble son, rising far above all selfishness, pride, or envy, loved the son of Jesse even “as his own soul.” He heard the command with horror, and apprised David of it, counseling him to hide himself until he should have an opportunity of remonstrating on the subject privately with the king. This he did with such effect, displaying the services and fidelity of David with such force, that the better reason of Saul prevailed for the time, and he solemnly swore to make no further attempt against his life.

But not long after, all the evil passions of Saul were again roused by the increased renown which David obtained by a splendid victory over the Philistines. He had scarce returned to court before he had a narrow escape of being pinned to the wall by a javelin which the king threw at him in one of those fits of frenzied melancholy which the son of Jesse was at that moment endeavoring to soothe by playing on his harp.

The remainder of the life of Saul presents a sad illustration of one who had wandered from the right path, who disobeyed the commands of the most high God, and was in turn deserted by him.

David was forced to flee from Saul's wrath, and for long years suffered from his resentment.

At length the time came when the word of the Lord was to be fulfilled, and the kingdom to pass from Saul and his descendants. He was to be overcome by the Philistines. The hour approached, and the appearance of the Philistines against the Israelites was one of those large operations which nations can in general only undertake after long intervals of rest. There seems, indeed, during the reign of Saul, to have been always a sort of desultory and partial warfare between the two nations ; but it had produced no measure compara-

ble to this, which was intended to be decisive, and was calculated to tax to the utmost the resources of the belligerents. When Saul surveyed, from the heights of Gilboa, the formidable army which the Philistines had brought into the plain of Esdraelon—that great battle-field of nations—his heart failed him. Presentiments of coming events cast deep shadows over his troubled mind. He sought counsel of God. But God had forsaken him—left him to his own devices—and answered him “neither by dreams, nor by urim, nor by prophets.”

The crimes of Saul arose from his disloyalty to Jehovah, in his reluctance to acknowledge him as the true king of Israel. But as his God, he worshiped him, and had no tendency towards those idolatries by which so many subsequent kings were disgraced. All idolatry and idolatrous acts were discouraged and punished by him. In obedience to the law, he banished from the land all the diviners and wizards he could find. But now, in his dismay, he directed his attendants to find out a woman skillful in necromancy, that he might seek through her the information which the Lord refused to give. One was found at Endor, a town not far from the camp in Gilboa; and to her he repaired by night, disguised, with two attendants, and desired her to evoke the spirit of Samuel, that, in this dread emergency, he might ask counsel of him. He had been dead two years. Whatever might be the nature of the woman’s art, and her design in undertaking to fulfill his wish—whether she meant to impose on Saul by getting some accomplice to personate Samuel, who had only been dead two years, and whose person must have become well known to the Israelites during his long administration—or whether she expected a demoniacal spirit to give him an answer; it appears from a close examination of the text, that, to the great astonishment of the woman herself, and before she had time to utter any of her incantations, the spirit of Samuel was permitted to appear, in a glorified form, and ominously clad in that mantle in which was the rent that signified the rending of the kingdom from the family of Saul. When the figure appeared, the king *knew* that it was Samuel, and bowed himself to the ground before him. From that awful and passionless form he heard that the doom declared

long since was *now* to be accomplished ; to-morrow Israel should be given up to the sword of the Philistines—to-morrow Saul and his sons should be numbered with the dead. At these heavy tidings, the king fell down as one dead, for he had touched no food that night or the preceding day, and was with difficulty restored to his senses and refreshed by the woman and his attendants.

The next day all that had been foretold was accomplished. Israel fled before the Philistine archers ; and Saul and his sons, unable to stem the retreating torrent, fled also. The three sons of the king, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, were slain.

Saul himself was grievously wounded by the archers ; and that he might not fall alive into the hands of the Philistines, and be subjected to their insults, he desired his armor-bearer to strike him through with his sword ; and the example was followed by the armor-bearer, when he beheld his lord lying dead before him. “ So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.”

CHAPTER VII.

DAVID.

WE have already mentioned in the foregoing chapter something of the birth and parentage of David. The great achievement by which he won his early fame was his battle with Goliath. On one occasion the Philistines commenced the war by invading the territory of Judah. Saul marched against them, and the two armies encamped in the face of each other on the sides of opposite mountains, which a valley separated. While thus stationed, the Hebrews were astonished and terrified to behold a man of enormous stature, between nine and ten feet high, advance from the camp of the Philistines, attended by his armor-bearer. His name was Goliath. He was arrayed in complete mail, and armed with weapons proportioned to his bulk. He stood forth between the hosts, and, as authorized by the Philistines, who were confident that his match could not be found, proposed, with great arrogance of language, that the question of tribute and servitude should be determined by the result of a single combat between himself and any champion which might be opposed to him. The Israelites were quite as much dismayed at the appearance of Goliath, and at the proposal which he made, as the Philistines could have expected, or as the Philistines themselves would have been under the same circumstances. No heart in Israel was found stout enough to dare the encounter with this dreadful Philistine; nor was any man then present willing to take on his single arm the serious consequences of the possible result. Then finding that no one of riper years or higher pretensions offered himself to the combat, David presented himself before Saul, whom he attended as his armor-bearer, and said, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." But Saul

told him that he was unequal to such a contest, "for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." The reply of David was equally forcible and modest: "Thy servant tended his father's flock; and when there came a lion or a bear and took a lamb out of the flock, then I pursued him and smote him, and snatched it from his mouth; and if he rose against me, I caught him by the beard, and smote him, and slew him. Both lions and bears hath thy servant smitten, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them. Let me go and smite him, and take away the reproach from Israel; for who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the host of the living God?" He added, "Jehovah, who delivered me from the power of lions and bears, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul had been too little accustomed to this mode of speaking and feeling not to be struck by it. Although he had himself not been prone to exhibit *military* confidence in God, he perceived that such a confidence now supplied the only prospect of success; he therefore said, "Go; and may Jehovah be with thee!" He would fain have arrayed him in his own complete armor; but David rejected this as an incumbrance, and stepped lightly forward in his ordinary dress, and without sword, or shield, or spear, having only in his right hand a sling—with the use of which early pastoral habits had made him familiar—and in his left a little bag, containing five smooth pebbles picked up from the small brook that then meandered, and still meanders, through the valley of Elah. The giant was astonished, and felt insulted that a mere youth should be sent forth to contend with so redoubted a champion as himself; and availing himself of the pause which the ancient champions were wont to take to abuse, threaten, and provoke each other, he cried, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" He then cursed him by his god, and, like the old Homeric heroes, threatened to give his flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field. David's reply, conceived in the finest and truest spirit of the theocracy, at once satisfies us that we behold in him the man fit to reign over the peculiar people. "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the

name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will Jehovah deliver thee into mine hand ; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee ; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth ; *that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.* And all this assembly shall know that Jehovah saveth not with sword and spear ; for the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you into our hands." On this, the enraged giant strode forward, and David hastened to fit a stone to his sling ; and he flung it with so true an aim that it smote the Philistine in the only vulnerable part that was not cased in armor, his forehead, and buried itself deep in his brain. He then ran and cut off the monster's head with his own sword, thus fulfilling the prediction he had just uttered. A few minutes after he had gone forth, he returned and laid the head and sword of the giant at the feet of Saul.

The overthrow of their champion struck a panic into the Philistines. They fled, and were pursued with great slaughter, even to their own country, by the Israelites, who then returned and plundered their camp.

After the death of Saul, his crown and armlet were brought and laid before David. Our limits will permit us to give only a few pages on this celebrated king.

With the approbation of the Lord, whom he consulted, David now removed, with his family and friends, to Hebron, where the rulers of the tribe of Judah, with views altogether theocratical, awarded the scepter to him, as one whom God had already designated as king. David was at this time thirty-three years of age.

The first act of David's reign was to undertake the reduction of the fortress of Jebus, on Mount Zion, which had remained in the hands of the natives ever since the days of Joshua, and which, as Josephus reports, had been, from its situation and its fortifications, hitherto deemed impregnable.

It is supposed that David first gave the name Jerusalem (*the possession of peace*) to the city, but this is not quite certain. On Mount Zion he fixed his residence, and erected a palace and other buildings ; and it was on this account called

“the city of David.” This strong part of the whole metropolis ever after remained what may be called the royal quarter of the town.

And now, when David had a respite from war, about the tenth year of his reign, he thought of the ark of God, which had so long remained in the house of Abinadab, at Kirjath-jearim, and contemplated its removal to Jerusalem, that the place which had now become the capital of the human kingdom, might also become the capital of the invisible King. The design being received with approbation by the elders and chiefs of Israel whom he consulted, the king prepared for its execution, by dispatching messengers throughout all Israel, to summon all the priests and Levites, and to invite as many of the people as were so disposed, to attend the solemnity. He also prepared a tabernacle to receive the ark on its arrival. Accordingly, at the appointed time, the ark was removed from the house of Abinadab, upon a new cart, attended by David and his court, by a large body of priests and Levites, who sang and played on various instruments of music, and by a numerous concourse of people from all parts of the kingdom. The irregularity of removing it on a cart gave occasion to an accident, attended with such fatal consequences as threw an effectual damp upon the joy of the solemnity : for the cart being at one place much shaken by the oxen, the officious Uzzah, the son or grandson of Abinadab, was struck dead upon the spot for putting forth his hand to stay the ark, none but the priests being warranted to touch it under pain of death. This event struck David and the people with such consternation, that the intention of taking the ark to Jerusalem was relinquished, and it was left in the house of a Levite named Obed-edom, near which the circumstance occurred. But about three months after, hearing that the blessing of Jehovah had very evidently rested on the house in which the ark lay, the king hastened to complete his design. He perceived the former improprieties, and directed that the priests should now bear the ark upon their shoulders ; and the whole solemnity was placed under the direction of Chenaniah, the chief of the Levites, who was found to be best acquainted with the proper observances. This was a great day in Israel.

Nothing was omitted by which the occasion could be honored. In the presence of that sacred symbol of the divine King, David laid aside his royal mantle, and appeared in such a garb as the Levites wore, with and before whom he went, as one of them ; and as they sang and played the triumphant song, which he had composed for the occasion, he accompanied them with his renowned harp, and danced to the joyful sounds it gave forth.

About five years after this, and the fifteenth of David's reign, when the king had finished and inhabited his palace of cedar, "and God had given him rest round about from all his enemies," he meditated a design of building a temple to Jehovah, in place of the temporary tabernacle which he had provided. This design he mentioned to the prophet Nathan, to whom it seemed so obviously proper that he gave it much commendation and encouragement. But the night following, a message from God to David was delivered to him. This message declared it seemly that the temple of God should be built by a man of peace ; but his life had been spent in warfare, and he had shed much blood. He was therefore directed to leave the accomplishment of his plan to his son and successor, whose reign should be one of peace. Nevertheless, it was well for David that this intention had been formed ; for the Lord, to testify his approbation of this and other evidences of his zeal, and of his attachment to the principles of the theocracy, promised to make his name as great as the names of the great ones who are on the earth ; and, far beyond this, the Lord promised to build *him* a house, by establishing the succession in his house, and by granting to his posterity an eternal kingdom. The gratitude with which this promise was received by David seems to show he had some conception of its extensive import. He went, and seating himself most reverently on the ground, before the ark, poured forth the strong expression of his gratitude. Now it is evident that under an express promise of this nature, all succeeding kings of the line of David were virtually chosen and appointed by Jehovah, according to the essential law of the government. David literally became a "king of kings," and his fame extended into far countries. Some states which

had been at hostilities with the states conquered by him sent splendid embassies, with valuable gifts, to congratulate him on his successes. Among these, Toi, the king of Hamah, upon the Orontes, who had been at war with Hadadezer, is particularly mentioned. He sent his own son Joram "to salute" and "bless" king David, and to deliver costly gifts, such as vessels and utensils of gold, silver and fine brass. All the surplus wealth thus acquired from the states he conquered, or from those which sought his friendship and alliance, was treasured up by him for the great work which he had so much at heart, and which his son was destined to execute.

But of all David's foreign alliances, the earliest and most valuable was that of Hiram, king of Tyre. This had been formed very soon after David had taken Jerusalem and defeated the Philistines, and seems to have been sought by Hiram ; for it will be remembered that David was famous in the closely-neighboring states before he became king ; and no doubt not only his eminent public qualities, but his remarkable personal history was familiar not less to the Phœnicians than to the Philistines. And although an enterprising commercial and skillful manufacturing nation, like them, would be disposed to look down upon a people so inferior to themselves as the Hebrews in the finer and larger arts of social life—military talents and success, and such heroic qualities as the character of David offered, have never yet failed to be appreciated, wherever found. Hiram "was ever a lover of David," and the offered alliance must have been the more gratifying to him as it came before "his fame went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations." This alliance was one of mutual advantage. Tyre possessed but a narrow strip of maritime territory, the produce of which, if sedulously cultivated, would have been very inadequate to the supply of its teeming population and numerous fleets. But besides this, the absorbing devotion of the Phœnicians to commerce and the arts rendered them averse to the slow pursuits of agriculture, the products of which they could so much more easily obtain by exchange against the products of their foreign traffic and their skill. To them, therefore, it was a most invaluable circumstance, that behind them lay a

country in the hands of a people who had none of the advantages which were so much prized by themselves, but who had abundance of corn, wine, oil, and cattle to barter for them. An alliance cemented by such reciprocal benefits, and undisturbed by any territorial designs or jealousies, was likely to be permanent, and we know that it tended much to advance the Hebrews in the arts which belonged to civilized life, and to promote the external splendor of this and the ensuing reign. In the present instance Hiram supplied the architects and mechanics, as well as the timber (hewn in Lebanon) whereby David was enabled to build his palace of cedar, and to undertake the other works which united the upper and lower cities, and rendered Jerusalem a strong and comely metropolis.

One afternoon the king arose from his mid-day sleep, and walked on the terraced roof of his palace, from the commanding height of which he unhappily caught a view of a woman bathing. This was the beautiful Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, who was then serving under Joab at the siege of Rabbah. The king sent for her, and she became with child by him. Afflicted at this event, which was so calculated, by betraying the adulterous connection, to bring upon the woman the ignominious death which the law demanded, if the husband should think proper to demand her punishment, David sent to desire Joab to send him to Jerusalem, as if with news of the war, hoping that his presence about this time would screen, or at least render doubtful, the effects of his own crime. But Uriah, either, as he professed, thinking the gratifications of home inconsistent with the obligations of his military service, or suspecting the fidelity of his wife, avoided her during his stay, and remained publicly among the king's attendants. Disappointed in this device by the proud honor or caution of Uriah, the king concluded that the life of Bathsheba and his own character could be only secured by his death. This therefore he contrived, in concert with the unprincipled Joab, in such a manner as to make him perish by the sword of the Ammonites, although this could not be effected without involving several other men in the slaughter. David concluded his complicated crime by sending back to Joab, through the messen-

gers who brought this intelligence, a hypocritical message of condolence : "Let not this thing displease thee, *for the sword devoureth one as well as another.*" And then, to fill up the measure of his successful guilt, he openly took Bathsheba to wife after the days of her mourning were expired, and she bore him a son.

But the deed which David had done with so much privacy, thinking to escape human detection, "displeased Jehovah ;" and he sent Nathan the Prophet to reprove him. This he did with much tact, in a well-known and very beautiful tale of oppression and distress, so framed that the king did not at the first perceive its application to himself, and which worked so powerfully upon his feelings that his anger was kindled against the man, who "had no pity," and he declared not only that he should, as the law required, make a fourfold restitution ; but with a severity beyond the law of the case, pronounced a sentence of death upon him. Instantly the prophet retorted, "*Thou art the man !*" In the name of the Lord, he authoritatively upbraided him with his ingratitude and transgression, and threatened him that *the sword* which he had privily employed to cut off Uriah should never depart from his own house, and that his own wives should be publicly dishonored by his neighbor.

Convicted and confounded, David instantly confessed his guilt—"I have sinned against Jehovah !"—and for this speedy humiliation, without attempting to dissemble or cloak his guilt, the Lord was pleased to remit the sentence of death which he had pronounced on himself, and to transfer it to the fruit of his crime. The child died ; and the Rabbins remark that three more of David's sons were cut off by violent deaths, thus completing as it were the fourfold retaliation for the murder of Uriah which he had himself denounced.

"The fall of David is one of the most instructive and alarming recorded in that most faithful and impartial of all histories, the Holy Bible. The remainder of his days were as disastrous as the beginning had been prosperous."

These things happened about the eighteenth year of David's reign, and the forty-eighth of his age.

Bathsheba bore him a second son. This was Solomon, who, long before his birth, and long before his mother was known to David, had been pointed out, by name, as "the man of peace," who was to succeed him in the throne, and through whom his dynasty was to reign in Israel.

But the commencement of the evils threatened upon the house of David was not long withheld. Amnon, the eldest of his sons, conceived a violent passion for his half-sister, Tamar, the full sister of Absalom. By a feigned sickness he procured her presence in his house, and delayed not to declare to her his criminal desires; and finding that he could not persuade her to compliance, he by force effected her dishonor. Then passing suddenly from a criminal excess of love to an equal excess of hate, he expelled her ignominiously from his house. Tamar, in her grief, rent her virginal robe and threw dust upon her head, and sought the asylum of her brother Absalom's house; for, according to the ideas of the East, *the son of the same mother* is, more than even the father, the proper person to protect a female and redress her wrongs. No man could be more haughty and implacable than Absalom; but he was also deeply politic, and while he received the unhappy Tamar with tenderness, he desired her to conceal her grief, seeing that a brother was the cause of it, and to spend her remaining days in retirement in his house. He made no complaint on the subject, and, young as he was, so well concealed his deep resentment that even Amnon had not the least suspicion of it. When the news of this villainous fact came to the ears of David, it troubled him greatly; but being greatly attached to Amnon, as being his eldest son and probable successor in the throne, he neglected to call him to account or to punish him for his transgression. This, we may be sure, increased the resentment of Absalom, and perhaps laid the foundation of his subsequent dislike of his father. Absalom waited full two years cherishing his purposes of vengeance, and then had Amnon murdered. He then fled to his grandfather Talmai, king of Geshur, and it was five years before David received him again.

It would seem that during his retirement Absalom had formed those designs, for the ultimate execution of which he

soon after began to prepare the way, this was no less than to deprive his father of his crown.

We need not repeat the story of his subsequent rebellion and death, after a sanguinary battle fought in the forest of Ephraim, wherein the rebel army was defeated, with the loss of 20,000 men slain in the battle-field, besides a great number of others who perished in the wood and in their flight. Absalom himself, mounted upon a mule, was obliged to flee from a party of David's men towards the wood, where the boughs of a thick oak having taken hold of his bushy hair, in which he took so much pride, the mule continuing its speed, left him suspended in the air. The pursuing soldiers, seeing him in this state, respected the order of the king, and forbore to smite him; but Joab, who happened to learn what had occurred, ran and struck three darts through his body.

On hearing this, "the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he wept, thus he said, 'O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'" And thus he remained in the chamber over the gate, with his head covered like a mourner, wailing for his son, and oblivious to all things else.

About the thirty-fourth year of David's reign commenced a grievous famine, which continued for three successive years.

Now that the Israelites had been weakened by two rebellions and three years of famine, the Philistines deemed the opportunity favorable for an attempt to shake off their yoke. They therefore renewed the war about the thirty-seventh year of David's reign, but were defeated in four engagements, and finally subdued. In all these engagements the Philistines exhibited their old passion for bringing gigantic champions into the field. In the first of these engagements, David himself, notwithstanding his years, shrunk not from the combat with the giant Izbi-benob; but he waxed faint, and was in danger of being slain, had not the brave and trusty Abishai hastened to his relief, and killed the gigantic Philistine. After this the people would no more allow David to go forth in person to battle, "that thou quench not the light of Is-

rael." This war completely extinguished the gigantic race to which Goliath had belonged.

The numbering of the people was one of the last and most reprehensible acts of the reign of David. In itself, an enumeration of the population might be not only innocent but useful ; it was the motive by which the deed was rendered evil. This motive, so offensive to God, was obviously supplied by the design of forcing all the Israelites into military service, with a view to foreign conquests ; a design not only pitiable in so old a man, but in every way repugnant to both the internal and external polity of the theocratical government. That the census was not, as in former times, taken through the priests and magistrates, but by Joab, as commander-in-chief, assisted by the other military chiefs, sufficiently indicates the military object of the census ; and if they were accompanied by the regular troops under their command, as the mention of their "encamping" leads one to suspect, it may be seen that the object was known to and disliked by the people, and that the census could only be taken in the presence of a military force. Indeed the measure was repugnant to the wishes of the military commanders themselves, and was in a peculiar degree abhorrent to Joab, who saw the danger to the liberties of the people, and gave it all the opposition in his power, and undertook it reluctantly, when he found the king adhered to his purpose with all the obstinacy of age.

David was now advancing towards seventy years of age, and it appeared from the declining state of his health that his latter end could not be far off. This made Adonijah, his eldest surviving son, determine to take measures to secure the throne, which, had it been hereditary, would naturally have devolved to him. He doubtless knew that the crown had been assigned to his younger brother Solomon, and he felt that this was perhaps his only opportunity of asserting what he conceived to be his natural rights. Adonijah was a very handsome man, and he had not at any time been baulked or contradicted by his father, many of whose sorrows arose from his excessive indulgence of his children. He now, in apparent imitation of Absalom, set up a splendid retinue, and

courted popularity among the people ; and he succeeded in drawing over to his party Joab, who now at last forsook his old master, and Abiathar the high-priest, who had shared all his fortunes. One day, when matters seemed ripe for the further development of his designs, he made a grand entertainment at Ain Rogel, the fountain in the king's garden, to which he invited all the king's sons, with the significant exception of Solomon ; and the principal persons in the state, with the exception of those who were known to be in Solomon's interest. There he was proclaimed king in the usual form, "God save king Adonijah !" by the powerful party assembled.

In this important emergency, Nathan the prophet sent Bathsheba to inform the king of these proceedings, and afterwards came in himself and confirmed her account. By both he was reminded of his previous declarations, that Solomon was to be his successor in the throne. The old king was roused to his wonted energy by this intelligence ; he instantly appointed Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, Benaiah, and his own guards the Cherethites and Pelethites who continued faithful, to take Solomon, and conduct him, mounted on the king's own mule, to the fountain of Gihon, and there to anoint and proclaim him king. The ceremony was thus attended with every circumstance which could give it authority in the eyes of the people, as indicating the intention of the king, which, it was now well known, was according to the will of God. There was the mule, which none but David had ever been seen to ride, and which, he having habitually ridden, none but a king might ride ; there was the prophet who could only sanction that which he knew to be the will of God ; there was Zadok, with the holy anointing oil from the tabernacle ; and there were the guards, whom the people had been accustomed to see in attendance only on the king. The whole ceremony was also directed to take place on one of the most public and frequented roads leading from Jerusalem. The people were adequately impressed by all these considerations and circumstances ; they heartily shouted, "God save king Solomon !" The earth was, as it were, rent with the rejoicing clamor, mixed with the sounds of trumpets and of

pipes. The party of Adonijah heard the noise ; and when informed of the cause, they were all so struck with consternation at the promptitude and effect of this counter-move, that they dispersed immediately, and slunk away every man to his own house. Adonijah, seeing himself thus forsaken, and dreading nothing less than immediate death, fled to the refuge of the altar (erected on the threshing-floor of Araunah). Solomon being informed of this, sent to tell him that if by his future conduct he proved himself a worthy man, he would not hurt a hair of his head ; but at the same time assured him that any future instance of a disloyal intention would be fatal to him. On leaving the altar Adonijah went and rendered his homage to the new king, after which he was ordered to retire to his own house.

David appears to have survived the coronation of Solomon about six months ; for although he reigned seven years and six months over Judah, and thirty-three years over all Israel, yet the whole duration is reckoned only forty years in 2 Samuel, v. 4, 5 ; 1 Chronicles, xxix. 27. The interval he seems to have employed in the development, for the benefit of his son, of those plans and regulations which had long before been formed and considered in his own mind, and to which the due effect was afterwards given by his son. These are fully stated in the first five chapters of the second book of Chronicles.

David was seventy years of age when he “slept with his fathers.” At that time certainly the period of human life was reduced to the present standard ; for, in recording his death at this age, the historian says, “He died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor.” He was buried in a stately tomb, which, according to a touching custom, still prevalent in the East, he had *prepared for himself*, in that part of the city (on Mount Zion) which he had covered with buildings, and which was called after him, “the city of David.”

CHAPTER VIII.

SOLOMON.

KING SOLOMON succeeded his father David in the year 1030, B. C., when he was about twenty years of age. Never monarch ascended the throne with greater advantages, or knew better how to secure and improve them. Under David, the kingdom had been much extended, and brought under good regulations. The arms of the Hebrews had for so many years been feared by all the neighboring nations, that the habit of respect and obedience on their part, offered to the new king the reasonable prospect, confirmed by a divine promise, that his reign should be one of peace.

Although Solomon was not the first-born, nor even the eldest living son of David, but succeeded to the throne through the special appointment of the Supreme King, Jehovah—there was one circumstance which, from the usual notions of the orientals, could not but be highly favorably to him, even had *all* his elder brothers been alive. Amnon had been born before his father became king, and Absalom and Adonijah while he was king of Judah only ; while Solomon was born when his father was king over all Israel, and lord over many neighboring states. And in the East there is a strong prejudice in favor of him who is the son of *the king* and of *the kingdom*, that is, who is born while his father actually *reigns* over the states which he leaves at his death. Soon after Solomon's accession he discovered and crushed another conspiracy of Adonijah's, aided by the king's own mother, Bathsheba.

By the removal of these dangerous persons, Solomon felt his throne secured to him. He then sought an alliance worthy of the rank to which his kingdom had attained. The nearest power, from an alliance with which even he might derive honor, was that of Egypt. He therefore demanded and re-

ceived the daughter of the reigning Pharaoh in marriage. His new spouse was received by the king of Israel with great magnificence, and was lodged in "the city of David," until the new and splendid palace, which he had already commenced, should be completed. That Solomon should thus contract an alliance, on equal terms, with the reigning family of that great nation which had formerly held the Israelites in bondage, was, in the ordinary point of view, a great thing for him, and shows the relative importance into which the Hebrew kingdom had now risen. The king is in no part of Scripture blamed for this alliance, even in places where it seems unlikely that blame would have been spared had he been considered blameworthy; and as we know that the Egyptians were idolaters, this absence of blame may intimate that Solomon stipulated that the Egyptian princess should abandon the worship of her own gods, and conform to the Jewish law. This at least was what would be required by the law of Moses, which the king was not likely (at least, at this time of his life,) to neglect. Nor need we suppose that the royal family of Egypt would make much difficulty in this; for, *except among the Israelites*, the religion of a woman has never in the East been considered of much consequence.

Soon after this, the discharge of those judicial duties which engage so much of the attention of eastern kings, gave him an opportunity of displaying so much discernment as satisfied the people of his uncommon endowments, and his eminent qualifications for his high place. This was his celebrated judgment between the two harlots who both claimed a living child, and both disclaimed one that had died; in which he discovered the rightful owner of the living child by calling forth that self-denying tenderness which always reigns in a mother's heart. This produced the very best effect among all the people; for generally nothing is better understood and appreciated, popularly, than an acute and able judicial decision of some difficult point in a case easily understood, and by which the sympathies are much engaged.

The preparations for the temple had from the first engaged the attention of Solomon. Among the first who sent to congratulate him on his succession was Hiram, king of

Tyre, who has already been named as an attached friend and ally of David. The value of the friendship offered by this monarch was fully appreciated by Solomon, who returned the embassy with a letter, in which he opened the noble design he entertained, and solicited the same sort of assistance in the furtherance of it, as the same king had rendered to his father David, when building his palace. Hiram assented with great willingness, and performed the required services with such fidelity and zeal as laid the foundation of a lasting friendship between the kings, and to the formation of other mutually beneficial connections between them. The forests of the Lebanon mountains only could supply the timber required for this great work. Such of these forests as lay nearest the sea were in the possession of the Phœnicians ; among whom timber was in such constant demand, that they had acquired great and acknowledged skill in the felling and transportation thereof, and hence it was of much importance that Hiram consented to employ large bodies of men in Lebanon to hew timber, as well as others to perform the service of bringing it down to the sea-side, whence it was to be taken along the coast in floats to the port of Joppa, from which place it could be easily taken across the country to Jerusalem. This portion of the assistance rendered by Hiram was of the utmost value and importance. If he had declined Solomon's proposals, all else that he wanted might have been obtained from Egypt. But that country was so far from being able to supply timber, that it wanted it more than almost any nation.

Solomon also desired that Phœnician artificers of all descriptions should be sent to Jerusalem, particularly such as excelled in the arts of design, and in the working of gold, silver, and other metals, as well as precious stones ; nor was he insensible of the value and beauty of those scarlet, purple, and other fine dyes, in the preparation and application of which the Tyrians excelled. Men skilled in all these branches of art were largely supplied by Hiram. He sent also a person of his own name, a Tyrian by birth, who seems to have been a second Bezaleel ; for his abilities were so great, and his attainments so extensive and various, that he was skilled not only in the working of metals, but in all kinds of works in

wood and stone, and even in embroidery, in tapestry, in dyes, and the manufacture of all sorts of fine cloth. And not only this, but his general attainments in art, and his inventive powers, enabled him to devise the means of executing, and to execute, whatever work in art might be proposed to him. This man was a treasure to Solomon, who made him oversee not only of the men whom the king of Tyre now sent, but of his own workmen, and those whom David had formerly engaged and retained in his employment.

In return for all these advantages, Solomon engaged on his part to furnish the king of Tyre yearly with 2500 quarters of wheat, and 150,000 gallons of pure olive oil, for his own use ; besides furnishing the men employed in Lebanon with the same corn quantities, respectively, of wheat and barley, and the same liquid quantities of wine and of oil.

Josephus informs us that the correspondence on this subject between Solomon and Hiram, copies of which are given by him as well as in the books of Kings and Chronicles, were in his time still preserved in the archives of Tyre.

Solomon, who certainly had a strong leaning toward arbitrary power, being still in want of laborers, ventured to raise a levy of 30,000 Israelites, whom he sent to assist the Phœnician timber-cutters in Lebanon—not all at once, but in alternate bands of 10,000 each, so that each band returned home and rested two months out of three. This relief, and the sacred object of the service, probably prevented the opposition which the king might otherwise have experienced. For the more onerous labor in the quarries, Solomon called out the remnant of the Canaanites, probably with those foreigners (or their sons) who had been brought into the country as prisoners or slaves during the wars of David, who had, indeed, left an enumeration of all of them (adult males) for this very purpose. Their number was 153,600 ; according to the common custom of the East in such cases, these no doubt labored in alternate bands, an instance of which has just been given, and as such service is usually required from persons in their condition, when any great public work is in progress, this measure was doubtless considered less arbitrary, and gave occasion to less discontent, than *we*, with our notions, might be

disposed to imagine. Of these strangers, 70,000 were appointed to act as porters to the others, and to the Phœnician artisans. They also probably had the heavy duty of transporting to Jerusalem the large stones, which 60,000 more of them were employed in hewing and squaring in the quarries. Of these the stones intended for the foundation were in immense blocks ; and, as well as the rest, were probably brought from no great distance, as quarries of very suitable stones are abundant in the neighborhood. The stones were squared in the quarry, to facilitate their removal. It has been a question how such vast blocks of stone as we see in some ancient buildings were brought to their destination. The remaining 3300 of these strangers were employed as overseers of the rest, and were, in their turn, accountable to superior Israelite officers.

Not only were the stones squared and fitted in the quarry, but the timber was shaped for its use, and every other article fitted and finished before it was brought to Jerusalem ; so that, at last, when the edifice began to be reared with the materials thus carefully prepared,

“No workman’s steel, no pond’rous axes rung ;
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.”

Three years were spent in these preparations ; but, at last, all was ready, and the foundation of this famous temple was laid in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign (1027 B.C.), in the second month, and finished in the eleventh year and eighth month, being a space of seven years and six months.

“The cella of the temple of Solomon, as described in the first book of Kings, was small, as all those of the Egyptian temples were, of few parts, but those noble and harmonious. It was about the same length, but not so wide, as St. Paul’s, Covent Garden ; this church is a double square inside, the temple was a treble square ; but one square was divided off for the oracle, and geometrical proportions thus established. It was one hundred and sixteen feet three inches long, to which must be added the pronaos, in the same way as that of St. Paul’s, Covent Garden, nineteen feet four inches and a half more ; giving a total length of one hundred and thirty-

five feet seven inches and a half long, by thirty-seven feet six inches broad, and fifty-eight feet one inch and a half high. It was surrounded on three sides by chambers in three stories, each story wider than the one below it, as the walls were narrowed, or made thinner, as they ascended, by sets-off of eleven inches on each side, which received the flooring-joists, 'as no cutting was on any account permitted.' Access to these apartments was given from the right-hand side of the interior of the temple, by a winding stair-case of stone, such as may be seen in several of the ancient Nubian temples. A row of loop-hole windows above the chambers gave light to the cella. The oracle was an exact square, of thirty-seven feet six inches, divided from the rest of the temple by a partition of cedar, thirty-seven feet six inches high, in the center of which was a pair of folding-doors of olive-wood, seven feet six inches wide, very richly carved, with palm-trees and open flowers and cherubim; the floor of the temple was boarded with fir, the roof was flat, covered with gold, upon thick planks of cedar, supported by large cedar beams. The inside walls and the ceiling were lined with cedar, beautifully carved, representing cherubim and palm-trees, clusters of foliage and open flowers, among which the lotus was conspicuous; and the whole interior was overlaid with gold, so that neither wood nor stone was seen, and nothing met the eye but pure gold, either plain as on the floor, or richly chased, and enriched with the gems they had brought from Egypt at the exodus, upon the walls and ceiling. At a little distance from 'the most holy place,' like the railing of a communion table, were fixed five massive gold candelabra, on each side the entrance, and between the candelabra were chains or wreaths of flowers, wrought in pure gold, separating even the entrance of the oracle from the body of the temple. Within the oracle was set the ancient 'ark of the covenant,' which had preceded them to the Promised Land, beneath two colossal cherubim, each nineteen feet four inches and a half high, with immense outspread wings, one wing of each cherubim touching the other in the middle of the temple, while the other wings touched the wall on each side; before them was the altar of incense, formed of cedar, and entirely overlaid with refined gold; and on the sides of

the temple were arranged ten golden tables, five on each side, for the exhibition of the shew-bread, besides other tables of silver, for the display of above one hundred gold vases of various patterns, and the censers, spoons, snuffers, etc., used in the service of the temple. It appears that the inside of the pronaos was also covered with gold; from it a grand pair of folding-doors nine feet four inches and a half wide opened into the temple. These doors were also overlaid with gold, embossed in rich patterns of cherubim, and knops and open flowers; both pairs of doors had ornamented hinges of gold, and before the doors of the oracle hung a vail, embroidered with cherubim, in blue and purple and crimson.

“Hiram, the architect (who was also a king), had sent over from Tyre his clerk of the works, who superintended the building till it became necessary to set up the two great columns of the pronaos; these were of the usual proportions of Egyptian columns, being five and a half diameters high, and as these gave the great characteristic feature to the building, Solomon sent an embassy to fetch the architect from Tyre to superintend the moulding and casting of these columns, which were intended to be of brass; and observe how conspicuous is the idea of the vase (the *bowl* of our translation) rising from a cylinder ornamented with lotus flowers; the bottom of the vase was partly hidden by the flowers, the belly of it was overlaid with net-work, ornamented by seven wreaths, the Hebrew number of happiness, and beneath the lip of the vase were two rows of *pomegranates*, one hundred in each row; these superb pillars were eight feet diameter, and forty-four feet high, supporting a noble entablature fourteen feet high.

“The temple was surrounded on the north, south, and east, by the inner or priest’s court, which had a triple colonnade around it, and before the western front was the great court, square and very spacious, having in the midst the great brazen altar, as wide as the front of the temple itself, viz., thirty-seven feet six inches square; it contained also the magnificent basin called the ‘molten sea,’ besides ten other lavatories, all of splendid workmanship in brass, for our architect appears to have a first-rate artist, both in designing and

executing, and his materials and talents to have been inadequately rewarded, even by the donation of twenty cities. The great court had three propylea, with gates of brass, and was surrounded also with a triple colonnade. Solomon placed his palace, in imitation of the Egyptian kings, adjoining the temple, and like them, also assumed the sacerdotal office, presiding at the consecration of the temple, preaching to the people, and offering the dedicatory prayer. Magnificent must have been the sight, to see the young king, clothed in royalty, officiating as priest before the immense altar, while the thousands of Levites and priests, on the east side, habited in surplices, with harps, cymbals, and trumpets in their hands, led the eye to the beautiful pillars flanking the doors of the temple, now thrown open and displaying the interior brilliantly lighted up, while the burnished gold of the floor, the ceiling, and the walls, with the precious gems with which they were enriched, reflecting the light on all sides, would completely overwhelm the imagination, were it not excited by the view of the embroidered vail, to consider the yet more awful glories of the most holy place ; and astounding must have been the din of the instruments of the four thousand Levites, led on by the priests with one hundred and twenty trumpets, directing the choruses of the immense congregation, as they chanted the sublime compositions of the royal Psalmist in the grand intonations of the Hebrew language, like the 'roaring of many waters.'"

As the utensils for the sacred service were similar in design and use to those in the tabernacle of Moses, which have received due attention, it is not necessary to enter into details respecting those which Solomon provided for his temple. It may suffice to mention that, seeing it was designed that the sacred services should be conducted on a larger and more splendid scale than in former times, the instruments of service were proportionately larger, or more splendid, or more numerous. The most remarkable of the new utensils was "the molten sea," which was destined to occupy the place of "the brazen laver" of the old tabernacle. It was cast of fine brass, a hand's breadth thick, and its border was wrought "like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies." It was so

large as to contain about 15,000 gallons of water. It was mounted on twelve brazen oxen, which must have given it a very imposing appearance. The instance proves, by the by, as do the figures of cherubim so profusely displayed in all parts of the temple, and the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that the Hebrews were not forbidden to make images of living creatures, so that they were not designed for any idolatrous or superstitious object. Had it been otherwise, nothing could well have been more suspicious and dangerous than the figures of oxen, considering the addiction of the Israelites to the worship of the ox Apis, as evinced by the golden figure of him which they worshiped in the wilderness, and by those which were ultimately set up in Dan and Bethel. Lions, as well as oxen and cherubim, were figured on the base of the smaller lavers which stood in the same (the inner) court of the temple with the large one.

The temple, with all things destined for its service, and every arrangement connected with it, being completed in seven years, its dedication was celebrated the year after, with a magnificence worthy of the object and the occasion. All the chief men in Israel were present—the heads of tribes, and paternal chiefs, together with multitudes of people from all parts of the land. The priests, if not the Levites, also attended in full force, the succession of the courses being *afterwards* to commence. God himself was pleased to manifest his presence and his complacency by two striking miracles :

At the moment when the ark of the covenant, having been brought in high procession from its former place in “the city of David,” was deposited in the Holy of Holies, the numerous Levitical choirs thundered forth their well-known song—sent to the heavens by their united voices, and by the harmonious concord of a thousand instruments : “Praise Jehovah ! for he is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever !” Suddenly, as at the consecration of the first tabernacle, the house of God was covered with a thick cloud, which filled it, and which enveloped all the assistants in such profound obscurity that the priests were unable to continue their services.

This was a manifest symbol that God had accepted this

as his house, his palace, and that his Presence had entered to inhabit there. It was so understood by Solomon, whose voice rose amidst the silence which ensued. "Jehovah said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever !" The king stood on a brazen platform which had been erected in front of the altar ; and now, turning to the people, he explained the origin and object of the building. After which "he spread forth his hands" towards the heavens to address himself to God. The prayer he offered on this occasion is one of the noblest and most sublime compositions in the Bible. It exhibits the most exalted conceptions of the omnipresence of God, and of his superintending providence ; and dwells more especially on his peculiar protection of the Hebrew nation, from the time of its departure from Egypt, and imploring pardon and forgiveness for all their sins and transgressions in the land, and during those ensuing captivities which, in the same prophetic spirit that animated the last address of Moses, he appears to have foreseen. Nothing can be finer than that part of his long and beautiful address, in which, recurring to the idea of *inhabitation*, which had been so forcibly brought before his mind, he cries, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth ? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens can not contain thee ; how much less this house that I have builded !"

The king had no sooner concluded his prayer than a fire from the heavens descended upon the altar and consumed the burnt offerings. All the Israelites beheld this prodigy, and bent their faces towards the earth in adoration, and repeated with one voice the praise which was the most acceptable to him, "He is good ; his mercy endureth for ever !"

By these two signs the sanctuary and the altar received the same acceptance and consecration which had been granted in the wilderness to the tabernacle and the altar there.

The king's numerous palaces were perhaps even more magnificent than the temple. These structures were, for the most part, built with immense blocks of squared stones ; and the whole was fitted up with cedar, while the nobler rooms and galleries were lined with slabs of costly polished marble

to the floor, and were above enriched with sculptures (on the wall), and apparently with paintings (on the plaster), especially towards the ceiling, all of which we may conclude to have been very much in the style of similar things among the Egyptians, whose palaces were decorated after the same style. And if we have rightly interpreted Josephus to intimate that there were three ranges of ornaments in the principal rooms, polished slabs at the bottom, sculpture above, and painting towards the top, it would be very easy to show how the same ideas and distributions are retained in the palaces of the modern East, where, above basement slabs of *looking-glass*, are wrought recesses and carvings and arabesques and ornaments of stucco (sculpture being interdicted), while towards the ceiling much highly-colored painting is displayed. If we may credit Josephus, "barbaric pearl and gold" were not wanting among the materials which contributed to the decoration of the more splendid apartments. The historian is at a loss for words to express the full conception, which the traditions of his fathers had conveyed to his mind, of the splendors of Solomon's palatial buildings: "It would be an endless task (he says) to give a particular survey of this mighty mass of building; so many courts and other contrivances; such a variety of chambers and offices, great and small; long and large galleries; vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, set out as richly as could be with costly furniture and gildings; besides, that all the services for the king's table were of pure gold. In a word, the whole palace was, in a manner, made up from the base to the coping, of white marble, cedar, gold, and silver, with precious stones here and there intermingled upon the walls and ceilings."

The judgment porch of Solomon's palace we take to have been a large covered apartment, supported by pillars, and entirely open in front. It was seventy-five feet long by forty-five feet broad. Here, upon a raised platform, to which there was an ascent by steps, was placed the *throne* of Solomon, of which so much notice is taken in the scriptural description and in that of Josephus; from which, with the help of particulars preserved by early traditions, we collect that to the raised dais, or platform, on which the throne rested, there was

an ascent by six steps. The balustrade (so to speak) of these steps was formed by the figures of couching lions of gold, twelve in all, being two to each step. The throne itself was of *ivory* (a material which appears to have been unknown in Palestine until the time of Solomon), studded and enriched with gold, and over it was a semi-spherical canopy. Besides the twelve lions on the six steps of ascent, there were two as "stays" on each side of the seat, the back of which appears to have been concave.

On the walls of the hall in which the throne was placed were probably hung the 300 shields of gold (or probably of wood or hide, covered with gold) which the king caused to be made, and which are mentioned among the proudest treasures of the kingdom. There were 200 other shields, of the same costly material, and twice as large, which were for the use of the royal guard; for, as we shall see presently, the state of the king in his court and in his going forth, was fully commensurate to the magnificence of his palaces.

It was doubtless from the considerations arising from his connection with king Hiram, and from narrowly observing the sources of the extraordinary prosperity enjoyed by the Phœnician state, coupled with the want of adequate means for the execution of the magnificent plans which his mind had formed, that Solomon began to turn his own attention to foreign commerce, as a source of wealth and aggrandizement. We are unacquainted with the particular inducements which Solomon was able to offer to the Phœnicians, who were in this matter proverbially a jealous people, to induce them to offer the benefit of their experience in this enterprise. But it is certain that they furnished the king with ships, such as they employed in their distant voyages westward, and therefore called "ships of Tarshish," and that these ships were manned by Phœnician mariners, and voyaged in company with a fleet of ships belonging to the king of Tyre. That they must have had very cogent reasons for this—for allowing themselves to be made the instruments of enriching the Hebrew king by traffic with foreign parts—no one who is acquainted with the historical character of that people, or with the commercial character in general, will in the least degree

doubt. In seeking the motive by which their proceedings were determined, we must consider the direction of the voyage. In another work we have exhibited our reasons for concluding that the regions of Tarshish and Ophir lay not in different directions, but were visited in the same voyage; and further that this voyage embraced the southern shores of Arabia, the eastern shores of Africa, and possibly the isle of Ceylon, if not some points in the Indian peninsula. This being the case, we shall perceive that although the Phœnicians had the exclusive command of the *westward* traffic, on the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, they could have had no share in this *eastern* traffic but on such terms as Solomon might think proper to impose. For he was in possession of the ports of the Elanitic Gulf, and of the intervening country, whereby he held the key of the Red Sea, and could at his pleasure exclude them from that door of access to the Indian Ocean. It is true that there was another door, by the Gulf of Suez; but its ports were in the hands of the Egyptians, who were by no means likely to allow unobstructed access to it. And then, as to the other channel, across the desert to the Euphrates and Persian Gulf, the key of this also was in the hand of Solomon, by virtue of his military stations on the Euphrates, and his complete command of the desert country west of that river. It may thus appear that since the Phœnicians could have no access to the Indian Ocean but with the consent and by the assistance of the Hebrew king, he was in a condition to stipulate for a profitable partnership in the enterprise. Nor perhaps was he so entirely dependent upon the Phœnicians for the execution of his plans as might at first sight appear: for although the Israelites knew little of maritime affairs, this was not the case with the Edomites, who were now the subjects of Solomon. They had been accustomed to navigate the Red Sea, and probably to some extent beyond; and although we know not that they reached the shores to which, under the abler guidance of the Phœnicians, the fleets of Solomon penetrated, they probably might have been made, with a little encouragement, the instruments of his designs. In preferring the Phœnicians, Solomon was probably influenced, not only by the knowledge

of their greater experience in distant voyages, but by political considerations, which might suggest that he could always control this trade, as conducted by the Phœnicians, while to the Edomites living on the borders of the Elanitic Gulf it would give such advantages as might in time enable them to engross the whole trade, and to shake off the yoke his father had imposed upon them.

The interest which the king took in the matter may be judged of from the fact that he went in person to the port of Ezion-geber, at the head of the gulf, to superintend the preparations, and to witness the departure of the fleet.

A thirst for knowledge, which is one of the surest evidences of the "wisdom" with which this splendid monarch was gifted, may have had some share in promoting this design; for his agents were instructed not only to seek wealth, but to bring back specimens of whatever was curious or instructive in the countries to which they came. We know they brought various foreign animals and birds; and since the king took much interest in botany, it is more than likely that they also brought the seeds of many plants which had engaged their attention by their use or beauty; and that consequently we may refer to this reign the introduction into Palestine of many plants which had not been known there in former times.

The fleet returned in the third year, laden with the rich and curious treasures of the South and the remote East. There were vast quantities of gold and silver, while the bulk of the cargo was composed of elephants' teeth, and various sorts of valuable woods and precious stones. Nor were the supercargoes which the king sent in the ships unmindful of his peculiar tastes, and probably his special orders, for they took pains to collect examples of the more curious animals, and doubtless other products of the countries to which they came. Among these, monkeys and peacocks are particularly named—probably from their more singular difference from the forms of animal life with which the Hebrews were previously acquainted.

Without doubt, a large portion of the commodities thus obtained were sold at a great profit. And this explains that

while in one place the yearly weight of gold brought to the king, by his ships, is stated at 480 talents, the yearly profit in gold derived both directly and indirectly from these voyages, is counted at the weight of 666 talents, which according to the lower computation would make not less than twenty millions of dollars.

Of the precious woods, Solomon employed a considerable portion in making balustrades for the temple, and in the fabrication of instruments of music. And of the gold, a large quantity was used in making various sorts of golden shields, and the various vessels of the palace. In that palace *all* the vessels were of gold ; silver was not seen there : for under the influx of gold as well as of silver, from various sources, the latter metal was much depreciated in value during this splendid reign : “It was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon ; he made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones.” And, in like manner, the rather poor wood of the cedar, which had previously, in the want of large and good timber, acquired a high value, sunk much in estimation, through the large importations of the compact and beautiful eastern timbers, as well as through the profuse supply of cedar-wood itself from Lebanon.

Besides this marine traffic the caravan trade by land engaged a full share of Solomon’s attention. By the possession of a southern frontier stretching across from the Elanitic Gulf to the Mediterranean, the land traffic between Egypt and Syria lay completely at his mercy. He felt this, and through some arrangement with his father-in-law the king of Egypt, he contrived to monopolize it entirely in his own hands. It appears that what Syria chiefly required from Egypt were *linen fabrics* and *yarn*, for the manufacture of which that country had long been celebrated ; also *chariots*, the extensive use of which in Egypt has already been pointed out ; and *horses*, of which that country possessed a very excellent and superior breed, if we may judge from the numerous fine examples which the paintings and sculptures offer. All this trade Solomon appears to have intercepted and monopolized. He was supplied by contract, at a fixed price, with certain quantities adequate to the supply of the Syrian market, which,

after retaining what he required for himself, his factors sold, of course at a high profit, to the different kings of Syria. The price was doubtless arbitrary, and dependent on times and circumstances ; but the contract price at which the chariots and horses were supplied by the Egyptians to the Hebrew factors happens to be named—600 silver shekels for a chariot, and one fourth of that sum, or 150 shekels, for a horse.

This was not the only land traffic which engaged the notice of Solomon. His attention was attracted to the extensive and valuable caravan trade which, from very remote ages, coming from the further East, and the Persian Gulf, proceeded to Egypt, Tyre, and other points on the Mediterranean, by the Euphrates and across the great Syrian desert.

Besides these branches of commerce, “the traffic of the *spice* merchants” is mentioned among the sources from which wealth accrued to Solomon. In what form this profit was derived is not distinctly intimated. From the analogy of his other operations, we might conclude that he bought up the costly spices and aromatics brought by the spice caravans of southernmost Arabia, which must needs pass through his territories ; and that, after deducting what sufficed for the large consumption of his own nation, he sold the residue at an enhanced price to the neighboring nations.

Besides the commercial advantages, the country had numerous outlets for all its agricultural products ; and afterwards it enjoyed a good market for foreign products, the transport, which is in general most expensive, being effected almost without real cost by the returning merchants. But instead of confining himself to these obvious sources of profit, Solomon was incited by his vanity, and by the example of the Tyrians, to send forth numerous fleets at a vast cost. The success of these expeditions introduced a disproportionate luxury into Jerusalem, replacing there the rich simplicity of life which had previously characterized the Hebrew nation. A court, organized on the most splendid oriental models—a vast seraglio, a sumptuous table, officers without number, and hosts of avidious concubines, afflicted a country in which the balance of conditions and property, as established by Moses, ought to have been maintained with the most jealous exactitude.

Vast numbers of persons, who acted in some capacity or other as the servants of the numerous officers of the king ; the officers and servants of the great personages who were constantly visiting the court of Solomon, and the numerous servants of those officers and royal servants ; the harem, which alone contained a thousand women, with a great number of servants and eunuchs ; and probably the rations of the royal guards and of all dependent upon them—all were to be supplied from the court, being considered as members or guests of the royal household. This explains the prodigious quantities of victuals which were *daily* required for the use of the court, of which the account is—"Solomon's provision for one day was thirty cores (750 bushels) of fine flour, and three-score cores (1,500 bushels) of meal ; ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl."

And besides this, it would seem that the people had the charge of supporting the numerous *horses* kept by Solomon. Unmindful of the law by which the kings were expressly forbidden "to multiply horses unto themselves," Solomon formed a numerous body of cavalry. He had 1,400 chariots, which, being Egyptian chariots, doubtless had two horses to each ; and not fewer than 12,000 horsemen. A portion of these he kept in Jerusalem, and the rest were distributed through the land in what were called from this circumstance, the "chariot-cities." This distribution was doubtless made for the purpose of equally distributing the charge of their subsistence.

Josephus reckons up the horses of Solomon as 20,000, and says that they were the most beautiful in their appearance and the most remarkable for their swiftness that could anywhere be seen ; and that, to preserve these qualities, they were kept in constant and careful exercise. The riders were in their appearance quite worthy of their horses. They were young men in the beauty and flower of their age, and the tallest in stature that could be found in the country. Their undress was of Tyrian purple ; and their long hair, which hung in loose tresses, glittered with golden dust with which, every day, they sprinkled their heads. But when they attended the king they were in complete armor, and had their

bows ready strung. Often, in the fine season, the king rode down to his beautiful gardens at Etham, six miles from Jerusalem, attended by these young men. On such occasions he rode loftily in his chariot, arrayed in white robes.

But we have a still better description of the manner of the king's excursions, from the pen of Solomon himself, in his renowned Song of Songs. His bride is represented sitting in her kiosk, and looking towards the quarter in which the royal gardens lay; and takes notice of an appearance concerning which she inquires of her virgins:—

“ ‘ *Bride*.—What is this that cometh from the wilderness,
Like clouds of smoke perfumed with myrrh,
With incense, and all the powders of the merchant?’
‘ *Virgins*.—Behold, this is the *palanquin* of Solomon.
Three-score valiant men are about it,
Of the valiant of Israel.
They all bear swords, being expert in war;
Each bears his sword on his thigh,
On account of the perils of the night.
King Solomon hath made for himself
This *couch* of the wood of Lebanon.
Its pillars hath he made of silver,
Its bases of gold, its cushions of purple.
The middle of it is spread with love
By the daughters of Jerusalem.’ ”

This is a very clear description of a splendid palanquin or litter, and shows that this conveyance was then in use among great people, as it was in Egypt, and is still, in one form or another, throughout the East.

In this attempt to convey some notion of the royal establishments, the wealth, the state, and the pomp of Solomon's court, which, on an inferior scale, formed the model to subsequent Hebrew kings, it is necessary that some notice of his harem should be taken.

The women of the king's harem are to be considered as making a part of his retinue or equipage, since, generally speaking, they were merely designed to augment the pomp which belonged to his character and his situation. The multiplication of women in the character of wives and concubines was, indeed, forbidden in the strongest manner by the law of

Moses ; but Solomon, and, though in a less extent, several other Hebrew kings, paid little heed to this admonition, and too readily and wickedly exposed themselves to the dangers which Moses had anticipated as the result of pursuing the course which he had interdicted.

The women in the harem of Solomon were not fewer than one thousand, of whom the Scripture counts seven hundred as wives and three hundred as concubines. This distinction may be taken as illustrated by Solomon's own classification at a time when he was younger, and his harem was less extensive, than in the later day to which the present statement refers : "In my palace are threescore *queens*, and fourscore *concubines*, and *virgins* without number." Here by *queens* we are probably to understand those of noble parentage, who at the celebration of their nuptials brought ample dowries with them ; by *concubines* those who were selected on account of their personal charms, and were married without dowries ; and by *virgins* those who were also procured (perhaps purchased) by the royal purveyors on account of their beauty, and who were in waiting to be introduced to the royal notice. With the number of these Solomon himself does not appear to have been acquainted. The same distribution doubtless applies to the larger number which now engages our notice.

That a large proportion of the whole were foreigners and idolaters is certain.

King Solomon was unquestionably wise : but, from this and other matters, we may suspect the practical character of his wisdom—may doubt whether it were not rather "the wisdom of words," or of ideas, or even of knowledge, than that wisdom of conduct, or, more properly, wisdom manifested in conduct, which is worth more than all.

The view which we take—that the proverbial wisdom of Solomon had nothing to do with his moral character or perceptions ; and that, although he *possessed* the most wisdom, he was not in his *use* of it the wisest of men, appears to be precisely that which the scriptural narrative intended to convey. Nor is the world without other eminent instances in which vast attainments, and a strength and grasp of intellect before which the most hidden things of physical and moral

nature lay open and bare, have been united with much weakness of heart and great deficiency in the moral sense. This view does not therefore in the least degree interfere with the conviction that "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore. . . . For he was wiser than all men ; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol : and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs : and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall : he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom."

Among these there is one whose visit is more particularly mentioned than any other. This was the queen of Sheba. And the distinguished notice which her visit has obtained is probably on account of the greater distance from which she came, and the greater glory which therefrom redounded to Solomon, the fame of whose wisdom brought her, with royal offerings, from her far distant land. That land is supposed to have been Abyssinia ; and as the fleets of Solomon, which passed through the Red Sea, may, with the greatest probability, be presumed to have touched and traded at the eastern ports of Africa, it is easy to see through what channels she might have heard of the glory and wisdom of the Hebrew king. She came with a very great and splendid retinue ; and in her train were camels laden with spices, gold, and precious stones. In her interviews with Solomon she "proved him with hard questions," a mode of testing "wisdom" which was common in that age, and which, indeed, every one who made unusual pretensions to knowledge and sagacity was understood to invite. Solomon was familiar with this exercise, for doubtless other illustrious visitors had tried his wisdom in the same manner ; and Josephus expressly says that before this there had been much passing of "hard questions" to and fro between him and Hiram king of Tyre. He readily solved all the difficulties which the royal stranger proposed ; and we

are told that, "when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of Jehovah, there was no more spirit in her, and she said to the king, 'It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine own eyes had seen it; and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men! happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be Jehovah thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel.'"

Being now satisfied, the queen presented Solomon with the precious things she had brought with her. The gold alone was not less than one hundred and twenty talents, and with respect to the spices, it is remarked that "there came no more such abundance of spices as those which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon." Suitable returns were made by him; and the queen returned to her own country.

The glory of Solomon's reign was grievously dimmed towards its conclusion. It will be observed that he had not only transgressed the law by "multiplying wives unto himself," but had taken a considerable proportion of them from the neighboring idolatrous and adverse nations, with whom the Israelites generally had been interdicted from contracting any alliance, on the ground that such connections might turn their hearts to idols. The case of Solomon evinced in the strongest manner the wisdom and foresight of this interdiction; for even he, in the doating attachment of his latter days to the "fair idolatresses" in his harem, not only tolerated the public exercises of their idolatrous worship, but himself erected high places for the worship of Ashtaroath, the goddess of the Sidonians; of Chemosh, the god of the Moabites; and of Molech, the abominable idol of the Ammonites, on the hills opposite to and overlooking that splendid temple which he had commenced his reign by building to Jehovah. The con-

trast of these two acts, at the opposite extremities of his reign, offers as striking a "vanity" as any of those on which he expatiates in his book. In the end, his fall was rendered complete by his own participation, by the act of sacrifice, in the worship of these idols. This great and astonishing offense is, with sufficient probability, reckoned by Abulfaragi to have taken place about the thirty-fourth year of Solomon's reign, and the fifty-fourth of his age. By this fall he forfeited the benefits and privileges which had been promised on the condition of his obedience and rectitude. It was not long before the doom which he had so weakly and willfully incurred was made known to him. This was that the kingdom should be *rent* from him and given to his servant. Nevertheless, in judgment remembering mercy, the Lord said that this great evil should not occur during his time, but under his son. This was for David's sake ; and, for his sake also, who had derived so much satisfaction from the promised perpetuity of his race in the throne, his house should still reign over one tribe, that of Judah, with which Benjamin had now coalesced. How this intimation was received by Solomon, and what effect it produced upon him, we are not told.

Whether Solomon ultimately repented of his offenses, and was reconciled to God, is a question which is involved in some doubt. If he did repent, it is a matter of surprise that there is not the least intimation of so interesting and important a circumstance, either in the books of Kings and Chronicles, or in Josephus.

Solomon died in the year 990 B. C., after he had reigned forty years, and lived about sixty. With all his glory he was little lamented by his subjects, for reasons which will now be obvious to the reader. Indeed, a great part of the nation may appear to have regarded his death with a secret satisfaction, on account of the prospect which it offered of a release from the heavy imposts which the king had found it necessary to inflict for the support of his costly establishments. The more the splendor of Solomon's reign is considered, the more its illusive and insubstantial character will appear, whether we inquire for its effect upon the real welfare of the nation or even upon the permanent grandeur of the crown. Its utter dis-

proportion to the permanent means and resources of the state is strikingly and sufficiently evinced by the fact that, so far from any of his successors supporting or restoring the magnificence of his court, the quantities of gold which he had lavished upon his various works and utensils gradually disappeared, to the last fragment, and served but as a treasure on which succeeding kings drew until it was entirely exhausted.

Of the children of Solomon history has only preserved the name of one son, Rehoboam, his destined successor, and one daughter named Taphath. Rehoboam was the son of an Ammonitish mother, and being born the year before his father's accession to the throne, was of course upwards of forty years of age when that father died.

CHAPTER IX.

ISAIAH.

ISAIAH was the first of the four great prophets, and is represented to have entered on the prophetic office in the last year of Uzziah's reign, about 758 years B. C. Some have supposed that he did not live beyond the fifteenth or sixteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, in which case he prophesied during the space of about forty-five years. Others suppose that he survived Hezekiah and suffered martyrdom during a succeeding reign, about 698 years B. C., being cruelly sawn asunder with a wooden saw. Isaiah informs us himself that he prophesied during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, who successively flourished between A. M. 3194 and 3305. The name of Isaiah is in some measure descriptive of his character, since it signifies "the salvation of Jehovah." He has always been considered a prophet of the highest eminence, and looked up to as the highest luminary of the Jewish church. He speaks of himself as enlightened by vision ; and he has been emphatically styled the evangelical prophet, so copiously and clearly does he describe the Messiah, and characterize his kingdom, favored, as it were, with an intimate view of the Gospel state, from the very birth of our Saviour, "to be conceived of a virgin," to that glorious and triumphant period when every Gentile nation shall bring a clean offering to the Lord, and "all flesh shall come to worship" before him. It is certain that Isaiah, in addition to his other prophetic privileges, was invested with the power of performing miracles. Besides those that are ascribed to him in Scripture, tradition relates that he supplied the people besieged under Hezekiah with water from Siloam, while the enemy could not procure it. It is remarkable that the wife of Isaiah is styled a proph-

etess, and the Rabbins maintain that she possessed the gift of prophecy. He himself appears to have been raised up as a striking object of veneration among the Jews, and to have regulated his whole conduct in subserviency to his sacred appointment. His sons, likewise, were for types and figurative pledges of God's assurances, and their names and actions were intended to awaken a religious attention in the persons whom they were commissioned to address and to instruct.

Isaiah was animated with the most lively zeal for God's honor and service. He was employed chiefly to preach repentance to Judah, though he occasionally uttered prophecies against the ten tribes, which in his time constituted the separate kingdom of Israel. In the prudent reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, the kingdom of Judah flourished, but in the time of Ahaz Isaiah had ample subject for reproach, as idolatry was established, even in the temple, and the kingdom nearly ruined by the impiety which the king had introduced and countenanced. In the reign of Hezekiah, his endeavors to reform the people were more successful, and some piety prevailed, till the seduction of Manasseh completed the triumph of idolatry and sin. There are many historical relations scattered through the book of Isaiah which illustrate the designs and occasions of the prophecies. The prophetic parts are sometimes considered under five divisions. The first part, which extends from the beginning to the thirteenth chapter, contains five discourses immediately addressed to the Jews and Ephraimites, whom the prophet addressed on various subjects in various tones of exhortation and reproof. The second part, which extends to the twenty-fifth chapter, contains eight discourses, in which the fate of other nations, as of the Babylonians, Philistines, Moabites, Syrians and Egyptians is described. The third part, which terminates with the thirty-sixth chapter, contains God's threats denounced against the disobedient Jews and enemies of the church, interspersed with consolatory promises, which were intended to encourage those who might have deserved God's favor. The fourth part, which begins at the fortieth chapter, where the prophetic strain is resumed, describes in four discourses the manifestation of the Messiah, with many introductory and attendant circumstances

This division ends at the forty-ninth chapter. The fifth part, which concludes the prophecies, describes more particularly the appearance of our Saviour and the character of his kingdom. The historical part, which begins with the thirty-sixth and terminates with the thirty-ninth chapter, relates the remarkable events of those times in which God employed the ministry of Isaiah.

With respect to chronological arrangement, it must be observed, that the first five chapters appear to relate to the time of Uzziah. The vision described in the sixth chapter must have happened early in the reign of Jotham. The next fifteen chapters contain the prophecies delivered under Ahaz; and the prophecies which follow to the end of the book, were probably uttered under Hezekiah. Some writers, however, have conceived that the chapters have been accidentally deranged; and it is possible that the prophecies were not delivered by the prophet exactly in the order in which they now stand. Others have attributed the dislocations, if there be any, to the men of Hezekiah, who are said to have collected these prophecies.

When Isaiah entered on the prophetic office, a darker scene of things began to arise. As idolatry predominated, and the captivity drew near, plainer declarations of God's future mercies were necessary to keep alive the expectations and confidence of the people. In treating of the captivities and deliverance of the Hebrew nation, the prophet is often led to consider those more important captivities and deliverances which these temporal wants foreshowed. Hence with promises of the first, he blends assurances of final restoration. From the bondage of Israel, he likewise adverts to the bondage under which the Gentile world was held by ignorance and sin; and hence he exhibits in connected representation, deliverance from particular afflictions, and the general deliverance from sin and death. The present concern is often forgotten in the contemplation of the distant prospect. The prophet passes with rapidity from the first to the second subject without intimation of the change, or accurate discrimination of their respective circumstances; as for instance in the fifty-second chapter, where the prophet, after speaking of the re-

covery from the Assyrian oppression, suddenly drops the idea of the present redemption, and breaks out into a rapturous description of the gospel salvation which it prefigured.

Among the prophecies of Isaiah which deserve to be particularly noted for their especial perspicuity and striking accomplishment, are those in which he foretold the captivities of Israel and Judah ; and described the ruin and desolation of Babylon, Tyre, and other nations. He spoke of Cyrus by name, and of his conquests, above 200 years before his birth, in predictions which are supposed to have influenced that monarch to release the Jews from captivity, being probably shown to him by Daniel. But it must be repeated, that the prophecies concerning the Messiah seem almost to anticipate the gospel history, so clearly do they foreshow the divine character of Christ ; his miracles ; his peculiar qualities and virtues ; his rejection, and sufferings for our sins ; his death, burial, and victory over the grave ; and lastly, his final glory, and the establishment, increase, and perfection of his kingdom ; each specially pointed out and portrayed with the most striking and discriminating characters. It is impossible, indeed, to reflect on these and on the whole chain of his illustrious prophecies, and not to be sensible that they present the most incontestable evidence in support of Christianity.

The style of Isaiah has been universally admired as the most perfect model of the sublime ; it is distinguished for all the magnificence and for all the sweetness of the Hebrew language. The variety of his images and the animated warmth of his expressions, characterize him as unequalled in point of eloquence ; and if we were desirous of producing a specimen of the dignity and beauties of the Scripture language, we should immediately think of having recourse to Isaiah. St. Jerome speaks of him as conversant with every part of science ; and indeed, the marks of a cultivated and improved mind are stamped on every page of his book ; but these are almost eclipsed by the splendor of his inspired knowledge. In the delivery of his prophecies and instructions, he utters his enraptured strains with an elevation and majesty which unhallowed lips would never have attained. From the grand exordium in the first chapter, to the concluding description of the

gospel, to "be brought forth" in wonders, and to terminate in the dispensations of eternity ; from first to last, there is one continued display of inspired wisdom, revealing its oracles and precepts for the instruction of mankind. The prophecies of Isaiah were modulated to a kind of rhythm, and they are evidently divided into certain metrical stanzas or lines.

Isaiah, besides this book of prophecies, wrote an account of the actions of Uzziah ; this has perished, with some other writings of the prophets, which, as probably not written by inspiration, were never admitted into the canon of Scripture. Some apocryphal books have likewise been attributed to him ; among others, that so often cited by Origen and other fathers, entitled " The Ascension of Isaiah ;" not to mention a later book called " The Vision of Isaiah," which is only a compilation from his works. These are probably attributed to him on as insufficient grounds as the books of Solomon and Job.

CHAPTER X.

JEREMIAH.

JEREMIAH was the son of Hilkiah ; probably not of that Hilkiah who was high priest in the reign of Josiah, but certainly he was of sacerdotal extraction, and a native of Anathoth, a village about three miles from Jerusalem, appointed for the priests in that part of Judea which was allotted to the tribe of Benjamin.

He was called to the prophetic office nearly at the same time with Zephaniah, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, the son of Amon, A. M. 3376. Like St. John the Baptist and St. Paul, he was, even in his mother's womb, ordained a prophet to the Jews and other nations. He was not, however, expressly addressed by the word of God till about the fourteenth year of his age, when he diffidently sought to decline the appointment on account of his youth, till, influenced by the divine encouragement, he obeyed, and continued to prophesy upwards of forty years, during several successive reigns of the degenerate descendants of Josiah, to whom he fearlessly revealed those marks of the divine vengeance which their fluctuating and rebellious conduct drew on themselves and their country.

After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, he was suffered by Nebuchadnezzar to remain and lament the miseries and desolation of Judea, from whence he sent consolatory assurances to his captive countrymen. He was afterward, as we are by himself informed, carried with his disciple Baruch into Egypt, by Johanan, the son of Kareah, who, contrary to his advice and prophetic admonitions, returned from Judea.

Many circumstances relative to Jeremiah are interspersed in his writings, and many more which deserve but little cred-

it, have been recorded by the Rabbins and other writers. He appears to have been exposed to cruel and unjust persecutions from the Jews, and especially from those of his own village, during his whole life, on account of the zeal and fervor with which he censured their incorrigible sins ; and he is sometimes provoked to break out into the most feeling and bitter complaints of the treatment which he received. The author of Ecclesiasticus, alluding to his sufferings, remarks that they entreated him evil, who nevertheless was a prophet, sanctified from his mother's womb. According to the account of St. Jerome, he was stoned to death at Tahpanhes, a royal city of Egypt, about 586 years before the birth of Christ, either by his own countrymen, as is generally maintained, or by the Egyptians, to both of which people he had rendered himself obnoxious by the terrifying prophecies which he had uttered. The chronicle of Alexandria relates that the prophet had incensed the Egyptians by predicting that their idols should be overthrown by an earthquake when the Saviour of the earth should be born and placed in a manger. His prophecies, however, that are still extant concerning the conquests of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, the "servant of God," must have been sufficient to excite the fears and hatred of those against whom they were uttered. It was added to this account which Ptolemy received, that Alexander the Great, visiting the tomb of Jeremiah, and hearing what he had predicted concerning his person, ordered that the prophet's urn should be removed to Alexandria, and built a magnificent monument to his memory. This was soon rendered an object of general attention ; and as a reverence for the prophet's character encircled it with imaginary influence, it became celebrated as a place of miracles. Other accounts, however, relate that the prophet returned unto his own country ; and travelers are still shown a place in the neighborhood of Jerusalem where, as they are told, Jeremiah composed his prophecies, and where Constantine erected a tomb to his memory.

Jeremiah, who professes himself the author of these prophecies, employed Baruch as his amanuensis in committing them to writing. He appears to have made, at different times, collections of what he had delivered. The first seems



*"You stand there still upon the
ground, as now, in the path of the
conqueror."*

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to have been composed in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when the prophet was expressly commanded by God to write upon a roll all the prophecies which he had uttered concerning Israel, Judah, and other nations. This he did by means of Baruch. But this roll being burnt by Jehoiakim, another was written, under Jeremiah's directions, with many additional particulars. In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the prophet appears to have collected into one book all the prophecies that he had delivered before the taking of Jerusalem. To this probably he afterward added such further revelations as he had occasionally received during the government of Gedaliah, and during the residence in Egypt, the account of which terminates with the fifty-first chapter. The fifty-second chapter, which is compiled from the five last chapters of the second book of Kings, was probably not written by Jeremiah, as it contains in part a repetition of what the prophet had before related in the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters of his book, and some circumstances which, as it has been supposed, did not happen till after the death of Jeremiah. And it is evident, from the intimation conveyed in the last verse, "thus far are the words of Jeremiah," that his book there terminates. The fifty-second chapter was therefore probably added by Ezra as an exordium to the Lamentations. It is, however, a very useful appendage, as it illustrates the accomplishment of Jeremiah's prophecies relative to the captivity and the fate of Zedekiah. The prophecies, as they are now placed, appear not to be arranged in the chronological order in which they were delivered. Whether they were so originally compiled by Jeremiah or Ezra, or whether they have been accidentally transposed, can not now be determined.

The prophecies of Jeremiah, of which the circumstantial accomplishment is often specified in the Old and new Testaments, are of a very distinguished and illustrious character. He foretold the fate of Shallum, Jehoiakim, Coniah, and Zedekiah; the Babylonish captivity; the precise time of its duration; and the return of the Jews. He described the destruction of Babylon; and the downfall of many nations; in predictions, of which the gradual and progressive comple-

tion kept up the confidence of the Jews for the accomplishment of those prophecies which he delivered relative to the Messiah and his period. He foreshowed the miraculous conception of Christ ; the virtue of his atonement ; the spiritual character of his covenant ; and the inward efficacy of his laws. Jeremiah, contemplating those calamities which impended over his country, represented in the most descriptive terms, and under the most expressive images, the destruction that the invading enemy should produce. He bewailed in pathetic expostulation the shameless adulteries which had provoked the Almighty, after long forbearance, to threaten Judah with inevitable punishment at the time that false prophets deluded the nation with the promises of "assured peace," and when the people in impious contempt of the Lord's word defied its accomplishment. Jeremiah intermingles with his prophecies some historical relations relative to his own conduct, and to the completion of those predictions which he had delivered. The reputation of Jeremiah had spread among foreign nations, and his prophecies were deservedly celebrated in other countries. Many heathen writers have likewise undesignedly borne testimony to the truth and accuracy of his prophetic and historical descriptions.

The style of Jeremiah, though not deficient either in eloquence or sublimity, has been considered as inferior in both respects to that of Isaiah. St. Jerome objects a certain kind of rusticity to him ; but this would not be easy to point out. His images are, perhaps, less lofty, and his expressions less dignified than those of some others of the sacred writers ; but the character of his works, which breathes a tenderness of sorrow calculated to awaken and interest the milder affections, led him to reject the majestic and declamatory tone in which the prophetic censures were sometimes conveyed. The holy zeal of the prophet is, however, often excited to a very vigorous eloquence in inveighing against the frontless audacity with which men gloried in their abominations. The first part of the book is chiefly poetical, and, indeed, nearly one half of the work is composed in some kind of measure. The historical part, toward the middle of the work, is written with much simplicity of style. The last six chapters, which are

entirely in verse, contain several predictions delivered in a high strain of sublimity. The descriptions of Jeremiah have all the vivid colorings that might be expected from a painter of contemporary scenes. The historical part has some characters of antiquity that ascertain the date of its composition. The months are reckoned by numbers, a mode which did not prevail after the captivity, when they were distinguished by Chaldaic names. Beside the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter, which is written in Chaldee, there are likewise a few Chaldaic expressions, which about the time of Jeremiah must have begun to vitiate the Hebrew language.

Jeremiah has been sometimes considered as an appointed prophet of the Gentiles. He certainly delivered many prophecies relative to foreign nations. His name, translated, is, "He shall exalt Jehovah," and his whole life was spent in endeavoring to promote God's glory. His reputation was so considerable, that some of the fathers fancifully supposed that, as his death is nowhere mentioned in Scripture, he was living in the time of Christ, whom, as the gospel informs us, some supposed to have been this prophet. They likewise applied to him and Elias what St. John mysteriously speaks of—two witnesses that should prophesy 1260 days: which superstitious fictions serve, at least, to prove the traditional reverence that was entertained for the memory of the prophet, who long afterward continued to be venerated in the Romish church as one of the greatest saints that had flourished under the old covenant—as having lived not only with the general strictness of a prophet, but, as was believed, in a state of celibacy, and as having terminated his righteous ministry by martyrdom.

Lamentations is another celebrated work of Jeremiah, undoubtedly composed by Jeremiah and as the unvarying tradition of the Church declares. The style, indeed, itself, indicates the same hand which composed the preceding book. Upon what occasion these Lamentations were produced can not be possibly determined. In the second book of Chronicles it is said that Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and Josephus, and other writers, suppose that the work which we now possess was written upon the occasion of that monarch's death,

maintaining that the calamities which only three months after attended the deposition of Jehoahaz were so considerable as to correspond with the description of the prophet, though they are not minutely detailed in sacred history. The generality of the commentators are, however, of a different opinion ; and, indeed, Jeremiah here bewails the desolation of Jerusalem, the captivity of Judah, the miseries of famine, and the cessation of all religious worship, in terms so forcible and pathetic that they appear rather applicable to some period after the destruction of Jerusalem, when, agreeably to his own predictions, every circumstance of complicated distress overshadowed Judea. But upon whatever occasion these Lamentations were composed, they are evidently descriptive of past events, and can not be considered as prophetic elegies.

Some Jewish writers imagined that this was the book which Jeremiah dictated to Baruch, and which was cut and burnt by Jehoiakim. But there is no foundation for this opinion, for the book dictated to Baruch contained many prophetic threats against various nations of which there are no traces in this book.

The Lamentations were certainly annexed originally to the prophecies of Jeremiah, and were admitted with them together into the Hebrew canon as one book. The modern Jews, however, place this work, in their copies, among other smaller tracts, such as Ruth, and the Canticles, etc., at the end of the Pentateuch, having altered the arrangement of the books of Scripture from the order which they held in Ezra's collection.

With respect to the plan of this work, it is composed after the manner of funeral odes, though without any very artificial disposition of its subject. It appears to contain the genuine effusions of real grief, in which the author, occupied by his sorrow, attends not to exact connection between the different rhapsodies, but pours out whatever presents itself. He dwells upon the same ideas, and amplifies the same thoughts by new expressions and figures, as is natural to a mind intent on subjects of affliction. There is, however, no wild incoherency in the contexture of the work, but the transitions

are easy and elegant. It is, in fact, a collection of distinct sentences, probably uttered at different times, upon the same subject, which are properly entitled lamentations. The work is divided into five parts. In the first, second, and fourth chapters, the prophet speaks in his own person, or, by a very elegant and interesting personification, introduces Jerusalem as speaking. In the third chapter, a chorus of the Jews speaks as one person. In the fifth, which forms a sort of epilogue to the work, the whole nation of the captive Jews is introduced in one body, as pouring out complaints and supplications to God. Each of these five parts is distributed into twenty-two periods or stanzas, in correspondence with the number of the Hebrew letters. In the first three chapters these periods are triplets, or consist of three lines.

It is remarkable, also, that though the verses of the fifth chapter are short, yet those of the other chapters seem to be nearly half as long again as those which usually occur in Hebrew poetry, and the prophet appears to have chosen this measure as more flowing and accommodated to the effusions of sorrow, and therefore more agreeable to the nature of funereal dirges.

This poem affords the most elegant variety of striking images that ever probably was displayed in so small a compass. The scenes of affliction, the circumstances of distress, are painted with such beautiful combination, that we contemplate everywhere the most affecting picture of desolation and misery. The prophet reiterates his complaints in the most pathetic style, and aggravates his sorrow with a boldness and force of description that correspond with the magnitude and religious importance of the calamities exposed to view. In the instructive strain of an inspired writer, he reminds his countrymen of the grievous rebellions that had provoked the Lord to "abhor his sanctuary;" confesses that it was of God's mercies that they were not utterly consumed, and points out the sources of evil in the iniquities of their false prophets and priests. He then with indignant irony threatens Edom with destruction for rejoicing over the miseries of Judea, opens a consolatory prospect of deliverance and future protection to Zion, and concludes with a most interesting ad-

dress to God, to "consider the reproach" of his people, and to renew their prosperity.

It is worthy to be observed that Jeremiah, in endeavoring to promote resignation in his countrymen, represents his own deportment under difficulties, in terms which have a prophetic cast, so strikingly are they descriptive of the patience and conduct of our Saviour under his sufferings. The prophet, indeed, in the meek endurance of unmerited persecution, was an illustrious type of Christ.

CHAPTER XI.

EZEKIEL.

EZEKIEL, who was the third of the great prophets, was the son of Buzi, a descendant of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, that is, of the sacerdotal race. He is said to have been a native of Sarera, and to have been carried away captive to Babylon with Jehoiachim, king of Judah, A.M. 3406.

He settled, or was placed, with many others of his captive countrymen, on the banks of the Chebar, a river of Mesopotamia ; where he was favored with the divine revelations which are described in this book. He is supposed to have prophesied during a period of twenty-one years. He appears to have been mercifully raised up to animate the despondence of his contemporaries in their sufferings and afflictions ; and to assure them that they were deceived in supposing, according to the representations of false prophets, that their countrymen who remained in Judea were in happier circumstances than themselves ; and with this view he describes that melancholy scene of calamities which was about to arise in Judea ; and thence he proceeds to predict the universal apostacy of the Jews, and the total destruction of their city and temple ; adverting also, occasionally, to those punishments which awaited their enemies ; and interspersing assurances of the final accomplishment of God's purpose, with prophetic declarations of the advent of the Messiah, and with promises of the final restoration of the Jews.

The name of Ezekiel was happily expressive of that inspired confidence and fortitude which he displayed, as well in supporting the adverse circumstances of the captivity, as in censuring the sins and idolatrous propensities of his countrymen. He began to deliver his prophecies about eight or ten years after Daniel, in the fifth year of Jehoiachim's captivity,

and, as some have supposed, in the thirteenth year of his age.

The divine instructions were first revealed to him in a glorious vision, in which he beheld a representation, or, as he himself reverently expresses it, "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord," attended by his cherubims symbolically portrayed. "The word of the Lord came expressly unto him, and he received his commission by a voice, which was followed by a forcible influence of the Spirit, and by awful directions for his conduct. He appears to have executed his high trust with great fidelity. The author of Ecclesiasticus says of him that he directed them who went right ; which may be considered as a merited encomium on the industry with which he endeavored to instruct and guide his countrymen to righteousness. He is reported by some writers to have presided in the government of the tribes of Gad and Dan in Assyria ; and among other fabulous miracles, to have punished them for idolatry by a fearful destruction produced by serpents. In addition to these popular traditions, it is reported that his countrymen were so incensed by his reproaches as to put him to a cruel death. In the time of Epiphanius it was superstitiously believed that his remains were deposited in the same sepulchre with those of Shem and Arphaxad, which was supposed to be situated between the river Euphrates and that of Chaboras ; and it was much resorted to, not only by the Jews, but also by the Medes and Persians, who revered the tomb of the prophet with extravagant devotion.

The authenticity of Ezekiel's book will admit of no question. He represents himself as the author in the beginning and other parts of it, and justly assumes the character and pretensions of a prophet ; as such he has been universally regarded. A few writers, indeed, of very inconsiderable authority, have fancied from the first word of the Hebrew text, in which they suppose the initial letter Vau to be a connective particle, that what we possess of Ezekiel is but the fragment of a larger work. But there is no shadow of foundation for this conjecture, since it was very customary to begin a discourse in that language with the particle Vau, which we prop-

erly translate, "Now it came to pass." It has been asserted, likewise, on Talmudical authority, that certain Rabbins deliberated concerning the rejection of the book from the canon, on account of some passages in it which they conceived to be contradictory to the principles of the Mosaic law. If they had any such intention, they were soon convinced of their mistake, and gave up the design. But the Jews, indeed, did not suffer the book, or at least the beginning of it, to be read by any who had not attained their thirtieth year; and restrictions were imposed upon commentators who might be disposed to write upon it.

St. Jerome has remarked certainly with great truth that the visions of Ezekiel are sometimes very mysterious and of difficult interpretation, and that they may be reckoned among the things in Scripture which are hard to be understood. Ezekiel himself, well aware of the mysterious character of those representations which he beheld in vision, and of the necessary obscurity which must attend the description of them to others, humbly represented to God that the people accused him of speaking darkly "in parables." It appears to have been God's design to cheer the drooping spirits of his people, but only by communicating such encouragement as was consistent with a state of punishment, and calculated, by indistinct intimations, to keep alive a watchful and submissive confidence. For this reason, perhaps, were Ezekiel's prophecies, which were revealed amidst the gloom of captivity, designedly obscure in their nature, but though mysterious in themselves, they are related by the prophet in a plain and historical manner. He seems to have been desirous of conveying to others the strong impressions which he received, as accurately as they were capable of being described.

The representations which Ezekiel beheld in vision are capable of very interesting and instructive illustration from other parts of Scripture, as may be seen in the commentaries of various writers who have undertaken to explain their allusive character; and the figurative directions which the prophet received in them with relation to his own conduct, were very consistent with the dignity of his character and the de-

sign of his mission. Some of these directions were given, indeed, only by way of metaphorical instruction ; for when Ezekiel is commanded to "eat the roll of prophecy," we readily understand that he is enjoined only to receive and thoroughly to digest its contents ; and when he professes to have complied with the command, we perceive that he speaks only of a transaction in vision. With respect to some other relations of this nature contained in Ezekiel's book, whether we suppose them to be descriptive of real or imaginary events, they are very reconcilable with divine intention in the employment of the prophet. On a supposition that they were real, we may reasonably suppose a miraculous assistance to have been afforded when necessary ; and if we consider them as imaginary, they might be represented equally as emblematical fore warnings revealed to the prophets. The book of Ezekiel is sometimes distributed by the following analysis, under different heads. After the first three chapters, in which the appointment of the prophet is described, the wickedness and impending punishment of the Jews, especially of those remaining in Judea, are represented under different parables and visions, to the twenty-fourth chapter, inclusive. From thence to the thirty-second chapter, the prophet turns his attention to those nations who had unfeelingly triumphed over the Jews in their affliction, predicting that destruction of the Ammonites, Moabites and Philistines, which Nebuchadnezzar effected ; and particularly he foretells the ruin and desolation of Tyre and of Sidon, the fall of Egypt and the base degeneracy of its future people, in a manner so forcible, in terms so accurately and minutely descriptive of their several states and present condition, that it is highly interesting to trace the accomplishment of these prophecies in the accounts which are furnished by historians and travelers.

From the thirty-second to the fortieth chapter, Ezekiel inveighs against the hypocrisy and murmuring spirit of his captive countrymen, encouraging them to resignation by promises of deliverance and by intimations of spiritual redemption. In the last two chapters of this division, under the promised victories to be obtained over Gog and Magog, he undoubtedly predicts the final return of the Jews from

their dispersion, in the latter days, with an obscurity, however, that can be dispersed only by the event.

The last nine chapters of this book detail the description of a very remarkable vision of a new temple and city, of a new religion and polity, under the particulars of which is shadowed out the establishment of a future universal church. Josephus says that Ezekiel left two books concerning the captivity ; and the author of the synopsis, attributed to Athanasius, supposes that one book has been lost ; but as the last nine chapters of Ezekiel constitute in some measure a distinct work, probably Josephus might consider them as forming a second book.

It deserves to be remarked that we are informed by Josephus that the prophecy in which Ezekiel foretold that "Zedekiah should not see Babylon, though he should die there," was judged by that monarch to be inconsistent with that of Jeremiah, who predicted that "Zedekiah should behold the king of Babylon, and go to Babylon." But both were exactly fulfilled ; for Zedekiah did see the king of Babylon at Riblah, and then being deprived of his eyes, he was carried to Babylon, and died there. From this account, it appears that Ezekiel's prophecies were transmitted to Jerusalem, as we know that Jeremiah's were sent to his countrymen in captivity, an intercourse being kept up, especially for the conveyance of prophetic instruction, for imparting what might console misery, or awaken repentance ; and it was probably on the ground of this communication that the Talmudists supposed that the prophecies of Ezekiel were arranged into their present form, and placed in the canon by the elders of the great synagogue.

The style of the prophet is characterized by Bishop Lowth as bold, vehement and tragical, as often worked up to a kind of tremendous dignity. His book is highly parabolical, and abounds with figures and metaphorical expressions. Ezekiel displays a rough but majestic dignity, an unpolished though noble simplicity ; inferior, perhaps, in originality and elegance to others of the prophets, but unequaled in that force and grandeur for which he is particularly celebrated. He sometimes emphatically and indignantly repeats his sentiments,

fully dilates his pictures, and describes the adulterous manners of his countrymen under the strongest and most exaggerated representations that the license of the eastern style would admit. The middle part of the book is in some measure poetical, and contains even some perfect elegies, though his thoughts are in general too irregular and uncontrolled to be chained down to rule or fettered by language.

CHAPTER XII.

DANIEL.

DANIEL was a descendant of the kings of Judah. He is related to have been born at upper Bethoron, which was in the territory of Ephraim. He was carried away captive to Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, A. M. 3898 ; probably in the eighteenth or twentieth year of his age ; and on account of his birth, wisdom and accomplishments, was selected to stand in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar ; so that in him and his companions was fulfilled that prophecy in which Isaiah declared to Hezekiah that "his issue should be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

By the signal proofs which he gave of an excellent spirit, and by the many extraordinary qualities which he possessed, Daniel conciliated the favor of the Persian monarchs ; he was elevated to high rank and entrusted with great power. In the vicissitudes of his life, as in the virtues which he displayed, he has been thought to have resembled Joseph. Like him he lived amidst the corruption of a great court, and preserved an unshaken attachment to his religion, in a situation embarrassed with difficulties and surrounded by temptations. He publicly professed God's service, in defiance of every danger ; and predicted his fearful judgments to the very face of intemperate and powerful tyrants. It may be collected from the pensive cast of his writings that he was of that melancholy disposition which might be expected to characterize the servants of the true God amidst scenes of idolatry. He experienced through his whole life very signal and miraculous proofs of divine favor, and was looked upon by the Persians as well as by his his own countrymen as an oracle of inspired wisdom ; he contributed much to spread a knowledge of God among the Gentile nations. Many writers have supposed

that Zoroaster, the celebrated founder or reformer of the Magian religion, was a disciple of Daniel, since Zoroaster was evidently well acquainted with many revealed truths, and borrowed from the sacred writings many particulars for the improvement of his religious institutes.

The most celebrated passage in the life of this prophet is his interpretation of the handwriting on the wall which so awed and terrified King Belshazzar and his guilty court. The king was utterly given up to idolatry and licentiousness, and his very last and most heinous offense was the profanation of the sacred vessels belonging to the Jerusalem temple, which his illustrious grandfather, and even his incapable father, had respected. Having made a great feast "to a thousand of his lords," he ordered the sacred vessels to be brought, that he and his wassailers might drink wine from them. That there was an intentional insult to the Most High in this act, transpires in the narrative:—"They praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone;" but THE GOD in whose hand was their breath, and whose were all their ways, they praised or glorified not. Indeed, to appreciate fully this act and its consequences, it is indispensably necessary that the mind should revert to the operations by which the supremacy of Jehovah was impressed upon Nebuchadnezzar—operations not hid in a corner; and which, together with the public confessions and declarations of this conviction which were extorted from that magnanimous king, must have diffused much formal acquaintance with the name and claims of Jehovah among the Babylonians, with which also the royal family must have been in a peculiar degree familiar, not only through these circumstances, but through Daniel, who had occupied high rank at court in the still recent reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and whose mere presence must constantly have suggested the means to which his advancement was owing. From this it will be seen that, on the principle of operation which we have indicated in the early part of this chapter, the time was now come for another act whereby Jehovah might vindicate the honor of his own great Name, and enforce his peculiar and exclusive claims to the homage of mankind.

Suddenly a mysterious hand appeared, writing conspicuously upon the wall words of ominous import, but which no one could understand; for, although they were in the vernacular Chaldean language, the character in which they were written was the primitive old Hebrew, which differed totally from the Chaldee, and was the original from which that which is called the Samaritan character was formed. The king himself was greatly agitated, and commanded the instant attendance of the magi and astrologers. They came, but were utterly unable to divine the meaning of the portentous words upon the wall. This increased the terror of the impious king, which was at its height when the queen-mother, or rather grandmother, made her appearance. She soothed the troubled monarch, and reminded him of the services and character of Daniel; indicating him as one "in whom is the spirit of THE HOLY GOD; and in the days of thy grandfather light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him;" and therefore one who was likely to afford Belshazzar the satisfaction which he sought. It was probably the custom at Babylon (as with respect to the corresponding officer in other oriental courts) for the archimagus to lose his office on the death of the king to whose court he was attached; and that, consequently, Daniel had withdrawn into private life on the death of Nebuchadnezzar. This will explain how the king needed to be reminded of him, and how the prophet was in the first instance absent from among those who were called to interpret the writing on the wall.

Daniel was sent for: and when he appeared, the king repeated what he had heard of him; stated the inability of the magicians to interpret the portentous words, and promised him, as the reward of interpretation, that he should be clad in scarlet, with a chain of gold about his neck, and that he should rank as the third person in the kingdom. The venerable prophet modestly waived the proffered honors and rewards, as having no weight to induce his compliance:—"Thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king." But, first, he undauntedly reminded the king of the experience, and resulting convictions of his renowned grandfather, adding, with emphasis, "And

thou, his grandson, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knowest all this." He then read the inscription :—

"MENE, MENE, TEKEL, [PERES], UPHARSIN."
Number, Number, Weight, [Division], and Divisions,

and proceeded to give the interpretation :

"MENE, God hath *numbered* thy kingdom, and

"[MENE], *finished* it.

"TEKEL, Thou art *weighed* in the balances, and art found wanting.

"PERES, Thy kingdom is *divided*.

"UPHARSIN, *And* given to the Medes and Persians" [Darius and Cyrus].

The king heard this terrible sentence : but made no remark further than to command that Daniel should be invested with the promised scarlet robe and golden chain, and that the third rank in the kingdom should be assigned to him.

The sacred historian adds, with great conciseness, "In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain." *How*, we are not told : but we may collect from Xenophon that he was slain through the conspiracy of two nobles, on whom he had inflicted the greatest indignities which men could receive. This was in 553 B.C., in the fifth year of his reign.

Daniel appears to have attained the fullest confidence of "Darius the Mede," who "took the kingdom." When this monarch was making new appointments of the governors of provinces, the prophet was set over them all : and the king contemplated a still further elevation for him. This excited the dislike and jealousy of the native princes and presidents, who determined to work his ruin. In his administration, his hands were so pure, that no ground of accusation could be found against him. They therefore devised a plan by which Daniel's known and tried fidelity to his religion should work his destruction. They procured from the careless and vain king a decree, that no one should for thirty days offer any prayer or petition to any god or man save the king himself, under pain of being cast into the lion's den. The king at

once became painfully conscious of his weak and criminal conduct, when his most trusted servant, Daniel, was accused before him as an open transgressor of this decree, and his punishment demanded. Among the Medes and Persians there was a singular restraint upon despotism—which, while at the first view it seemed to give intensity to the exercise of despotic power, really tended to deter the kings from hasty and ill-considered decisions, by compelling them to feel the evil consequences with which they were attended. The king's word was irrevocable law. He could not himself dispense with the consequences of his own acts. Of this Darius was reminded ; and he saw at once that he was precluded from interfering in behalf of his friend. It is a beautiful illustration of the great truth, which appears as the main argument of this chapter, namely, that the glory of God was promoted among the heathen by the captivity of his people—that the king himself was already so well acquainted with the character and power of Jehovah, that he spontaneously rested himself upon the hope, that, although unable himself to deliver him from this well-laid snare, the God whom Daniel served would certainly not suffer him to perish. The prophet was cast into the lion's den, and the mouth thereof was closed with a sealed stone. The king spent the night sleepless and in sorrow. Impelled by his vague hopes, he hastened early in the morning to the cavern, and cried in a doleful voice, "O Daniel, servant of THE LIVING GOD, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" To the unutterable joy and astonishment of the king, the quiet voice of Daniel returned an affirmative answer, assuring the king of his perfect safety. Instantly the cavern was opened, the servant of God drawn forth, and his accusers were cast in, and immediately destroyed by the savage inmates of the den. This striking interposition induced the king to issue a proclamation, to the same ultimate effect as that which Nebuchadnezzar had issued in a former time. He wrote unto "all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwelt in all the earth," charging them to "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel ; for he is THE LIVING GOD, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion

shall be, even unto the end." It would not be easy to overrate the importance of the diffusion of such truths as these through the length and breadth of the Median empire.

Daniel prophesied during the whole period of the captivity, but he probably did not long survive his last vision concerning the succession of the kings of Persia, which he beheld in the third year of Cyrus, A. M. 3470, when the prophet must have reached his ninetieth year. As Daniel dates this vision by a Persian era, it was apparently revealed to him in Persia; and though some have asserted that he returned from the captivity with Ezra, and took upon him the government of Syria, it is probable that he was too old to avail himself of the decree of Cyrus, however he might have been accessory in obtaining it; and that, agreeably to the received opinion, he died in Persia. Some affirm that he died in Babylon; and they say that his sepulchre was there to be seen many years after in the royal cave. But it is more probable, according to the common tradition, that he was buried at Susa or Sushan, where certainly he sometimes resided, and perhaps as governor of Persia, and where he was favored with some of his last visions. Benjamin Tudela, indeed, informs us that he was shown the reputed tomb of Daniel on the Tigris, where likewise, as we are assured by Josephus, was a magnificent edifice, in the form of a tower, which is said to have been built by Daniel, and which served as a sepulchre for the Persian and Parthian kings. This, in the time of the historian, retained its perfect beauty, and presented a fine specimen of the prophet's skill in architecture. The book of Daniel contains a very interesting mixture of history and prophecies; the former being introduced, as far as was necessary, to describe the conduct of the prophet, and to show the design and occasion of his predictions. The first six chapters are chiefly historical, though, indeed, the second chapter contains the prophetic interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream concerning the kingdoms which were successively to illustrate the power of that God who removeth and setteth up kings, as seemeth good to him.

The four historical chapters which succeed relate the miraculous deliverance of Daniel's companions from the fur-

nace, the remarkable punishment of Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance, the impiety and portended fate of Belshazzar, and the divine interposition for the protection of Daniel in the lion's den. All these accounts are written with a spirit and animation highly interesting, and even with dramatic effect ; we seem to be present at the scenes described. The whole work is enriched with the most exalted sentiments of piety, and with the finest attestations to the praise and glory of God.

Daniel flourished during the successive reigns of several Babylonish and Median kings, to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, in the beginning of whose reign he probably died. The events recorded in the sixth chapter were coeval with Darius, the Mede ; but in the seventh and eighth chapters Daniel returns to an earlier period, to relate the visions which he beheld in the first three years of Belshazzar's reign ; and those which follow in the last four chapters were revealed to him in the reign of Darius.

The prophecies of Daniel were in many instances so exactly accomplished that those persons who would have otherwise been unable to resist the evidence which they disclosed in support of our religion, have not scrupled to affirm that they must have been written subsequently to those occurrences which they so faithfully describe. But this groundless and unsupported assertion serves but to establish the character of Daniel as a great and enlightened prophet ; for it is contrary to all historical testimony, and contrary to all probability, to suppose that the Jews would have admitted into the canon of their sacred writ a book which contained pretended prophecies of what had already happened. Indeed it is impossible that these prophecies should have been written after the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, since they were probably translated into Greek near a hundred years before the period in which he lived ; and that translation was in the possession of the Egyptians, who entertained no kindness for the Jews or their religion. Those prophecies also which foretold the victories and dominion of Alexander were shown to that conqueror himself by Jaddua, the high-priest, as we learn from Josephus, and the Jews thereupon obtained an

exemption from tribute every Sabbatical year, and the free exercise of their laws.

Daniel not only predicted future events with singular precision, but likewise accurately defined the time in which they should be fulfilled, as was remarkably exemplified in that illustrious prophecy of the seventy weeks, in which he prefixed the period for "bringing in everlasting righteousness by the Messiah," as well as in some other mysterious predictions, which probably mark out the time or duration of the power of Antichrist, and, as some suppose, for the commencement of the millennium, or universal reign of saints, which they conceive to be foretold; for the explanation of which we must wait the event.



I am the Vine

Ye are the Branches

PART II.

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE entering upon the history of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we may remark that the religion promulgated by him differs from those of all other founders of systems, inasmuch as it is the distinguishing glory of Christianity, not to rest satisfied with superficial appearances, but to rectify the *motives* and purify the *heart*. The true Christian, in obedience to the lessons of Scripture, nowhere keeps over himself a more resolute and jealous guard than where the desire of human estimation and distinction is in question. Nowhere does he more deeply feel the insufficiency of his unassisted strength, or more diligently and earnestly pray for divine assistance. He may well indeed watch and pray against the encroachments of a passion, which, when suffered to transgress its just limits, discovers a peculiar hostility to the distinguishing graces of the Christian temper ; a passion which must insensibly acquire force, because it is in continual exercise ; to which almost every thing *without* administers nutriment, and the growth of which within is favored and cherished by such powerful auxiliaries as pride and selfishness, the natural and perhaps inexterminable inhabitants of the human heart.

Strongly impressed, therefore, with a sense of the indispensable necessity of guarding against the progress of this encroaching principle, in humble reliance of superior aid, the true Christian thankfully uses the means, and habitually exercises himself in the considerations and motives suggested to him for that purpose by the word of God. He is much

occupied in searching out and contemplating his own infirmities. He endeavors to acquire and maintain a just conviction of his great unworthiness ; and to keep in continual remembrance, that whatever distinguishes himself from others, is not properly his own, but that he is altogether indebted for it to the undeserved bounty of Heaven. He diligently endeavors also, habitually to preserve a *just* sense of the real worth of human distinction and applause, knowing that he shall covet them less when he has learned not to overrate their value. He labors to bear in mind how undeservedly they are often bestowed, how precariously they are always possessed. The censures of good men justly render him suspicious of himself, and prompt him carefully and impartially to examine into those parts of his character, or those particulars of his conduct, which have drawn on him their animadversions. The favorable opinion and the praises of good men are justly acceptable to him, where they accord with the testimony of his own heart ; that testimony being thereby confirmed and warranted.

Those praises favor also and strengthen the growth of mutual confidence and affection, where it is his delight to form friendships, rich not less in use than comfort, and to establish connections which may last for ever. But even in the case of the commendations of good men, he suffers not himself to be beguiled into an overvaluation of them lest he should be led to substitute them in the place of conscience. He guards against this by reflecting how indistinctly we can discern each other's motives, how little enter into each other's circumstances, how mistaken therefore may be the judgments formed of us, or of our actions, even by good men, and that it is far from improbable, that a time may come, in which we may be compelled to forfeit their esteem, by adhering to the dictates of our own consciences.

But if he endeavors thus to sit loose in the favor and applause even of good men, much more to those of the world at large ; not but that he is sensible of their worth as means and instruments of usefulness and influence ; and, under the limitations and for the ends allowed in Scripture, he is glad to possess, observant to acquire, and careful to retain them.

He considers them, however, like the precious metals, as having rather an exchangeable than an intrinsic value, as desirable, not simply in their possession, but in their use. In this view he holds himself to be responsible for that share of them which he enjoys, and as bound not to let them lie by him unemployed, this were hoarding ; not to lavish them prodigally, this would be to waste ; not imprudently to misapply them, this were folly and caprice ; but as under an obligation to regard them as conferred on him, that they might be brought into action ; and consequently he may by no means throw away, though he is ready, if it be required, to give them up with cheerfulness ; and never feeling himself at liberty, in consideration of the use he intends to make of them, to acquire or retain them unlawfully. He holds it to be his bounden duty to seek diligently for occasions of rendering them subservient to their true purposes ; and when any such occasion is found, to expend them cheerfully and liberally, but with discretion and frugality ; being no less prudent in determining the measure, than in selecting the objects, of their application, that they may go the further by being thus managed with economy.

Acting therefore on these principles, he will studiously and diligently use any degree of worldly credit he may enjoy in removing or lessening prejudices ; in conciliating good will, and thereby making way for the less obstructed progress of truth ; and in providing for its being entertained with candor, even with favor, by those who would bar all access against it in any rougher or more homely form. He will make it his business to set on foot and forward benevolent and useful schemes ; and where they require united efforts, to obtain and preserve for them this coöperation. He will endeavor to discountenance vice, to bring modest merit into notice ; to lend as it were his light to men of real worth, but of less creditable name, and perhaps of less conciliating qualities and manners ; that they may thus shine with a reflected luster, and be useful in their turn, when invested with their just estimation. He can not discover a surer model for such a line of conduct than in Christ himself, whose history we now accordingly proceed to relate.

Some time before the incarnation of the blessed Jesus, an opinion prevailed among the pious part of the Jews that the great Jehovah would condescend to favor them with a clear revelation of his divine will by the mission of some eminent person qualified from above to instruct them in the same. This opinion was founded on the predictions of the ancient prophets, who had described, with the utmost beauty and clearness, the person, character, and glory of the Messiah, appointed by God, in his own time, to declare his eternal counsels to mankind.

Relying on the fulfillment of these prophecies, the devout persons among the Jews imagined the time appointed by God was near at hand, and that the appointed Messiah would shortly make his appearance, and therefore are said to "have awaited night and day for the consolation of Israel." The people, at that time grievously oppressed by the Roman power, and consequently anxious of regaining their liberty, as well as revenging themselves on their tyrannical oppressors, waited the accomplishment of the prophecies with the most solicitous desire. But this opinion of the approach of a general deliverer extended much further than the country of the Jews; for, through their connections with so many countries, their disputes with the learned men among the heathen, and the translation of the Old Testament into a language now almost general, their religion greatly prevailed in the East, and consequently their opinion, that a prince would appear in the kingdom of Judea, who would dispel the mists of ignorance, deliver the Jews from the Roman yoke, and spread his dominion from one end of the world to the other.

While the eastern world was fraught with these sanguine hopes, the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to Daniel the prophet, with a certain information as to the period of the Messiah's coming, as well as his transactions in this lower world, was sent to Zacharias, a pious priest, while he was executing his office before God, in the order of his course (which was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord), to foretell that a child would spring from him and his wife Elizabeth (though they were stricken in years), who should be endowed with extraordinary gifts from heaven, and

honored with being the forerunner of the Saviour of the world.

Zacharias, when he saw the angel, though he probably knew him to be of heavenly extraction, could not judge the subject of his mission, and therefore discovered a mixture of fear and surprise, but the heavenly ambassador cheered his desponding soul with this kind address: "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." That he waited, day and night, for the consolation of Israel, he well knew; which is all we can understand by his prayer being heard; for it was unnatural in him to think, that he and his wife Elizabeth, who were advanced in years, should have a son; nay, he intimates his doubts concerning it in these words: "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years." Besides, he was a priest of the course of Abia, whose particular office was to pray on behalf of the people, for public and national blessings; so that it is very reasonable to think that on all occasions of public worship he prayed most earnestly for the accomplishment of the prophecies relative to the appearance of the long-expected Messiah, who was promised as a general blessing to all the nations of the earth.

That this was the great subject of his prayer, appears from the declaration of Gabriel: the prayer thou hast directed with sincerity to an Almighty ear, concerning the coming of the Messiah, "is heard; and, behold, thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son," who shall prepare the way for the mighty Redeemer of Israel. The good old priest was as much astonished at the subject of his mission as he was at the appearance of the messenger; and esteeming it impossible that his wife, thus advanced in years, should conceive a son, weakly demanded a sign, to confirm his belief in the fulfillment of the promise, though he knew the authority of the angel was derived from the God of truth. But as it is the lot of humanity to err, Zacharias had, for that time, forgot that nothing was impossible to Omnipotence, as well as that it was not the first time the aged were caused to conceive, and bear children. The least reflection would have reminded him, that

Sarah had conceived and bore Isaac, when she was far advanced in years, and that Samuel was born of a woman, who was reputed, and even called, barren.

His curiosity was, indeed, gratified, but in a manner that carried with it, at once, a confirmation of the promises, and a punishment of his unbelief. As he had verbally testified his doubt of the fulfillment of the prediction of the angel, he was punished with the loss of his speech, which was to continue to the very day in which the prediction should be accomplished : " Behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."

Zacharias soon received an awful testimony of the divinity of the mission of Gabriel, who was no sooner departed than he was struck dumb ; for when he came to pray in the course of his office during the oblation of his incense, he could not utter a word ; and was under a necessity of making signs to the people that an angel had appeared to him in the temple, and that he was deprived of the faculty of speech, as a punishment for his doubting the fulfillment of an event which he had been foretold concerning him.

Soon after Zacharias departed to his own house (the days of his ministration being accomplished), his wife Elizabeth, according to the prediction of the angel, conceived, and retired into a private place, where she lived five months in the uninterrupted exercise of piety, devotion, and contemplation on the mysterious providence of the Almighty, and his amazing goodness to the sinful children of men.

When Elizabeth was advanced six months in her pregnancy, the same heavenly ambassador was sent to a poor virgin, called Mary, who lived in obscurity in Nazareth, under the care of Joseph, to whom she was espoused. This man and woman were both lineally descended from the house of David, from whose loins it was foretold the great Messiah should spring.

This virgin being ordained by the Most High to be the mother of the great Saviour of the world, was saluted by the angel in the most respectful terms : " Hail, thou that art highly

avored ; the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women !” Such an address, from so exalted a being, greatly alarmed the meek and humble virgin ; to allay whose fear, and encourage whose heart, the angel related, in the most sublime terms, the subject of his embassy, which was to assure her that she was the chosen of God to the greatest honor which could be conferred on a mortal, and which would perpetuate her memory ; an honor no less than that of being mother of the promised and long-expected Messiah, who upon earth shall be called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins, be the restorer of human nature, and the procuring cause of eternal bliss to sinners, who had forfeited the favor, and incurred the resentment of an offended God ; that this divine person was the Son of the Most High God ; to whom should be given, by his Almighty Father, a throne in the heavenly kingdom, on which he should preside, and which, being the whole church of Christ, the house of Jacob, the spiritual Israel, or the kingdom of the Messiah, should continue for ever and ever.

The astonished virgin, unmindful that Isaiah had long since prophesied, “that a virgin should conceive and bear a son,” thought her virginity an insurmountable barrier to the fulfillment of the prophecy, especially as such an event had never occurred since the creation of the world, and therefore required of the angel an explanation of the manner in which such a circumstance could be effected.

This desire by no means implies her not remembering that with God all things were possible, but only serves to prove the weakness of her apprehensions on the one hand, or her diffidence and sense of her own unworthiness on the other.

The angel, therefore, perceiving the uprightness of her disposition, notwithstanding some little proof of human weakness and shortness of sight, vouchsafed an immediate answer to her inquiry : “The Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ;” or, in other words, This miraculous event shall be brought about by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and wonderful exertion of the power of the Most High. As thy conception shall be effected by the

immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, "therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." To confirm her faith in the glorious message, the heavenly messenger observed to her that her cousin Elizabeth, notwithstanding her advanced years, and reputed barrenness, was above six months pregnant, assigning this incontestable argument for the miraculous incident: "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

This reply not only removed all her doubts and fears, but filled her with inexpressible joy, so that she even anticipated the promised felicity; for she, with the rest of the daughters of Jacob, had long indulged the hope of being selected by God to be the honored mother of the Saviour of Israel; and, therefore, on her being assured that such happiness was destined her by the great Disposer of all events, she thus expressed her reliance on the fulfillment of the divine promise, and perfect acquiescence in the will of the Almighty: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord! be it unto me according to thy word."

The angel had no sooner departed than Mary set out for the mountainous country of Judea, though at a very remote distance from Nazareth, in order to rejoice with her cousin Elizabeth in the joyful news that she had received from the angel concerning her. The rapture and delight which filled the minds of Mary and Elizabeth on the occasion of this salutation can alone be conceived from the affecting description recorded by the evangelist Luke, who is peculiar for the beauty of his style and elegance of his expressions.

That evangelist writes that the salutation of Mary had such an effect upon Elizabeth that, on hearing of the miraculous event that had befallen the virgin, the babe leaped within her, and that she, being inspired with a holy delight, on the approaching prospect of the nativity of her Saviour, exclaimed with rapture, "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Luke, i. 43. Nor did her ecstasy cease with the token of humility and joy on the important event, in the ardor of which she evinced that prophetic influence which, while it amazed the blessed virgin, could not fail of establishing her belief in what the angel had foretold; for

she repeated the very words expressed by the angel in his salutation of the holy virgin, "Blessed art thou among women;" together with a quotation from the Psalms, "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

Mary conceived the Seed long promised and earnestly desired, the Seed in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, according to the words of the Psalmist, "His name shall continue as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." The happy virgin, catching the holy flame from the aged Elizabeth, broke out into an humble acknowledgment of her unworthiness, and the wonderful grace of the Almighty, in appointing her to the exalted honor of bearing the Redeemer of Israel, as expressed in these known words, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," etc.

Thus having, by his visit, confirmed herself in the belief of the prediction of the angel Gabriel, when the period of Elizabeth's pregnancy approached, she returned to Nazareth, having resided in Judea about three months.

Soon after the departure of Mary, Elizabeth brought forth a son, the appointed harbinger of the King of Glory; and on the eighth day after his birth, according to the Judaical custom, he was circumcised, and called, agreeably to the appointment of the angel, John, alluding, in the Hebrew tongue, to the gracious display of the wisdom and goodness of God, who was about to manifest himself to the world by the spreading of the gospel of his Son, of whom this John was the appointed forerunner.

The promise being thus fulfilled, the aged priest was restored to his speech, and immediately broke out into praise and rapture at the marvelous works of God, in strains which astonished all around him.

This surprising event greatly alarmed the people of the adjacent country, who were divided in their opinions concerning a child whose birth was attended with so many extraordinary circumstances. Indeed, these incidents were worthy of general admiration; that he who was to be the forerunner of the mighty Saviour of Israel should not make his entrance on life in an obscure and uncommon manner, but with particular

tokens of the favor of Heaven, in order to attract the observation of his countrymen, and excite their attention to that ministry which he is called to by the blessed God, even the preparation of the people for the reception of the Messiah, who was shortly to appear in the flesh.

It is observable, that the Baptist from his infancy displayed great qualities, both of mind and body ; for such was his strength of constitution, through the blessing of the God of nature, that he lived till near the thirtieth year of his age, when his public ministry began, in the mountainous and desert country of Judea, bereft of almost all the comforts of life. But at length the prophecy of the good old Zacharias, relating to his future elevation, was literally fulfilled : "Thou, O child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest ; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways ; to give knowledge of salvation to his people, by the remission of their sins through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace."

As Joseph had betrothed Mary, according to the method of the Jewish espousals, before they came to cohabit together as man and wife, she was found to be with child ; at which he was so much confounded that he resolved to put her away. Yet he purposed doing it privately, probably to prevent that exemplary punishment which the law inflicted on those who had violated the faith of their espousals before the marriage was completed, Deuteronomy, xii. 23, 24, or endure the infamy of a public divorce.

While he was ruminating on this interesting event, he was overtaken with a pleasing slumber, and received a communication from above, which fully revealed the cause and manner of Mary's pregnancy, dispelled his doubts, and encouraged him to take home his falsely suspected spouse : "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife ; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

The pious Joseph complied with the voice of Heaven most cheerfully ; for no sooner did the morning dawn appear, than he rose from his couch, and obeyed the commands of the Most



HEROD,

King of Judea.

High, by relating to his espoused wife his being assured of her innocence, and immediately restored her to her former favor.

While he related to her the manner of this extraordinary revelation, by a messenger from heaven, he discovered in her a remarkable chastity of heart, entirely conformable to so mysterious an operation, and knew her not, till she had brought forth the great Redeemer of Israel.

Thus was fulfilled that which was foretold by the prophets, and particularly the prediction of Isaiah, which imported, that a virgin should bring forth a son—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us." Isaiah, vii. 14. Matthew, i. 23.

CHAPTER II.

AUGUSTUS CÆSAR, the Roman emperor, having at this time issued an edict for a general taxation on all the nations, cities, and towns, subject to the empire, King Herod, in consequence of that decree, commanded all under his government to muster in the city of his people, or place of his descent, that an estimate may be taken of their persons and effects. Pursuant to this order, Joseph and Mary, as descendants from the line of David, departed from Nazareth, where they then resided, and came to Bethlehem, a city of Judea, the place of the nativity of David and his ancestors.

The manner and place of our Lord's birth certainly demanded our highest admiration and wonder, as a striking display of wisdom, both in the direction and accomplishment of the will of his heavenly Father. Considered in his divine nature, heaven is the habitation of his seat, and the earth is his footstool: considered in his human nature, he is humble beneath all, being confined within the narrow limits of a manger! Though as the Son of God, he is the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, and his throne is for ever and ever!—as the Son of man, O wondrous

condescension ! he is wrapped in the meanest swaddling clothes ; and, as man, he takes up his habitation with the beasts of the field. In fine, let us adore his grace and love in vailing those glories, for a time, which he enjoyed at the right hand of his Father, assuming our nature, and that in its humblest state, in order to raise us to that degree of glory and happiness, which, by our apostacy from God, we had justly forfeited ; exulting with the prophet, “ Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains, for the Lord hath comforted his people.”

But the humble manner in which the blessed Jesus made his appearance in the world, did not long eclipse the glory of his descent ; a heavenly messenger being dispatched from above to apprise mankind of their Saviour’s incarnation. It pleased the wise Disposer of all things, by his holy angel, first to make known to some honest shepherds, who were watching their flocks by night, in the neighboring fields, the birth of the long-promised, long-expected Messiah. The radiance which shone around them terrified the astonished peasants ; but, to dissipate their fears, and confirm their joys, the divine messenger interposed, and thus addressed them : “ Fear not ; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you : ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.” Luke, ii. 10, etc.

The glorious news was no sooner proclaimed, than a number of the celestial choir were heard to resound the praises of the Almighty for this transcendent display of his goodness to sinful men : “ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.” Transported with the happy tidings of the birth of the Redeemer of Israel, the angel no sooner departed than the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, in quest of the Babe, whom, according to the information of the sacred missionary, they found wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger. This event, so exactly conformable to the angel’s prediction, equally delighted and amazed them ; nor could they conceal

the purport of his mission, but published abroad all they had seen and heard.

Having viewed, with praise and wonder, their long-expected Saviour, and offered their grateful praises to God for the manifestation of his goodness to mankind, they departed with hearts filled with love and gratitude, still glorifying the Almighty Parent of universal nature.

After the expiration of eight days from the birth of the holy infant, he was circumcised, according to the Mosaic institution ; and thus, by a few drops, gave earnest of the abundance of blood which he was to shed for the purification of mankind. The blessed Redeemer passed through this ceremony, not that he stood in any necessity of conforming to the laws of any kind, being the supreme Lawgiver, with respect to his exalted nature ; but, as considered in his humble state, he was born of a woman, made under the law, and came, according to his own declaration, to fulfill all righteousness, it was requisite he should conform to that custom, which characterized the Jewish nation, and was one of the principal injunctions of the Mosaic law under which he was born ; in order to fulfill all that is spoken of him in the Scriptures.

Besides, as all the promises made to Abraham were to be fulfilled in the Messiah, it was necessary he should receive the seal of circumcision, in order to prove his descent from the patriarch, concerning whom it was foretold, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." As a further reason for our Lord's compliance with this Jewish institution, we may urge the propriety of his finishing the former dispensation, by an exact adherence to its rules, as he was about to establish another, and much better, which could not be effected more fully, than by conforming to that sacrament, which was of divine injunction, and indispensably requisite to admission into the former.

As the same institution also required that every first-born son, without any regard to circumstances of family, should be presented to the Lord, in the temple, by delivering him into the hands of the priest, and paying five shekels, together with an offering, which, from the poorer sort, consisted of a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons ; a ceremony in

commemoration of the divine mercy in sparing the first-born of Israel, when those of Egypt, both man and beast, were destroyed ; his parents having tarried at Bethlehem till the days of Mary's purification were accomplished, brought the child Jesus to Jerusalem, and there presented him in the temple to the Lord, in the manner thus described, with the offering allowed to the poorer sort of people ; a repeated instance of the exact obedience of the immaculate Jesus to the ceremonial law, as well as the poverty of his parents, though descended from a royal house.

During the presentation of the holy infant, there entered the temple a pious and venerable old man, named Simeon, who, with all the devout, had "waited day and night for the consolation of Israel," and to whom it had been revealed by the Spirit of Truth, that he should not depart this mortal life till he had seen the Lord of life and salvation.

Accordingly, it was signified to him by the Holy Ghost, at whose instance he came at the precise time into the temple, that the child there presented was the long-expected Messiah, even the Redeemer of Israel. In an ecstasy of joy he embraced the heavenly infant in his arms, and exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke, ii. 29-32.

A certain good prophetess, called Anna, who had a long time waited for the redemption of Israel, entering the temple, at the instant in which Simeon exulted in the birth of the heavenly infant, and finding that he was the promised Messiah, likewise joined with him in praising God, and went forth and declared the glad tidings of salvation to all the faithful in these parts.

Having, in every respect, complied with the ceremonies and rites contained in the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary, with the child Jesus, "entered in Galilee, to their city Nazareth." They did not, however, long abide there, for having adjusted their affairs, they returned again to Bethlehem, the place of our Lord's nativity.

This step appears to have been pursued in consequence of

their opinion, that it was necessary, in order to his being acknowledged the Messiah, sent by God, that he should reside some time in the place of his birth. Whatever was their motive for removal, it is evident, from Scripture, that while they were in Bethlehem, with their son, certain eastern philosophers, called Magi, or wise men, on account of the appearance they had seen, went to Jerusalem, and inquired for the King of the Jews, declaring they had seen his star in their own quarter : and were come to pay him the adoration due to his dignity.

Various conjectures have been formed by the learned concerning this star, which is said to have appeared in the east ; some think it was the Spirit of God, others an angel, some a comet, others a luminous appearance, etc. A modern writer thinks it was the glory that surrounded the angels, who had appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem, on the night of the blessed Lord's nativity.

But to leave this subject, as not immediately appertaining to our purpose. The whole city of Jerusalem was alarmed at the unexpected appearance of the eastern Magi ; an event which much perplexed the tyrant Herod, whose ambitious mind maintained the utmost aversion to the very thought of a rival or competitor, and consequently could not brook a report that favored the news of the birth of the King of the Jews.

Disguising, however, his sentiments, he received the Magi with seeming respect, attended to the design of their errand with affected complacency, and, to gratify their curiosity, summoned a general council, and demanded of them *where Christ should be born ?* The council kept him not long in suspense ; for, well remembering the prophets had particularly foretold the place of his birth, they replied to the demand of the monarch, " In Bethlehem of Judea ;" and to confirm their answer, cited prophetic authority : " And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art not the least among the princes of Judea ; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." Matthew, ii. 6. The tyrant king, in consequence of the reply from the supreme council of the nation, directed the Magi to Bethlehem. as the place,

according to ancient prophecy, designed for the honor of Christ's nativity, earnestly entreating them at the same time, immediately on their finding out the child, to send him word, that he might repair thither, and pay his adoration to him also.

But this was mere pretense, and vile hypocrisy; for so far was Herod from entertaining any religious regard for the infant Jesus, that he vowed in his heart to destroy him as soon as he should be found; looking on him as designed for a temporal prince, who should expel him or his descendants from the throne of Judea, instead of a prince whose kingdom was wholly spiritual, and whose throne was not to be established upon earth, but in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Although we may have many stronger proofs of the divinity of our Saviour's mission than his miraculous preservation from the designs of the ambitious Herod, yet this was very remarkable. The tyrant, in this case, acted with the utmost subtlety; he declined accompanying the wise men in person; nor did he even send attendants with them, who, under the guise of honoring them, might have secretly informed him of the abode of the Messiah. In short, he acted with such apparent indifference, as if he had no peculiar reason for dispatching them on the occasion.

However, the Magi, having obtained the intelligence they sought in Jerusalem, got forward, under the guidance of the same star that conducted them from their own country, but had left them on their arrival in Judea, which was the cause of their directing their course to the capital, in order to seek that information which, by the desertion of the star, became requisite. Thus it appears that the designs of the Almighty, in directing the eastern Magi to the capital of Judea, was, that the whole nation might be made acquainted with the cause of their journey.

It is natural and reasonable to suppose that the end of the divine wisdom, in directing these Magi to the kingdom of Judea to worship the child Jesus, was not merely to gratify the curiosity of the wise men, because the event promoted many other very important designs.

It contributed to a valuable purpose, in that the offerings

of the wise men procured a subsistence for the holy family in Egypt whither they were soon afterward to fly, in order to escape the vengeance of the enraged king ; for no sooner had the wise men departed from Bethlehem than Joseph was warned, by a heavenly messenger, of the barbarous purpose of Herod, and commanded to flee into Egypt with the young child and his mother.

Joseph, in obedience to the Almighty's command, rose that very night, and prepared to go into Egypt, "and was there until the death of Herod ; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my Son." This prophecy, which is quoted from Hosea, seems originally to refer to the Israelites ; though the evangelist's reference will be amply justified, by considering that the Egyptian captivity alludes to the subjugation of the Israelites to great hardships, and their deliverance from the same by an Almighty hand.

Now, as the departure of the holy family into Egypt was in obedience to the divine command, in order to protect the holy Jesus from the incensed Herod, the application of the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," appears very just, as well as elegant. The king of Judea long waited with the most earnest expectation the return of the wise men, anxious to glut his resentment on the innocent Jesus ; till, from their long delay, he began to suspect a delusion, and that his designs were frustrated by some extraordinary interposition of Providence.

At length, irritated by disappointment, he resolved to accomplish by cruelty a resolution he could not effect by art ; and accordingly issued orders to a large party of soldiers to go throughout Bethlehem, and the neighboring villages, and massacre all the children whom they could find therein, from two years old and under ! thinking that the infant Jesus, whom, as a prince, he both envied and dreaded, would fall in the general slaughter.

But the heavenly missionary was sheltered from above ; nor was the relentless king permitted to impede the design of an Almighty Creator.

However, the cities through which the soldiers carried the

destructive sword exhibited such scenes of horror and distress as could not fail to pierce every soul not entirely lost to humanity. No sound was heard but the affecting cries of parents, the groans of expiring babes, and a general imprecation of vengeance on the merciless tyrant. But he did not long survive his cruel decree, being swept from his throne by a nauseous disease, to answer for his conduct at the bar of a tremendous Judge.

The tyrant Herod being cut off from the face of the earth, Joseph was warned by a heavenly messenger to return to the land of Israel. The good old man obeyed the Almighty's command, and appears to have had a great desire of residing in Judea, and very probably in Bethlehem ; but hearing that Herod was succeeded in his throne by his son Archelaus, and fearing that he might pursue the barbarous design of his father, he directed his course another way ; but being warned again by a heavenly mission, he retired into Galilee, then under the government of a mild and benevolent prince, called Antipas, and took up his habitation at Nazareth, where the particular circumstances which attended the birth of the blessed Jesus were not generally known. The evangelist affirms that Joseph, with the infant and his mother, resided in Nazareth, where the holy Jesus spent his youth ; " that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene."

CHAPTER III.

THE precise circumstances of our Lord's childhood and life, previous to his public ministry, can not be ascertained from the writings of any of the evangelists, which can be relied on as authentic. All we can gather from those men is, that the faculties of his mind were enlarged in proportion to the growth of his body, insomuch that he arrived at the very perfection of heavenly wisdom.

As his parents were mean and poor, he had not the ad-

vantage of a finished education ; and he seems to have received no other instruction than what his parents gave him in conformity to Jewish laws. But supernatural abilities amply compensated for the deficiency of natural acquirements, and he gave instances, in his earliest years, of amazing penetration and consummate wisdom.

According to the Mosaic institution, his parents annually went up to Jerusalem ; and, when he arrived at the age of twelve years, carried him with them to that city, in order that he might early imbibe the precepts of religion and virtue. In this place the holy Jesus tarried, without the knowledge, and, consequently, the consent of his parents, who departed with the rest that were going towards Galilee ; and thinking that he was gone forward with some of their relations or acquaintance, they continued their journey, not doubting but they should overtake him on the road, or meet with him at the place where they had appointed to lodge. But on their arrival, not finding the child in the village, nor amongst their relations, they returned to Jerusalem, much troubled, and, after a most anxious search of three days, found him in the temple, sitting among the learned doctors, who were amazed at the wisdom of the questions, and his pertinence of his replies ; which were greatly superior to what they could expect from one of his tender years and mean education.

These doctors, or expounders of the law among the Jews, always taught the people publicly on the three great festivals ; and it was on one of these public occasions that the blessed Jesus gave such manifest proofs of his wisdom and penetration as astonished all the beholders, many of whom thought he must be something more than human.

During the obscure state of our blessed Redeemer at Nazareth, the Emperor Augustus died at Campania, after a long reign of above forty years, to the general regret of the whole Roman empire. He was succeeded by Tiberius, his son, a prince of very different temper of mind from his predecessor. The emperor, in the second year of his reign, recalled Rufus from the government of Judea, and sent Valerius Gracchus to succeed him. After reigning eleven years, Gracchus was recalled, and succeeded by Pontius Pilate, a person resem-

bling, in disposition, his master Tiberius, who was malicious, cruel, and covetous.

Soon after Pontius Pilate was appointed to the government of Judea, John the Baptist began to open his commission for preparing our Saviour's way before him, according as was appointed, by preaching "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Sacred history has not informed us of the manner in which the Baptist spent the former part of his life ; but, according to ancient tradition, Elizabeth, hearing of Herod's barbarous massacre of the infants of Bethlehem, fled into the wilderness, to secure the infant John from the relentless cruelty of that inhuman monster, and there nurtured him with all the tenderness of an affectionate mother. John the Baptist was about eighteen months old when his mother fled with him into the wilderness, within forty days after which she died.

He proved very successful in his ministry, as he enforced the doctrine of repentance, because the kingdom of heaven was at hand ; persons of all degrees and professions flocked to him, confessed their sins, were baptized in Jordan, and submitted to whatever the prophet prescribed as necessary to obtain an inheritance in that kingdom, the approach of which he came to declare. Amongst the converts were many of the Pharisaical tribe, some of whom confessed their sins, and were likewise baptized in Jordan.

The conversation of the Pharisees surprised the Baptist, knowing that they maintained a high opinion of their own sanctity, for which reason it was very astonishing that they should express any desire of obtaining a remission of their sin. In short he was much surprised to find the whole nation so affected by his threatenings, especially as he knew they expected salvation on account of their being of the seed of Abraham, a conceit which they cherished, and which they seem to have derived from a misrepresentation of the following passage : "Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinance of the moon, and the stars, for a light by night ; who divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar ; the Lord of Hosts is his name ; if these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed

of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me, for ever. Thus saith the Lord. If the heaven above can be measured, and the foundation of the earth searched beneath, I will also cast off the seed of Israel, for all that they have done."

But the Baptist, to curb their arrogance, called them the "offspring of vipers," instead of the children of Abraham ; perhaps the Pharisees and Sadducees applied to John for baptism, thinking by that means to avoid the danger they might incur, from being the avowed enemies of the Messiah, whom they expected to come in all the pomp of royalty, and to maintain his superiority by force of arms.

Throughout the whole of the Baptist's ministration, he happily adapted his discourses to the circumstances and capacities of the various people he addressed ; and took every pious means to prepare them for the reception of the promised Messiah, who was shortly to appear amongst them in the glorious character of Saviour and Redeemer of Israel.

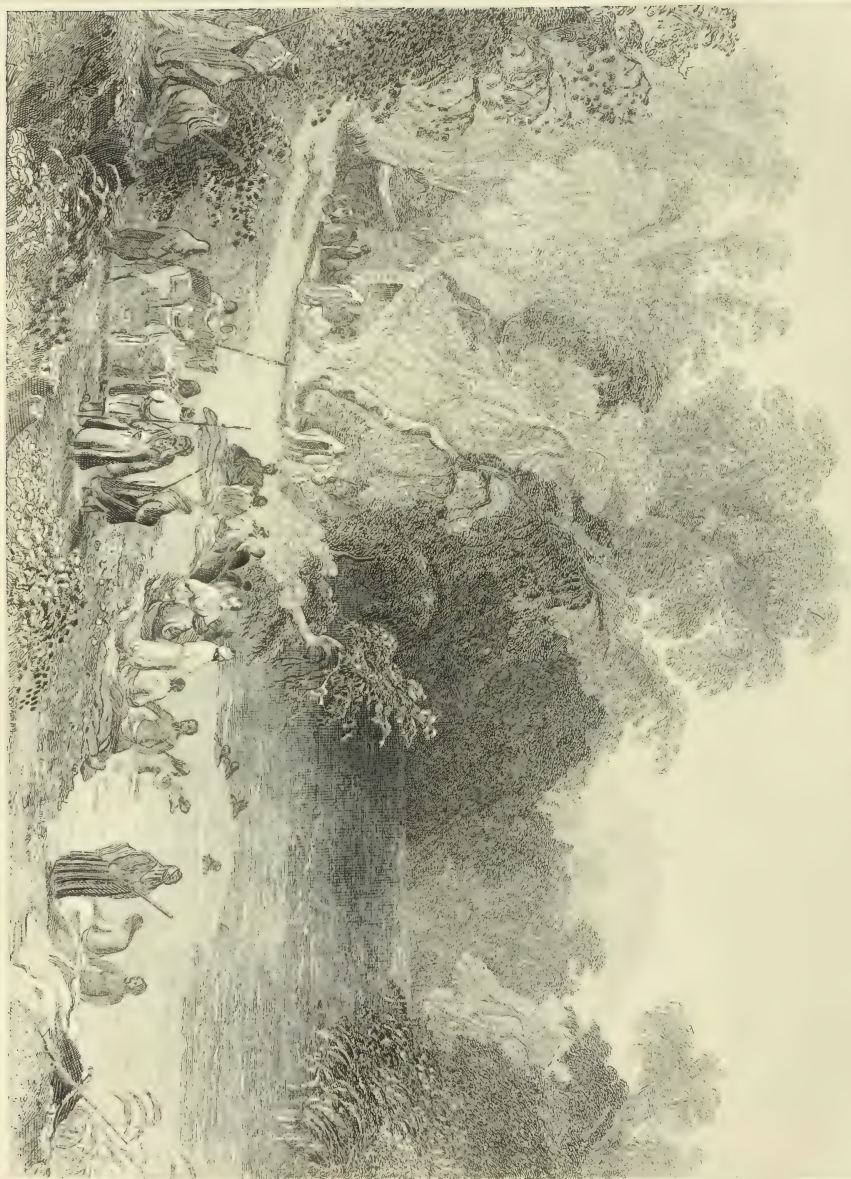
Thus, by a life of inflexible virtue, discourses nervous and pathetic, exhortations sincere and fervent, and rebukes honest and courageous, the Baptist became renowned throughout the region of Judea. Such was the admiration of the people at his life and doctrine, that, from the vision of his father Zacharias in the temple, the arrival of the Magi at Jerusalem, the prophecies of Simeon (circumstances recent in their memories), they began to conjecture that John might be the promised Messiah, and were even ready to pronounce him the Redeemer of Israel ; so that had he aspired to worldly dignity, he might, for a time, have shone in all the grandeur of human pomp, and claimed a regard superior to the sons of men. But, pious in principle, and humble in heart, he could not arrogate honors of which he was conscious of his unworthiness ; and therefore honestly undeceived his numerous followers, by assuring them that, so far from being the glorious person promised, he was only his forerunner ; and that, such was his own inferiority, that he was unworthy of doing his most menial offices. "I indeed baptize you with water ; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to loose." Luke, iii. 16.

During the time of the Baptist's continuance at Bethabara, the blessed Jesus left his retirement at Nazareth, and previous to his public ministry repaired to the banks of the river Jordan, where John was executing his commission for him, in order to be thus baptized by him. We can not impute this conduct of our Lord to any necessity there was of his conforming to the institution of baptism ; for purity needs not cleansing ; it is therefore evident that his motive was to add a sanction to that ordinance, for ever after appointed to be the initiating rite of Christianity, "Go, baptize all nations," etc.

It appears that John immediately, as it were by a prophetic revelation, knew the Saviour of the world ; for we find from the evangelist, that he acknowledged his superiority, and declined the office : "I have need to be baptized of thee ; and comest thou to me ?" Our Lord's answer, though short, is very full and expressive : "Suffer it to be so now ; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." As if he had said, regard not the precedence at this time, but perform thy office ; for it is necessary that we should, in the minutest point, conform to the divine will, by which this institution is enjoined.

This remonstrance removed the objections of John, and he baptized the immaculate Jesus in the river Jordan, in the presence of numerous spectators.

When the ceremony was performed, as he needed not the instructions usually given on the occasion, he went up straightway out of the water, and, kneeling on the bank of the river, fervently addressed his Almighty Father for an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit, as he was now entering on his public ministry, the prelude of his important mission, the end of which was the salvation of mankind.



CHAPTER IV.

THE great Redeemer having thus complied with the institution of Baptism, and received a most convincing testimony of his heavenly Father's approbation, by the miraculous descent and effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him, while praying on the banks of Jordan, in the presence of a multitude of spectators, entered upon his public ministry at the age of thirty years, according to the custom of the priests among the Jews.

It was apprehended by the people, that as he had just begun his public office, he would repair to Jerusalem, the seat of power and grandeur, in order to display to the mighty and the learned his miraculous abilities and effulgent glories.

But, averse to human praise, the heavenly-minded Jesus preferred solitude to the noise and hurry of mortal life ; he therefore retired into the wilderness, in order to prepare himself by fasting, meditation, and prayer, and sustaining temptation, for the important work on which he was entering—the salvation of mankind.

To promote this grand design, the evangelists write that this retirement into the wilderness was in consequence of the immediate direction of the divine Spirit. Though solitude itself is melancholy, the blessed Jesus added to the dismal scene by retiring on a barren spot, surrounded by high and craggy mountains, and forming a dark and gloomy chaos.

The Saviour of the world had not only been exposed to poverty and ridicule, but also to the most trying temptation of Satan ; that as the captain of our salvation has undergone the same, we ought not to faint when we are tempted, but, like him, be able to withstand the fiery darts of the devil.

It doubtless appears highly proper, in order that our blessed Lord and Master might both enter upon and prosecute his ministry with more glory to himself and advantage to mankind, that he should previously overcome the most subtle arts of that deceiver, who, under the mask of a serpent, seduced our first parents, and involved them and their posterity in one common ruin.

The peculiar devices by the old serpent to tempt the Son of God, during the time of his fasting, are not recorded in holy writ, and consequently they can not be ascertained.

But at the expiration of the forty days, when the blessed Jesus had endured the keenest hunger, the tempter, to make proof of the divinity of his mission, insolently demanded why he bore the sensations of hunger? since, if he was the Son of God, he must have power to change the stones of that dreary wilderness into bread; and by so marvelous a transmutation, he might have the satisfaction of knowing the truth of what was said concerning him at his baptism.

But our blessed Saviour repelled his device, by citing the words of Moses, which implied that God, whenever it seemed good in his sight, could, by extraordinary means, provide for the support of the human race. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Luke, iv. 4.

Satan, being defeated in his effort, took him to the top of a very high mountain, and thinking to work upon him by another artifice, showed him a bright view of all the kingdoms of the world, with all their alluring glories, promising him universal empire over the whole, if he would bow down and yield him the honor of the benefaction.

But observe his accursed pride and arrogance, in promising that which is the gift of God alone—universal empire over the earth; and requiring what was due to none but the Supreme—religious homage. This blasphemy, as well as insolence, incited the blessed Jesus to exert his divine authority, and command him, in a peremptory manner, to desist, citing this special injunction from sacred writ, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Thus repelled, he repeated the attempt, and, having taken our Lord to Jerusalem, placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, and, by a taunt of insolence, urged him to prove the truth of his mission by casting himself down from thence, citing, as an encouragement for him to comply with his desire, a text from the Psalms: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Matthew iv. 6. But our Saviour soon baffled this attempt, by another apt quotation from Scripture : "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Matthew iv. 7. Thou shalt not provoke the Lord, either by disobeying his command, or by an impertinent curiosity to know more concerning his mind and will than he is pleased to reveal.

Thus baffled in all his arts and devices by the wisdom and power of the Son of God, he departed from him, and an host of celestial spirits, dispatched from the regions of bliss, came and ministered refreshment to our Saviour, after his victory over the great enemy and father of mankind.

Hence, notwithstanding the ridicule of the infidel, Christians may derive great encouragement to fight manfully against the flesh, the world, and the devil, under the banner of the great captain of their salvation, who is ever ready to supply them with spiritual armor to sustain the combat with that inveterate and subtle foe, whose devices he has experienced, being in every respect tempted like them.

During the time of our Saviour's retirement in the wilderness, his faithful harbinger, the Baptist, being assured, from the miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit, and other concurring testimonies, that Jesus was the promised and long-expected Messiah, continued publishing his mission to the multitude ; so that the rulers in Jerusalem received information of the surprising events that had happened in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, before they saw the blessed Jesus, in confirmation of whose mission and doctrine they were effected.

Prompted by curiosity, they dispatched a deputation of priests and Levites to the Baptist, to demand of him who he was ; whether he was the Messiah, or Elias ; or a prophet risen from the dead to precede the Messiah, the powerful Prince, so earnestly expected by the whole nation of Israel.

The Baptist frankly replied, that he was not the Messiah whom they expected, nor Elias, who, as they had vainly thought, would personally appear amongst them, nor any other prophet risen from the dead : but, at the same time, hinted to them, that though he was not Elias himself, yet he was that person spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, and him of whom he thus prophesied, "The voice of him that crieth in

the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord ; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isaiah xl. 3.

The priests and Levites, not sufficiently gratified with this reply of the Baptist, demanded of him why he assumed the power of baptizing the people, if he was neither the Messiah, nor Elias, nor any of the ancient prophets risen from the dead ? To this demand John answered, I indeed baptize, to show the necessity of repentance : but my baptism is only that of water, and wholly ineffectual of itself to the remission of sins ; but that washing foretold by Zacharias, is of sovereign effect ; it is not my province, but solely that of the Messiah, who is actually upon earth and among you, though ye know him not, because he hath not yet manifested himself to the world. The Messiah is so far exalted beyond me, in power and dignity, that I am not worthy to do him the meanest offices.

The day after the departure of the priests and Levites from Bethabara, our blessed Lord left the wilderness, and repaired thither himself, while John was yet baptizing and preaching the doctrine of repentance.

The Baptist, as his grand business was to direct all persons to the Messiah, for life and salvation in and through him, embraced this seasonable opportunity of pointing him out to the multitude : " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world !" Lest the attending crowd should surmise that it had been previously concerted between Jesus and John, that the former should assume, and the latter give him, the appellation of Messiah, he publicly and solemnly declared that he was, equally with them, ignorant of the pretensions of Jesus to that high character, till he saw the descent of the Holy Ghost, and heard him pronounced, in the most awful manner, the Son of God. " And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not ; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." John, i. 32, 33, 34.

The Baptist having made this declaration, the Messiah

left Bethabara, but returned the day following ; and John happening to stand with two of his followers on the bank of the river Jordan, pointed to him as he passed, and in a pious rapture repeated what he had addressed to the multitude the preceding day : " Behold the Lamb of God ! " It is hence imagined that these two disciples, or followers of the Baptist, were absent at the time of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and for that reason this method was taken of pointing out to them the venerable person of the promised Redeemer of the world.

Animated with an ardent desire of hearing, as well as seeing, this extraordinary person, they left John, and followed Jesus, who, conscious of their design, turned about, and, with the utmost affability, gave them an invitation to the place of his residence. The evangelist John informs us that one of these disciples was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter ; and it is conjectured, from his silence, that himself was the other ; for it is remarkable, that in his writings, he studiously concealed his own name. Be that as it will, it is abundantly evident that the testimony of the Baptist, added to the tokens he had from the blessed Jesus, in the course of his converse with him, amply satisfied Andrew that he was indeed the promised Messiah, the Saviour and Redeemer of lost and perishing sinners.

Andrew soon after found his brother Peter, and brought him to our blessed Lord, telling him that he should afterwards be called Cephas (which signifies a rock), from his firm resolution of mind, and also because he should contribute towards the foundation of the Christian church.

Some time after, Jesus met with Philip, an inhabitant of the town of Bethsaida, and said unto him, " Follow me." Philip immediately obeyed the divine command, having heard of the character and mission of our blessed Saviour. It is supposed that this disciple was present at the miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit on our Lord at his baptism, which, being admitted, his compliance with his call is no matter of admiration.

Philip meeting with Nathanael, an inhabitant of Cana, a town in Galilee, informed him of the actual coming of the long-expected Messiah, that great Deliverer of Israel, spoken

of by Moses and the ancient prophets ; “Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph.” Nathaniel was assured, from the predictions concerning the Messiah, that he was to be descended from the line of David, and born in the city of Bethlehem, and therefore discovered an amazement at his being called Jesus of Nazareth : “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?” Can that most contemptible of places, Nazareth, be supposed to have given birth to the mighty Saviour, the Prince of peace, especially as it was expressly foretold by the prophet, that he was born in Bethlehem, the city of David ?

Notwithstanding the improbability of such an event, Nathaniel listened to Philip, and determined on an examination of the person whom he said was the promised Messiah. Accordingly, under his direction, he repaired to the blessed Jesus, who, knowing his character, saluted him on his approach with this honorable appellation, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile !”

Nathaniel, amazed at our Lord’s pertinent address, as he had never before seen him, asked by what means he obtained such precise knowledge of him ? Our Lord replied, he had seen him under the fig-tree. Probably Nathaniel had been praying under the fig-tree, and been overheard by our Lord, who, from the substance of his prayer, thus concluded his character ; for when the blessed Jesus informed him that he gave him that character on account of what had passed under the fig-tree, Nathaniel perceived that he knew not only what had passed at a distance, but had access to the inmost thoughts of the heart—a property not allotted to mortals—and therefore exclaimed with rapture, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel !”

Our Saviour then told him, he should hereafter have much stronger testimonials of the divinity of his mission, when he should be eye-witness to what the old patriarch Jacob had before seen in a vision—the angels of heaven descending and ascending, to attend the person, and execute the commands of the Son of Man : an appellation our blessed Lord assumed, not only as considering his humanity, but in order to fulfill most peremptorily that remarkable prediction of the prophet Daniel concerning him : “I saw in the night visions, and,

behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Daniel, vii. 13, 14.

The great Redeemer, having attested the divinity of his mission by many incontestable evidences, and made five disciples, departed for Galilee, where, soon after his arrival, he was invited, with his mother and disciples, to a marriage feast at Cana, a place near Nazareth.

At these nuptials there happened to be a scarcity of wine, and his mother, who interested herself in the conduct of the feast, and was therefore desirous that every thing should be done with decorum, applied to her Son, hoping he would be able to remedy the defect.

She had, doubtless, conceived he had the power of working miracles, and was therefore desirous that he would give proof of his ability in the presence of her friends, who were assembled at the marriage.

Addressing herself, therefore, to her Son, she told him, "They have no wine." Our Lord gently reproved her, in these words, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come:" that is, the time or period of my public ministry is not yet arrived; nor is it time for me to display my natural powers.

Notwithstanding this mild reproof, his mother still entertained an opinion that he would interest himself in behalf of her and the company, and therefore ordered the servants punctually to obey his commands.

Our blessed Lord, being assured that working a miracle would greatly tend to confirm the faith of his young disciples, exerted his divine power, by ordering the servants to fill six water pots, containing each about twenty gallons, with water; which was no sooner done, than the whole was converted into excellent wine.

He then ordered them to draw, and bear to the governor of the feast; who, being ignorant of the miracle that had been

wrought, and astonished at the preference of this wine, to that which had been served up at the beginning of the feast, addressed himself to the bridegroom, in the hearing of the whole company, telling him that, contrary to the usual custom, he had reserved the best wine to the last, at the same time commending so judicious a practice, as a plain proof of his approbation of his friends present at the entertainment. The bridegroom was equally surprised at the address of the governor of the feast, and the occasion of it, which was effected by the supernatural power of our blessed Lord.

This miracle, which was the first wrought by Jesus, confirmed the faith of his followers, and spread his renown throughout the adjacent country.

CHAPTER V.

OUR blessed Lord, immediately on his arrival at Jerusalem, repaired to the temple, where he was not a little shocked at beholding a place dedicated to the solemn service of Almighty God, so prostituted to purposes of fraud and avarice, and become the resort of traders of every kind. It is evident there must have been a grand market for oxen, sheep and doves at such times, for Josephus tells us no less than two hundred and fifty-six thousand victims were offered at one Passover.

Such abuse could not long escape his notice or correction, having an absolute right to chastise so flagrant a perversion of a place that, strictly speaking, was his own. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Accordingly, the blessed Jesus, whose pious soul was vexed at their profanation of the sacred place, drove out the traders, and upset the tables of the money-changers, saying unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence; make not my father's house a house of merchandise."

These mercenary wretches appear to have been struck at once with a consciousness of their guilt, and the severity of our Lord's reproof; as they immediately departed, without making the least resistance. But our Lord's conduct in this affair, carrying with it every token of zeal, for which the ancient prophets were so remarkable, the council assembled, and determined to inquire by what authority he attempted such a reformation, requiring, at the same time, a demonstrative proof of the divinity of his commission.

To gratify their curiosity, our Lord referred them only to the miracle of his own resurrection: "Destroy," says he, probably laying his hand on his breast, "this temple, and I will raise it up in three days." The rulers, mistaking his meaning, imagined that he had referred to the superb and lofty temple finished by Herod, and therefore told him such a relation was highly improbable, nor had they the least reason to think he could possibly rebuild, in three days, that magnificent structure which had been finished at immense expense, and was the labor of so many years.

Though the blessed Jesus declined compliance with the request of the mighty and noble among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he wrought several miracles in the presence of the common people, in order to confirm the doctrines he delivered, and prove the divinity of his mission.

The time of the Passover at Jerusalem being expired, Jesus, together with his disciples, withdrew into the remote parts of Judea, where he continued a considerable time, preaching the kingdom of God, and baptizing the new converts. John the Baptist being also, at the same time, baptizing in the river Enon, a dispute arose between his disciples and certain Jews concerning the preference of the baptism of Jesus.

Being unable to decide the point, they referred it to the opinion of John; on which the pious Baptist immediately declared, that he was only the harbinger of the great Messiah, who baptized not only with water but with the Holy Spirit; adding, that his own ministry was on the decline, as the beauty of the morning star, the harbinger of the sun, decreases, when that fountain of life but dawns in the chambers of the east.

The Baptist likewise mentioned to his disciples and hearers many circumstances tending to prove the divinity of the mission of the holy Jesus, and the important design of his incarnation.—“He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

The Baptist, having publicly preached the great doctrines of salvation, through faith in Jesus, departed from the wilderness of Judea, where he had continued a considerable time, and went into Galilee, often repairing to the court of Herod, who esteemed, or affected to esteem, both his preaching and person. But John, being faithful in his ministry, could not fail to remonstrate on the injustice and impiety of a known practice of Herod, which was, his cohabiting with Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, and thereby incurring the displeasure of that ambitious woman, he was, at her instance, cast into prison, and there reserved for future destruction.

While these things happened in Galilee, our blessed Lord continued preaching in the wilderness, whither great numbers resorted, attracted by curiosity to see the miracles which fame reported he daily wrought. The success of his ministry exciting the envy of the hypocritical tribe of Pharisees, our blessed Lord thought proper to retire into Galilee, in order to promote the design of his mission in those parts.

In the course of his journey, being weary of traveling in so warm a country, and excessively thirsty, he sat down in Samaria by a celebrated well, given by the old patriarch Jacob to his son Joseph, while the disciples were gone to the city to procure provisions.

While the humble Jesus was sitting by the well-side, a woman, a native of the country, came with her pitcher to fetch water ; and our Lord requested of her to give him to drink. The appearance of Jesus astonished the woman, because she believed him to be a Jew, and the Samaritans were held in the utmost contempt by those people, who, indeed, arrogated a preference to all nations upon earth. But though she knew him to be a Jew, she knew not that he was the Son of God, full of grace and truth, divested of human prejudices, and the very essence of humility and heavenly virtue. As the

design of his mission and incarnation was to promote the real happiness of mankind, he embraced every opportunity of enforcing his salutary doctrines ; and therefore, though his thirst was extreme, he delayed its gratification, in order to inform this woman, though of an infamous character, of the means by which she might obtain living water, or, in other words, eternal life. As the best method to effect this purpose, he gave her to understand, that had she known the character of the supplicant, she would have cagerly satisfied his desire, and been rewarded by a gift the most invaluable—even living water, issuing from the well of eternal salvation.

The woman, taking his words in the common acceptation, imagining that he suggested his power of supplying her with water flowing from a perpetual spring, which, in that parched climate appeared impossible, demanded of him if he was vested with a power superior to their father Jacob, who dug this well, drank out of it with his family, and left it for the benefit of posterity.

The Saviour and friend of mankind, still benign in his purpose towards the poor sinner, replied, "That all who drank of the water of Jacob's well would thirst again, because but a temporary allay of a desire incident to human nature ; whereas those who drank of the water which he was ready to dispense, should never thirst ; because that water flowed from the inexhaustible fountain of divine grace, and could not be drained but with immensity itself."

Though this great Preacher of Israel, by a simple and natural allegory, displayed the power of divine grace, the woman, ignorant of the allusion and meaning of the blessed Jesus, desired of him that water, that she might not thirst in future, nor have occasion to come to Jacob's well daily for water.

To show her the nature of sin, and thereby create in her soul desires after the water of life, the blessed Jesus, by some pertinent questions and replies, evinced his knowledge of her infamous course of life, and by that means convinced her that he had acted under an influence more than human. To evade, however, the present subject of discourse, which filled her with a degree of awe and fear, she proposed for discussion a

case long warmly contested between the Jews and Samaritans : Whether Mount Gerizim, or the city of Jerusalem, was destined by God as the place peculiarly set apart for religious worship ? Our blessed Lord replied to this insignificant question, that it was not the place but the manner in which adoration was offered to the Father of Spirits, that rendered such homage acceptable, observing that "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John, iv. 24.

In consequence of this reply to her, which apparently referred to things spiritual and eternal, she informed the blessed Jesus of her expectation of the arrival of the promised Messiah, who should punctually inform them concerning those points, so long and undecisively contested.

Our Lord, embracing the opportunity of preaching himself to this poor woman, as the Saviour of sinners, replied, without hesitation, "I that speak unto thee am he."

While Jesus continued talking with the woman, his disciples returned, and approached him at the very time when he told the woman he was the Messiah. Though they were astonished at his condescension in conversing with an inhabitant of Samaria, and even of instructing her in the doctrines of religion, none presumed to ask him why he conversed with one who was an enemy to the Jews, and the worship in the temple of Jerusalem. But the woman, hearing Jesus call himself the Messiah, left her pitcher and ran into the city to publish the glad tidings, that the great Deliverer of mankind was then sitting by the well of Jacob, and told her all the secret transactions of her life. The report astonished the Samaritans, and, at the same time, roused their curiosity to see a person foretold by Moses and the prophets, and of whose appearance there was then so universal an expectation.

The disciples, on their return, set before their Master the provision they had purchased, but he, wholly absorbed in meditation, refused the refreshment so highly requisite, telling them that he had "meat to eat that they knew not of." This unexpected answer surprised his disciples, who, understanding his words in their natural sense, asked one another whether any person had, during their absence, supplied him with provisions.

But Jesus soon explained this mystery, by telling them that he did not mean natural, but spiritual, food; that to execute the commission he had received from his Father, was far better to him than meat or drink, and the satisfaction he was going to receive from the conversion of the Samaritans much greater than any sensual enjoyments.

Many of the Samaritans were now near Jesus, who, lifting up his eyes, and seeing the ways crowded with people coming to him from the city, stretched out his benevolent hand toward them, and addressed his disciples in the following manner: "Say not ye there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are already white unto harvest." John, iv. 35. Behold yonder multitudes, how they are thronging to hear the word, which has only a few minutes been sown in their hearts! It is not, therefore, always necessary to wait with patience for the effect, which sometimes immediately follows the cause. To gather this spiritual harvest, and finish the work of him that sent me, is my proper food; adding, for the encouragement of his disciples, as you have labored with me in this harvest, so shall you participate in the great recompense of eternal rewards: "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together." John, iv. 36.

Many of the people had been so affected at the words of the woman, that they were fully persuaded that Jesus could be no other than the great Messiah; accordingly, their first request was that he would deign to take up his residence in their city. The compassionate Redeemer of the human race so far complied, as to stay with them two days, an interval which he spent in preaching to them the kingdom of God, so that the greatest part of the city embraced the doctrine of the gospel, and at his departure, said unto the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." John, iv. 42.

Having accomplished his gracious design in Samaria, Jesus continued his journey to Galilee, to exercise his ministry, and

preach there the kingdom of God ; telling his disciples that the time was now accomplished which had been pre-determined by Omnipotence for creating the happy kingdom of the Prince of peace.

Our Lord had performed several miracles at Jerusalem during the passover, at which the inhabitants of Galilee were present. His preaching was, therefore, at first attended with great success, for they listened attentively to his doctrine, and received it with particular kindness and courtesy, especially the people of Cana, where he had turned the water into wine.

During his residence in that city, a nobleman of Capernaum came to him, requesting, with great humility and reverence, that he would come down and heal his son, who was at the point of death. Our blessed Lord readily consented with the latter part of his request ; but to remove a prejudice they had conceived, that it was necessary to be personally present in order to restore the sick person to health, he refused to go down to Capernaum, dismissing the father with this assurance, that his son was restored to health, "Go thy way ; thy son liveth." John, iv. 50. The nobleman obeyed the word of Jesus, and immediately departed for his own house ; but before his arrival, he was met by his servants, with the joyful news that his son was recovered. On this the father inquired at what time they perceived an alteration for the better ; and from their answer was satisfied, that immediately after the words were spoken by the blessed Jesus, the fever left him, and he was recovered in a miraculous manner. The amazing instance of his power and goodness abundantly convinced the nobleman and his family, that Jesus was the true Messiah, the great prophet so long promised to the world.

After some stay in the city and neighborhood of Cana, Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had spent the greater part of his youth, and, as his constant custom was, went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and read that celebrated prediction of the Messiah in the prophet Isaiah : "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-

hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke, iv. 18, 19.

It should be remembered that our blessed Saviour read the passage in the original Hebrew, which was then a dead language ; and, as he had never been taught letters, could do it only by inspiration from above. But he did more ; he explained the passage with such strength of reason, and beauty of expression, that the inhabitants of Nazareth, who well knew he had never been initiated into the rudiments of learning, heard him with astonishment. But as he performed no miracle in their city, they were offended at him. Perhaps they thought the place of his residence should have been his peculiar care ; and, as he could, with a single word, heal the sick at a distance, not a single person in Nazareth should have been afflicted with any kind of disease. That they really entertained sentiments of this kind, seems plain from our Saviour's own words : " Ye will surely say to me, Physician, heal thyself : whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country ;" evidently alluding to the great and benevolent miracle he had wrought on the nobleman's son.

But the holy Jesus, enumerating the miracles Elijah had done in behalf of the widow of Sarepta, who was an heathen, and the inhabitant of an idolatrous city in the time of famine, when many widows in Israel perished with hunger, and of Naaman the Syrian, who was cured of his leprosy by the prophet Elisha, when numbers of Jews, afflicted with the same loathsome disease, were suffered to continue in their uncleanness, sufficiently proved that the prophets had, on some extraordinary occasions, wrought miracles in favor of those whom the Israelites, from a fond conceit of their being the peculiar favorites of Heaven, judged unworthy of such marks of particular favor. The council was so incensed at this reply, that, forgetting the sanctity of the Sabbath, they hurried him through the streets, "to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built," intending to cast him headlong down the precipice ; but the Son of God defeated their cruel intentions, by miraculously confounding their sight, and withdrawing from the fury of those wretched people.

CHAPTER VI.

THE holy Jesus, aggrieved by the cruel Nazarenes, departed from them, and visited Capernaum, the capital of Galilee (being built on the borders of the Lake of Gennessaret), which was a place highly convenient for his design ; for, besides the numerous inhabitants of that city, the trading towns on the lake were crowded with strangers, who, after hearing the doctrine of the gospel preached by the great Redeemer of mankind, would not fail to spread, in their respective countries, the happy tidings of salvation.

While Jesus tarried at Capernaum, he usually taught in the synagogues on the Sabbath day, preaching with such energy of power as greatly astonished the whole congregation. He did not, however, constantly confine himself to that city ; the adjacent country was often blessed with his presence, and cheered with the heavenly words of his mouth.

In one of the neighboring villages, he called Simon and Andrew, who were following their occupation of fishing on the lake, to accompany him. These disciples, who had before been acquainted with him, readily obeyed the heavenly mandate, and followed the Saviour of the world. Soon after, he saw James and John, who were also fishing on the lake, and called them also. Nor did they hesitate to follow the great Redeemer of mankind ; and, from their ready compliance, there is reason to believe that they, as well as Simon and Andrew, were acquainted with Jesus at Jordan, unless we suppose, which is far from being improbable, that their readiness proceeded from the secret energy of his power upon their minds. But, however this be, the four disciples accompanied our blessed Saviour to Capernaum, and soon after to different parts of Galilee.

How long our Lord was on this journey can not be determined ; all the evangelists have mentioned is, that he wrought a great number of miracles on diseased persons ; and that the fame of these wonderful works drew people from Galilee, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond Jordan. Nor was the knowledge of these miracles concealed from the heathen, particularly the

inhabitants of Syria ; for they also brought their sick to Galilee to be healed by him. Consequently, the time our blessed Saviour spent in these tours must have been considerable, though the evangelists have said very little concerning it.

But whatever time was spent in these benevolent actions, the prodigious multitudes which flocked to him from every quarter, moved his compassion toward those who were bewildered in the darkness of ignorance, and determined him to preach to them "the words of eternal life."

For this blessed purpose, he ascended a mountain in that neighborhood ; and placing himself on an eminence, from whence he could be heard by throngs of people attending him, he inculcated, in an amazingly pathetic manner, the most important points of religion. But, alas ! they were coldly received, because many of them were directly opposite to the standing precepts delivered by the scribes and Pharisees. Surely, these people, who had seen the blessed Jesus perform so many benevolent actions to the poor, the diseased, and the maimed, might have entertained a more favorable opinion of his doctrine, and known that so compassionate and powerful a person must have been actuated by the Spirit of God, and, consequently, the doctrine he taught was really divine.

He opened his excellent sermon with the doctrine of happiness, a subject which the teachers of wisdom have always considered as the principal object in morals, and employed their utmost abilities to convey a clear idea of it to their disciples, but differed very remarkably with regard to the particulars in which it consisted. The Jews were, in general, persuaded that the enjoyments of sense were the sovereign good. Riches, conquest, liberty, mirth, fame, revenge, and other things of the same kind, afforded them such pleasures, that they wished for no better in the Messiah's kingdom, which they all considered as a secular one ; and that a "golden," instead of a "scepter of righteousness," would have been the "scepter of his kingdom." Nay, some of the disciples themselves retained, for a time, the like kind of notion, till they were convinced of their mistake, by the spirit, word, and conduct of their divine Master.

Having shown in what true happiness consisted, our

Saviour addressed himself to his disciples, and explained their duty, as the teachers appointed to conduct others in the paths that lead to eternal felicity ; and excited them to diligence in dispensing the salutary influences of their doctrine and example, that their hearers might honor and praise the great Creator of heaven and earth, who had been so kind to the children of men.

As his definition of happiness was very different from what the Jews were accustomed to hear from the scribes and Pharisees, he thought proper to declare, that he was not come to destroy the moral precepts contained in the law or the prophets, but to fulfill and confirm them.

Nothing is so steadfast as the eternal truths of morality : the heavens may pass away, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, but the rule of righteousness shall remain immutable and immortal. And, therefore, he ordered his disciples, on the severest penalties, to enforce, both by preaching and example, the strict observation of all the moral precepts contained in the sacred writings, and that in a much greater latitude than they were taken by the teachers of Israel ; and, in consideration of the frailties of human nature, taught them that excellent form of prayer, which has been used by Christians of most denominations to this very day : "Our Father," etc.

If earthly parents are called fathers, the Almighty has the best title from every creature, and particularly from men, being the father of their spirits, the former of their bodies, and the continual preserver of both. Nor is this all : he is "our Father" in a still higher sense, as he regenerates us, and stamps his image upon our minds, so that, partaking of his nature, we become his children, and therefore we can, with a holy boldness, call him by the title of that relation. In the former sense, God is the father of all his creatures, whether good or bad ; but in the latter, he is the father only of the righteous. Father is the most magnificent title invented by poets and philosophers, in honor of their gods ; it conveys the most lovely idea possible to the human breast. As it is used by mankind in general, it marks the essential character of the true God ; namely, that he is the first cause of all things, or

the author of our being, and, at the same time, conveys a strong idea of the tender love he bears to his creatures, whom he nourishes with an affection, and protects with a watchfulness, infinitely superior to that of an earthly parent. The name of father also teaches us, that we owe our being to God, points out his goodness and mercy in upholding us, and expresses his power in giving us the things we ask. Nor is this all : we are likewise taught to give our Maker the title of father, that our sense of the tender relation in which he stands to us may be confirmed ; our faith in his power and goodness strengthened ; our hopes of obtaining what we ask in prayer cherished ; and our desire of obeying and imitating him quickened ; for reason aided by grace teaches us that it is disgraceful in children to degenerate from their parents, and that they can not commit a greater crime than to disobey the commands of an indulgent father.

Lastly, we are commanded to call him father in the plural number (and that in our secret addresses to the throne of grace), to put us in mind that we are all brethren, the children of one common parent ; and that we ought to love one another with sincerity, as we pray not for ourselves only, but for all the human race.

“ Which art in heaven.” The words do not suppose the presence of God to be confined ; he is present everywhere ; is about our paths, and about our bed, and narrowly inspecteth every action of the sons of men. But they express his majesty and power, and distinguish him from those we call fathers upon earth, and from false gods, which are not in heaven, the happy mansion of bliss and felicity ; where the Almighty, who is essentially present in every part of the universe, gives more especial manifestation of his presence to such of his creatures as he hath exalted to share with him in the eternal felicities of the heavenly Jerusalem.

“ Hallowed be thy name.” By the name of God, the Hebrews understood God himself, his attributes, and his works ; and, therefore, the meaning of the petition is, May thy existence be universally believed, thy presence loved and imitated, thy works admired, thy supremacy over all things acknowledged, thy providence revered and confided in ! May all

the sons of men think so highly of his divine majesty, of his attributes, of his works ! and may we so express our veneration for God, that his glory may be manifested in every corner of the world !

“Thy kingdom come.” Let the kingdom of the Messiah be extended to the utmost parts of the earth, that all the children of men “may know his salvation, and become one fold, under one shepherd—Jesus Christ the righteous.”

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” May thy will, O thou great Father of the universe, be done in us, that by the light of thy glorious gospel, and the aid of thy Holy Spirit, we may be enabled to imitate the angels of light, by giving as sincere, universal and constant obedience to thy divine commands, as those blest beings do in glory.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” Give us, from time to time, wholesome and proper food, that we may be enabled to worship thee with cheerfulness and vigor.

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” The Almighty, as supreme governor of the universe, has a right to support his government, by punishing those who transgress his laws. The suffering of punishment, therefore, is a debt which sinners owe to the divine justice ; so that when we ask God, in prayer, to forgive our debts, we beg that he would be mercifully pleased to remit the punishment of all our sins, particularly the pains of hell ; and that, laying aside his displeasure, he would receive us into favor, and bless us with life eternal. In this petition, therefore, we confess our sins, and express the sense we have of their power ; namely, that they deserve death ; and sure nothing can be more proper than such a confession in our addresses to God ; because humility and a sense of our unworthiness, when we ask favors of the Almighty, whether spiritual or temporal, have a tendency to give us a proper sense of the goodness of God in bestowing them upon us.

The terms of this petition are worthy of notice : “Forgive us only as we forgive.” We must forgive others if we hope ourselves to be forgiven ; and we are permitted to crave from God such forgiveness only as we grant to others ; so that if we do not forgive even our enemies, we seriously and

solemnly implore the Almighty to condemn us to the punishment of eternal death. How remarkably careful, therefore, should men be to have their hearts purged from all rancor and malice, before they enter into the temple of the Almighty to offer up their prayers to the throne of grace!

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Whenever we are tempted, O thou that helpest our infirmities, suffer us not to enter into temptation, to be overcome, or suffer loss thereby; but make a way for us to escape, so that we may be more than conquerors, through thy love, over sin, and all the consequences of it. “But deliver us,” by some means, from the evil, either by removing the temptation or increasing our strength to resist it. This petition teaches us to preserve a sense of our own inability to repel and overcome the solicitations of the world, and of the necessity there is of our receiving assistance from above, both to regulate our passions and enable us to prosecute a religious life.

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.” Because the government of the universe is thine for ever, and thou alone possessest the power of creating and upholding all things; and because the glory of thine infinite perfections remains eternally with thee, therefore all men ought to hallow thy name, submit themselves to thy government, and perform thy will; and, in an humble sense of their dependence, seek from thee the supply of their wants, the pardon of their sins, and the kind protection of thy providence.

This is emphatically called the Lord's Prayer, because delivered by the Son of God himself; and therefore we should do well to understand it thoroughly, that when we enter the temple of the Lord and address him in solemn prayer, we may have hopes he will grant our petitions. And, above all, not to harbor in our breasts the least envy or malice against any one who may have offended us; for it is only on a supposition that we have forgiven others that we may have the least reason to hope for obtaining forgiveness from the great Creator.

The divine Preacher proceeded to discover the great duty of fasting, in which he directed them not to follow the hypo-

crites, in disfiguring their faces, and clothing themselves in the melancholy weeds of sorrow, but to be chiefly solicitous to appear before God as one that truly fasteth. Then will the Almighty, who constantly surrounds us, and is acquainted even with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, openly bestow upon us the blessings which he hath promised to a true penitent, whose mortification, contrition, and humility he can discern without the external appearance of sorrow and repentance. It must, however, be remembered that our blessed Saviour is here speaking of private fasting, and to this alone his directions are to be applied ; for when we are called upon to mourn over public sins or calamities, it ought to be performed in the most public manner.

Heavenly-mindedness was the next thing inculcated by the blessed Jesus ; and this he recommended with a peculiar earnestness, because the Jewish doctors were in general strangers to his grace, in which he was desirous his followers should be clothed, as being the most excellent ornament for a teacher of righteousness. This is strenuously recommended by our blessed Saviour, by showing the deformity of its opposite, covetousness, and which has only perishable things for its object. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew, vi. 19, 20, 21.

More solid happiness will accrue from depositing your treasures in heaven than in laying them up on earth, where they are subject to a thousand disasters, and even, at best, can remain only for a short series of years ; whereas, those laid up in heaven are permanent, and will lead to a "crown of glory that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens." Nor let any man be so foolish as to think he can place his heart on the happiness of a future life when his treasures are deposited in this vale of misery ; for wherever are laid the goods which his soul desireth, there his heart and affections will also remain. If, therefore, ye are desirous of sharing in the

joys of eternity, you must lay up your treasures in the "mansions of my Father's kingdom."

Lest they should imagine it was possible to be both heavenly-minded and covetous at the same time, he assured them that it was full as absurd as to imagine that a person could, at the same time, serve two masters; "for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and Mammon." Matthew, vi. 24.

To strengthen this doctrine, he added a few plain, evident instances of the power, perfection, and extent of God's providence, in which his tender care for the least and weakest creatures shines with a remarkable luster, demonstrating the wise and paternal attention of the Deity to all the creatures of his hand. He desired them to observe the birds of the air, the lilies, and even the grass of the field; leading his most illiterate hearers to form a more elevated and extensive idea of the divine government than the philosophers had attained, who, though they allowed in general that the world was governed by God, had very confused notions of his providence with regard to every individual creature and action. He taught them that the Almighty Father of the whole was the guardian and protector of the universe; that every action is subject to his will, and nothing left to the blind determination of chance.

Having enforced these heavenly precepts, he exhorted them to place an humble dependence on the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to strive to practice the precepts of religion, however difficult the task might appear. "Enter ye in at the straight gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew, vii. 13, 14. Straight indeed is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life. In the way nothing is to be found that suits the flesh, but many things that have a tendency to mortify it—poverty, fasting, watching, injuries, chastity, sobriety. And, with regard to the gate, it receives none that are puffed up with the glory of this life, none that are indulging in lux-

ury ; it does not admit those that love riches, or are encumbered with the goods of this world. None can pass through it but those who renounce all worldly lust, and are resolved to forsake all sin. There is, however, no reason for us to despair of entering through this heavenly portal ; if we sincerely endeavor, the assistance of the Holy Spirit will be freely given us, and we shall safely pass through the "straight gate," and pursue our journey with ease along the "narrow path," till we arrive at the blissful mansion of the heavenly Canaan.

But lest evil-minded men, under the mask of piety and religion, should endeavor to draw them from the paths of righteousness, our blessed Saviour cautioned his disciples to beware of such persons, and carefully make the strictest scrutiny into their lives and doctrines.

Our Lord closed his sermon with the parable of the house built on different foundations ; intimating, that the bare knowledge, or the simple hearing, of the divinest lessons of the truth ever delivered ; nay, even the belief of these instructions, without the practice of them, is of no manner of importance.

When will the happy time come, in which professing Christians shall form themselves on these important maxims of their great Master ! When shall they be known to be his disciples, by the candor of their sentiments, the equity of their conduct, and the beneficence of their actions, as well as by the articles of their faith, and the forms of their worship !

The way of life, which our blessed Redeemer has marked out for us in such precepts as the above, may, indeed, to corrupt nature, appear "rugged and narrow," and the "gate straight," through which we are to pass ; but let us encourage ourselves against all the difficulties, by considering that immortal life and glory to which they infallibly lead. Then shall we, doubtless, prefer the most painful way of piety and virtue, though with yet fewer companions than we might reasonably expect, to all those "flowery," and frequented paths of vice which go down to the chamber of death.

CHAPTER VII.

THE great Preacher of Israel, having finished his excellent discourse, came down from the mountain, surrounded by a multitude of people, who had listened with astonishment to the doctrines he delivered, and were soon confirmed by divers miracles. A leper met him in his way to Capernaum, and being doubtless acquainted with the wondrous works he had already performed, threw himself, with great humility, before the Son of God, using this remarkable expression, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

The species of leprosy common among the Jews, and the other eastern nations, was equally nauseous and infectious ; but this was so far from preventing the blessed Jesus from approaching so loathsome an object, that it increased his pity—he even touched him ; but instead of being polluted himself, the leper was instantly cleansed, and he departed glorifying God.

The evangelist adds, that Jesus forbade him to tell any person what had been done, but repair immediately to the priest, and offer the gift commanded by Moses.

Having performed the cure on the leper, our blessed Lord proceeded to Capernaum ; but as he entered the city, he was met by a Roman centurion, who represented to him, in the most pathetic manner, the deplorable condition of his servant, who was grievously afflicted with the palsy. The compassionate Redeemer of the world listened attentively to his complaint, and immediately assured him he would come and heal him. The centurion thought this too great a condescension to one who was not of the seed of Jacob, and therefore told him that he did not mean he should give himself the trouble of going to his house, as his presence was an honor he had not the least reason to expect, he being confident that his word alone would be sufficient, diseases and devils being as much subject to his commands, as his soldiers were to him.

Our Lord was amazed at these words ; not that he was ignorant of the centurion's faith, or the basis on which it was built : he well knew the thought of his heart long before he

uttered his request, but he was filled with admiration at the exalted idea the Roman officer had conceived of his power ; and to make his faith the more conspicuous, he gave it the praise it so justly deserved : " Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matthew, viii. 10.

This centurion, doubtless, relied upon the miracle Jesus had before wrought upon the nobleman's son ; but the excellency and peculiarity of it consisted in applying the most grand ideas of the divine power to Jesus, who, according to outward appearance, was only one of the sons of men.

This exalted faith induced the blessed Jesus to declare the gracious intentions of his Almighty Father with regard to the Gentiles ; namely, that he would as readily accept their faith as that of the Jews, and place them with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven ; while those who boasted of being the offspring of these great patriarchs, but fell short of the heathen in faith, should be excluded from the blissful seats of Paradise. " And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew, viii. 11, 12.

Having thus addressed the multitude, the blessed Jesus turned himself to the centurion, and said, " Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." Though the idea thou conceived of my power is just, though remarkably great, as a reward for thy faith I grant the petition thou hast asked of me. " And," the evangelist adds, " his servant was healed in the self-same hour." Matthew, viii. 13.

On the succeeding Sabbath, our Saviour went into the Jewish synagogue at Capernaum and taught the people, delivering his instructions in so graceful and elegant a manner that they were all astonished ; and, to increase their admiration, one of the congregation, possessed of an unclean spirit, cried out in a terrible manner, " Let us alone ; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ! Art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Mark, i. 24.

But the blessed Jesus, who wanted the testimony of no such confessors, commanded him to keep silence, and immediately come out of the man, which command the evil spirit instantly obeyed, to the great surprise and astonishment of all the spectators.

The enemies of the gospel have always endeavored to depreciate our Saviour's miracles, pretending that no more is meant by a person possessed of the devil than that he was afflicted with some loathsome disease, and that because sepulchres were considered as polluted places, and, therefore, whenever any melancholy person frequented them, they were said to be possessed with unclean spirits.

To this objection, namely, that the demoniacs were in reality nothing more than persons afflicted with some loathsome disease, we reply, it is evidently false, the evangelist having taken care to be very particular on this head. "They brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them." Matthew, iv. 24. "He gave to the apostles power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Matthew, x. 1. And, accordingly, "he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils." Mark, i. 34.

But the vast concourse of people that now gathered round him in Capernaum began to be troublesome, and he retired into a desert, whither the multitude soon followed him, and entreated him never to depart from them. But as this request was inconsistent with the design of his mission, he, for the first time, refused their request, and "preached in the synagogues of Galilee." Luke, iv. 44.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR blessed Lord, having spread his doctrine throughout Galilee, returned to Capernaum, followed by such numbers of people that he found it necessary to step into Peter's ship, from whence he taught the multitude, who stood on the shore listening with great attention to his doctrine.

Having concluded his discourse, he turned himself to Simon Peter, desiring him to launch out further from the shore and let down his net. On which the disciple told him of the unsuccessful pains they had taken during the whole night, but added, that he would, in obedience to his command, make one trial more. Nor had he any cause to repent; for the net was no sooner in the lake, than they found it so full of large fishes that it was in danger of breaking.

This success, after such fruitless toil, astonished Peter, who, falling down at the feet of Jesus, cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He was conscious of the many sins he had been guilty of, and therefore afraid of being in the company of so divine a person, lest some offense might have exposed him to more than ordinary chastisement.

But the benevolent Redeemer of mankind removed his fears, by telling him that from thenceforth the employment of him and his companions should be far more noble; they should catch men, that is, they should turn them from the crooked paths of iniquity to the straight road leading to the heavenly mansions.

In one of the cities through which he passed, he found "a man full of leprosy," who, seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

It was the custom in Judea for the priest to banish from society those who were afflicted with a contagious leprosy. The disease of this person, therefore, was of a less pestilential kind, as he was suffered to enjoy the conversation of men. His case, however, excited the pity of the compassionate Jesus, who immediately cleansed him, ordered him to repair

to Jerusalem, and, after showing himself to the priest, offer the gifts commanded by Moses, giving him the same admonition he had done to others, namely, not to tell any man what he had done to him. But the blessing he had received was so great and unexpected, that instead of concealing he published everywhere the great things Jesus had done for him, which brought such crowds to the Son of God, that he was obliged to return from Capernaum into the wilderness, to refresh his body with rest, and his spirit with prayer and meditation.

The generality of commentators suppose that this leper, and the other mentioned in the foregoing chapter, are one and the same person ; but this is a mistake. The former was cured in the fields, the latter in the city. After cleansing the first, Jesus went to Capernaum, and healed the centurion's servant ; but after curing the latter, he retired into the wilderness, to shun the prodigious crowds which soon gathered round him, from the leper's publishing everywhere the miracle Jesus had wrought for him.

Our blessed Lord, finding all his endeavors to conceal himself in the desert would be in vain, ordered his disciples to accompany him to the other side of the lake, upon which a certain scribe, who happened to be present, declared he would follow him ; but Jesus, who well knew that his desire was only to gain the profits and advantages of an earthly kingdom, which he supposed the Messiah would establish, told him, if he intended nothing more by following him than to improve his worldly wealth, he would find himself wretchedly mistaken. "The foxes have holes," saith the blessed Jesus to this teacher of Israel, "and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Matthew, viii. 20.

The disciples having prepared the ship, took on board their Master, and departed for the other side of the lake, attended by many boats full of people, who were desirous of hearing his heavenly discourses, and of being spectators of his astonishing works. But Jesus, being fatigued with the labors of the day, sat himself down at the stern of the ship, and fell asleep.

The weather, which had till now been calm and serene, suddenly changed. A terrible storm came on, and the rising waves dashed impetuously against the ship, threatening every moment to bury them all in the bowels of the deep. The darkness of the night increased the horrors of the tempest. Now ~~they~~ they were carried on the tops of the mountainous waves, and seemed to touch the skies ; then plunged to the bottom of the deep, while the foaming billows roared horribly above them. In vain the disciples exerted their utmost strength, the storm continued to increase, and baffled all the efforts of human strength. The waves broke over the ship, the waters rushed in, and she began to sink. All hopes of escaping were vanished, despair seized every individual, and they were on the brink of perishing, when they ran to Jesus crying out, "Master, Master, we perish !" Their vehement cries roused him from his sleep. He raised his hand, so often employed in acts of mercy and benevolence, and, with a stern and awful voice, rebuked the boisterous elements. The raging sea instantly obeyed his command. The aerial torrent stopped short in its impetuous course, and became silent as the grave, while the mountainous waves sunk at once into their beds, and the surface of the deep became as smooth as polished marble.

Soon after the storm was allayed, they arrived in the country of Gadara, and, on their landing, two men, possessed with devils, came from the tombs to meet Jesus. One of them, who was more furious than the other, had been often bound with chains and fetters, but to no purpose, being always broken with great fury, so that no man attempted further to restrain him. Being therefore at liberty, he shunned the society of men, wandering day and night in desert places among the sepulchres or caverns where the dead were deposited, crying and making the most dismal complaints, and cutting himself with stones.

The disciples were terrified at the approach of these furious mortals ; but Jesus soon dissipated their fears, commanding, while the men were at a distance, the devils to come out of them. The heavenly mandate was no sooner given, than they fell on their faces, crying out, "What have

we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God?" Mark, v. 7. "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matthew, viii. 29. "I adjure thee, by God, that thou torment me not!" Mark, v. 7. The apostate spirits well knew the power of the Son of God, and trembled lest he should immediately cast them into the torments prepared for them, and not suffer them to continue roving through the earth till the day of judgment, when they should be condemned to eternal punishment in the sight of the whole creation.

Jesus, being willing that the torments suffered by these miserable men should be known before he healed them, asked one of the devils his name, who answered, "Legion, for we are many," (Mark, v. 9,) begging, at the same time, that he would not command them to repair into the deep or bottomless pit, but suffer them to enter a herd of swine feeding at a distance.

How subtle are the wiles of the devil! The power of the Son of God he knew was not to be resisted; but he could not help envying the benevolent miracles he had wrought for the sons of men, and was therefore willing to prevent, as much as possible, their good effects on the miserable people of this country. This was the true reason why he begged leave to enter the herd of swine—he knew he could destroy them—and this he hoped would render our blessed Saviour odious to the wicked inhabitants of Gadara.

Though Jesus well knew his crafty design, yet he permitted the devils to enter the swine, that his disciples, and others who were with him, might be fully convinced these unhappy persons were really possessed by apostate spirits, and, at the same time, give them a terrible instance of their power, when free from all restraint.

The divine permission was no sooner granted, than the spectators beheld, at a distance, the torments of these poor creatures, with what amazing rapidity they ran to the confines of the lake, leaped from the precipices into the sea, and perished in the waters; while the persons who, a moment before, were raving and cutting themselves in the most shocking manner, became at once meek and composed, having recovered entirely the exercise of their reason.

The keepers of the herd, terrified at this astonishing miracle, ran into the city, publishing, in every part, the cure of the men possessed with the devils, and the destruction of the swine.

This surprising report threw the inhabitants into the greatest consternation : they left the city to be spectators of so wonderful an event ; but when they saw the men who had been possessed sitting at the feet of Jesus, decently clothed, and in their right mind, their fear was increased. For knowing they had trespassed in keeping the swine, which was contrary to the law of Moses, they dreaded a more severe punishment ; and, being ignorant of the goodness of Jesus, though he had given them so remarkable a proof of it in the cure of these wretched mortals, they besought him that he would leave their country.

There prevailed a custom among the heathen, when any illustrious hero had delivered his country from its enemies, or from any other great evil, to erect lofty columns to his memory ; his statue was seen in every place ; altars blazed to his glory ; they honored him with the high appellation of saviour ; and thought nothing, not even divine honors, too great to confer upon him. But when Christ had removed a monster from the Gadarenes, more formidable and fearful than any in heathen history, even a legion of devils, and rendered the way, by which no man could pass before, secure from danger, instead of being received by them as a Saviour and as a God, with the acclamations and hosannas of the people, he was besought to depart out of their coasts. Stupid people ! they had, indeed, lost their herd of swine, but surely the valuable gift they had received, in two of their countrymen and fellow-creatures being delivered from the tyranny of Satan, was better than the cattle on a thousand hills, and merited, at least, their thanks and acknowledgments.

The stupid request of the Gadarenes was, however, complied with by the blessed Jesus, who, entering the ship, returned to the country from whence he came, leaving them a valuable pledge of his love, and us a noble pattern of perseverance in well-doing, even when our kindnesses are condemned or requited with injuries.

CHAPTER IX.

THE arrival of our Saviour and his disciples at Capernaum, a city of Galilee, was no sooner published, than such throngs of people were gathered together that the house could not contain them, nor even the court before it. He, however, preached the words of eternal life to the listening audience, among whom were many Pharisees and doctors of the law, who, from the fame of his miracles, were come from all quarters to hear him.

He not only addressed them in the most nervous and pathetic manner, in order to inculcate the doctrines he delivered, but also performed such astonishing miracles as ought to have removed all their scruples with regard to the truth of his mission.

Among other instances he gave of his divine power, was that of restoring a man to perfect health, who had long been afflicted with the palsy, and was reduced by that terrible disease to the most melancholy condition, being unable to move any member of his body, but seemed rather an emaciated carcase than a man. This miserable object was brought on his bed by four persons, who, being unable to enter by the door, on account of the multitude, carried him to the top of the house, which, like the other roofs in that country, was flat, and had a battlement round, according to the directions given by Moses, Deuteronomy, xxii. 8.

On these roofs there was a kind of trap-door, by which they came out of the houses upon the roofs, where they spent a considerable part of the day. It was also common to have a flight of stairs from the garden to the roof; and by these the persons seemed to have carried the sick of the palsy, but finding the door fastened, forced it open, and uncovered the roof, and through the opening let down, by ropes, the sick of the palsy, lying on his bed, into the midst of the company before Jesus, who, seeing the faith of the friends of this afflicted person, had compassion upon him, and spoke aloud, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee."

The scribes, taking offense at this saying, cried out, This

man speaketh blasphemy ; for he appropriates that to himself which is solely the province of Omnipotence. "Who can forgive sins but God only ?" They were ignorant that the person who uttered such gracious words was the Son of God, and consequently had the power of forgiving the sins of the human race.

But our Lord, who had recourse to the most secret recesses of the heart, and was willing to show them that he was really endued with the Spirit of God, said to them : "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts ? For whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk ?" These were questions beyond the ability of the haughty scribes to answer, and therefore they held their peace. The blessed Jesus then added, that the miracle he was going to perform would sufficiently demonstrate that he had not usurped what did not, in the strictest manner, belong to him. And, turning himself from those bigoted teachers of Israel toward the sick of the palsy, he said unto him, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Matthew, ix. 6.

Nor was this divine mandate any sooner given than the man was restored to his former health and strength, and, to the astonishment of all present, rose, took up his bed, and departed to his own house glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw this great work, expressed the highest degree of surprise, mixed with admiration, for the great honor the Almighty had conferred on human nature. "They glorified God, who had given such power unto men." But with regard to the scribes and Pharisees, though they must have been confounded at this miracle, yet they still continued in their unbelief ; an instance which should awake in us the most serious thoughts, as it abundantly demonstrates that the malady of the soul is a much more deplorable disease than the palsy of the body.

The blessed Jesus having wrought this miracle repaired to the sea-side and taught a multitude of people. What the subject of his sermon was the evangelists have not told us ; but it was, doubtless, like the rest, calculated to promote the eternal welfare of mankind.

His discourse being ended, he returned to the city, and in his way saw Matthew, or Levi, the son of Alpheus, a rich publican, sitting in his office, where the customs were levied at the port of Capernaum, whom he ordered to follow him. Matthew immediately obeyed the summons, and followed the Saviour of the world, to pursue a far more honorable and important employment, being afterwards both an apostle and evangelist.

Some little time after his call he made a splendid entertainment for his Master, inviting all the publicans he knew, hoping, by hearing the heavenly conversation of Christ, they might also repent, and embrace the doctrines of the gospel.

The self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, who considered all men as sinners, except themselves, especially the publicans, were highly offended that one who called himself a prophet should so far demean himself as to be seen in the company of such men ; and asked his disciples, with an air of insolence, in the hearing of all the guests, how their Master could sit down at the same table with publicans and sinners ?

Our Lord replied to this artful question, that the sick only had need of a physician ; and desired them to reflect seriously on the prophet Hosea's declaration : "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." The turning of sinners into the path of righteousness, which is the highest act of benevolence, is far more acceptable to the Almighty than all the ceremonies of the law of Moses, so highly magnified by your fraternity, who, on many occasions, observe them at the expense of charity ; adding, I am not come to call the righteous, as you ignorantly imagine yourselves to be, but sinners to repentance. The chief object of my attention is the conversion of sinners.

This answer, however satisfactory to an unprejudiced person, was far from being so to the scribes and Pharisees, who, joining with some of John's disciples then present, returned to Matthew's house, and demanded of Jesus why his disciples wholly neglected to fast, a duty often performed both by the rulers of Israel and the disciples of John ? To this the blessed Jesus replied, It is not a proper season for the friends of the bridegroom to fast and afflict themselves while they

enjoy his company ; “but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast.” The various calamities and afflictions that shall attend them after the departure of their Master shall cause them to fast, which they shall repeat as often as the circumstances of distress and danger, with which they will be surrounded, shall require ; and added, that to have obliged his disciples to observe the precepts of frequent abstinence at a time when he was employing them to preach the gospel, by which all the legal ceremonies of the law were to be abolished, would have been as absurd as to sew a new piece of cloth upon a rotten garment, which would only make the rent worse ; or to put new wine into old leathern bottles, which, on the first fermentation of the liquor, would burst—indicating that infant virtue must not immediately be put to the greatest trials, lest it be destroyed by the severity of the exercise.

During this controversy between our Lord and the haughty scribes and Pharisees in Matthew’s house, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came running to him in all the agonies of grief, and, in the presence of the whole company, fell on the ground before him, beseeching that he would come and heal his daughter, who lay at the point of death.

When did the beneficent Jesus deny his gracious assistance to those who implored it of him ? He immediately arose, and followed the ruler towards his house, surrounded by a great multitude of people, who were desirous of seeing so great a miracle.

But, as he passed through the street, a woman, who had, for twelve years, been afflicted with an issue or flux of blood, and had spent her whole substance on physicians to no purpose, “came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment ; for she said within herself, If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be well.” Nor was she deceived, for no sooner had she touched the border of the garment of the Son of God, than her issue of blood dried up, and she felt, by the return of her health and strength, and other agreeable sensations that accompany such sudden changes from painful diseases to perfect health, that the cure was absolutely complete.

But this transaction could not be concealed ; the blessed

Jesus knew the whole, and her secret thoughts, before she put them into practice ; and, pleased with the opinion this woman had entertained both of his power and goodness, would not, by any means, suffer it to pass unapplauded. Accordingly, he turned himself about, and asked, "Who touched me?" He well knew the person ; but asked this question for the fuller manifestation of the woman's faith, and that he might have an opportunity of instructing and comforting her.

His disciples, being ignorant of what had passed, were surprised at the question : "Thou seest," said they to their Master, "the multitude thronging and pressing thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" They could not distinguish between the spiritual and corporeal touch, nor knew that such efficacious virtue had gone out of their Master. Jesus, however, persisted in knowing who it was that had done this thing, and the woman, finding it in vain to conceal her action any longer, came to him trembling, and told him all. Perhaps the uncleanness of her distemper was the reason of her fear, thinking he would be offended, even at her touching the hem of his garment. But the divine Physician, far from being angry, spoke to her in the kindest manner, and commended her faith, on which account he had consented to heal her plague : "Daughter, be of good comfort ; thy faith hath made thee whole." Matthew, ix. 22.

Such a miraculous incident must, doubtless, have greatly strengthened the ruler's faith ; for, behold, a virtue, little inferior to that of raising the dead, issues from the borders of Christ's garment, and heals a disease which, for the space of twelve years, had baffled all the skill of the healing art, and defied the power of medicine. Indeed, the faith of this ruler had great need of the strongest confirmation ; for news was brought him that his daughter was even now dead, and therefore it was needless for him to give any further trouble to Jesus—not in the least suspecting he had power to recall the departed spirit, and to reanimate the breathless carcase.

This message was a terrible blow to the affectionate parent. His only daughter, who, but a few days before, was in the bloom of youth, was now a pale and lifeless corpse ; and with her all his joys and comforts had fled. But Jesus, com-

miserating his grief, desired him to be comforted, promising that his daughter should be restored.

On his coming to the ruler's house, he found it full of mourners, who made terrible lamentations—a sufficient demonstration that the damsel was really dead ; and, accordingly, when our blessed Saviour desired the mourners to cease their funeral ceremonies, as the maid was not dead, but sleeping, they laughed him to scorn.

It is necessary to remark, in this place, that the Jews, when they spoke of a pious person's death, styled it sleep, to intimate their belief that his spirit existed in the happy scenes of paradise, and their hopes of a future resurrection to life eternal. But the blessed Jesus used the word with remarkable propriety, to signify that though she was now locked in the cold embrace of death, yet he was going to release her from the king of terrors with the same ease as a person is awaked from sleep. Thus our blessed Saviour, in the very manner of performing a miracle, modestly declined the honor that would undoubtedly result from a work so greatly superior to all the powers of men.

Having thus briefly addressed the mourners, he entered the chamber where the damsel was lying, but suffered none to follow him except Peter, James and John, together with the father and mother of the damsel. Probably his reason for suffering these only to be spectators of so stupendous a work was, that they might have an opportunity of examining the whole transaction in the most careful manner, and be thence enabled, afterwards, to report it upon the fullest conviction, and with every circumstance of credibility.

The blessed Jesus now approached the body, took her by the hand, and, with a gentle voice, said, “Maid, arise.” The heavenly command was instantly obeyed ; the damsel arose as from a sleep, and with all the appearance of health and vigor, for Jesus commanded to give her something to eat—a plain proof that she did not appear in the weak and languishing condition of a person worn out with disease, or even like one who had fainted away—a circumstance that abundantly proves the greatness and perfection of the miracle. It is, therefore, no wonder, that her parents should be astonished at so stu-

pendous a work, the fame of which was soon spread through all the neighboring country, though Jesus, who was, in every scene, above praise, and therefore never courted it, had strictly charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

These instances of power did the blessed Jesus display, to convince the world; that those who die in him are not dead; for that he hath the keys of life and death. Those also of the present age, who believe that the soul sleeps with the body till the resurrection, will do well to consider the expression of the evangelist, "Her spirit came again," (Luke, viii. 55,) which sufficiently shows that the soul exists separately, when the body is laid in the chambers of the silent grave.

Having performed this benevolent miracle, our blessed Saviour left the ruler's house, and was followed through the streets by two blind men, imploring assistance: nor did they implore in vain; the Redeemer of mankind was, and still is, always ready to grant the petition of those who apply to him for relief. Accordingly, he was no sooner entered into a house, to avoid the thronging multitude, than he touched their eyes, and said, "According to your faith, be it unto you," (Matthew, ix. 29,) and immediately the invaluable gift of sight was bestowed upon them.

The blind men were so overjoyed at beholding the light, that though our Saviour charged them to keep the miracle a secret, they published his fame in every part of the country, being unwilling to conceal what, in gratitude for so great a mercy, they thought themselves obliged to divulge.

The men, who had thus miraculously received their sight, being departed, the multitude brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. So moving a sight could not fail of attracting a compassionate regard from the Saviour of the world, who, being never weary of well-doing, immediately cast out the apostate spirit; on which the dumb man recovered the use of his speech, and spoke in a very rational manner to the multitude, who, with one voice, declared, that such wondrous works were never wrought by any of the old prophets: "It was never so seen in Israel." (Matthew, ix. 33.) This reflection was perfectly just; for no one of the prophets that we read of in the Old Testament appears to have wrought

so many beneficial miracles in his whole life as our Lord did in this one afternoon. These works did not remove the prejudices of the Pharisees, who, being unable to deny the miracles, insinuated that he did it by a power received from Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. A poor pretense indeed ! and did not escape the animadversion it deserved from the Saviour of the world, as we shall see in a succeeding chapter. Well might the prophet cry out in a prophetic ecstasy, "Who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ?"

But all their calumnies could not provoke the meek and merciful Jesus to cease from performing these compassionate offices for the children of men. On the contrary, he exerted himself still more and more to promote the prosperity of the whole of the human race. Accordingly, he left Capernaum, and traveled through the country in search of miserable objects, on which he might confer happiness and peace, visiting "all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease, among the people." (Matthew, ix. 35.)

On his return from this town to Capernaum, he was attended by a great number of people, who expressed a more than common desire to hear the doctrine of the gospel—an incident abundantly sufficient to engage the attention of this divine teacher, who was ever careful to cultivate the smallest seeds of virtue, and cherish the least appearance of piety and religion.

It was not this desire of the people alone that excited his compassion towards them ; he well knew that they were wholly destitute of spiritual teachers ; for the scribes and Pharisees, who ought to have instructed them, were blind, perverse and lazy guides, who, instead of seeking the glory of the Almighty, made it their whole business to support and augment their own. They magnified the ritual ceremonies and traditions, but took no care to inspire the people with a love of truth and holiness. "To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God," were no parts of their doctrine. The small appearance of religion they entertained was wholly

hypocritical ; and the disputes carried on with so much bitterness between the factions of the Pharisees and Sadducees, distracted the minds of the people.

The inhabitants of Judea were truly in a deplorable state, which called loudly for the compassion of the Son of God, who always regarded the descendants of Jacob with the most tender affection. He saw the sheep of Israel scattered on the barren wastes of error and superstition, without a shepherd to lead them to the heavenly pastures of the law and the prophets. He saw, he commiserated their distress, and resolved to provide some remedy for it. Accordingly, he directed his apostles to intercede with the Almighty, who, by his servants and prophets, had sown the seeds of piety and virtue in the minds of the Jews, that he would not suffer the rich harvest to be lost for want of laborers. "The harvest," said the blessed Jesus to his disciples, "truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." (Matthew, ix. 37, 38.)

To these gracious acts he added the most powerful of all intercessions to the throne of grace—his own prevailing prayer—and, accordingly, ascended the top of a mountain, and there spent the night in making the most powerful petitions in behalf of the lost sheep of Israel to his heavenly Father.

Having spent the night in this pious exercise, he lost no time in putting his beneficent intentions in execution ; for no sooner had darkness withdrawn her sable vail, and the blushing rays of the morning adorned the chambers of the east, than the benevolent Redeemer of mankind called his disciples to him, and chose twelve, whom he named apostles, to be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. He ordered them to be with him, that they might learn from his own mouth the doctrines they were to preach to the whole world ; that they might see his glory, the transcendant glory of the virtues which adorned his human life ; that they might be witnesses of all the wondrous works that he should perform, during his residence in this vale of misery, and by which his mission from the court of heaven was to be fully demonstrated.

These twelve persons, thus qualified, were to supply the people with that spiritual food they so greatly wanted, both while their Master continued here below, and after his ascension to the right hand of power.

Having ordained them to their respective offices, he sent them out by two and two, into the most distant parts of Judea, to preach the glad tidings of the gospel, and prepare the way for their Master, the great Shepherd of Israel. And, that nothing might be wanting to render their preaching acceptable to the people, and confirm the important doctrines they delivered, he invested them with full power to cure all diseases, cast out devils, and even to raise the dead.

After appointing the twelve apostles, he came down from the mountain, and was joyfully received by the multitude of people who were awaiting for him in the plain, and pressed to touch him—well knowing that if they could only touch the border of his garment, they should be healed of whatever distemper they were afflicted with—a sufficient reason why they were continually waiting for him, and were willing to accompany him, even to the remotest corners of the wilderness.

The preaching and miracles of our Lord were attended to, not by the low and vulgar only, but persons of the first rank and character came from distant parts of the country to converse with him, hear his doctrine, and be spectators of his wonderful works. It, therefore, evidently appears, that persons of all ranks were desirous of following him; and their desire could be founded upon nothing but the truth of his doctrines and miracles.

After healing all the sick among the multitude, he turned towards his disciples, and delivered a divine discourse, something like that he had before preached to them on the mountain: but in the former he only pronounced blessings, whereas, in the latter, he added curses also; and in this principally it differs from that recorded by St. Matthew. I shall, therefore, only select a few passages from the sermon now delivered, as I have given a larger paraphrase on the other.

“Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.” Luke, vi. 24. Riches, considered in themselves, by no means render us the objects of the Almighty’s hatred,

unless accompanied by those vices which too often flow from an opulent fortune, as luxury, covetousness, and the like. The woe, therefore, is here denounced against those only who are contaminated with these vices ; for those who make a proper use of their wealth, and possess the virtues which should accompany affluence, have no share in the malediction.

“Woe unto you that are full ! for ye shall hunger.” The pain ye shall suffer in a future life shall be sharp and excruciating. The opportunities you have neglected of doing good to your afflicted brethren in this life, shall then be remembered with the most poignant grief, and bewailed with the most bitter lamentations.

“Woe unto you that laugh now ! for ye shall mourn and weep.” This malediction of our blessed Saviour is not inconsistent with the apostle’s precept, which commands Christians always to rejoice. Neither is the mirth, against which the woe is here denounced, to be understood of that constant cheerfulness of temper which arises in the breasts of true Christians, from the comfortable and cheerful doctrine with which they are enlightened by the gospel, the assurance they have of reconciliation with God, and the hope they will have of everlasting life, and the pleasures they will enjoy in the practice of the duties of religion ; but it relates to that turbulent carnal mirth, that excessive levity and vanity of spirit, which arises not from any solid foundation, but from sensual pleasures, or those vain amusements of life, in which the giddy and gay contrive to spend their time—that sort of mirth which dissipates thought, leaves no time for consideration, and gives them an utter aversion to all serious reflections. Persons who constantly indulge themselves in this kind of mirth, shall weep and mourn eternally, when they are excluded from the joys of heaven, and banished for ever from the presence of God, by the light of whose countenance all the righteous are enlivened, and made transcendently happy.

“Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you ! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Woe unto you, if by propagating such doctrines as encourage men in sin, you shall gain to yourselves the applause and flattery of the generality of men ; for thus, in old times, did the false prophets

and deceivers, who, accommodating their doctrines to the lusts and passions of men, gained their applause, but incurred the wrath and displeasure of a just and all-seeing God.

Our Lord here represents those as miserable, who are rich and full, joyous and applauded ; not that this is universally the case, but because prosperous circumstances are so frequently a sweet poison, and affliction a healing though bitter medicine. Let the thought reconcile us to adversity, and awaken our caution when the world smiles upon us ; when a plentiful table is spread before us, and our cup runneth over ; when our spirits are gay and sprightly ; or when we hear, what to corrupt nature is too harmonious music, that of our own praise from men. Oh, that we may secure, what is of infinitely greater importance, the praise of a heavenly Master, by a constant regard to these his precepts!

CHAPTER X.

THE divine Preacher having closed this excellent sermon, he repaired to Capernaum, and was met by certain messengers from a centurion, desiring him to come and heal a servant who was dear to him, and ready to die.

The centurion, from the account given him by the evangelist, seems to have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, as he was a lover of the sons of Jacob, and had erected for them a place of worship, and accordingly the inhabitants of Capernaum strongly espoused his cause on this occasion, saying, "that he was worthy for whom he should do this. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." Luke, vii. 4, 5.

There was not the least danger that this petition would be rejected by the blessed Jesus, who sought all occasions of doing good to the children of men. Accordingly, he very readily accompanied the messengers ; but, before he came to the house, he was met by some of the centurion's friends, who expressed the high idea that officer entertained of his power,

and desired that he would not take the trouble of coming to his house, as a word was abundantly sufficient to perform the cure. At this message, Jesus turned himself about, and said to the multitude, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Luke, vii. 9.

The persons having delivered their message, returned to the house, and found the servant, who had been sick, perfectly recovered.

Behold an instance of faith in a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, by which their unbelief was condemned ! Oh, that the virtues of heathen may not another day rise up to our condemnation, notwithstanding a higher profession and much nobler advantages ! We can not but rejoice to hear that "many shall come from the east and from the west, to sit down with the pious patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven ;" but how deplorable is the case of those children of the kingdom, who, with all their towering expectations, "shall be cast out," and doomed to hopeless sorrow and everlasting darkness !

Having thus miraculously healed the centurion's servant, he repaired to Peter's house to eat bread ; but the multitude came again together, and surrounded the house in a tumultuous manner, demanding, in all probability, that he would heal their sick ; and it was not without difficulty they were dispersed by his friends.

The multitude being dispersed, Jesus called unto him the twelve apostles he had before chosen, and conferred on them the power of working miracles, in confirmation of the doctrines they were appointed to preach, and delivered them such instructions as he thought necessary to enable them to discharge the duties of this important commission.

"Go," said their heavenly Master, "and preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Publish in every corner of Judea, the glad tidings of the gospel, and the near approach of the Messiah's kingdom—not a temporal, but a spiritual empire—consisting of righteousness and peace.

To inure them to those hardships and dangers which were to attend them in their preaching, after the death of their Master, our Lord forbade them to provide any thing for their

journey—teaching them to rely wholly on the providence of God for support in every distress, and to have recourse to his protection in every danger.

Our Lord's disciples had, perhaps, flattered themselves with the pleasing expectation that the glad tidings they were going to publish, and the miraculous cures they were enabled to perform, would procure them an honorable reception wherever they came. Their Master, however, told them the event would not, in any manner, answer their expectations; but that they were everywhere to be despised, persecuted, delivered into the hands of the rulers, and punished as wicked men. But, at the same time, he promised them the aid of the Almighty, and gave them instructions how to behave in every particular. He added, that those who rejected their message should be treated with severity by the great Judge of all the earth; but those who received them kindly, and gave even a cup of cold water to the least of his disciples, for their Master's sake, should not fail of receiving a large reward.

Having received this commission, the apostles visited all parts of Palestine, where the Jews inhabited, preaching the doctrine of repentance, working miracles for its confirmation, and particularly healing the sick, while our blessed Lord continued the course of his ministry in Galilee.

The apostles being returned from their tour, Jesus went to Nain, a town situated near Endor, about two miles south of Mount Tabor, attended by many of his disciples, and a great multitude of people.

On their coming to the entrance of the city, a melancholy scene presented itself to the eyes of Jesus and his followers. "Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Luke, vii. 12. Who would not have imagined that God had indeed "forgotten to be gracious, and, in his anger, shut up his tender mercies" for this poor widow, suffering under the heaviest load, and laboring under the most oppressive burden of distress? Deprived of her son, her only son, in the flower of his youth, when he might have repaid his mother's toils, and been to her in the place of a husband—of that husband she had long since lost, and whose loss was supportable only through the comfort of

this child, the surviving image of his departed father, the balm of all her grief, the hope of her afflicted soul—who now shall administer consolation to this solitary widow, to this lonely parent, bereaved of her husband, deprived of her child ? What misery can be more complicated ? What can be more natural than that she should “refuse to be comforted,” that she should “go down to the grave mourning,” and visit the chambers of death, the residence of the beloved remains of her husband and her son, with sorrow ?

Toward the receptacle of mortality, that dreary waste of forgetfulness, the mournful funeral was now, with slow and solemn pomp, advancing, when the compassionate Redeemer of mankind met the melancholy procession, composed of a long train of her weeping neighbors and relations, who pitied her distress, sympathized with her in this great affliction, and were melted with compassion at her deplorable circumstances : but sighs and tears were all they had to offer ; relief could not be expected from a human being ; their commiseration, though grateful to her oppressed soul, could neither restore the husband nor the son ; submission and patience were the only lessons they could preach, or this afflicted daughter of Israel learn.

But though man was unable to relieve the distresses of this disconsolate widow, the Saviour of the world, who beheld the melancholy procession, was both able and willing to do it. There was no need of a powerful solicitor to implore assistance from the Son of God ; his own compassion was abundantly sufficient. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her : he both sought the patient, and offered the cure expected. “Weep not,” said the blessed Jesus to this afflicted woman. Alas ! it had been wholly in vain to bid her refrain from tears, who had lost her only child, the sole comfort of her age, without administering the balm of comfort to heal her broken spirit. This our compassionate Redeemer well knew ; and, therefore, immediately advancing towards the corpse, “he touched the bier.” The pomp of the funeral was instantly stopped, silence closed every mouth, and expectation filled the breast of every spectator. But this suspense did not long continue ; that glorious voice, which shall one day

call our dead bodies from the grave, filled their ears with the remarkable words, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." Nor was this powerful command uttered without its effect. "He spake, and it was done;" he called with authority, and immediately "he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." He did not show him around to the multitude, but, by a singular act of modesty and humanity, delivered him to his late afflicted, now astonished and rejoicing mother, to intimate, that in compassion to her great distress, he had wrought this stupendous miracle.

A holy and awful fear fell on all who heard and saw this astonishing event; and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up amongst us, and that God hath visited his people.

Here it must be observed, that as this miracle is liable to no objection, it therefore abundantly proves, that the power of the blessed Jesus was truly and absolutely divine. He met this funeral procession apparently by accident. It was composed of the greatest part of the inhabitants of the city, who bewailed the disconsolate state of the widow, and therefore well knew that the youth was really dead. The powerful word, which called the breathless body to life, was delivered in an audible voice, before all the company, and even at the very gate of the city, the place of public resort.

This miracle, with others amply attested, abundantly evinces the truth of our Saviour's mission, and that he was indeed the Son of God, the Redeemer of mankind.

CHAPTER XI.

WE have taken notice, in a foregoing chapter, that Herod, incensed at the honest freedom of the Baptist, reproving his adulterous commerce with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, had cast him into prison; and in this he still continued, though his disciples were suffered to visit and converse with him. In one of these visits, they had given him an account

of our Saviour's having elected twelve apostles to preach the gospel, and of his miracles, particularly of his raising to life the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain.

On hearing of these wonderful relations, the Baptist immediately dispatched two of his disciples to Jesus to ask him this important question, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?"

Accordingly, the disciples of John came to Jesus, and proposed the question of their master, at the very time when he "cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and to many that were blind he gave sight." Jesus, therefore, instead of directly answering their question, bade them return, and inform their master what they had seen. "Go," said he, "and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Matthew, xi. 4, 5. Go, tell your master, that the very miracles the prophet Isaiah so long since foretold should be wrought by the Messiah, you have yourselves seen performed.

It appears from the Scriptures, that the Baptist, through the whole course of his ministry, had borne constant and ample testimony to our Saviour's divine mission, that he exhorted those who came to him to rest their faith not on himself, but on "him that should come after him," and that, as soon as he was acquainted who Jesus was, by a visible descent of the Holy Ghost, and a voice from heaven, he made it his business to dispose the Jews in general, and his own disciples in particular, to receive and reverence him, by testifying everywhere that he was the "Son of God, the Lamb of God, who came down from heaven, and spake the words of God, and to whom God had given the Spirit not by measure."

It seems that the scribes and Pharisees, seeing their pretended mortifications eclipsed by the real austerity of the Baptist, impudently affirmed, that his living in the deserts, his shunning the company of men, the coarseness of his clothing, the abstemiousness of his diet, and the other severities he practiced, were the effects of his being possessed by an

apostate spirit, or of a religious melancholy. "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil." Matthew, xi. 18.

On the other hand, they would not listen to the heavenly doctrines preached by Christ, because he did not separate himself from society—attributing his free manner of living to a certain looseness of disposition, though they well knew that he observed the strictest temperance himself, and never encouraged the vices of others, either by dissimulation or example. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking; and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; but Wisdom is justified of her children." Matthew, xi. 19.

He next proceeded to upbraid the several cities where his most wonderful works had been performed. For though they had heard him preach many awakening sermons, and seen him perform such astonishing miracles, as would have converted, Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, cities infamous for their impiety, contempt of religion, pride, luxury, and debauchery, yet, so great was their obstinacy, that they persisted in their wickedness, notwithstanding all he had done to convert them from the evils of their ways. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee." Matthew, xi. 21, etc.

Having denounced these judgments on the cities which had neglected to profit by his mighty works, he concluded his discourse with these heavenly words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly at heart: and ye shall find rest unto your

souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew, xi. 28, etc.

Having concluded this public address, one of the Pharisees (named Simon) desired he would "eat with him:" the blessed Jesus accepted the invitation, accompanied him to his house, and sat down to meat.

He had not continued long at the table before a woman, who had lately left the paths of vice for those of virtue, placed herself behind him, and, from a deep conviction of her former crimes, and the obligations she owed to the Saviour of mankind for bringing her to a sense of them, shed such quantities of tears, that they trickled down on his feet, which, according to the custom of the country, were then bare. But observing that her tears had wet the feet of her beloved Instructor, she immediately wiped them with the hairs of her head, kissed them with the most ardent affection, and anointed them with precious ointment she had brought with her for that purpose.

It was a custom, among the inhabitants of the East, to pour fragrant oils on the heads of such guests as they intended particularly to honor, while they sat at meat; and probably the woman's original intention was to anoint Jesus in the usual manner. But being exceedingly humbled on account of her former crimes, she could not presume to take that freedom with him, and therefore poured it on his feet, to express at once the greatness of her love, and the profoundness of her humility.

The Pharisee, who had attentively observed the woman, concluded from thence that our Saviour could not be a prophet. "This man," said the Pharisee to himself, "if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." Luke, vii. 39.

But though Simon spoke this only in his heart, his thoughts were not concealed from the great Redeemer of mankind, who, to convince them that he was a prophet, and that he knew not only the character of men, but even the secret thoughts of their hearts, immediately conversed with him on the very subject he had been revolving in his mind.

He did not, indeed, expose him before the company, by relating what he had said in secret ; but, with remarkable delicacy, pointed out to Simon alone the unreasonableness of his thoughts. "Simon," said the blessed Jesus, "I have somewhat to say unto thee. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most ? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged." And then immediately he applied this short parable to the subject of the woman, on which the Pharisee had so unjustly reasoned with himself. "Simon," continued our Saviour, "seest thou this woman ? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet ; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss : but this woman since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint : but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." Luke, vii. 40, etc.

This woman's kind services were in no danger of losing their reward from the blessed Jesus, who possessed the softer and finer feelings of human nature in their utmost perfection. Accordingly, he added, in pursuance to so kind an invitation he had before made to weary and heavy-laden sinners, "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven : for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Luke, vii. 47.

The blessed Jesus having thus commended the conduct of the woman to the company, and rebuked, with great delicacy, the unjust suspicions of Simon, turned himself to the woman, and, in the kindest manner, assured her that "her sins were forgiven." But the power he assumed in forgiving sins greatly offended the Jews, who, not being acquainted with his divinity, considered his speech as derogatory to the honor of the Almighty. Jesus, however, contemned their malicious murmurs, and repeated his assurance, telling the woman, that her faith had saved her, and bade her depart in peace.

The next day Jesus traveled from Capernaum to different parts of Galilee, going "throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." Luke, viii. 1. That is, he declared to the people the welcome tidings of the Almighty's being willing to be reconciled to the children of men, on condition of their repentance and embracing the gospel of the grace of God.

Leaving Galilee, he repaired to Jerusalem to keep the pass-over, being the second feast of that kind since his public ministry. In this journey he was accompanied by certain pious women, "who ministered to him of their substance."

CHAPTER XII.

OUR LORD had no sooner entered the ancient city of Jerusalem, so long famous for being the dwelling-place of the Most High, then he repaired to the public bath or pool, called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, that is, the house of mercy, on account of miracles wrought there, by the salutary effects of the water, at certain seasons. This bath was surrounded by five porches, or cloisters, in which those who frequent the place were sheltered both from the heat and cold; and were particularly serviceable to the diseased and infirm, who crowded hither to find relief in their afflictions.

These porches were now filled with a "great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." John, v. 3, 4.

Among these objects of pity was one who had labored under his infirmity no less than thirty and eight years. The length and greatness of this man's afflictions, which were well known to the Son of God, were sufficient to excite his tender compassion, and make him the happy object to demonstrate that his power of healing was infinitely superior

to the sanative virtues of the waters ; while the rest were suffered to remain in their affliction.

Had not our Lord at this time restored any of them to health, he would not have acted contrary to the general accounts which the evangelists give of his goodness on other occasions ; namely, that he healed all who came to him. For such diseased persons who left their habitations through a persuasion of his power and kindness were proper objects of mercy ; whereas the sick in the cloisters of Bethesda were no more so than the other sick throughout the whole country, whom he could have cured with a single word of his mouth, had he been pleased to utter it.

Our compassionate Lord now approached the man whom he had singled out as the person on whom to manifest his power. He asked him whether he was desirous of being made whole ?—a question which must induce the man to declare publicly his melancholy case in the hearing of the multitude, and consequently render the miracle more conspicuous. And as this was done on the Sabbath day, our blessed Saviour seems to have wrought it to rouse the sons of Jacob from their lethargy, and convince the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the long-expected Messiah was now come, and had actually visited his people.

This distressed mortal, beholding Jesus with a sorrowful countenance, and understanding that he meant his being healed by the sanative virtue of the waters, answered, “ Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool : but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.” John, v. 7. But the compassionate Redeemer of mankind soon convinced him that he was not to owe his cure to the salutary nature of the waters, but to the unbounded power of the Son of God ; and accordingly said to him, “ Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” Nor was the heavenly mandate any sooner uttered, than the impotent man, to the astonishment of the multitude, “ was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.” John, v. 9.

This great and miraculous cure could not fail of having a great effect on the spectators ; and his carrying his bed on the Sabbath day, which the Jews considered as a profanation

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of that day of rest, tended greatly to spread the fame of the miracle over the whole city. Nor did the man scruple to obey the commands of his kind physician ; he well knew that the person who had the power of working such miracles must be a great prophet, and, consequently, that his injunction could not be sinful. He, therefore, thought that he gave a sufficient answer to those Jews, who told him it was not lawful to carry his bed on the Sabbath day, to say, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." John, v. 11. He that restored my strength in an instant, and removed, with a single word, a disease that had many years afflicted me, commanded me, at the same time, to take up my bed and walk ; and surely a person endued with such power from on high, would not have ordered me to do any thing but what is truly right.

The votaries of infidelity should remember that this signal miracle was performed in an instant, and even when the patient did not expect any such favor, nor even know the person to whom he owed it. No one, therefore, can pretend that imagination had any share in performing it. In short, the narrative of this miracle of mercy sufficiently proves that the person who did it was really divine.

The Jews had long expected the Messiah ; but they had expected him to appear as a temporal prince, who would not only restore the former luster of the throne of David, but infinitely augment it, and even place it over all the kingdoms of the earth. And hence they were unwilling to acknowledge Jesus for their Messiah, notwithstanding the proofs of his mission were so undeniable, because they must, in so doing, have abandoned all their grand ideas of a temporal kingdom. Our blessed Saviour, therefore, desired them to consult their own Scriptures, particularly the writings of the prophets, where they would find the character of the Messiah displayed, and be fully convinced they were all fulfilled in his person.

He also gave them to understand that the proofs of his mission were as full and clear as possible, being supported by the actions of his life, which, in all things, agreed with his doctrine ; for he never sought the applause of men, or assumed secular power, but was always innocent and humble, though

he well knew that these virtues made him appear little in the eyes of those who had no idea of a spiritual kingdom, but expected that the Messiah would appear in all the pomp of secular authority.

In short, the fatal infidelity of the Jews was principally owing to their pride. They had long filled the minds of the people with grand ideas of the glory and power of the Messiah's kingdom ; they had represented him as a potent prince, who was to appear at once adorned with all the ensigns of power ; and therefore to have ascribed that august character to a mere teacher of righteousness, destitute even of the ordinary advantages of birth, fortune and erudition, would have been so plain a confession of their ignorance of the Scriptures, as must have exposed them to the ridicule and contempt of the whole people.

Our blessed Saviour added that he himself should not only be their own accuser to the God of Jacob for their infidelity, but Moses, their great legislator, in whom they trusted, would join in that unwelcome office ; for, by denying him to be the Messiah, they denied the writings of that prophet. "For had ye," added he, "believed Moses, ye would have believed me ; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ?" John, v. 46, 47.

Thus did the blessed Jesus assert himself to be the Son of God, to be the great Judge of the whole earth, and the Messiah promised by the prophets ; and, at the same time, gave them such convincing proofs of his being sent from God, that nothing could be said against them.

Convincing as these proofs were, yet they did not in the least abate the malice of the scribes and Pharisees ; for the very next Sabbath, upon his disciples plucking a few ears as they passed through the fields, and eating the grain after rubbing it out in their hands, they again exclaimed against this violation of the Sabbath. But our blessed Saviour soon convinced them of their error, by showing, both from the example of David and the constant practice of their own priests, who never omitted the necessary works of the temple on the Sabbath day, that works of necessity were often permitted, even though they broke a ritual command ; that acts of mercy

were the most acceptable services to God of any whatever ; that it was inverting the order of things to suppose that man was made for the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath for the benefit of man : adding, that if the service of the temple should be said to claim a particular dispensation from the law of the Sabbath, he and his disciples, whose business of promoting the salvation of mankind was of equal importance, might justly claim the same exemption ; as they were carrying on a much nobler work than they who attended on the service of the temple. Thus did our blessed Saviour prove, that works of mercy should not be left undone, though attended with the violation of some of the most sacred institutions of the ceremonial law.

Soon after this dispute with the scribes and Pharisees, our blessed Saviour entered one of the synagogues of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, and found there a man whose right hand was withered.

The Pharisees, who observed the compassionate Jesus advance toward the man, did not doubt but he would heal him, and therefore watched him attentively, that they might have something to accuse him with to the people. Their hypocrisy had arrived to that enormous pitch, that they determined to injure his reputation, by representing him as a Sabbath-breaker, if he dared to heal the man, while they themselves were profaning it by an action which would have polluted any day ; namely, of seeking an opportunity of destroying a person who had never injured them, but done many good actions for the sons of Jacob, and was continually laboring for their eternal welfare.

The Saviour of the world was not unapprised of these malicious intentions. He knew their designs, and defied their impotent power, by informing them of the benevolent action he designed, though he well knew they would exert every art they were masters of in order to put him to death.

Therefore, when our Saviour ordered the man to show himself to the whole congregation, in order to excite their pity, these hypocritical teachers declared, in the strongest terms, the unlawfulness of his performing such beneficent actions on the Sabbath : "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath

day?" They did not, however, ask this question with an intention to hinder him from performing the miracle. No, they had a very different intention than that of accusing him, for they hoped he would have declared openly that such actions were lawful; or, at least, make no reply to their commands, which they would have construed into an acknowledgment of what they asserted.

Nor did our Lord fail to expose their malice and superstition, and accordingly asked them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?" Luke, vi. 9. Is it not more lawful for me, on the Sabbath day, to save men's lives, than for you to seek my death without the least provocation? This severe rebuke would admit of no answer, and therefore they held their peace, pretending not to understand his meaning. He therefore made use of an argument which stupidity itself could not fail understanding, and which all the arts of these hypocritical sophists were unable to answer. "What man," said the blessed Jesus, "shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep. Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day." Matthew, xii. 11, 12.

The former question they pretended not to understand, and therefore held their peace; but this argument effectually silenced them, though they were determined not to be convinced. This unconquerable obstinacy grieved the spirit of the meek, the benevolent Jesus, who beheld them with anger, that, if possible, an impression might be made, either on them or the spectators.

But at the same time that he testified his displeasure towards the Pharisees, he uttered words of comfort to the lame man, bidding him to stretch his hand; and he no sooner obeyed the divine command than it was restored whole as the other.

This astonishing work, performed in the midst of a congregation, many of whom, doubtless, knew the man while he labored under this infirmity, and in the presence of his most inveterate enemies, must certainly have had a great effect on

the minds of the people, especially as they saw it had effectually silenced the Pharisees, who had nothing to offer, either against the miracle itself, or the reasoning and power of him who had performed it.

But though these whited sepulchres, as our blessed Saviour justly termed them, were silenced by his arguments, and astonished at his miracles, yet they were so far from abandoning their malicious intentions, that they joined their inveterate enemies, the Herodians, or Sadducees, in order to consult how they might destroy him, well knowing that if he continued his preaching, and working of miracles, the people would wholly follow him, and their power soon become contemptible. Jesus, however, thought proper to prevent their malicious designs, by retiring into Galilee, and there pursuing his benevolent purposes.

This retreat could not, however, conceal him from the multitude, who flocked to him from all quarters, bringing with them the sick and maimed, who were healed, and sent away in peace.

Soon after this, as Jesus was disputing with the Pharisees, he was informed that his mother and brethren, or kinsmen, were without, desiring to speak to him: upon which the blessed Jesus stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Matthew, xii. 49, 50. This glorious truth should be stamped on the minds of all believers, as it shows that every one, of what nation or kindred soever, who is brought into subjection to the will of God, is allied to the blessed Jesus, and entitled to the salvation of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE miraculous power of our blessed Lord, both in performing this most astonishing act, and confuting the most learned of the Pharisaical tribe, who endeavored to oppose his mission and doctrine, brought together so great a multitude, that he repaired to the sea-side ; and, for the better instructing the people, entered into a ship, and the whole multitude stood on shore. Being thus conveniently seated, he delivered many doctrines of the utmost importance, beginning with the parable of the sower, who cast his seed on different kinds of soil, the products of which were answerable to the nature of the ground—some yielding a large increase, others nothing at all. By this striking similitude, the blessed Jesus represented the different kinds of hearers, and the different manner in which they were affected by the truth of religion. Some wholly suppressed the doctrines delivered ; in others they produce the fruits of righteousness in a different proportion. And surely a more proper parable could not have been delivered, when such multitudes came to hear his discourses, and so few practiced the precepts, or profited by the heavenly doctrines they contained.

The parable being finished, his disciples asked, why he taught the people in parables ? to which he answered, “ Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance ; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables : because they seeing, see not ; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand.” Matthew, xiii. 11, etc. As if he had said, You, my beloved disciples, who are of a humble, docile temper, and are willing to use means, and resort to me for instruction and the explanation of the truths I deliver, to you it shall be no disadvantage, that they are delivered in parables. Besides, my discourses are plain and intelligible to all unprejudiced minds : truth will shine through the vail in which it is arrayed, and the shadow will guide you to the sub-

stance. But these proud, these self-conceited Pharisees, who are so blinded by their own prejudices that they will neither hear nor understand a thing plainly delivered, to them I preach in parables, and hide the great truths of the gospel under such metaphorical robes as will ever conceal them from persons of their temper. They have, therefore, brought upon themselves this blindness, that in seeing they see not, and this willful deafness, that in hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

The blessed Jesus added, that there was no reason for their being surprised at what he had told them, as it had long before been predicted by the prophet Isaiah. "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Matthew, xiii. 14, 15. There is some variation in the words, as quoted by the evangelist and those found in Isaiah; but the import of both is the same, and may be paraphrased in the following manner: The sons of Jacob shall, indeed, hear the doctrines of the gospel, but not understand them; and see the miracles by which these doctrines are confirmed, without perceiving them to be wrought by the finger of God: not because the corruption of their hearts will not suffer them to examine and weigh these evidences; for the sins of this people have hardened their hearts; their pride and vanity have shut their ears; and their hypocrisy and bigoted adherence to tradition and forced interpretations of the law and the prophets, have closed their eyes, lest the brilliant rays of truth should strike their sight with irresistible force, and the powerful voice of divine Wisdom force their attention, and command their assent—being unwilling to be directed to the paths of righteousness which lead to the heavenly Canaan.

Such are the reasons given by our blessed Saviour for his teaching the people by parables; and to enhance the great privilege his disciples enjoyed, he added, that many patriarchs and prophets of old had earnestly desired to see and hear those

things which the people now saw and heard, but were denied that favor—God having, till then, showed them to his most eminent saints in shadows only, and as they lay brooding in the womb of futurity.

Our Lord having, by these means, excited the desire of his disciples, proceeded to explain to them the parable of the sower. Having ended the interpretation of the sower, he continued his discourse to his disciples, explaining to them, by the similitude of a lighted lamp, the use they were expected to make of all the excellent instructions they had and should receive from him.

Having explained these parables to his disciples, he turned himself to the multitude on shore, and, in his usual endearing accents, delivered the parable of the enemy sowing tares among the wheat.

The next parable he spake to the multitude was that of the mustard seed, which, though very small when sown, becomes, in Palestine and other parts of the East, a full spreading tree—intimating to his audience, under this similitude, that notwithstanding the gospel would at first appear contemptible, from the ignominy flowing from the crucifixion of its Author, the strictness of its precepts, the weakness of the persons by whom it was preached, and the small number and mean condition of those who received it, yet, being founded on truth itself, it would increase to an astonishing magnitude, filling the whole earth, and affording a spiritual nourishment to all persons of all nations, who should enjoy all the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom equally with the Jews.

Our blessed Saviour concluded his discourse to the multitude with the parable of the leaven, to intimate the influence of the doctrine of the gospel on the minds of particular persons. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matthew, xiii. 33.

While Jesus was thus employed in his heavenly Father's business, his mother and brethren came a second time, desiring to see him. In all probability, they feared that the continued fatigue of preaching would injure his health; and were therefore desirous of taking him with them, that he

might refresh himself. But the blessed Jesus, who was never weary of doing good, answered his indulgent parent, as before : " My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." Luke, viii. 21.

Night approaching, Jesus dismissed the multitude, and returned to the house in Capernaum, where he abode, and there explained to his disciples the parable of the tares in the field. The husbandman, said the blessed Saviour, is the Son of Man ; the field, the Christian church, planted in different parts of the world ; the wheat, are those that believe in Christ, who obey the precepts of the gospel, and are supported by the influences of the Holy Spirit ; and the tares, the bad professors, seduced into the paths of vice, by the temptations of the devil. Our blessed Lord, therefore, by this parable, represented the mixed nature of the church on earth, the dismal end of the hypocrites, and those who forget God ; for these may deceive, for a time, by assuming the robes of virtue and religion, yet they will not fail sooner or later to betray themselves, and show that they are only wolves in sheep's clothing. At the same time, however sincerely we may wish to see the church freed from her corrupted members, we must not extirpate them by force, lest, being deceived by outward appearances, we also destroy the wheat, or sound members. We must leave this distinction to that awful day, when the great Messiah will descend to judgment ; and then a final separation will be made : the wicked cast into torments, that will never have an end ; but the righteous received into life eternal, where they " shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their father." Matthew, xiii. 43.

Our Lord, on this occasion, delivered the parable of the treasure hid in the field, and of the pearl of great price, both designed for the same purpose—to promote the diligence, zeal, and resolution of his disciples, in searching into and in teaching these great and important truths in which the glory of God, and the salvation of souls were so much concerned. And surely the similitudes, both of the treasure and pearl, are very naturally used to signify the gospel ; the former, as it enriches all who possess it ; and the latter, because it is more precious than rubies.

But that the disciples must expect that the Christian church would consist of a mixed multitude of people, the good blended with the bad, in such a manner that it would be difficult to separate them, he compared it to a net cast into the sea, which gathered fish of every kind, good and bad, which were separated when the net was drawn to land : that is, at the last great day of accounts, when the righteous will be conveyed to life eternal, and the wicked cast into everlasting misery.

Our blessed Saviour, having finished these parables, asked his disciples if they understood them ? and upon their answering in the affirmative, he added, that every teacher of the gospel ought to resemble a person whose house was completely furnished, and brought “forth out of his treasures things new and old.”

Soon after, Jesus left Capernaum, and repaired to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and preached in the synagogue the glad tidings of the kingdom of God ; but his townsmen, though astonished at his doctrine, could not overcome the prejudices they had conceived against him, on account of the meanness of his family, and thence refused to own him for the Messiah. Our Saviour, finding them the same incorrigible persons as when he visited them before, departed from them, and taught in the neighboring villages. They, in common with all the Jews, were strangers to the true character of the Messiah, whom they considered as a temporal prince ; and therefore could not bear that a person, so mean as Jesus appeared to be, should perform works peculiar to that idol of their vanity, a glorious triumphant, secular Messiah.

While our Lord resided in the neighborhood of Nazareth, he sent his disciples to preach in different parts of Galilee, and to proclaim the glad tidings, that God was then going to establish the kingdom of the Messiah, wherein he would be worshiped in spirit and in truth. And, in order that they might confirm the doctrines they delivered, and prove that they had received their commission from the Son of God, they were endowed with the power of working miracles. How long they continued their preaching can not be known, but it is

reasonable to think they spent a considerable time in it, preaching in several parts of Judea.

The miracles which the apostles taught, raised the expectations of men higher than ever : the people were astonished to see the disciples of Jesus perform so many miracles ; and thence concluded, that our Saviour must be greater than any of the old prophets, who could not transmit the power they enjoyed to any other. This extraordinary circumstance could not fail of spreading his fame through the whole country ; it even reached the ears of Herod the Tetrarch, who fearing a person of such extraordinary abilities, was very uneasy, which some of his courtiers observing, endeavored to remove, telling him that one of the old prophets was risen from the dead ; but this did not satisfy him, and he declared that he believed it was John the Baptist risen from the dead. "And he said unto his servants, this is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." Matthew, xiv. 2.

The evangelists having, on this account, mentioned John the Baptist, inform us that Herod had put him to death ; but when this happened is uncertain.

It has already been observed, that Herod cast John into prison for his boldness in reproving him for the adulterous commerce in which he lived with his brother's wife. The sacred writers have not told us how long he continued in prison ; but it is plain, from his two disciples, who came from him to our Saviour, that his followers did not forsake him in his melancholy condition. Nay, Herod himself both respected and feared him, knowing that he was highly and deservedly beloved by the people ; he consulted him often, and in many things followed his advice. But Herodias, his brother's wife, with whom he lived in so shameful a manner, being continually uneasy, lest Herod should be prevailed upon to set him at liberty, sought all opportunities to destroy him ; and, at last, an incident happened which enabled her to accomplish her intention.

The king having, on his birth-day, made a great feast for his friends, she sent her daughter Salome, whom she had by Philip, her lawful husband, into the saloon, to dance before

the king and his guests. Her performance was remarkably elegant, and so charmed Herod, that he promised, with an oath, to give her whatever she asked.

Having obtained so remarkable a promise, she ran to her mother, desiring to know what she should ask ? and was instructed by that wicked woman to require the head of John the Baptist. Her mother's desire, doubtless, surprised Salome, as she could not possibly see the use of asking what could be of no use to her. But Herodias would take no denial, peremptorily insisting on her demanding the head of John the Baptist. Accordingly, she returned to Herod, saying, "I will that thou give me, by and by, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist."

So cruel a request thrilled every breast ; the gayety of the king was vanished ; he was vexed and confounded. But being unwilling to appear either rash, fickle, or false, before a company of the first persons of his kingdom for rank and character, he commanded the head to be given her—not one of the guests having the courage to speak a single word in behalf of an innocent man, or attempt to divert Herod from his mad purpose, though he gave them an opportunity of doing it, by signifying to them that he performed his oath merely out of regard to the company. Thus Herod, through a misplaced regard to his oath and his guests, committed a most unjust and cruel action ; an action that will for ever brand his memory with dishonor, and render his very name detestable to the latest posterity.

Soon after the command was given, the head of that venerable prophet, whose rebukes had struck Herod with awe in his loosest moments, and whose exhortations had often alarmed his guilty conscience, was brought, pale and bloody, in a charger, and given to the daughter of Herodias, in the presence of all the guests.

The young lady eagerly received the bloody present, and carried it to her mother, who enjoyed the whole pleasure of revenge, and feasted her eyes with the sight of her enemy's head, now silent and harmless. But she could not silence the name of the Baptist ; it became louder, filling the earth

and heavens, and publishing to every people and nation this woman's baseness and adultery.

Thus fell that great and good man, John the Baptist, who was proclaimed by our blessed Saviour himself to be "more than a prophet." Josephus tells us, that his whole crime consisted in exhorting the Jews to the love and practice of virtue; and in the first place to piety, justice, and regeneration, or newness of life; and not by the abstinence from this or that particular sin, but by an habitual purity of mind and body.

It may not be improper, on this occasion, to hint that the history of this birth-day, transmitted to posterity in the Scriptures, stands a perpetual beacon, to warn the great, the gay, and the young, to beware of dissolute mirth. Admonished by so fatal an example, they should be careful to maintain, in the midst of their cheerfulness, an habitual recollection of spirit, lest reason, at any time, enervated by the pleasures of sense, should slacken the rein of wisdom, or let it drop, though only for a moment; because their headstrong passions, ever impatient of control, may catch the opportunity, and rush with them into follies, whose consequences will be unspeakably, perhaps eternally bitter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE disciples were so alarmed at the cruel fate of the Baptist, whose memory they highly revered, that they returned from their mission, and assisted in performing the last offices to the body of their old master, many of the apostles having been originally the disciples of John. As soon as the pious rites were over, they repaired to Jesus, and told him all that had happened.

Their compassionate Master, on hearing this melancholy news, retired with them by sea into a desert place, belonging to Bethsaida, that by retirement, meditation, and prayer, they might be refreshed and recruited for their spiritual

labors, and, at the same time, leave an example to us, that we should retire from the noise and hurry of the world, and offer up the most fervent prayers to our heavenly Father.

But the multitude attended so closely that their departure was not long concealed, and great numbers of people repaired to the place where they supposed Jesus and his disciples had excluded themselves. Struck with the greatness of his miracles on those that were sick, and anxious to hear more instructions from the mouth of so divine a teacher, no difficulties were too great for them to surmount, nor any place too retired for them to penetrate, in search of their admired preacher.

Nor was the beneficent Saviour of the world regardless of their pious esteem. He saw them, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd ; multitudes of people without a pastor ; a large harvest without laborers—motives abundantly sufficient to excite compassion in the Son of God.

The situation of these numerous throngs of people, scattered abroad, without a guide, without a guardian ; a flock of defenseless sheep, without a single shepherd to defend them from the jaws of the infernal wolf, was truly deplorable : the blessed Jesus, therefore, that “good Shepherd, who came to lay down his life for the sheep,” was moved with compassion toward them. The same pity which brought him from the courts of heaven, for the sake of his lost and wandering sheep in the desert, now brought him to this multitude of people, whom he instructed in the doctrines of eternal life, and, with his usual goodness, healed all the sick among them.

Intently devoted to teaching and healing the people, our blessed Saviour did not seem to notice the day wear away, and that the greatest part of it was already spent ; but his disciples, too anxious about the things of this world, thought proper to advise him of it, as if the Son of God wanted any directions from man. The day, said his disciples, is now far advanced, and the place a solitary desert, where neither food nor lodging can be procured ; it would, therefore, be convenient to dismiss the people, that they may repair to the towns and villages on the borders of the wilderness and pro-

vide themselves with food and lodging, for they have nothing to eat.

But our Lord prevented that trouble by telling them there was no necessity for sending the people away to procure victuals for themselves, as they might satisfy the hunger of the multitude by giving them to eat ; and, at the same time, to prove what opinion his disciples entertained of his power, addressed himself to Philip, who was well acquainted with the country, and said, " Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat ?"

Philip, astonished at the seeming impossibility of procuring a supply for so great a multitude with the small sum of money which he knew was their all, and forgetting the extent of his Master's power, answered. " Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." John, vi. 7.

Our blessed Saviour might now put the same question to Philip that he did on another occasion : " Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ?" John, xiv. 9. Hast thou beheld so many miracles, and art still ignorant that I can supply food, not only for this people, but for all the sons of men, and for the cattle upon a thousand hills ?

But he contented himself with answering, " Give ye them to eat." The twelve, not yet comprehending the design of their Master, repeated the objection of Philip ; but added, that they were willing to expend their whole stock in order to procure as large a supply as possible. " Shall we go," said they, " and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, that they may eat ?"

But this was by no means the design of their great Master, who, instead of making a direct answer to their question, asked them, " How many loaves have ye ?" How much provision can be found among this multitude ? Go and see.

The disciples obeyed the command of their Master ; and Andrew soon returned, to inform him that the whole stock amounted to no more than five barley loaves and two small fishes—a quantity so inconsiderable that it scarcely deserved notice. " What are they," said his disciples, " among so

many?" What, indeed, would they have been among such a multitude of people, if they had not been distributed by the creating hand of the Son of God?

Jesus, notwithstanding the smallness of the number, ordered them to be brought to him; and immediately commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, with which the place abounded, directing his disciples, at the same time, to range them in a regular order, by hundreds and fifties in a company, each company forming a square, containing a hundred in rank and fifty in file, that the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people more regularly served.

In obedience to his command, the people sat down in the manner they were ordered, big with the expectation of what this uncommon preparation portended; while the great Master of the banquet stood ready to supply the necessities of the guests—a banquet where, though they had no canopy but the azure sky, no table but the verdant turf, where their food was only coarse barley bread and dried fishes, and their drink only water from a bubbling fountain, yet displayed more real grandeur, by the presence of the divine Master of it, than the royal feast of gorgeous Ahasuerus, or the splendid entertainment of the imperious Nebuchadnezzar.

The multitude being seated, Jesus took the loaves and fishes into his hands, in the sight of all the people, that they might be convinced of the small quantity of provisions that were then before them, and that they could only expect to be fed by his supernatural power. But that hand, which had constantly sustained nature, could now easily multiply these five loaves and two fishes; for, as the Psalmist elegantly observes, "He openeth his hand, and filleth all things with righteousness." Accordingly, he looked up to heaven, returned thanks to God, the liberal giver of all good things, for his infinite beneficence in furnishing food for all flesh, and the power he had conferred on him of relieving mankind by his miracles, particularly for that he was about to work. This done, he blessed them; and so peculiarly efficacious was his blessing, that these five barley loaves and two fishes were multiplied into a quantity sufficient to supply the wants of five thousand men, besides women and children, who, on the

most favorable supposition, must amount to an equal number. "And Jesus took the loaves ; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down ; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would." John, vi. 11.

Thus did the compassionate and powerful Redeemer feed at least ten thousand people with five barley loaves and two small fishes, giving a magnificent proof both of his power and goodness. For, after all had eaten to satiety, they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces, a much larger quantity than was at first set before our Lord to divide.

The people, when they had seen the Saviour of the world perform so stupendous a miracle, were astonished above measure, and, in the height of their transport, purposed to take Jesus by force and make him a king, concluding that he must then assume the title of the Messiah, whose coming they had so long earnestly expected, and under whose reign they expected all kinds of temporal felicities.

But our Lord, well knowing the intentions of the multitude, and the inclinations of his disciples to second them, ordered the latter to repair immediately to their boat and sail to Bethsaida, while he sent away the multitude. They would, it seems, gladly have detained the people, with whom they fully agreed in sentiments ; and even lingered till he constrained them to get into the boat, so fully were they still possessed, that their Master was to take the reins of government, and become a powerful prince over the house of Jacob.

The people suffered the disciples to depart without the least remorse, as they saw that Jesus did not go with them.

Perhaps they imagined he was sending them away, to provide such things as they had need of. Nor did they refuse to disperse when he commanded them, purposing to return in the morning, as we find they actually did.

Having thus sent the disciples and the multitude away, Jesus repaired himself to the summit of a mountain, spending the evening in heavenly contemplations and ardent prayers to his Almighty Father.

But the disciples, meeting with a contrary wind, could not continue their course to Bethsaida, which lay about two

leagues to the northward of the desert mountain where the multitude were miraculously fed. They, however, did all in their power to land as near the city as possible, but were tossed up and down all the night by the tempest ; so that in the fourth watch, or between three and six o'clock in the morning, they were not above a league from the shore.

Their divine Master beheld, from the mountain, their distressed situation ; but they were ignorant of his presence, though he was coming to their relief.

Such was the state of the disciples ; they were tossed by boisterous waves, and opposed in their course by the rapid current of the wind, so that all hopes of reaching the place intended were vanished ; when, behold, their heavenly Master, to assist them in this distressing situation, comes to them, walking on the foaming surface of the sea. Their Lord's approach filled them with astonishment ; they took him for an apparition and shrieked for fear. Their terrors were, however, soon removed : their great and affectionate Master talked to them, with the sound of whose voice they were perfectly acquainted. " Be of good cheer," said the blessed Jesus, " it is I, be not afraid."

Peter, a man of warm and forward temper, beholding Jesus walking on the sea, was exceedingly amazed, and conceived the strongest desire of being enabled to perform so wonderful an action.

Accordingly, without the least reflection, he immediately begged that his Master would bid him come to him on the water. He did not doubt that Jesus would gratify his request, as it sufficiently intimated that he would readily undertake any thing, however difficult, at the command of his Saviour. But it appeared that his faith was too weak to support him to that height of obedience to which he would willingly have soared. To convince this forward disciple of the weakness of his faith, and render him more diffident of his own strength, our blessed Saviour granted his request. He ordered him to come to him upon the water.

Peter joyfully obeyed his divine Master ; he left the boat, and walked on the surface of the sea. But the wind increasing, made a dreadful noise, and the boisterous waves at the

same time threatened to overwhelm him. His faith now staggered ; his presence of mind forsook him ; he forgot that his Saviour was at hand ; and, in proportion as his faith decreased, the waters yielded, and he sunk. In this extremity he looked around for his Master, and, on the very brink of being swallowed up, cried, " Lord, save me !" His cry was not disregarded by his compassionate Saviour ; " he stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?"

Peter was convinced, before he left the ship, that it was Jesus who was coming to them on the water : nor did he even doubt it when he was sinking, because he then implored his assistance. But when he found the storm increase, and the billows rage more horribly than before, his fears suggested that either his Master would be unable or unwilling to support him amidst the frightful blasts of the tempest.

This miracle alarmed the disciples, for though they had so lately seen the miracle of the five loaves, they did not seem to have before formed a proper idea of his power ; but being now persuaded that he could be no other than the expected Messiah, they " came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Matthew, xiv. 33.

Our Saviour seems to have confirmed this miracle by working another ; for the evangelists tell us that he had no sooner entered the ship, and hushed the violence of the storm, than they arrived at the place whither they were going. " Then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land, whither they went." John, vi. 21.

When our Lord disembarked, the inhabitants of the neighboring country ran to him, bringing with them all those that were sick, and they were all healed. It must be remembered, that though Jesus ordinarily resided in the neighborhood of Capernaum, yet he had been absent ever since his visiting Nazareth, and therefore it is natural to think that the inhabitants, on his return, would not omit the opportunity of bringing their sick in such prodigious crowds, that it seems our Saviour did not pay particular attention to each of them, and this was the reason of their beseeching him " that

they might only touch the hem of his garment : and as many as touched were made perfectly whole." Matthew, xiv. 36.

The virtue of that power by which he wrought these things lay not in his garments, for then the soldiers who seized them at his crucifixion might have wrought the same miracles ; but it was because Jesus willed it to be so. It was now the acceptable time, the day of salvation foretold by Isaiah, and Christ's power was sufficient to remove any distemper whatsoever.

CHAPTER XV.

THE season of the grand passover approaching, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to attend that solemnity. But the Jews being offended at his discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, made an attempt upon his life. Our Lord, therefore, finding it impossible to remain at Jerusalem in safety, departed from that city, and retired into Galilee.

The Pharisees were sensible they could not perpetrate their malicious design upon that occasion ; they therefore followed him, hoping to find something by which they might accuse him, and at length ventured to attack him for permitting his disciples to eat with unwashed hands, because, in so doing, they transgressed the tradition of the elders.

Moses had, indeed, required external cleanness as a part of their religion, but it was only to signify how careful the servants of the Almighty should be to purify themselves from all uncleanness, both of flesh and spirit. These ceremonial institutions were, in process of time, prodigiously multiplied, and the Pharisees, who pretended to observe every tittle of the law, considered it as a notorious offense to eat bread with unwashed hands, though, at the same time, they suffered the more weighty precepts of the law to be neglected and forgotten.

To expose the absurdity of such superstitious customs, our Saviour applied to them the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me:" adding, that all their worship was vain, and displeasing to the Almighty, while they praised themselves and imposed upon others the frivolous precepts of man's invention, and at the same time neglected the external rules of righteousness; and to remove all objections that could be brought against this imputation of gross profaneness in the Pharisees, he supported it by a very remarkable instance.

God, saith the Saviour of the world, hath commanded children to honor their parents, and to maintain them when reduced to poverty by sickness, age, or misfortunes; promising life to such as obey this precept, and threatening death to those who disregard it. But, notwithstanding the peremptory commandment of Omnipotence, you teach that it is more sacred to enrich the temple than to nourish their parents, reduced to the utmost necessity, pretending that what is offered to the great Parent of the universe, is much better bestowed than what is given to the support of our earthly parents; making the honor of God absolutely different from the happiness of his creatures. Nay, ye teach that it is no breach of the commandment for a man to suffer his parents to perish, provided he has given what ought to nourish them to the temple at Jerusalem. Thus have ye concealed, under the cloak of piety, the most horrid, the most unnatural crime any person can commit.

Having thus reprov'd the Pharisees, he called the multitude to him, and desired them to reflect on the absurdity of the precepts inculcated by the scribes. These hypocrites, said he, solicitous about trifles, neglect the great duties of morality, which are of eternal obligation. They shudder with horror at unwashed hands, but are perfectly easy under the guilt of a polluted conscience, though they must be sensible that "not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." Matthew, xv. 11.

The haughty Pharisees were highly offended at his speaking in a degrading manner of their traditions. And the apostles, who would gladly have reconciled their Master and the Pharisees, insinuated to Jesus that he ought to have acted in

another manner. To which the Saviour answered, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matthew, xv. 13. As if he had said, You have no cause to fear their anger, as both they and their doctrine shall perish together, for neither of them come from God : adding, "Let them alone : they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matthew, xv. 14.

His disciples, not fully comprehending this doctrine, desired their Master to explain it. This our Saviour complied with, and showed them that meats being of a corporeal nature, could not defile the mind of man, or render him polluted in the sight of the Almighty, unless they were used to excess, or in opposition to the commandment of God ; and even then the pollution arose from the man, and not from the meat. But, on the contrary, that which proceedeth out of the mouth of a man comes from his heart, and really polluteth his mind.

These doctrines of truth could not fail of irritating the Pharisees, as they tended to strip them of the mask with which they concealed their deformity, and rendered themselves so venerable in the eyes of the vulgar ; and therefore their plots were leveled against his reputation and life.

Jesus, to avoid their malice, retired to the very borders of Palestine, to the coast of those two Gentile cities, Tyre and Sidon, proposing there to conceal himself for a time ; but he could not be hid. It was as impossible for the Sun of righteousness to be concealed where he came with his healing wings and messages of peace, as it is for the sun in the firmament, when he riseth in his glory, "as a bridegroom cometh out of his chamber, and as a giant rejoiceth to run his course." For a certain woman of Canaan, having heard of him, determined to implore his assistance. She was, indeed, one of the most abject sort of the Gentiles, a Canaanite, one of that detested race with which the Jews would have no dealings, nor even conversation ; but notwithstanding all these discouraging circumstances, she threw herself, as an humble petitioner, on the never-failing mercies of the Son of God. Strong necessity urged her on ; and insuperable distress caused her to be importunate. Alas ! unhappy parent, her only daughter,

her beloved child, had an unclean spirit, and was grievously vexed with a devil.

When her case was so urgent, and her woes so poignant, who can wonder that she was so importunate, and would take no refusal from this divine Person, who, she knew, was able to deliver her? Accordingly, she came; she fell at his feet; she besought him; she cried, saying "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy." I plead no merits; as a worthless, suffering wretch, I entreat only the bowels of thy mercy; I entreat it, for I believe thee to be the Son of David, the promised Messiah, the much desired Saviour of the world; have mercy on me, for the case of my child and her distresses are my own: "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Matthew, xv. 22.

Is it not, at the first view, astonishing that such a petitioner should be apparently rejected, and that by a bountiful Redeemer, who kindly invited all that were heavy laden to come to him? who promised never to cast out any that would come, and whose business it was "to go about doing good?"

We, however, find that he answered this woman not a word; he did not, in appearance, take the least notice, either of her or her distress. But this silence did not intimidate her; she still cried, she still besought, she still importunately pressed her petition, so that the very disciples were moved with her cries, and became her advocates. They themselves, though Jews, besought their Master to dismiss this petitioner, to grant her requests, and to send her away.

But Jesus soon silenced them by an answer agreeable to their own prejudices: "I am not sent," said he, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To this the disciples readily assented; and as they had a high opinion of the Jews' prerogative, were so well satisfied with the answer, that we hear them plead no more for this lost, this miserable Gentile.

But this soothed not her griefs; it was her own cause; and what is immediately our own concern, animates us to the most zealous application. Somewhat encouraged that she was the subject of discourse, she ventured to approach the Saviour of the world, though she well knew that custom actually forbade such an intercourse; yet she came, she wor-

shipped "this Son of David," she confessed again his divinity, and prayed, saying, "Lord, help me !"

The compassionate Saviour now condescended to speak to her, but with words seemingly sufficient to have discouraged every further attempt ; nay, to have filled her with bitter dislike to his person, though she had conceived such high and noble notions of his mercy and favor : "It is not meet," said he, "to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs." Matthew, xv. 26. It is not justice to deprive the Jews, who are the children of the covenant, the descendants of Abraham, of any part of those blessings which I came into the world to bestow, especially to you, who are aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel.

This answer, though seemingly severe, did not shake her humility, nor overcome her patience ; she meekly answered, "Truth, Lord ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Matthew, xv. 27. Let me enjoy that kindness which the dogs of my family are not denied ; from the plenty of miraculous cures which thou bestowed on the Jews, drop this one to me, who am a poor distressed heathen ; for they will suffer no greater loss by it than the children of a family do by the crumbs which are cast to the dogs.

Our Lord having put the woman's faith to very severe trial, and well knowing that she possessed a just notion of his power and goodness, as well as of her own unworthiness, wrought with pleasure the cure she solicited in behalf of her daughter, and, at the same time, gave her faith the praise it so richly deserved. "O woman, great is thy faith ! be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole even from that very hour." Matthew, xv. 28.

After performing this miracle, Jesus returned to the sea of Galilee, through the region of Decapolis. In this country a man was brought to him who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Objects in distress were always treated with benevolence by the holy Jesus ; but as the people now thronged about him, in expectation that he would soon establish his kingdom, he thought proper to take the man, with his relations, aside from the multitude ; after which he put

his fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue, that the deaf man, who could not be instructed by language, might know from whence all his benefits flowed. He then "looked up to heaven, he sighed, and said unto him Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man." Mark, viii. 34, 35, 36.

But notwithstanding they were enjoined to secrecy, the man, or his relations, published it in every part of the country, doubtless thinking they could not be too lavish in the praise of such a benefactor, especially as the modesty with which he had performed the cure abundantly demonstrated that his sole view was the benefit of the human race.

CHAPTER XV.

JESUS having displayed his power and goodness in restoring the blind man to his sight, departed from Bethsaida, and retired into the territory of Cæsarea Philippi, where, being desirous of proving in some measure the faith of the apostles, he asked them, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Matthew, xvi. 13, 14.

The people in general mistook the character of our Saviour, because he did not assume that outward pomp and grandeur with which they supposed the Messiah would be adorned. Jesus was therefore desirous of hearing what idea his disciples formed of his character, as they had long enjoyed the benefit of his doctrine and miracles; and accordingly asked them what they themselves understood him to be? To this question Simon Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, Son of the living God."

Our Saviour acknowledged the title; telling Peter that God alone had revealed the secret to him. And in allusion

to his surname, Peter, which signifies a rock, our Saviour promised, that upon himself as the foundation, or upon the confession which Peter had just made of his being "the Christ, Son of the living God" he would build his church, and that he should have a principal hand in establishing the Messiah's kingdom, never to be destroyed. "Other foundation can no man lay." 1 Corinthians, iii. 11. On him may our souls rest, and the fiercest tempest shall rage in vain ! "And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew, xvi. 18, 19.

Having delegated this power to Peter, our Saviour strictly forbade his disciples to tell any man that he was the Messiah, because it had been foretold by the prophets that he should be rejected by the rulers of Israel as a false Christ, and suffer the pangs of death. "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." Matthew, xvi. 20. Circumstances which could not fail of giving his followers great offense, as they did not yet understand the true nature of his kingdom ; and therefore he thought proper to let every man form a judgment of his mission from his doctrine and miracles.

The foregoing discourse had doubtless filled the apostles with lofty imaginations, and therefore our Saviour thought proper to acquaint them with his sufferings, in order to check any fond expectation of temporal power. Peter, however, was greatly displeased to hear his Master talk of dying at Jerusalem, when he had just before acknowledged the title of Messiah. Accordingly he rebuked him for the expression, which he was so bold as to think unguarded. But Jesus, turning himself about, said to Peter : "Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offense unto me ; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matthew, xvi. 23.

Peter's conduct, in this respect, arising from an immoderate attachment to sensual objects, our Saviour thought proper

to declare publicly, that all who intended to share with him in the glory of the heavenly Canaan, must deny themselves ; that is, they must be always ready to renounce every worldly pleasure, and even life itself, when the cause of religion required it : he also told them, that in this world they must expect to meet with troubles and disappointments, and that whoever intended to be his disciple, must “ take up his cross, and follow him.”

Thus did the blessed Jesus explain to his disciples the true nature of his kingdom ; and, at the same time, intimated, that although they had already undergone many afflictions, yet they must expect still more and greater, which they must sustain with equal fortitude, following their Master in the footsteps of his afflictions. This duty, however hard, was absolutely necessary ; because, by losing their temporal life, they would gain that which was eternal. “ For whosoever shall save his life, shall lose it ; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.” Luke, ix. 24. “ For what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?” Matthew, xvi. 26.

To add to the weight of this argument, and to enforce the necessity of self-denial, our Saviour particularly declared, that a day was fixed for distributing rewards and punishments to all the human race ; and that he himself was appointed by the Father as universal Judge ; so that his enemies could not flatter themselves with the hope of escaping the punishments they deserved, nor his friends be afraid of losing their eternal reward. “ Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.” Mark, viii. 38.

About eight days after this discourse, our blessed Saviour being with the multitude in the country of Cæsarea Philippi, left them in the plain, and accompanied with Peter, James, and John, ascended an exceedingly high mountain.

In this solitude, while Jesus was praying with these three disciples, he was transfigured ; his face became radiant and

dazzling, for it shone like the sun in his meridian clearness. At the same time, his garment acquired a snowy whiteness, far beyond any human art could produce ; a whiteness bright as the light, and sweetly refulgent, but in a degree inferior to the radiance of his countenance.

Thus, as it were, in an instant, the Son of God, during his state of humiliation, suffered the glory of his divinity to shine through the vail of human nature with which it was covered ; and to heighten the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, and Elijah, a zealous defender of the law, appeared in the beauties of immortality, the robes, in which the inhabitants of the heavenly Canaan are adorned. The disciples, it seems, did not see the beginning of this transfiguration ; happening to fall asleep at the time of prayer, they lost that pleasure, together with a great part of the conversation which these two prophets held with the only-begotten Son of God.

They, however, understood that the subject was his meritorious sufferings and death, by which he was to redeem the world ; a subject that had, a few days before, given great offense to his disciples, particularly to Peter. At beholding the illustrious sight, the disciples were greatly amazed ; but the forwardness of Peter's disposition prompting him to say something, he uttered he knew not what : " Master," said he, " it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Mark, ix. 5.

This disciple imagined that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity, that Elias was now come according to Malachi's prediction, and the Messiah's kingdom was at length begun.

Accordingly, he thought it was necessary to provide some accommodation for his Master and his assistants, intending, perhaps, to bring the rest of the disciples, with the multitude, from the plain below, to behold his matchless glory. This, he thought, was much better for his Master, than to be put to death at Jerusalem, concerning which, Jesus had been talking with the messengers from heaven, and the design of which Peter could not comprehend.

But "while he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them : and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him." Matthew, xvii. 5.

When the three disciples heard the voice, which, like the roaring thunder, burst from the cloud, and was such as mortals were unaccustomed to hear, they fell on their faces, and continued in that posture till Jesus approached, raised them up, and dispelled their fears, saying unto them, "Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only." Matthew, xvii. 7, 8.

Jesus, having continued all night with his three disciples, on the mountain, returned to the plain early in the morning, charging them to conceal what they had seen, till after he was risen from the dead. He well knew that the world, and even his own disciples, were not yet able to comprehend the design of his transfiguration, and that if it had been published before his resurrection, it might have appeared incredible ; because nothing but afflictions and persecutions had hitherto attended him. "He was truly a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN our Lord approached the descent of the mountain, accompanied by his three disciples, he saw a great multitude surrounding the nine who continued in the plain, and the scribes disputing with them. The people, seeing Jesus coming down from the mountain, ran to him, and saluted him with particular reverence ; after which Jesus asked the scribes what was the subject of their debate with his disciples ? to which one of the multitude answered, "Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit : and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him ; and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away : and I spake to

thy disciples that they should cast him out ; and they could not." Mark, ix. 17, 18.

This answer being made by one of the multitude, and not by the scribes, to whom the question was directed, indicates that they had been disputing with the disciples on their not being able to cure this afflicted youth : perhaps their making this unsuccessful attempt had given the scribes occasion to boast that a devil was at length found, which neither they nor their Master were able to conquer. This seems to be indicated by the manner in which our Saviour addressed himself to these arrogant rulers. " O faithless generation !" says he, " how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I suffer you ? " Must I always bear with your infidelity ? After speaking in this manner to the scribes, he turned himself to the father of the young man, and said, " Bring thy son hither." But no sooner was he brought in sight of his deliverer, than the evil spirit attacked him, as it were, with double fury : " The spirit tare him ; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming." Mark, ix. 20.

Jesus could easily have prevented this attack ; but he permitted it, that the minds of the spectators might be impressed with a more lively idea of this youth's distress. And, for the same reason, probably, it was, that he asked the father how long he had been in that deplorable condition ? To which the afflicted parent answered, " Of a child : and oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him ; but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Mark, ix. 21, 22.

The inability of our Lord's disciples to cast out this spirit, had greatly discouraged the afflicted father ; and the exquisite torture of his son, and the remembrance of its long continuance, so dispirited him, that he began to fear this possession was even too great for the power of Jesus himself, as the scribes had probably before affirmed ; and therefore could not help expressing his doubts and fears. But Jesus, to make him sensible of his mistake, said to him, " If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." On which the father cried out, with tears, " Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief." The vehement manner in which

he spake causing the crowd to gather from every quarter, Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him." Mark, ix. 25.

No sooner was the powerful edict pronounced, than the spirit, with a hideous howling, and convulsing the suffering patient in the most deplorable manner, came out, leaving the youth senseless and without motion, till Jesus, taking him by the hand, restored him to life, and delivered him perfectly recovered to his father.

The nine disciples, during the whole transaction, remained silent. They were, doubtless, mortified to think that they had lost, by some fault of their own, the power of working miracles, lately conferred upon them by their Master ; and for this reason were afraid to speak to him in the presence of the multitude. But when they came into the house, they desired Jesus to inform them why they had failed in their attempt to heal that remarkable youth ? To which Jesus answered, "Because of your unbelief." But to encourage them, he described the efficacy of the faith of miracles. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matthew, xvii. 20. Nothing shall be too great for you to accomplish, when the glory of God and the good of the church are concerned, provided you have a proper degree of faith ; even yonder mountain, which bids defiance to the storm, and smiles at the attacks of its mingled horrors, shall, at your command, leave its firm basis, and remove to another place.

The expulsion of the dumb spirit seems to have astonished the disciples more than any other miracle they had seen their Master perform ; so that our Saviour found it necessary to moderate the high admiration of his works, by again predicting his own death, and retiring, for a time, into the unfrequented parts of Galilee.

After a short tour through the desert part of Galilee, Jesus returned into Capernaum, the place of his general residence. Soon after his arrival, the tax-gatherers came to Peter, and asked him whether his Master would pay the

tribute ? That disciple, it seems, had promised that Jesus would satisfy their demand ; but, on a more mature consideration, feared to ask him concerning his paying taxes, on any pretense whatever.

Jesus was, however, no stranger to what had happened, and the fear of Peter to ask him, and therefore turned his discourse to this subject by saying unto him, “ What thinkest thou, Simon ? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute ? of their own children, or of strangers ? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free ;” insinuating, that, as he was himself the Son of the great King, to whom heaven, earth, and the sea belong, he had no right to pay tribute to any monarchy whatever, because he held nothing by a derived right.

Or, if we suppose this contribution was made for the service and reparation of the temple, he meant that as he was Son of that omnipotent Being to whom the tribute was paid, he could have justly excused himself. But the blessed Jesus was always careful not to give offense ; and therefore sent Peter to the lake, with a line and hook, telling him that in the mouth of the first fish that came up, he should find a piece of money equal to the sum demanded of them both. “ Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up ; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money ; that take, and give unto them, for me and thee.” Matthew, xvii. 27.

Our Lord took this extraordinary method of paying the tribute-money in this manner, because the miracle was of such a kind as could not fail to demonstrate that he was the Son of the great Monarch worshiped in the temple, and who rules the universe. In the very manner, therefore, of paying this tribute, he showed Peter that he was free from all taxes ; and, at the same time, gave this useful lesson to his followers, that when their property is affected only in a small degree, it is better to recede a little from their just right, than to offend their brethren, or disturb the state, by obstinately insisting on it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE great Redeemer, having promoted his Father's work in Galilee, departed into Judea, passing through the country beyond Jordan, that the Jews who inhabited those distant parts might enjoy the unspeakable benefits of his discourses and miracles. After sowing the seeds of eternal life, and publishing the glad tidings of salvation in those remote countries, he repaired to Jerusalem to celebrate the fourth pass-over; but the malignity of the scribes and Pharisees was so great, that he staid but a short time in the capital; and then returned into Galilee, where the multitude again resorted to him, and he again instructed them in the paths that lead to everlasting life.

The feast of the tabernacles now drew on, at which all the males of the Jewish nation, capable of traveling, repaired to Jerusalem, and dwelt in the tabernacles, or booths made of the boughs of trees, in commemoration of their fathers having had no other habitation, during their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness. To this feast some of the kinsmen of the blessed Jesus desired he would accompany them, and there show himself openly to the whole nation of the Jews. They did not themselves believe that he was the great Prophet so long expected, and therefore condemned the method he pursued in his public ministry as altogether absurd.

They could not conceive what reason he had for spending so much of his time in the deserts and remote corners of the kingdom, while he professed so public a character as that of the Redeemer of Israel. Jerusalem, the seat of power, was to them much the most proper place for him to deliver his doctrines, and work his miracles in the most public manner possible, before the great and learned men of the nation, whose decision in his favor would have great weight in increasing the number of his disciples, and inducing the whole nation to own him for the Messiah. "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the work that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou

do these things, show thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him." John, vii. 3, 4, 5.

Our Lord well knew the rancorous prejudice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and therefore did not think proper to reside among them any longer than was absolutely necessary. They had more than once attempted his life, and therefore little hopes remained that they would believe his doctrine ; but, on the contrary, there was great reason to think they would destroy him, if possible, before he had finished the work for which he assumed the vail of human nature, and resided among the sons of men. " My time," said the blessed Jesus to these unbelieving relations, " is not yet come : but your time is always ready. The world can not hate you : but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast : I go not up yet unto this feast ; for my time is not yet fully come." John, vii. 6, 7, 8. As if he had said, It is not proper for me to go before the feast begins ; but you may repair to the capital whenever you please ; the Jews are your friends, you have done nothing to displease them ; but the purity of the doctrine I have preached to them, and the freedom with which I have reprov'd their hypocrisy and other enormous crimes, have provok'd their malice to the utmost height, and therefore, as the time of my sufferings is not yet come, it is not prudent for me to go so soon to Jerusalem.

There was also another reason why our blessed Saviour refused to accompany these relations to the feast of tabernacles : the roads were crowded with people, and these gathering around him, and accompanying him to Jerusalem, would, doubtless, have given fresh offense to his enemies, and have, in a great measure, prevented his miracles and doctrines from having the desired effect. He therefore chose to continue in Galilee, till the crowd were all gone up to Jerusalem, when he followed, as it were in secret, neither preaching nor working miracles by the way, so that no crowd attended him to the feast.

As Jesus did not go up openly to Jerusalem, so neither did he, on his arrival, repair to the temple, and there preach openly to the people. This gave occasion to several disputes

among the Jews with regard to his character. Some affirmed that he was a true prophet ; and that his absenting himself from the feast could be only owing to accident ; while others as confidently asserted that he only deceived the people, and paid no regard to the institutions they had received from heaven.

But about the middle of the feast, Jesus appeared openly in the temple, and taught the people, delivering his doctrines with such strength of reasoning and elegance of expression, that his very enemies were astonished, knowing that he had never enjoyed the advantage of a learned education. "Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ?'" John, vii. 14, 15.

To which the Redeemer of mankind replied, My doctrine was not produced by human wisdom ; the sages of the world were not my instructors ; I received it from heaven ; it is the doctrine of the Almighty, whose messenger I am : "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." John, vii. 16.

Nor can he who is desirous of practicing the doctrines I deliver, if he will lay aside his prejudices, and sincerely desire to be taught of God, be at a loss to know from whom my doctrines are derived because he will easily discern whether they are conformable to the will of man or of God. It is no difficulty to discover an impostor, because all his precepts tend to advance his own interest, and gratify his pride. Whereas all the doctrines delivered by a true prophet have no other end than the glory of God, however contrary they may prove to himself. "He that speaketh of Himself seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." John, vi. 18.

The scribes and Pharisees were highly provoked at this attachment of the common people to Jesus : and accordingly, on the last and great day of the feast, they met in council, and sent several officers to apprehend him, and bring him before them. Jesus, during these transactions in the council, continued in the temple teaching the people. My ministry,

said he to the people, is drawing near its period ; and therefore you should, during the short time it has to last, be very careful to improve every opportunity of hearing the word ; you should listen with the greatest attention to every discourse, that your minds may be stored with the truths of the Almighty, before I return to my Father ; for, after my departure, you shall earnestly wish for the same opportunities of seeing me, and hearing my instructions, but shall never obtain them. “ Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me : and where I am thither ye can not come.” John, vii. 33, 34.

The Jews, who did not understand that our blessed Saviour alluded to his own death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high, whither their sins would not permit them to follow him, wondered at this doctrine, and imagined that he intended to leave Judea, and preach to their brethren dispersed among the Gentiles. But this supposition was not sufficient ; because if he did go and preach among the Gentiles, they thought it was not impossible for them to follow him thither. “ Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him ? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles ! What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me : and where I am, thither ye can not come ?” John, vii. 35, 36.

While the divine Teacher was thus instructing the people in the temple, the water from Siloam was brought in, according to the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, part of which they drank with loud acclamations, in commemoration of the mercy showed to their fathers, who were relieved by a stream which miraculously flowed from a rock, and refreshed a whole nation, then ready to perish with thirst in a dreary and sandy waste ; and the other part they poured out as a drink-offering to the Almighty, accompanying it with their prayers, for the former or latter rain to fall in its season ; the whole congregation singing the following passage : “ With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” Isaiah, xii. 3.

It was the custom of the blessed Jesus to deliver moral

instructions, in allusion to any occurrences that happened ; and accordingly, he took this opportunity of inviting, in the most affectionate manner, all who were desirous of knowledge or happiness, to come to him and drink, alluding to the ceremony they were then performing. And, to encourage all such as were desirous of believing in him, he promised them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he represented under the similitude of a river flowing out of their belly. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John, vii. 37, 38.

During this discourse to the people, the officers from the council came to apprehend him ; but hearing that the topic he was discussing was a very singular one, and he seemed to deliver his discourse with remarkable fervor, their curiosity induced them to listen some time to his discourse before they laid hands on him. But the eloquent manner in which he delivered his subject appeased their rage ; the sweetness of pronounciation, and the plainness and perspicuity of his discourse, elucidated the beauties of truth, and caused them to shine before the understanding with their native luster. Accordingly, his very enemies, who were come from the council on purpose to apprehend him, were astonished ; the greatness of the subject, made, as it were, visible by the divine speaker, filled their understanding ; the warmth and tenderness with which he delivered himself, penetrated their hearts ; they felt new and uncommon emotions, and, being overwhelmed with the greatness of their admiration, were fixed in silence and astonishment ; they condemned themselves for having undertaken the office, and soon returned to the rulers of Israel without performing it.

If our Lord had pleaded for life before the officers of the council who were sent to apprehend him, the success of his eloquence, even in that case, had been truly wonderful ; but, in the case before us, it surely was superior to all praise, for, in a discourse addressed to others, and even on a spiritual subject, it disarmed a band of inveterate enemies, and made them his friends.

Nor were the officers the only persons affected by this discourse ; for many of them declared he must be one of the old prophets, and others, that he was none other than the Messiah himself. Some, however, led away with the common mistake that he was born at Nazareth, asked, with disdain, if the Messiah was to come out of Galilee ? and whether they would acknowledge a Galilean for the Messiah, when the Scriptures absolutely declared that he was to be born in Bethlehem, the native town of his father David ; “ Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth, this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee ? Hath not the Scriptures said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was ? ” John, vii. 40, 41, 42.

Such were the dissensions on this subject, that some of his enemies, knowing that the officers were sent to apprehend him, threatened to lay hands on him ; but the Almighty would not suffer them to execute their wicked design. “ And some of them would have taken him ; but no man laid hands on him.” John, vii. 44.

The officers now returned to the council, and were asked why they had not brought Jesus of Nazareth ? To whom the officers answered, “ Never man spake like this man.” This reply enraged the council, who reviled them for presuming to entertain a favorable opinion of one whom they had pronounced an imposter. It is strange, said they, that you, who are not ignorant of our sentiments concerning this person, should entertain a favorable idea of him. Have any persons of rank, or any celebrated for their knowledge of the laws, believed on him ? Are not his followers the lower orders of the people, who are totally ignorant of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah ?

These officers made no answer to the railing accusations of their master ; but Nicodemus, a member of the council, arraigned their conduct in a very poignant manner : “ Does our law,” says he, “ condemn any man before he has been heard ? ” They had before condemned their officers for being ignorant of the law, when it appeared they were themselves

far more ignorant, in pretending to condemn a person before they had found him guilty. They were acting directly contrary to the fundamental principles of the law of equity, at the time they boasted of their profound knowledge of its precepts.

Incensed at this reprimand of Nicodemus, they asked him, with an air of disdain and surprise, if he was also one of those mean persons who had joined together to support the pretenses of a Galilean, though the Scriptures had plainly said, that Bethlehem was the place of the Messiah's nativity : adding, that if he refused to listen to them, he should soon be convinced that the great prophet mentioned by Moses was not to be born in Galilee. "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look ; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." John, vii. 52.

Having made this reply to Nicodemus, the council broke up, and Jesus, who knew their malicious intentions, retired to the Mount of Olives, where he spent the night with his disciples.

Our blessed Lord, early the following morning, returned to the temple, and again taught the people. The scribes and Pharisees now determined to render him odious to the multitude, or obnoxious to the Roman governor ; and therefore placed before him a woman who had been taken in the act of adultery, desiring his opinion as to what punishment she ought to suffer. "This woman," said they to Jesus, "was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned ; but what sayest thou ?" John, viii. 4, 5.

Had our Lord disapproved this custom of the law, they would, doubtless, have represented him to the multitude as a person who contradicted Moses, and favored adultery : which could not have failed of rendering him odious to the people. On the other hand, had he ordered her to be stoned, it would have afforded a plausible pretense for accusing him to the Roman governor, as a person who stirred up the people to rebellion, the Romans having now taken the power of life and death into their own hands.

But Jesus, who well knew their malicious intentions,

made them no answer, but "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." John, viii. 6.

They, however, still continued pressing him to give an answer ; and, at last, Jesus, in allusion to the law, which ordered that the hands of the witnesses, by whose testimony an adulterer was convicted, should be first upon him, said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Let those who are remarkably zealous for having justice executed upon others, at least take care to purify themselves from all heinous crimes.

This reply had its desired effect. The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees were convicted of sin by their own consciences, so that they immediately retired, fearing Jesus would have made their particular sins public. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." John, viii. 9.

The woman's accusers being all retired, Jesus told her, that as no man had passed sentence of death upon her, to be very careful, for the future, to avoid the temptations which had induced her to commit so black a crime.

The wisdom, knowledge and power of our blessed Saviour were eminently displayed on this occasion ; his wisdom, in defending himself against the malicious attempts of his enemies ; his knowledge, in discovering the secrets of their hearts ; and his power, in making use of their own consciences to render their artful intentions abortive. It was, therefore, with remarkable propriety that the great Redeemer of the world now called himself the "light of the world ;" as if he had said, I am the spiritual sun, that dispels the darkness of ignorance and superstition, in which the minds of men are immersed, and discovers the path that leads to eternal life ; nor shall any who follow me ever be involved in darkness. "I am the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John, viii. 12.

This assertion of our Lord highly provoked the Pharisees, who told him he must be a deceiver, because he boasted of himself. To which the great Redeemer of mankind replied,

You are not to imagine that I called myself the light of the world from a principle of pride and falsehood : that title justly belongs to me ; nor would you yourselves refuse to acknowledge it, did you know from what authority I received my commission, and to whom, when I have executed it, I must return. But of these things ye are totally ignorant, and therefore judge according to outward appearance, and condemn me because I do not destroy those who oppose me, as you vainly think the Messiah will do those who refuse to submit to his authority. But the design of the Messiah's coming is very different from your mistaken notions ; he is not to destroy, but to save, the children of men. "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true : for I know whence I came, and whither I go ; but ye can not tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man." John, viii. 14, 15. He added, that if he should condemn any person for unbelief, the condemnation would be just, because his mission was confirmed by his own testimony and that of his Almighty Father, the God of Jacob, by whose authority, and agreeable to whose will, all his sentences would be passed. "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true : for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." John, viii. 16.

Having thus asserted the divinity of his mission, and shown that his judgment was just, he proceeded to inform them that his Father himself bore witness to the truth of his mission. You can not, said he, justly complain, even if I should punish you for your unbelief, because you are by your own laws, commanded to believe the testimony of two witnesses, that my mission evidently is true. For the actions of my life, which are perfectly agreeable to the character of a messenger from heaven, bear sufficient witness of me ; and the Father, by the miracles he has enabled me to perform, beareth witness of me ; ye are, therefore, altogether culpable in objecting to my mission. "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." John, viii. 17, 18.

The Jews then asked him, Where is thy Father the other witness to whom thou appealest ? Jesus replied, your conduct

sufficiently demonstrates that ye are strangers both to me and my Father ; for had ye known who I am, ye must have also known who it is I call my Father. Had ye been convinced that I am the Messiah, ye must also have been convinced that the Father is no other than the omnipotent Being, who created and upholds all things by the word of his power. "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father ? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me nor my Father : if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." John, viii. 19.

This discourse, the evangelist tells us, was held in the treasury, a court of the temple, where the chests were placed for receiving the offerings of all those who came to worship in the temple, and therefore must have been a place of great resort, being frequented by all, even the princes and rulers. But notwithstanding the public manner in which our blessed Saviour now asserted his claim to the character of the Messiah, no man attempted to seize him ; Providence not suffering them to put their malicious designs in execution, because his hour, or the time of his suffering, was not yet come.

The debate being ended, Jesus again repeated what he had before told them ; namely, that he should shortly depart from them ; and that they should then seek him, but not be able to find him. "I go away ; and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go ye can not come." John, viii. 21. As if he had said, After my ascension into heaven, when the Roman armies shall spread horror and desolation in every corner of the land, ye shall then earnestly wish for the coming of the Messiah, in expectation of being delivered by his powerful arm from your cruel enemy ; but ye shall then find your mistake. Ye shall die in your sins, and be for ever excluded from the mansions of happiness.

The Jews by no means comprehended the departure of which our Lord told them. They even fancied he would destroy himself ; because they thought the only retreat where they could not find him was the gloomy habitation of the grave. To which the blessed Jesus replied, Your vile insinuation discovers at once the wickedness of your hearts, and the baseness of your original. Ye are from the earth, and therefore subject to all the evil passions that infect human nature,

the source of temptation to every sin. Ye therefore must believe that I am the bread of life, the heavenly manna, the light of the world, the true Messiah, if ye are desirous of being cleansed from those pollutions which flow from your earthly origin ; but if ye still continue in your unbelief, you shall die in your sins.

The Jews now, in order to vindicate themselves, demanded what sort of a person he pretended to be ? To which Jesus answered, " Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning," that is, at the beginning of this discourse, " the light of the world ;" adding, " I have many things to say, and to judge of you ; but he that sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him." John, viii. 26.

This discourse, however plain it may appear, was not understood by the perverse Jews ; they did not perceive that he spoke to them of the Father. But Jesus told them that when they crucified him they would be convinced, by the miracles accompanying that awful hour—the resurrection from the dead, the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, and the destruction of the Jewish nation—who he was, and the Father that sent him. " When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he ; and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me I speak these things." John, viii. 28.

He added, that though he should be crucified as a malefactor, that punishment would not be inflicted on him as a consequence of being deserted by his Father ; because he would never leave him in any period of his sufferings, or even at the hour of his death ; as he always acted agreeably to his will.

These words induced many of the people to believe him to be the Messiah. Perhaps by lifting him up they did not understand his crucifixion, but his ascension to the throne of David ; and hence supposed that he now entertained sentiments worthy of the Messiah, and were therefore very ready to acknowledge him as such, and believe the doctrine he had delivered concerning his mission. But Jesus told them that if they persevered in the belief and practice of his word that

they should in reality become his disciples, have a title to that honorable appellation, be fully instructed in every doctrine of the gospel, and not only freed from the slavery of sin and its consequences, but also from the ceremonial laws delivered by Moses. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John, viii. 31, 32.

The Jews, on hearing him mention that they should be made free, answered, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man." This assertion, if taken literally, was absolutely false, the whole nation, at that time, being in bondage to the Romans; nor were their ancestors any strangers to slavery, having severely felt the hand of tyranny both in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. The expression, therefore, according to some writers, must be taken in a metaphorical sense, to signify spiritual bondage: it was a freedom of truth, a freedom in respect of religion, which they now asserted. They meant that they were the descendants of illustrious ancestors, and, during the worst of times, had preserved sentiments in religion and government worthy the posterity of Abraham; nor had the hottest persecution of the Assyrian kings been able to compel them to embrace the religion of the heathen. In respect of truth, "We were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

In answer to this question, Jesus told them that those who gave themselves up to the practice of sin, and the gratification of their sinful appetites, were absolute slaves; and how far they might deserve that appellation, it was incumbent on them to consider. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." And as a slave can not ensure the continuance of his master's favor, or be certain of abiding continually in the family, so my Father can, when he pleases, discard such habitual sinners, and deprive you of the external economy of religion, of which you so highly boast, as you have, through sin, rendered yourselves bondmen to his justice. If ye are desirous of becoming the children of God, and of remaining for ever in his family, you must submit to the authority of his Son, and embrace his

doctrine, which will induce him to adopt you as co-heirs with himself. It is he only that can make you free indeed, and place you in the city of the heavenly Jerusalem, without the least danger of being removed. I know well that you are, in a natural sense, the seed of Abraham, but, in a moral one, the offspring of Satan ; for many of you are desirous of destroying me, because I enjoy a greater degree of sanctity than you are willing to acquire. "I know that ye are Abraham's seed : but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father ; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our Father." John, viii. 37, 38, 39.

Notwithstanding their claim to immediate descent from that father of the faithful, Jesus told them, that if they were the spiritual progeny of Abraham, they would resemble that great and good man in his righteousness ; and therefore, instead of endeavoring to take away the life of a person who came with a revelation from God, they would believe on him, in imitation of Abraham, who was justly styled the father of the faithful, and the friend of God. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God ; this did not Abraham." John, viii. 39, 40.

The Jews, incensed at our Lord, rushed on him, and attempted to stone him ; but Jesus, by miraculously concealing himself, had passed unhurt through the crowd, and retired out of the temple. With what patience did our blessed Redeemer bear, and with what "meekness of wisdom" did he answer the most virulent and opprobrious language. And shall we too keenly resent the reflections which are thrown upon us ? May but our conscience witness for us and we need not fear all that are against us !

CHAPTER XIX.

THE great Preacher of Israel, having defeated the cruel designs of the obstinate Jews, in passing on his way, saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The sight of so affecting an object could not fail to excite the compassion of the benevolent Saviour of mankind. Nor could the affronts and indignities he had just received from the Jews hinder him from "working the works of him that sent him," and dispensing blessings on that rebellious and ungrateful nation. Accordingly, he beheld this poor blind man, not with a transient view, but fixed on him the eyes of pity, and presented him with the riches of his adorable love.

The disciples, observing the affectionate regard of their Master to this object of compassion, and probably imagining that he was going to extend his usual mercy to this unfortunate object, asked their Master whether his blindness was occasioned by his own sin, or the sin of his parents? They had often heard their Master say, that afflictions were commonly the punishment of particular sins, and had learned, from the law of Moses, that sin was the fruitful source of evil; and that the Lord punished the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. Their Master kindly answered, that neither his own nor the sins of the parents were the immediate cause of this peculiar affliction; but that he was born blind, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him:" particularly his sovereignty in bringing him blind into the world, his power in conferring the faculty of sight upon him, and his goodness in bearing witness to the doctrine by which men are to be saved.

We may learn, by this pertinent reply of the Saviour of the world, that a curious inquiry into the cause of afflictions in other men may be safely avoided; and that we ought to suppose very calamity subservient to the glory of Omnipotence; never imputing to their personal sins whatever miseries we behold in others, lest, like the disciples in the present case, we assign to sin what owes its origin to the glory of our Maker.

Having assigned the cause of this person's blindness, namely, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him," Jesus added, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day ; the night cometh when no man can work ;" (John, ix. 4 ;) intimating to his disciples, and all the sons of men, his unwearied labor in the work of his Almighty Father. In this he was employed day and night, during the time of his sojourning in the flesh. To this alone he directed all his thoughts and all his intentions. This he esteemed even as his meat and drink ; and for this he suffered the neglect of his ordinary food, that he might finish the blessed, the beneficent work of human salvation. A work to accomplish which he left the courts of heaven, and, during the execution of it, went about doing good.

It was now the Sabbath day, and the blessed Jesus was going to perform a miracle, in which there was to be a small degree of servile work ; and therefore he told his disciples, that they need not be surprised to see him work miracles of that kind on the Sabbath day. For though they should imagine that he might defer them till the day of rest was over, his time on earth was so short, that it was necessary for him to embrace every opportunity that offered of working miracles. Perhaps he chose to perform this work on the Sabbath, because he knew that the Pharisees would, for that reason, inquire into it with the utmost attention, and consequently render it more generally known.

But, however this might be, our blessed Saviour, who was now going to confer sight on one that was born blind, took occasion from thence to speak of himself as one appointed to give light also to the minds of men involved in darkness. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." John, ix. 5.

Having declared the salutary design of his coming into the world, "he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is, by interpretation, Sent). He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing." John, ix. 6, 7.

This miraculous operation could not fail of producing a

general curiosity and surprise ; it induced those who had seen this blind man in his dark and deplorable condition, to be very particular in their inquiries into the means of so singular a miracle. It was, doubtless, the subject of general conversation, and, it is natural to think, should also have proved the means of a general conversion ; but, as it too frequently happens, a perverse curiosity prevented its salutary effects upon their souls. Unbelief, and hardness of heart, led some of them even to doubt of the plainest fact—a fact the most evident and indisputable, and plainly the work of the Divinity—and others, to persecute at once both the object and the author of it ! “The neighbors, therefore, and they which had before seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged ? Some said, This is he : others said, He is like him : but he said, I am he.” John, ix. 8, 9.

The man, transported with gratitude and joy, and perceiving his neighbors to doubt of the identity of his person, proclaimed himself to be the very same whom they lately saw begging in total darkness. I am he thus wonderfully blest with sight, by the peculiar mercy of the Almighty ! I am he, who was blind from my birth, whom ye have all seen, and many relieved from my miserable distress ! I am he who was, even from my mother’s womb, involved in total darkness, but now enjoy the enlivening light of day !

So genuine an acknowledgment of the fact excited their curiosity to know how this admirable effect was produced. “How were thine eyes opened ?” To this question he readily replied, “A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight.” John, ix. 11. They then asked him where the person was who had performed so stupendous a work ? To which the man answered, “I know not ;” for Jesus had retired while the man went to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam, probably to avoid the applauses which would naturally have been given him, and which we see, through the whole gospel, he generally studied to avoid.

The neighbors, either stimulated by envy, or excited by a desire of having the truth of this extraordinary event

searched to the bottom, brought the man before the council, as the proper judges of this affair. Accordingly, he was no sooner placed before the assembly, than the Pharisees began to question him, "how long he had recovered his sight !" Not daunted by this awful assembly, though terrible to a man of his mean circumstances, he boldly answered, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and do see." John, ix. 15.

On hearing this account of the miracle, the Pharisees declared, that the author of it must have been an imposter, because he had, by the performing of it, violated the Sabbath day. But others, more candid in their way of thinking, gave it as their opinion, that no deceiver could possibly work a miracle of that kind, because it was too great and beneficial for an evil being to have either the inclination or power to perform.

The court being thus divided in their opinions with regard to the character of Jesus, they asked the man himself what he thought of the person who had conferred on him the blessing of sight ? To which he boldly and plainly answered, "He is a prophet." But the Jews, wanting to prove the whole a cheat, started another objection, namely, that this person was not born blind, though all his neighbors had really testified to the truth of it. Accordingly, they called his parents, and asked them whether he was their son ? if he had been born blind ? and by what means he had obtained his sight ? To which they answered that he was truly their son, and had been born blind ; but, with regard to the manner in which he received his sight, and the person who had conferred it on him, they could give no information : their son was of age, and he should answer for himself. "These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews ; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." John, ix. 22.

The road from Galilee to Jerusalem lay through Samaria, and the inhabitants were those which entertained the most inveterate hatred against all who worshiped in Jerusalem. Jesus, being no stranger to this disposition of the Samaritans, thought proper to send messengers before him, that they might, against his arrival, find reception for him in one of the

villages. The prejudiced Samaritans, finding the intention of his journey was to preach in the temple at Jerusalem, refused to receive either him or his disciples into their houses.

The messengers, being thus disappointed, returned to Jesus, and gave him an account of all that had passed, at which James and John were so exceedingly incensed, that they proposed to their Master to call down fire from heaven, in order to destroy such inhospitable wretches, alleging, in excuse for such violent proceedings, the example of the prophet Elijah: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" Luke, ix. 54.

Our Lord, desirous of displaying an example of humility on every occasion, sharply rebuked them for entertaining so unbecoming a resentment for this offense. "Ye know not," said he, "what manner of spirit ye are of." Ye are ignorant of the sinfulness of the disposition ye have now expressed; nor do ye consider the difference of times, persons, and dispensations. The severity exercised by Elijah on the men who came from Ahab to apprehend him, was a just reproof to an idolatrous king and people, very proper for the times, and very agreeable to the characters, both of the prophet who gave it, and of the offenders to whom it was given, and, at the same time, not unsuitable to the Mosaic dispensation. But the gospel breathes a very different spirit; and the intention of the Messiah's coming into the world, was not to destroy, but to save the lives of the children of men.

Ye wise of this world, who reject saving knowledge, behold here an instance of patience, under a real and provoked injury, which you can not parallel among all your boasted heroes of antiquity! An instance of patience which expressed infinite sweetness of disposition, and should be imitated by all the human race, especially by those who call themselves the disciples of Christ.

As our blessed Saviour's ministry was, from this time till its final period, to be confined to Judea and the countries beyond Jordan, it was necessary that some harbingers should be sent into every town and village he was to visit, to prepare his way. Accordingly, he called his seventy disciples unto

him, and, after instructing them in the duties of their mission, and the particulars they were to observe on their journey, he sent them into different parts of the country, to those particular places whither he himself intended to follow them, and preach the doctrines of the gospel to the inhabitants.

Our Lord, according to his own declaration, dispatched these disciples on the same important mission as he had done the twelve before.

The harvest was plentiful in Judea and Perea, as well as in Galilee, and the laborers also few ; and being never more to preach in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, the cities wherein he had usually resided, he reflected on the reception he himself had met with from the inhabitants of those cities. He foresaw the terrible consequences that would flow from their rejecting his doctrine, and the many kind offers he had made them. He was grieved at their obstinacy, and, in the overflowing tenderness of his soul, he lamented the hardness of their hearts. "Woe," said he, "unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." Luke, x. 13, 14, 15. To which our Saviour added, as some consolation to his disciples, "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Luke, x. 16.

Such a token of heavenly regard could not fail of comforting the seventy, and alleviating their minds, when thinking of the ill usages they expected to meet with during the course of their mission. They well knew that the preaching of Christ himself had been often despised, and often unsuccessful, with respect to many of his hearers, and, therefore, they had not very great reason to expect that they should find a more welcome reception than their Master.

The seventy disciples, having received their instructions, and the power of working miracles, from the Messiah, departed to execute their important commission in the cities of

Judea and Perea. And, after visiting the several places, publishing the glad tidings of salvation, and working many miracles in confirmation of their mission, they returned to their Master with great joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name !"

From this appeal, it seems that they knew not the extent of their delegated power, and were pleasingly surprised to find the apostate spirits trembling at their command. To which their great Master replied, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." You will be no longer astonished that the devils are subject to the power I have given you, when I tell you that their prince is not able to stand before me ; and, accordingly, when I first put on the vail of human nature, to destroy him and his works, I saw him, with the swiftness of the lightning's flash, fall from heaven : adding, in order to enlarge their joy, and prove that he had really cast Satan down from the seat of heaven, that he would increase their power. "Behold," says he, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy : and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Luke, x. 19.

Lest they should exult beyond measure in the honor thus conferred on them, which was merely temporary, our Lord adds, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you ; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke, x. 20.

Nor could the blessed Jesus reflect on the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of the divine dispensations to mankind, without feelings of extraordinary joy ; so that his beneficent heart overflowed with strains of gratitude : "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight." Luke, x. 21.

When the disciples had executed their commissions, Jesus left Samaria and retired into Judea, and in the way was met by a certain lawyer, or scribe, who, being desirous of knowing whether the doctrines preached by Jesus were the same with those before delivered by Moses, asked him, What he should

do to inherit eternal life? It is really amazing that any mortal should ask a question like this with a view to tempt, not to be instructed. This was, however, the case; but the blessed Jesus, though no stranger to the most secret thoughts of the heart, did not reply, as he had before done to the Pharisee, "Why temptest thou me, thou hypocrite?" He turned the scribe's weapons against himself; what, says he, is written in the law, of which thou professest thyself a teacher? "How readest thou?" That law will teach thee what thou must do to be saved; and happy will it be for thee, if thou compliest with its precepts. The scribe answered, it is there written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Luke, x. 27.

Our Lord then shows the strength and spirituality of the law: "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Perform these commands, and thou hast fulfilled the duties of an Israelite; for on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Where is the man that can fulfill the law? The lawyer, who, in all probability, expected no such answer, being conscious of his defects, and consequently, of the impossibility of obtaining eternal life on these conditions, was willing, as the sacred historian informs us, "to justify himself;" was willing to stifle the rising suggestions of his own conscience, and, at the same time, to make a show of his devotion; and, in order to do this, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" a question very likely to be asked by a bigoted Jew, whose narrow notions led him to despise all who were not of his own fold—all who were not the natural descendants of his father Abraham.

To remove their obstinate attachment to their own principles, open their hearts to a more generous and noble way of thinking, and show them the only foundation of true love, and the extensive relation they and all mankind stand in to each other, our Saviour delivered the following most beautiful and instructive parable:

A certain person, in his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho,

had the misfortune to fall into the hands of robbers, who, not content with taking his money, stripped him of his raiment, beat him in a deplorable manner, and left him for dead. While he continued in this miserable condition, utterly incapable of assisting himself, a certain priest happened to travel the same road, "and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side." So little compassion had these ministers of religion for a brother in the most deplorable circumstances of distress, that they continued their journey, without offering to assist so miserable an object, notwithstanding their sacred characters obliged them to perform, on every occasion, the tender offices of charity and compassion. It was a brother, a descendant of Abraham, in distress, and therefore these hypocrites could offer no reasons to palliate their inhumanity. Their stony hearts could behold the affecting object of an unfortunate Israelite, lying in the road naked and cruelly wounded, without being the least affected with his distress.

Though these teachers of religion were hypocrites, and wholly destitute of grace and charity, compassion glowed in the heart of a Samaritan, who, coming to the spot where this helpless object lay, ran to him ; and though he found him to be a person of a different nation, and one who professed a religion opposite to his own, yet the hatred which had been instilled into his mind from his earliest years, and every objection arising from the animosity subsisting between the Jews and Samaritans, were immediately silenced by the tender sensation of pity, awakened by the sight of such complicated distress ; his bowels yearned towards the miserable object ; though a Jew, he flew to him, and assisted him in the most tender manner.

It was the custom in these eastern countries for travelers to carry their provision with them ; so that this compassionate Samaritan was enabled, though in the desert, to give the wounded man a little wine to recruit his spirits. He also bound up his wounds, pouring into them wine and oil, placed him on his own beast, and walked himself on foot to support him. In this manner he conducted him to an inn, took care

of him during the night, and, in the morning, when business called him to pursue his journey, recommended him to the care of the host, left what money he could spare, and desired that nothing might be denied him ; for whatever was expended he would repay at his return.

Having finished the parable, Jesus turned himself to the lawyer, and asked him, " Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves ?" The lawyer, struck with the truth and evidence of the case, replied, without the least hesitation, " He that showed mercy unto him." Upon which Jesus replied, " Go and do thou likewise." Perform all the good offices in thy power ; extend thy kindness to every one who stands in need of thy assistance, whether he be an Israelite, an heathen, or a Samaritan. Consider every man as thy neighbor in respect to works of charity, and make no inquiry with regard to his country or religion, but with regard to his circumstances.

CHAPTER XX.

THE feast of the dedication approaching, Jesus turned his course towards Jerusalem, and in the evening came to the house of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, at Bethany. Martha was desirous of expressing her regard for the divine guest, by providing for him and his disciples the best entertainment in her power. But her sister, who was of a more contemplative disposition, sat quietly at the feet of Jesus listening with the utmost attention to his doctrine ; for the great Redeemer of mankind never omitted any opportunity of declaring the gracious offers of the Almighty, and his unspeakable love for the children of men. Martha, being greatly fatigued with the burden of the service, complained to Jesus of the little care Mary took to assist her. " Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." Luke, x. 40.

But Martha's officiousness incurred our Lord's reproof,

who commended Mary for her attentive application to his doctrine. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things : and one thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke, x. 41, 42.

When Jesus repaired to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of dedication, he was informed that the beggar he had restored to sight, had been, by the council, cast out of the synagogue. This information excited the pity of the Son of God ; and he resolved to make him full amends for the injury he had suffered. It was not long before he met the suffering person, and said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God ? He answered, and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him ? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him." John, ix. 35, etc.

We have hinted that the beggar was thoroughly convinced that the person who opened his eyes was a messenger from heaven. It is, therefore, no wonder, that as soon as he knew Jesus was the person who had performed so great a work, he readily believed him to be the Son of God.

Our Saviour having thus given the poor man proof of his Messiahship, directed his discourse to the people, and said unto them, "For judgment I am come into this world ; that they which see not may see, and that they which see might be made blind." John, ix. 39. The meaning of our Saviour, though he alluded to the blind man, was spiritual. He did not intend to represent the design of his coming, but the effect it would have on the minds of men, as it would demonstrate what character and disposition every person possessed. The humble, the docile, and the honest, though they were immersed in the night of darkness, with regard to religion and the knowledge of Scripture, should be enlightened by his coming, as the blind man had enjoyed the invaluable gift of sight from his hands ; but those who were wise, learned and enlightened, in their own opinion, should appear in their true character, absolutely ignorant, foolish, and blind.

The Pharisees, who happened to be present when he spake

these words to the people, imagined that he intended to throw a reflection on their sect, which the common people, from their skill in the law, held in great veneration. Accordingly, they asked him, with disdain, "Are we blind also?" Dost thou place us, who are teachers, and have taken such pains to acquire the knowledge of the Scriptures, on a level with the vulgar? To which Jesus answered, "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." If ye had not enjoyed the faculties and opportunities of discerning the proofs of my mission, you might have been considered as blind; but as ye are superior to the vulgar in point of learning, and, at the same time, your heart averse from acknowledging the truth, your enlightened understanding will only aggravate your guilt.

Having condemned the obstinacy and prejudices of the sect, in rejecting the most evident tokens of the divinity of his mission, he continued the reproof, by describing the character of a true and false teacher. It was our Lord's custom, always to allude to objects before him; and being now in the outer court of the temple, near the sheep, which were there exposed to sale for sacrifice, he compared the teachers among the Jews to shepherds, and the people to sheep—a metaphor often used by the old prophets. He considered two kinds of bad shepherds, or teachers: the one, who instead of entering in by the door to lead the flocks to the richest pastures, entered some other way, with an intention only to kill, to steal, and to destroy; the other, who, though they entered by the door to feed their flocks, with the dispositions of hirelings, yet when the wolf appeared, they deserted the sheep, having no love for any but themselves. By the former he plainly alluded to the Pharisees, who had cast the man born blind out of the synagogue, for no other reason than because he would not act contrary to the dictates of his conscience, and agree with them in declaring Jesus to be an imposter. But though they had cast him out of their church, Jesus received him into his, which is the true church, the spiritual inclosure, where the sheep go in and out, and find pasture.

To illustrate the allusion, it should be observed, that the sheep which were brought to be sold, were inclosed in little

fold, within the outer court of the temple, so that the shepherd himself could not enter, till the porter had opened the door. And, from this circumstance, the following parabolical discourse may be easily understood. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." John, x. 1. Believe me, that whosoever, in any age of the church, assumed the office of teacher, without a commission from me, was a thief and a robber; and, in the present age, he is no better who assumes that office without my commission, and particularly without believing on me. "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice." John, x. 2, 3, 4.

The doctrine here inculcated is, that good men are obedient to the instructions of true and faithful teachers, who, in every case, show them their duty with the greatest plainness, not concealing it because it may be disagreeable with their inclinations.

The feast of the dedication being now over, Jesus departed from Jerusalem, and retired into the parts of Perea beyond Jordan. Here his ministry was attended with great success; for the inhabitants of the country, remembering what had been told them by John the Baptist concerning Jesus, and being sensible that the doctrine and miracles of our blessed Saviour were fully equal to what the Baptist had foretold, firmly believed him to be the Messiah.

According to this supposition, which seems the most agreeable to reason, the inhabitants of these countries enjoyed the doctrines and miracles of the Son of God for a considerable time. But, however this may be, the evangelist tells us, that while he was executing his ministry beyond Jordan, he happened to pray publicly, with such fervency, that one of his disciples, who was exceedingly affected both with the matter and manner of his address, begged he would teach them to pray. "And it came to pass, that as he was praying in a

certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name : Thy kingdom come : Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us this day our daily bread : and forgive us our sins ; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us : And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil." Luke, xi. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Soon after, our blessed Saviour cast out a devil, when some who were present ascribed the miracle to Beelzebub. "And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake ; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils." Luke, xi. 14, 15. However strange this argument may seem, and however weak and absurd it must appear to impartial judges, yet it had a considerable effect on illiterate persons, especially on those whose prejudices and interest it favored. The Pharisees pretended that as Jesus had all along been at great pains to oppose the traditions which most of the teachers of that age considered as the essentials of religion, and the principal branches of piety, they concluded that he must be a very wicked person.

They also supposed that a false prophet had the power of working signs and wonders ; and thence concluded that our Saviour performed all his miracles by the assistance of evil spirits, with an intention to turn the people from the worship of the true God.

Another pretended reason for ascribing his miracles to evil spirits was, that the demons themselves, when they departed out of the persons possessed, honored him with the title of Messiah. Their arguments, though evidently founded on falsehood, contributed largely to the infidelity of the Jews ; and, however we may be surprised that such weak reasons should have any effect, considering what multitudes were witnesses of the many miracles the blessed Jesus performed on the sick of all sorts, on the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the maimed, the lame, on paralytics, lunatics, demoniacs, and other miserable objects ; nay, on the dead, whom he raised

again to life ; on the winds and the seas ; in a word, on every part of nature ; yet experience hath abundantly convinced us, that notwithstanding all these evidences, their own superstitious opinions fixed that headstrong people in their infidelity.

CHAPTER XXI.

HAVING undertaken to write the history of the life of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we can not omit a distinct account of the different sects of the Jews, a people with whom he was intimately concerned, both as an elucidation of many circumstances, as well as a verification of many things foretold concerning the Messiah.

Josephus reckons four principal sects among the Jews ; namely, the Pharisees, the Sadducees (called also Herodians), the Essenes, and the Galileans. The evangelists mention only two, the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The rise of the Pharisees is unknown. They claim, indeed, the celebrated Hillel for their founder, as he is, by some, supposed to have lived during the pontificate of Jonathan, about a hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ ; but others, with more reason, suppose that he was cotemporary with the famous Someas, who lived about the time of Herod, long before whom the sect of the Pharisees was in high repute. It is, therefore, probable that they claim Hillel rather as an ornament than as the author of their sect.

One of the most famous tenets of the Pharisees, was that of an oral tradition handed down from Moses, and to which they attributed the same divine authority as to the sacred books. This being strenuously opposed by the Sadducees and Samaritans, rendered these equally detested by them. But none more incurred their hatred than the blessed Jesus, who embraced every occasion for reproving them for the unjustifiable preference they gave this pretended tradition to the written word of God, and for condemning those as apostates, worthy

of death, who did not pay the same, or even a greater regard, to the former than to the latter.

Another tenet they embraced, in opposition to the Sadducees, was that of the existence of angels, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead, and future rewards. But, with regard to the latter, they excluded all who were notoriously wicked from having any share in the happiness of eternity : supposing, that as soon as death had put a period to their lives, their souls were conveyed into everlasting punishment.

A third tenet was, that all things were subject to fate ; or, as some expressed it, to the heavens. It is not easy to conceive what they meant by this : Josephus, indeed, will have it, that they designed to reconcile the fatality or predestination of the Essenes with the free-will of the Sadducees.

If so, this is not the only absurdity, or even contradiction, which they held ; but a certain learned prelate seems to have proved that they attribute all to fate, or to that chain of causes to which the Creator had subjected all things from the beginning ; among which the influence of the heavenly bodies were considered the principal. This seems to be hinted at by St. James, in the beginning of the epistle to the new converts, where he explodes that Pharisaical leaven by the most beautiful exposition of the immutability of God, the giver of all good, to the mutability of the planets, which, according to that notion, must necessarily vary their aspects from a malign to a benevolent one, and the contrary, even by their natural motions and change of position. This tenet of the Pharisees was, therefore, a source of dislike to the doctrines delivered by the blessed Jesus, as these affirm that men are the authors of their own unbelief, disobedience, and obstinacy ; and, consequently answerable for that, and all the train of evils these vices draw after them.

But the most distinguished character of the Pharisees, and that which rendered them more obnoxious to the just censures of our blessed Saviour was, their supererogatory attachment to the ceremonial law, their frequent washings, fastings, and prayings, their giving alms publicly, seeking proselytes, scrupulous tithings, affected gravity of dress, gesture, and

mortified looks : their building the tombs of the prophets, to tell the world that they were more righteous than their ancestors, who murdered them, though they were themselves plotting the death of one greater than all the prophets ; their over-scrupulous observance of the Sabbath, to the exclusion of the works of the greatest charity, and many others of the like nature ; while they were wholly negligent of the moral and eternal law of mercy and justice, of charity and humility, and the like indispensable virtues. The very best of them contented themselves with abstaining from the actual committing any enormous act, while they indulged themselves in the most wicked thoughts and desires. Nay, some, more hardened in their vices, made no scruple, not only of coveting, but destroying, poor widows' houses, of committing the vilest oppressions, injustice, and cruelties, and of encouraging these enormities in their followers, under the specious cloak of religion and sanctity. Well, therefore, might the great Redeemer of mankind compare them to whited sepulchres, beautiful indeed without, but within full of rottenness and corruption.

The last erroneous opinion we shall mention of the Pharisees, common, indeed, to all the other sects, but more exactly conformable to their haughty, rapacious, and cruel temper, was, their expectation of a powerful, a conquering Messiah, who was to bring the whole world under the Jewish yoke ; so that there was scarce an inhabitant of Jerusalem, however mean, that did not expect to be made a governor of some opulent province under that wonderful prince. How unlikely was it, then, that the preaching of the meek, the humble Jesus, whose doctrine breathed nothing but humility, peace, sincerity, and contempt of the world, and universal love and beneficence, should ever be relished by that proud, that covetous, that hypocritical sect, or even by the rest of the people, while these, their teachers, so strenuously opposed it.

The sect of the Sadducees is said to have been founded by one Saddoc, a disciple of Antigonus, of Socho. Their chief tenet was, that our serving God ought to be free either from slavish fear of punishment, or from selfish hope of reward ; that it should be disinterested, and flow only from the pure

love and fear of the Supreme Being. They added, that God was the only immaterial being ; in consequence of which they denied the existence of angels, or any spiritual substances, except the Almighty himself. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Sadducees should take every opportunity of opposing and ridiculing the doctrine of the resurrection.

Another of their tenets, equally opposite to the doctrine of the Pharisees and to the doctrine of Christ was, that man was constituted absolute master of all his actions, and stood in no need of any assistance to choose or act ; for this reason, they were always very severe in their sentences, when they sat as judges. They rejected all the pretended oral traditions of the Pharisees, admitting only the texts of the sacred books, and preferring those of Moses to all the rest of the inspired writings.

They are charged with some other erroneous tenets, by Josephus and the Talmudists ; but those already mentioned are abundantly sufficient for the purpose. The notions of a future life, universal judgment, eternal rewards and punishments, to men whom a contrary doctrine had long soothed into luxury, and an overgrown fondness for temporal happiness, which they considered as the only reward for their obedience, must of necessity appear strange and frightful ; and, as such, could not fail to meet with the strongest opposition from them ; especially, if we add, what Josephus observes, that they were, in general, men of the greatest quality and opulence, and, consequently, too apt to prefer the pleasures and grandeur of this life to those of another.

The sect of the Galilean (or Gaulonites), so called from Judas, the Galilean or Gaulonite, appeared soon after the banishment of Archelaus, when his territories were made a Roman province, and the government given to Coponius. For the Jews, considering this as an open attempt to reduce them to slavery, Judas took advantage of their discontent ; and, to ripen them for an insurrection, Augustus furnished them with a plausible pretense, by issuing, about this time, an edict for surveying the whole province of Syria, and laying on it a proportional tax. Judas, therefore, who was a man of uncommon ambition, took occasion from this incident to

display all his eloquence, in order to convince the Jews that such a submission was nothing less than base idolatry, and placing men on a level with the God of Jacob, who was the only Lord and Sovereign that could challenge their obedience and subjection. The party which he drew after him became in a short time so considerable that they threw every thing into confusion, laid the foundation for those frightful consequences that ensued, and which did not end but with the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Essenes, though not mentioned by the evangelists, made a very considerable sect among the Jews, and are highly celebrated by Josephus, Philo, Pliny and several Christian writers, both ancient and modern. It is impossible to trace their origin, or even the etymology of their name. This, however, is certain, that they were settled in Judea in the time of Jonathan, the brother and successor of Judas Maccabeus, about a hundred and fifty years before Christ.

The Essenes distinguished themselves, by their rules and manner of life, into laborious and contemplative. The former divided their time between prayer and labor; such as the exercise of some handicraft, or the cultivation of some particular spot of ground, where they planted and sowed such roots, corn, etc., as served for their food; and the latter, between prayer, contemplation and study. In this last they confined themselves to the sacred books and morality, without troubling themselves with any branch of philosophy.

But the contemplative and laborious had their synagogues, for reading and expounding the sacred books. The latter was always performed by the elders, who were seated at the upper end of the synagogue, according to their seniority; while the younger, who were permitted to read the lessons, were placed at the lower. Their expositions were generally of the allegorical kind, in which they seem to have excelled all their Jewish brethren. But they paid the greatest regard to the five books of Moses, and considered that lawgiver as the head of all the inspired penmen; they even condemned to immediate death whoever spoke disrespectfully either of him or his writings. Upon this account they studied, read and expounded him more than all the rest, and seem to have drawn

all their religion chiefly from the Pentateuch. The doctrines and expositions of the elders were received with implicit faith, and in their practice they conformed with an entire submission to all their sect.

With respect to their faith, they believed in the existence of angels, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, like the Pharisees ; but seem to have had no notion of the resurrection. They considered the souls of men as composed of a most subtle ether, which, immediately after their separation from the body, or from the cage or prison, as they called it, were adjudged to a place of endless happiness or misery : that the good took their flight over the ocean, to some warm or delightful regions prepared for them ; while the wicked were conveyed to some cold and intemperate climates, where they were left to groan under an inexpressible weight of misery. They were likewise entirely opposed to the Sadducean doctrine of free-will, attributing all to an eternal fatality, or chain of causes. They were averse to all kinds of oaths, affirming that a man's life ought to be such that he may be credited without them. The contemplative sort placed the excellency of their meditative life in raising their minds above the earth, and fixing their thoughts on heaven ; when they had attained this degree of excellency, they acquired the character of prophets.

In their practice, they excelled all the other sects in austerity. If we may credit Philo, it was a fundamental maxim with them, upon their entrance into the contemplative life, to renounce the world, and to divide among their friends and relations their properties and estates. They never ate till after sunset, and the best of their food was coarse bread, a little salt, and a few stomach herbs. Their clothing was made of coarse wool, plain, but white ; they condemned all sorts of unctions and perfumes, as luxurious and effeminate. Their beds were hard, and their sleeps short. Their heads, or superiors, were generally chosen according to seniority, unless there started up among the brotherhood some more conspicuous for learning, piety, or prophetic spirit. Some of them, indeed, were so contemplative that they never stirred out of their cell, or even looked out of their window, during the

whole week, spending their time in reading the sacred books, and writing comments upon them. On the Sabbath day they repaired to their synagogues early in the morning, and continued there the whole day in prayer, singing psalms, or expounding the sacred books.

Having endeavored to explain the origin and tenets of the several sects among the Jews, we now return to the history of our blessed Saviour, whom we left preaching in the country beyond Jordan, where he was surrounded by an innumerable multitude of people.

In the audience of this vast assembly, he gave his disciples, in general, a charge to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, namely, hypocrisy ; because all their actions would be brought to light, either in this world or in that which is to come ; and therefore exhorted them to be very careful never to commit any thing which could not bear the light, but to let the whole of their behaviour be honest, just, and good. “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed ; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light ; and that which ye have spoken in the ear, in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.” Luke, xii. 1, 2, 3.

This argument against hypocrisy is improved as a reason for their acquiring another quality, which would much better serve all the ends they could propose ; namely, an undaunted resolution in the performance of their duty, founded on a firm confidence in God, who would bring to light the most secret word and thought, publicly condemn the wicked, and justify his faithful servants and children.

CHAPTER XXII.

OUR Saviour was invited by one of the Pharisees to his house. Though he knew that this invitation arose not from a generous motive, yet, as he never shunned any opportunity of doing good, even to his most implacable enemies, he accepted it. At his entering the Pharisee's house, they placed before him a man that had a dropsy, doubtless with an intention to accuse him for healing on the Sabbath day ; being persuaded that he would work a miracle in favor of so melancholy an object. Jesus, who knew the secret thoughts of their hearts, asked the lawyers and Pharisees whether it was "lawful to heal on the Sabbath day ?" But they refusing to give any answer to the question, Jesus laid his hand on the diseased person, and immediately his complexion returned, his body was reduced to its ordinary dimensions, and his former health and strength renewed in an instant. So surprising a miracle might surely have convinced these Pharisees, that the author must have been endued with power from on high ; but, instead of being persuaded that he was a person sent from God, and labored only for the benefit of the children of men, they were contriving how they might turn this miracle to his disadvantage. Our Lord, however, soon disconcerted their projects, by proving that, according to their own avowed practice, he had done nothing but what was truly lawful. "Which of you," said he, "shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and shall not straightway pull it out on the Sabbath day ?" If a calamity happens to one of your beasts, you make no scruple of assisting it on the Sabbath, though the action may be attended with considerable labor ; and surely I may relieve a descendant of Abraham, when nothing more is requisite than touching him with my hand. This argument was conclusive, and so plain that the grossest stupidity must feel its force, and the most virulent malice could not contradict it.

As the entertainment approached, our blessed Saviour had an opportunity of observing the pride of the Pharisees, and remarking what an anxiety each of them expressed to obtain

the most honorable place at the table. Nor did he let their ridiculous behaviour pass without a proper animadversion ; in which he observed, that pride generally exposed a person to many affronts, and that humility is the surest method of gaining respect. "When thou art bidden," said he, "of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room ; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him ; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place ; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden go and sit down in the lowest room ; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher ; then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke, xiv. 8, etc.

Having thus addressed the guests in general, he turned to the master of the house, and said unto him, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbors ; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind." Luke, xiv. 12, 13. Be very careful not to limit thy hospitality to the rich, but let the poor partake of thy bounty. "And thou shalt be blessed ; for they can not recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Luke, xiv. 14.

One of the Pharisees, enraptured with the delightful prospect of the happiness good men enjoyed in the heavenly Canaan, cried out, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God !" Blessed is he, who, being admitted into the happy regions of Paradise, shall enjoy the conversation of the inhabitants of those heavenly countries ; as those spiritual repasts must regale and invigorate his mind beyond expression. In answer to which our blessed Saviour delivered the parable of the marriage-supper, representing, by the invitation of the guests, the doctrine of the gospel, and the success those beneficent invitations to the great feast of heaven should meet with among the Jews ; foretelling, that though it was attended with every inviting circumstance, they would dis-

dainfully reject it, and prefer the pleasures of a temporal existence to those of an eternal state ; while the Gentiles, with the greatest cheerfulness, would embrace the beneficent offer, and thereby be prepared to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the happy mansions of the kingdom of heaven. But, as the parable was afterwards spoken by our blessed Saviour in the temple, we shall defer our observations on it, till we come to the history where it was again delivered.

When Jesus departed from the Pharisee's house, great multitudes of people thronged round him to hear his doctrine ; but mistook the true intention of it, expecting he was going to establish the Messiah's throne in Jerusalem, and render all the nations of the world tributary to his power. The benevolent Jesus therefore took this opportunity to undeceive them, and to declare in the plainest terms, that his kingdom was not of this world ; and, consequently, that those who expected, by following him, to obtain temporal advantages, would find themselves wretchedly mistaken, as, on the contrary, his disciples must expect to be persecuted from city to city, and hated of all men for his name's sake ; though it was requisite for those who would be his true followers, to prefer his service to the richest grandeur and pleasure of the world, and to show, by their conduct, that they had much less respect and value for the dearest objects of their affection than for him. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, can not be my disciple." Luke, xiv. 26, 27.

And in order to induce them to weigh this doctrine attentively in their minds, he elucidated it with two opposite cases—that of an unthinking builder, and of a rash warrior. The former was obliged to leave the structure unfinished, because he had foolishly begun the building before he had computed the cost ; and the latter, reduced to the unpleasant dilemma of being ingloriously defeated, or meanly suing for peace previous to the battle, having rashly declared war before he had considered the strength of his own and his enemy's arms. "So likewise, whosoever he be of you," added the blessed

Jesus, "that forsaketh not all that he hath, he can not be my disciple." Luke, xiv. 33.

The publicans and sinners, roused by the alarming doctrine of our Lord, listened to it attentively. This opportunity was readily embraced by the great Redeemer of mankind, who not only condescended to preach to them the happy tidings of eternal life, but even accompanied them to their own houses ; that, if possible, the seeds of the gospel might take root in their hearts. But this condescension of the meek and humble Jesus was considered, by the haughty Pharisees, as an action too mean for the character of a prophet. They murmured, and were highly displeased at a condescension which ought to have given them the greatest joy. But Jesus soon showed them their mistake, by repeating to them the parables of the lost sheep and the piece of money ; intimating thereby, the great care all prophets and pastors ought to take of those committed to their care, and the obligation they lay under of searching diligently for every wandering sinner, whose conversion is a graceful offering to the Almighty. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke, xv. 10.

To illustrate his doctrine still farther, and show to the greatest sinner the willingness of God to receive him into his grace and favor, if convinced of his unworthy and lost condition in himself, and of imploring forgiveness through the merits of Jesus Christ, and the renewal of his heart by the efficacious influences of his Spirit, he delivered the expressive parable of the prodigal son. Luke, xv.

There are three expositions given of this instructive representation, each of which seems to have some place in the original design ; for it should be observed, and carefully remembered, that the parables and doctrines of our Saviour are by no means to be confined absolutely to one single point of view, since they frequently have relation to different objects, and consequently prove the riches and depth of the manifold wisdom of God.

In this parable, for instance, the great and principal doctrine intended to be particularly inculcated, is, that all sinners, upon their repentance and faith, are gladly received into

favor ; or that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. There are, however, two other expositions of this parable ; the first is that of the greatest part of the ancients, who expound it of Adam. He was made of the image of God, and endowed with many other excellent gifts, which he might have used happily, had he been content to stay in his Father's house ; but, like this younger brother, who foolishly desired his portion of goods to himself, that he might be his own master, and under no confinement or restriction, he was unwilling to remain under the obedience of the divine precepts, he was desirous of having a free use of things in Paradise, and by the devil's instigation effected a wretched independency, which caused him to break the divine command, and eat of the forbidden tree, to obtain the knowledge of good and evil. Thus he lost for himself, and his posterity, the substance put at first into his possession ; but his heavenly Father, on his and his posterity's return, hath provided such grace and compassion for them, that they may be reinstated in their former place and favor. And the same grace not being granted to the higher order of intellectual beings, the fallen spirits, is the cause of their murmuring against God and men, represented by the answer of the elder brother in this parable.

Others, *secondly*, with a much greater show of probability, expound this parable of the two people, the Jews and Gentiles, who have both one Father, even God ; and while they both continued in their Father's house, the true church, they wanted for nothing ; there was plenty of food for the soul, there was substance enough for them both. But the latter, represented by the younger brother, possessed of his share of knowledge, went into a strange country, left God, and spent his substance, the evidence and knowledge of the Almighty, fell into idolatry and wasted all he had in riotous living—all his knowledge of God, in the loose and absurd ceremonies of idolatry. Then, behold a mighty famine arose in that land ; the worship of the true God was banished from the country. In this dreadful dearth and hunger, he joined himself to the devil, and worked all uncleanness and greediness. But finding nothing to supply his spiritual hunger,

this prodigal, long estranged from his Father, reflecting on his spiritual famine, and his own severe wants, humbly confessed his faults, returned to his offended Father, was readmitted into favor and blest with the privileges of the gospel. But the elder brother, the Jewish church, daily employed in the field of legal ceremonies, and who had long groaned under the yoke of the law, seeing the Gentiles received into the covenant of the gospel, receive the remission of sins, and the hopes of everlasting life, murmured against the benevolent acts of the Almighty. God, however, out of his great compassion, pleaded pathetically the cause of the elder brother, offered him all things, upon supposition of his continuing in his obedience, and declared that he had delivered the nations from the heavy yoke of the ceremonial law.

Thus the parable has a very clear and elegant exposition ; the murmuring of the elder brother is explained to us without the least difficulty ; and as the offense of receiving the Gentiles to pardon and peace, through Jesus Christ, was so great a stumbling block to the Jews, it is natural to imagine that our Saviour intended to obviate and remove it by this excellent parable.

It is, however, evident, both from the context and the occasion of delivering it, that the *third* interpretation is the first in design and importance. The publicans and sinners drew near to hear Jesus. This gave occasion to a murmuring among the Pharisees ; and upon their murmuring, our Saviour delivered this and two other parables, to show, that if they would resemble God, and the celestial host, they should, instead of murmuring, rejoice at seeing sinners willing to embrace the doctrines of the gospel, because there is more joy, in the presence of God and his angels, "over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

The obstinacy and malicious temper of the Pharisees, who opposed every good doctrine, made a deep impression on the mind of the blessed Jesus : he did not, therefore, content himself barely with justifying his receiving of sinners, in order to their being justified through him, but, in the presence of the scribes and Pharisees, turned himself to his disciples, and de-

livered the parable of the artful steward, as an instance of the improvements made by the children of this world, in embracing every opportunity and advantage for improving their interests. "There was," said he, "a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." Luke, xvi. 1, 2.

This reprimand of his Lord, and the inward conviction of his own conscience, that the accusation was just, induced him to reflect on his own ill management of his lord's affairs, and in what manner he should support himself when he should be discharged from his service. "What shall I do?" said he, "for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? I can not dig; to beg I am ashamed." Luke, xvi. 3.

In this manner he deliberated with himself, and at last resolved on the following expedient, in order to make himself friends who would succor him in his distress: "I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, an hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore." Luke, xvi. 4, etc.

To illustrate this parable, we beg leave to observe that the riches and the trade of the Jews, originally, consisted principally in the products of the earth; they were, if we may be allowed the expression, a nation of farmers and shepherds; so that their wealth chiefly arose from the produce of their flocks and herds, and the fruits of the earth, their corn, their wine, and their oil.

Thus, the steward, to secure the friendship of his lord's tenants, bound them to him under a lasting obligation; and his master, when he heard of the proceedings of the steward, commended him, not because he acted honestly, but because

he had acted wisely : he commended the art and address he had shown, in producing a future subsistence ; he commended the prudence and ingenuity he had used with regard to his own interest, and to deliver him from future poverty and distress. "For the children of this world," added the blessed Jesus, "are in their generation wiser than the children of light." They are more prudent and careful, more anxious and circumspect, to secure their possessions in this world, than the children of light are to secure in the next an eternal inheritance. "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Luke, xvi. 9.

This advice of our Saviour is worthy our most serious attention ; the best use we can make of our riches being to employ them in promoting the salvation of others. For, if we use our abilities and interests in turning sinners from the evil of their ways ; if we spend our wealth in this excellent service, from pure motives, and to the glory of God, we shall have the good-will of all the heavenly beings, who will greatly rejoice at the conversion of sinners, and, with open arms, receive us into the mansions of felicity.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOON after our blessed Saviour had finished these discourses, one of his friends named Lazarus fell sick at Bethany, a village about two miles from the countries beyond Jordan, where Jesus was now preaching the gospel. The sisters of Lazarus, finding his sickness was of a dangerous kind, thought proper to send an account of it to Jesus ; being firmly persuaded that he who had cured so many strangers, would readily come and give health to one whom he loved in so tender a manner. "Lord," said they, "behold he whom thou lovest is sick : " they did not add, Come down and heal him, make haste and save him from the grave ; it was sufficient for them

to relate their necessities to their Lord, who was both able and willing to help them from their distress.

“When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death.” This declaration of the benevolent Jesus being carried to the sisters of Lazarus, must have strangely surprised them, and exercised both theirs and his disciples’ faith ; since it is probable that before the messenger arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had expired. Soon after, Jesus positively assured his disciples that “Lazarus was dead.”

The evangelist, in the beginning of this account, tells us, that Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus, and also, that after he had received the message, he abode two days in the same place where he was. His design in this might be to intimate, that his lingering so long after the message came, did not proceed from want of concern for his friends, but happened according to the counsel of his own wisdom. For the length of time which Lazarus lay in the grave put his death beyond all possibility of doubt, removed every suspicion of fraud, and consequently afforded Jesus a fit opportunity of displaying the love he bore to Lazarus, as well as his undoubted resurrection from the dead. His sisters, indeed, were, by this means, kept awhile in painful anxiety on account of their brother’s life, and at last pierced by the sorrow of seeing him die ; yet they must surely think themselves abundantly recompensed by the evidence, according to the gospel, from this astonishing miracle, as well as by the inexpressible surprise or joy they felt, when they again received their brother from the dead.

Jesus, having declared his resolution of returning into Judea, Thomas, conceiving nothing less than destruction from such a journey, yet unwilling to forsake his Master, said, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” Let us not forsake our Master in this dangerous journey, but accompany him into Judea, that if the Jews, whose inveteracy we are well acquainted with, should take away his life, we may also expire with him.

The journey to Judea being thus resolved on, Jesus departed with his disciples, and, in his way to Bethany, passed through Samaria and Galilee. “And as he entered into a

certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off : and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go, show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed." Luke, xvii. 12.

Among these miserable objects, one of them was a native of the country, who, perceiving that his cure was completed, came back, praising God for the great mercy he had received. He had before kept at a distance from our Saviour, but being now sensible that he was entirely clean, he approached his benefactor, that all might have an opportunity of beholding the miracle, and fell on his face at his feet, thanking him, in the most humble manner, for his condescension in healing him of so terrible a disease. Jesus, in order to intimate that those who were enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, ought, at least, to have shown as great sense of piety and gratitude as this Samaritan, asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Luke, xvii. 17, 18.

Jesus and his disciples now continued their journey towards Bethany, where he was informed, by some of the inhabitants of that village, that Lazarus was not only dead, as he had foretold, but had now lain in the grave four days. The afflicted sisters were overwhelmed with sorrow ; so that many of the Jews from Jerusalem came to comfort them concerning their brother.

It seems the news of our Lord's coming had reached Bethany before he arrived at the village ; for Martha, the sister of Lazarus, being informed of his approach, went out and met him ; but Mary, who was of a more melancholy and contemplative disposition, sat still in the house. No sooner was she come into the presence of Jesus, than in an excess of grief, she poured forth her complaint : Lord, said she, if thou hadst complied with the message we sent thee, I well know that thy interest with Heaven had prevailed ; my brother had been cured of his disease, and preserved from the chambers of the grave.

Martha, doubtless, entertained a high opinion of our Saviour's power : she believed that death did not dare to approach his presence ; and, consequently, if Jesus had arrived at Bethany before her brother's dissolution, he had not fallen a victim to the king of terrors. But she imagined it was not in his power to heal the sick at a distance ; though, at the same time, she seemed to have some dark and imperfect hopes that our blessed Saviour would still do something for her. "But I know," said she, "that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." She thought that Jesus could obtain whatsoever he desired by prayer ; and therefore did not found hopes on his power, but on the power of God, through his intercession. She doubtless knew that the great Redeemer of mankind had raised the daughter of Jairus, and the widow's son at Nain, from the dead, but seems to have considered her brother's resurrection as much more difficult, probably because he had been longer dead.

But Jesus, who was willing to encourage this imperfect faith of Martha, answered, "Thy brother shall rise again." As these words were delivered in an indefinite sense, with regard to time, Martha understood them only as an argument of consolation drawn from the general resurrection, and accordingly answered, "I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection at the last day." She was firmly persuaded of that important article of the Christian faith, the "resurrection from the dead ;" at which important hour she believed her brother would rise from the dust. And here she seems to have terminated all her hopes, not thinking that the Son of God would call her brother from the sleep of death. Jesus, therefore, to instruct her in the great truth, replied, "I am the resurrection and the life." I am the author of the resurrection, the fountain and giver of that life they shall then receive ; and therefore can, with the same ease, raise the dead now, as at the last day. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this ?" To which Martha answered, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." I believe that thou art the true Messiah, so long

promised by the prophets, and therefore believe that thou art capable of performing every instance of power that thou art pleased to claim.

Martha now left Jesus, and called her sister, according to his order. Mary no sooner heard that Jesus was come, than she immediately left her Jewish comforters, who increased the weight of her grief, and flew to her Saviour. The Jews, who suspected she was going to weep over the grave of her brother, followed her to that great Prophet who was going to remove all her sorrows. Thus the Jews, who came from Jerusalem to comfort the two mournful sisters, were brought to the grave of Lazarus, and made witnesses of his resurrection.

As soon as Mary approached the great Redeemer of mankind, she fell prostrate at his feet, and, in a flood of tears, poured out her complaint: "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." No wonder the compassionate Jesus was moved at so affecting a scene: on this side stood Martha, pouring forth a flood of tears; at his feet lay the affectionate Mary, weeping and lamenting her dear departed brother; while the Jews, who came to comfort the afflicted sisters, unable to confine their grief, joined the common mourning, and mixed their friendly tears in witness of their love for the departed Lazarus, and in testimony to the justice of the sisters' grief for the loss of so amiable, so deserving a brother. Jesus could not behold the affliction of these two sisters, and their friends, without having a share in it himself; his heart was melted at the mournful scene; "he groaned in spirit, and was troubled."

To remove the doubts and fears of these pious women, he asked them where they had buried Lazarus? not that he was ignorant where the body of the deceased was laid; he who knew that he was dead, when so far distant from him, and could raise him up by a single word, must have known where his remains were deposited: to which they answered, "Lord, come and see." The Son of God, to prove that he was not only so, but a most compassionate man, and to show us that the tender affections of the human heart, when kept in due bounds, and that friendly sorrow, when not immoderate, and directed to proper ends, are consistent with the highest sanc-

tity of the soul, joined in the general mourning. He wept, even at the time he was going to give the most ample proof of his divinity.

By his weeping, the Jews were convinced that he loved Lazarus exceedingly ; but some of them interpreted this circumstance to his disadvantage ; or, according to their mean way of judging, they fancied he had suffered him to fall by the stroke of death, for no other reason in the world, but for want of power and affection to rescue him. And thinking the miracle said to have been wrought on the blind man, at the feast of the tabernacles, at least as difficult as the curing an acute distemper, they rather called the former in question, because the latter had been neglected. "Could not this man," said they, "which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

Our Lord, regardless of their questions, but grieving for the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their infidelity, groaned within himself, as he walked towards the sepulchre of the dead. At his coming to the grave, he said, "Take ye away the stone." To which Martha answered, "Lord, by this time he stinketh : for he hath been dead four days." She meant to intimate that her brother's resurrection was not now to be expected ; but Jesus gave her a solemn reproof, to teach her that there was nothing impossible with God, and that the power of the Almighty is not to be circumscribed within the narrow bounds of human reason. "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" *i. e.*, Have but faith, and I will display before thee the power of Omnipotence.

The objections of Martha being thus obviated, she, with the rest, waited the great event in silence ; and, in pursuance with the command of the Son of God, took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Jesus had, on many occasions, publicly appealed to his own miracles, as the proofs of his mission, though he did not generally make a formal address to his Father before he worked those miracles. But being now to raise Lazarus from the dead, he prayed for his resurrection, to convince the spectators that it could not be effected without an immediate interposition of the divine

power. "Father," said he, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always : but because of the people that stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." John, xi. 41, 42. I entertain no doubt of thy empowering me to do this miracle, and therefore did not pray for my own sake : I know that thou hearest me always. I prayed for the sake of the people, to convince them that thou lovest me, and art continually with me.

After returning thanks to his Father for this opportunity of displaying his glory, "he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth !" This loud and efficacious call of the Son of God awakened the dead ; the breathless clay was instantly reanimated ; and he who had lain four days in the tomb obeyed immediately the powerful sound. "And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes ; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." John, xi. 44. It would have been the least part of the miracle, had Jesus, by his powerful word, unloosed the napkin wherewith Lazarus was bound ; but he brought him out in the same manner as he was lying, and ordered the spectators to loose him, that they might be the better convinced of the miracle ; for, in taking off the grave clothes, they had the fullest evidence both of his death and resurrection. For, on the one hand, the manner in which he was swathed must soon have killed him, if he had been alive when buried ; which consequently demonstrated, beyond all exception, that Lazarus had been dead several days before Jesus called him again to life ; besides, in stripping him, the linen probably offered, both to their eye and smell, abundant proofs of his putrefaction ; and by that means convinced them that he had not been in a delirium, but was really dead. On the other hand, by his lively countenance appearing, when the napkin was removed, his fresh color, and his active vigor, those who came near, and handled him, must be convinced that he was in perfect health, and had an opportunity of proving the truth of the miracle by the closest examination. There is something exceedingly beautiful in our Lord's behaviour on this occasion : he did not utter one

upbraiding word, either to the doubting sisters or the malicious Jews, nor did he let fall one word of triumph or exultation ; “ Loose him, and let him go,” were the only words we have recorded. He was in this, as on all other occasions, consistent with himself, a pattern of perfect humility and modesty.

Such was the astonishing work wrought by the Son of God at Bethany ; and, in the resurrection of Lazarus, thus corrupted, and thus raised by the powerful call of Jesus, we have a striking emblem and a glorious earnest of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave at the last, when the same powerful mandate, which spoke Lazarus again into being, shall collect the scattered particles of our bodies, and raise them to immortality.

Such an extraordinary power displayed before the face of the multitude, and near to Jerusalem, even overcame the prejudices of some of the most obstinate among them. Many believed that Jesus could be no other than the great Messiah so long promised ; though others, who still expected a temporal prince, and therefore unwilling to acknowledge him for their Saviour, were filled with indignation, particularly the chief priests and elders. But this miracle, as well as all the rest he had wrought in confirmation of his mission, was too evident to be denied ; and, therefore, they pretended that his whole intention was to establish a new religion, which would both endanger their church and nation. “ Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we ? for this man doth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him ; and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.” John, xi. 47, 48.

The common people, astonished at his miracles, will, if we do not take care to prevent it, certainly set him up for the Messiah ; and the Romans, under the pretense of a rebellion, will deprive us both of our liberty and religion. Accordingly, they came to a resolution to put him to death. This resolution was not, however, unanimous ; for Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and other disciples of our Saviour, then members of the council, urged the injustice of what they proposed to do, from the consideration of his miracles and innocence. But Caiaphas, the high priest, from a principle of human

policy, told them, that the nature of government often required certain acts of injustice, in order to procure the safety of the state. "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." John, xi. 49, 50.

The council having thus determined to put Jesus to death, deliberated, for the future, only upon the best method of effecting it ; and, in all probability, agreed to issue a proclamation, promising a reward to any person who would deliver him into their hands. For this reason, our blessed Saviour did not now go up to Jerusalem, though he was within two miles of it ; but went to Ephraim, a city on the borders of the wilderness, where he abode with his disciples, being unwilling to go far into the country, because the passover, at which he was to suffer, was now at hand.

While in retirement, the blessed Jesus foretold the ruin of the Jewish state ; after which, he continued to preach his divine mission over the adjacent countries, healing the sick as he went along, and rebuking sin.

At length he returned to Jerusalem, into which he made a public entry, accompanied by a multitude of many thousands. This drew upon him the malice of the Pharisees ; but this had no effect on his conduct ; he continued to preach daily in the temple and elsewhere to the multitude who thronged to hear him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JESUS, some time after repaired, with his disciples, into the court room of the temple, called the treasury, from several chests being fixed to the pillars of the portico surrounding the court, for receiving the offerings of those who came to worship in the temple. While he continued in this court, he "beheld how the people cast money into the treasury : and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a far-

thing. And he called unto him his disciples and said unto them, Verily I say unto you that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance ; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Mark, xii. 41, etc.

Though the offering given by this poor widow was in itself very small, yet, in proportion to the goods of life she enjoyed, it was remarkably large ; for it was all she had, even all her living. In order, therefore, to encourage charity, and to show that it is the disposition of the mind, not the magnificence of the offering, that attaches the regard of the Almighty, the Son of God applauded this poor widow as having given more in proportion than any of the rich. Their offerings, though great in respect to hers, were but a small part of their estates ; whereas her offering was her whole stock. And from this passage of the gospel, we should learn, that the poor, who in appearance are denied the means of doing charitable offices, are encouraged to do all they can. For how small soever the gift may be, the Almighty, who beholds the heart, values it, not according to what it is in itself, but according to the disposition with which it is given.

On the other hand, we should learn from hence, that it is not enough for the rich that they exceed the poor in the gift of charity ; they should bestow in proportion to their income ; and they would do well to remember, that a little given, where a little only is left, appears a much nobler offering in the sight of the Almighty, and discovers a more benevolent and humane temper of mind, than sums much larger bestowed out of a plentiful abundance.

The disciples now remembered that their Master, at the conclusion of his pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, had declared that the temple should not any more be favored with his presence, till they should say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

A declaration of this kind could not fail of greatly surprising his disciples ; and, therefore, as he was departing from that sacred structure, they desired him to observe the beauty of the building ; insinuating, that they thought it strange he

should intimate an intention of leaving it desolate ; that so glorious a fabric, celebrated in every corner of the earth, was not to be deserted rashly ; and that they should think themselves supremely happy, when he, as the Messiah, and the descendant of David, should take possession of it, and erect his throne in the midst of Jerusalem. And, as they went out of the temple, one of his disciples said unto him, " Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here !"

The eastern wall of the temple, which fronted the Mount of Olives, whither the disciples, with their Master, were then retiring, was built from the bottom of the valley to a prodigious height, with stones of an incredible bulk, firmly compacted together, and therefore made a very grand appearance at a distance. The eastern wall is supposed to have been the only remains of Solomon's temple, and had escaped when the Chaldeans burnt it. But this building, however strong and costly it appeared, our Saviour told them should be totally destroyed. " Seest thou," said he, " these great buildings ? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Mark, xiii. 2.

That noble edifice, raised with much labor, and at a vast expense, shall be razed to the very foundation. The disciples, therefore, when they heard their Master affirm, that not so much as one of these enormous stones, which had withstood the fury of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and survived the destructive hand of time, was to be left one upon another, they perceived that the whole temple was to be demolished, but did not suspect that the sacrifices were to be taken away, and a new mode of religion introduced, which rendered the temple unnecessary. They, therefore, flattered themselves, that the fabric then standing, however glorious it might appear, was too small for the numerous worshipers who would frequent it, when all the nations of the world were subject to the Messiah's kingdom, and was, therefore, to be pulled down, in order to be erected on a more magnificent plan, suitable to the idea they had conceived of his future empire. Filled with these pleasing imaginations, they received the news with pleasure, meditating, as they walked to the mountain, on the glorious things which were shortly to come to pass.

When they arrived on the Mount of Olives, and their Master had taken his seat on some eminence, from whence they had a prospect of the temple, and part of the city, his disciples drew near, to know when the demolition of the old structure was to happen, and what were to be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world. "And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matthew, xxiv. 3.

The disciples, by this request, seemed desirous of knowing what signs should precede the erection of that extensive empire, over which they supposed the Messiah was to reign; for they still expected he would govern a secular kingdom. They, therefore, connected the demolition of the temple with their Master's coming, though they had not the least notion that he was to destroy the nation, and change the form of religious worship.

They, therefore, meant by the "end of the world," or, as the words should have been translated, the end of the ages, the period of the political government, then executed by heathen procurators; and considered their Master's coming to destroy the constitution then subsisting, as a very desirable event. They also thought the demolition of the temple proper, as they expected a larger and more superb building, proportioned to the number of the Messiah's subjects, would be erected in its stead.

That this is the real sense of the disciples' question, will sufficiently appear, if we consider that the disciples were delighted with the prospect; whereas, if they had meant, by the end of the world, the final period of all things, the destruction of the temple would have exhibited to them, in their present temper of mind, a melancholy prospect, which they could not have beheld without a deep concern.

Our blessed Saviour, therefore, was careful to convince them of their mistake, by telling them that he was not come to rule a secular empire, as they supposed, but to punish the Jews for their perfidy and rebellion, by destroying both their temple and nation. "Take heed," said he, "that no man

deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and shall deceive many."

This caution was far from being unnecessary, because, though his disciples were to see their Master ascend into heaven, they might take occasion, from the prophecy, to think that he would appear again on earth, and, therefore, be in danger of seduction by the false Christs that should arise. "And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars : see that ye be not troubled : for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Before this nation and temple are destroyed, terrible wars will happen in the land ; "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom : and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Matthew, xxiv. 7.

These are the preludes of the important event, forerunners of the evils which shall befall this nation and people. At the same time you shall meet with hot persecutions ; walk therefore circumspectly, and arm yourselves, both with patience and fortitude, that you may be able to perform your duty, through the whole course of these persecutions ; for ye shall be brought before the great men of the earth for my sake. "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate ; but whatsoever shall be given unto you in that hour, that speak ye ; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Mark, xiii. 11.

During this time of trouble and confusion, he told them, the perfidy of mankind should be so great towards one another, that "brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son ; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death." The unbelieving Jews, and apostate Christians, shall commit the most enormous and inhuman crimes. It is, therefore, no wonder that the perfidy and wickedness of such pretended Christians should discourage many disciples, and greatly hinder the propagation of the gospel. But he who lives by faith, during these persecutions, and is not led away by false Christians, shall escape that terrible destruction, which, like a deluge, will overflow the land.



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And when Jerusalem shall be surrounded with armies, pagan armies, bearing on their standards the images of their gods, the "abomination of desolation" mentioned by the prophet Daniel, then let him who readeth the predictions of that prophet understand, that the end of the city and sanctuary, together with the ceasing of sacrifices and oblations, there predicted, is come, and consequently the final period of the Jewish polity.

"Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out." Luke, xxi. 21. "Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes." Matthew, xxiv. 17, 18. Then shall be fulfilled the awful predictions of the prophet Daniel, and the dreadful judgments denounced against the impenitent and unbelieving.

In those days of vengeance, the women who are with child, and those who have infants hanging at their breasts, shall be particularly unhappy, because they can not flee from the impending destruction. "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter," when the badness of the roads, and the rigor of the season, will render speedy traveling very troublesome, if not impossible; "neither on the Sabbath day," when you shall think it unlawful. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." This is confirmed by what Josephus tells us, that no less than eleven hundred thousand perished in the siege.

The heavenly prophet added, that except the days of tribulation should be shortened, none of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, of whom he was speaking, should escape destruction: in confirmation of which Josephus tells us, that the quarrels which raged during the siege were so fierce and obstinate, that both within the walls of Jerusalem, and without in the neighboring country, the whole land was one continued scene of horror and desolation; and had the siege continued much longer, the whole nation of the Jews had been totally destroyed, according to our Lord's prediction. "But," added our blessed Saviour, "for the elect's sake, whom he

hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." By the elect, are meant such of the Jews as had embraced the doctrines of the gospel, and particularly those who were brought in with the believing Gentiles.

As it is natural in time of trouble, to look with eager expectation for a deliverer, our blessed Saviour cautioned his disciples not to listen to any pretenses of that kind, as many false Christs would arise, and deceive great numbers of the people. A prediction that was fully accomplished, during the terrible siege of Jerusalem by the Romans ; so Josephus tells us, that many arose, pretending to be the Messiah, boasting that they would deliver the nation from all its enemies. And the multitude, always too prone to listen to deceivers, who promise temporal advantages, giving credit to those deceivers, became more obstinate in their opposition to the Romans, and thereby rendered their destruction more severe and inevitable.

And what still increased the infatuation of the people, was their performing wonderful things during the war ; and accordingly Josephus calls them magicians and sorcerers. Hence the propriety of the caution given by the Son of God, who foretold that "they should show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. But take heed ; behold, I have foretold you all things."

And, as the partisans of the false Christs might pretend, that the Messiah was concealed awhile for fear of the Romans, and the weaker sort of Christians, without this warning, have imagined that Christ was actually returned to deliver the nation in its extremity, and to punish their enemies, who now so cruelly oppressed them, and that he would show himself as soon as it was proper, the blessed Jesus thought proper to caution them against this particular, "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert ; go not forth : behold, he is in the secret chambers ; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Matthew, xxiv. 26, etc.

The coming of the Son of Man shall be like lightning,

swift and destructive. But he will not come personally ; his servants only shall come, the Roman armies, who by his command, shall destroy this nation, as eagles devour their prey.

Having thus given them a particular account of the various circumstances which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, he next described that catastrophe itself, in all the pomp of language and imagery made use of by the ancient prophets when they foretold the destruction of cities and kingdoms. "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light ; and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." Mark, xiii. 24, 25. "And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke, xxi. 25, 26.

Whosoever shall compare the prediction of our Saviour with the history Josephus wrote of the war, can not fail of being struck with the wisdom of Christ, and acknowledging that his prediction was truly divine : for, as the Jewish nation was at this time in the most flourishing state, the event here foretold appeared altogether improbable. Besides, the circumstances of the destruction are very numerous and great ; and the whole delivered without any ambiguity. It is, therefore, a prophecy of such a kind as could never have been uttered by any impostor, and consequently the person who delivered it was acquainted with the secret counsels of Heaven, and was truly divine.

Having thus generally described the future state of retribution, our Lord passed to the consideration of the general judgment, when those rewards and punishments should be distributed in their utmost extent. This could not fail of animating his disciples to a rigorous discharge of their duty : and by the striking representation of the last judgment he has here given, must greatly tend to rouse the consciences of men from their lethargy, to consider, before it be too late, "the things which belong to their peace."

Then shall the kingdom of heaven, the gospel kingdom, in the last dispensation of it, when the kingdom of grace is going

to be swallowed up in the kingdom of glory, "be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish." They that were foolish took their lamps, but put no oil in their vessel ; knowing that it was uncertain when the bridegroom would arrive, and that they might in all probability wait long for his coming. Nor were they mistaken : for the bridegroom did not come so soon as they expected. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil : for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so ; lest there be not enough for us and you : but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage : and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." Matthew, xxv. 5, etc.

In order to understand this parable, we must remember that it alludes to the custom of the eastern people. It was usual with them for the bridegroom to bring his bride home in the evening, sooner or later, as circumstances might happen ; and, that they might be received properly at his house, his female acquaintances, especially those of the younger sort, were invited to come and wait with lamps, till some of his retinue, dispatched before the rest, informed them that he was near at hand ; upon which they trimmed their lamps, went forth to welcome him, and conduct him, with his bride, into the house ; for which they were honored as guests at the marriage feast, and shared in the usual festivities.

To ten such virgins our blessed Saviour compares those to whom the gospel is preached ; because this was the general number appointed to wait on the bridegroom : and to these all Christian professors may be likened, who, taking their

lamp of Christian profession, go forth to meet the bridegroom ; that is, consider themselves candidates for the kingdom of heaven, and desire to be admitted, with Christ, the celestial bridegroom, into the happy mansions of immortality.

We must remember, that there always was, and always will be, a mixture of good and bad in the church, till the great day of separation arrives. The weakness of the foolish is represented by their taking no oil in their vessels, with their lamps ; that is, the foolish professors content themselves with the bare lamp of profession, and never think of furnishing it with the oil of divine grace, the fruit of which is a life of holiness. Whereas, the wise, well knowing that a lamp, without the supply of oil, would be speedily extinguished—that faith, without love or holiness, will be of no consequence—take care to secure a supply for themselves of the divine grace, and to display in their lives the works of love and charity. While all those virgins, though differently supplied, waiting the coming of the bridegroom, all slumbered and slept ; that is, as some think, all Christians, both good and bad, the sincere and the hypocrite, lie down together in the sleep of death, and while the bridegroom delays his coming, slumber in the chambers of the dust. But others suppose that this argues the want of vigilance and care, even in the wise as well as foolish ; that few, if any, are so attentive as they ought to be to the coming of the Lord.

The Jews have a tradition, that Christ's coming to judgment will be at midnight : which agrees with that particular in the parable, "At midnight there was a cry made, Go ye out to meet him." But, however this be, whether he will come at midnight, or in the morning, it will be awfully sudden and alarming. The great cry will be heard to the end of the earth ; the trumpet shall sound, and the mighty archangel's voice pierce even the bowels of the earth and the depths of the ocean : "Behold the bridegroom cometh : go ye out to meet him."

The graves, both earthly and watery, must surrender their clayey tenants, and all will then begin to think how they may prepare themselves to find admittance to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed

their lamps." But the foolish soon perceived their folly ; their lamps were gone out, totally extinguished, and they had no oil to support the flame : in like manner the hypocrite's hope shall perish. But the wise were in much happier condition : they had oil in their vessels, sufficient for themselves, but none to spare ; for when the foolish virgins would have procured some from them, they denied their request, fearing there would not be enough for both.

There are here beautifully represented nominal and sincere Christians. The former, having only the bare lamp of a profession, and who have not been solicitous to gain the oil of divine grace, by a constant use of the means assigned, will fare like the foolish virgins ; while the latter, whose hearts are filled with divine oil, will, like the wise virgins enter into the joy of their Lord.

But the foolish, going to purchase oil, missed the bridegroom, and, behold, "the door was shut." They at last, however, reached the gate, and, with great importunity, cried, "Lord, open unto us." But he answered, and said, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." As you denied me on earth, I deny you now ; depart from me, I know ye not. How justly, therefore, did our Saviour bid us all watch, that we may be found ready whenever he cometh ; or commands, by the king of terrors, our attendance before his judgment seat. Let us not refuse this kind invitation of being constantly prepared to meet the heavenly Bridegroom ; let us get our lamps filled with oil, that we may be ready to follow our great Master into the happy mansions of the heavenly Canaan.

But, as this duty was of the utmost importance, our blessed Saviour, to show us more clearly the nature and use of Christian watchfulness, to which he exhorts us at the conclusion of the parable of the ten virgins, he added another, wherein he represented the different characters of a faithful and slothful servant, and the difference of their future acceptance.

This parable, like the former, is intended to stir us up to a zealous preparation for the coming of our Lord, by diligence in the discharge of our duty, and by a careful improvement

of our souls in holiness ; and, at the same time, to expose the vain pretenses of hypocrites, and to demonstrate that their fair speeches and outward forms, without the power of godliness, will be of no service whatever in the last day of account.

The Son of Man, said he, may, with respect to his final coming to judge the world, be likened unto a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, and he lost no time, but traded with the same ; and his increase was equal to his industry and application ; he made them other five talents. He that received two talents did the same, and had equal success. But he that received one, very unlike the conduct of his fellow-servants, went his way, digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money, idle, useless, unemployed and unimproved.

After a long time, and at an hour when they did not expect it, the lord of those servants returned, called them before him, and ordered them to give an account of their several trusts. Upon which, he that had received five talents, as a proof of his fidelity, produced other five talents, saying, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents ; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more." Matthew, xxv. 20. His lord, highly applauding his industry and fidelity, said to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matthew, xxv. 21.

In like manner also, he that had received two talents, declared he had gained two other ; upon which he was honored with the same applause, and admitted into the same joy with his fellow-servant ; their master having regard to the industry and fidelity of his servants, not to the number of the talents only, but to the greatness of their increase.

After this, he that had received the one talent came, and, with a shameful falsehood, to excuse his vile indolence, said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strowed : and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth ; lo, there thou hast that is thine." Matthew, xxv. 24, 25.

The perversion of even the smallest portion of grace greatly excited the resentment of his lord, who answered, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed : thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the ex-changers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew, xxv. 26, etc.

Such is the parable of the talents, as delivered by our blessed Saviour ; a parable containing the measures of our duty to God, and the motives that enforce it, all delivered in the plainest and simplest manner. But its views are so extensive and affecting, that while it instructs the meanest capacity it engages reverence and attention from the greatest, and strikes an impression on the most approved understanding. We are to consider God as our Lord and Master, the author and giver of every good gift, and ourselves as his servants or stewards, who, in various instances and measures, have received from his goodness such blessings and abilities as may fit us for the several stations and offices of life to which his providence may appoint us. But then we are to observe, that these are committed to us as a trust or loan, for whose due management we are accountable to the donor.

If we faithfully acquit ourselves of this probationary charge, we shall receive far greater instances of God's regard and favor ; but if we are remiss and negligent, we must expect to feel his resentment and displeasure.

A time will come, and how near it may be none of us can tell, when our great Master will demand a particular account of every talent he hath committed to our care. This time may, indeed, be at a distance ; for it is uncertain when the king of terrors will receive the awful warrant to terminate our existence here below : yet it will certainly come, and our eternal happiness or misery depends upon it ; so that we

should all have it continually in our thoughts, and engraven, as with the point of a diamond, on the tables of our hearts.

We learn, from this instructive parable, that infinite Wisdom hath intrusted men with different talents, and adjudged them to the various purposes of human life. But though the gifts of men are unequal, none can, with justice, complain ; since whatever is bestowed, be it more or less, is a favor entirely unmerited.

Each then should be thankful, and satisfied with his portion ; and, instead of envying the more liberal endowments of others, apply himself to the improvement of his own. And it should be observed, that the difficulty of the task is in proportion to the number of talents committed to each. He who had received five, was to gain other five ; and he who had received two, was to account for other two.

Surely, then, we have no reason to complain, if our Master has laid on us a lighter burthen, a more easy and less service, than he has on others ; especially, as our interest in the favor of the Almighty does not depend on the number of our talents, but on our diligence and application in the management of them : so that the moral design of this parable is, to engage our utmost attention to improve such talents as our heavenly Father has thought proper to bestow upon us.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE blessed Jesus used frequently to retire in the evening from the city to the Mount of Olives, and there spend the night, either in some village or the gardens, either to avoid falling into the hands of his enemies, or for the sake of a little retirement. They did not, indeed, presume to attack him while he was surrounded by his followers, in the day-time ; but, in all probability, had he lodged within the city, they would have apprehended him during the darkness and silence of the night.

When our blessed Saviour had finished these parables, he

added a short account of his own death, in order to fortify his disciples against a greater trial than they had yet met with ; namely, the sufferings of their Master. " And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, into the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." Matthew, xxvi. 1, etc.

When the evening approached, our blessed Saviour, with his disciples, repaired to Bethany, and entered the house of Simon the leper, probably one who experienced the healing efficacy of his power. But while he sat at meat, a woman, who had also, doubtless, been an object of his mercy, came and poured a box of precious ointment upon his head.

This action displeased his disciples, who knew that their Master was not delighted with luxuries of any kind : and therefore they rebuked the woman, imagining that it would have been more acceptable to the Son of God, if the ointment had been sold, and the money distributed among the sons and daughters of poverty and affliction.

To reprove the disciples, Jesus told them that it had pleased the divine Providence to order that there should always be persons in necessitous circumstances, that the righteous might never want occasions for exercising their charity ; but that those who did not testify their love to him, would never more have the opportunity of doing it, as the time of his ministry was near its period, when the king of terrors should enjoy a short triumph over his body ; and therefore this woman had seasonably anointed him for his burial. And to make them sensible of their folly in blaming the woman for this expression of love to him, he assured them that she should be highly esteemed for this action, in every part of the world, and her memory live to the latest period of time.

Judas Iscariot, (one of the twelve, having been more for-

ward than the rest in condemning the woman, thought the rebuke was particularly directed to him,) stung with the guilt of his own conscience, arose from the table, and went immediately into the city, to the high priest's palace, where he found the whole council assembled. His passion would not suffer him to reflect on the horrid deed he was going to commit: he immediately promised, for the reward of thirty pieces of silver, to betray into their hands his Lord and Master.

Having thus engaged with the rulers of Israel, to put into their hands a person who had often invited them, in the most pathetic manner, to embrace the gracious terms of the gospel offered by the Almighty, he sought an opportunity to betray him in the absence of the multitude.

Our Lord, who well knew that the time of his suffering drew nigh, desired, therefore, to celebrate the passover with his disciples. He was now going to finish the mighty work for which he came into the world; and therefore would not neglect to fulfill the smallest particular of the law of Moses. He therefore sent two of his disciples into the city to prepare a lamb, and make it ready for eating the passover; telling them that they should meet a man, bearing a pitcher of water, who would conduct them to his house, and show them a large upper room, furnished, which they were to make ready for him. He was willing, in this last transaction, to convince his disciples, that he knew every thing that should befall him; that his sufferings were all foretold by the Almighty; and that they were all, on his own account, submitted unto voluntarily.

When night approached, Jesus left Bethany, and every thing being ready for him at the time he entered into the city, he sat down at the appointed hour. But knowing that his sufferings were now near, he told his disciples, in the most affectionate manner, that he had greatly longed to eat the passover with them before he suffered, in order to show them the strongest proofs of his love. These proofs were, to give them a pattern of humility and love, by washing their feet; instructing them in the nature of his death, and a propitiatory sacrifice; instituting the sacrament, in commemoration of his

sufferings ; comforting them by the tender discourses recorded John, xiv., xv., xvi., in which he gave them a variety of excellent directions, together with many promises ; and recommending them to the kind protection of his heavenly Father. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Having thus spoken, he rose from the table, laid aside his garments, like a servant, and with all the officiousness of a humble minister, washed the feet of his disciples, without distinction, although one of them, Judas Iscariot, was a monster of impiety ; that they might at once behold a conjunction of love and humility, of self-denial and indifference represented by a person glorious beyond expression, their great Lord and Master.

He washed their feet (according to a custom which prevailed in those hot countries, both before and after meat), in order to show them an example of the utmost humility and condescension.

The omnipotent Son of the Father lays every thing aside, that he may serve his followers ; heaven stoops to earth, and one abyss calls upon another ; and the miseries of man, which were almost infinite, are exceeded by a mercy equal to the immensity of the Almighty. He deferreth this ceremony, which was an honorable civility paid to honorable strangers at the beginning of their feast, that it might be preparatory to the second, which he intended should be a feast to the whole world, when all the followers of the blessed Jesus should have an opportunity, in a spiritual manner, of feeding on his flesh, and drinking his blood.

When our blessed Saviour came to Peter, he modestly declined it ; but his Master told him, if he refused to submit implicitly to all his orders, he could have no part with him. On which Peter cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But Jesus told him, that the person who was washed had no reason to wash any part of the body except the feet, which he might dirty by walking from the bath : and added, "Ye are all clean, as to the outward

laver, but not as to the inward and spiritual laver : I well know that one of you will betray me."

When our gracious Lord had finished this menial service, he asked his disciples if they knew the meaning of what he had done, as the action was purely emblematical ? You truly, added he, style me Master and Lord ; for I am the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. But if I, your Master and your Lord, have condescended to wash your feet, you surely ought to perform, with the utmost pleasure, the humblest offices of love to one another. I have set you a pattern of humility, and I recommend it to you.

And certainly nothing can more effectually show us the necessity of this heavenly temper of mind, than its being recommended to us by so great an example ; a recommendation which, in the present circumstances, was particularly seasonable ; for the disciples having heard their great Master declare that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, their minds were filled with ambitious thoughts. And therefore our blessed Saviour added, Ye need not be ashamed to follow my example in this particular ; for no servant can think it beneath him to condescend to perform those actions his Lord has done before him. And therefore, if he knows his duty, he will be happy if he practices it. He, moreover, added that though he had called them all to the apostleship, and well knew the secret dispositions of every heart, before he chose them, they need not be surprised that one among them should prove a traitor, as thereby the Scripture would be fulfilled : "He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me."

As our blessed Saviour was now to be but a short time with his disciples, he thought proper to take his farewell of them, which he did in a most affectionate manner. These melancholy tidings greatly troubled them. They were unwilling to part with so kind a friend, so dear a master, so wise a guide, and so profitable a teacher ; especially as they thought they should be left in a forlorn condition, a poor and helpless prey to the rage and hatred of a blind and malicious generation. They seemed willing to die with their Lord, if that might be accepted. Why can not I follow thee ? I will lay

down my life for thee ! was the language of one, and even all of them ; but they could not support the thoughts of a disconsolate separation.

Their great and compassionate Master, seeing them thus dejected, endeavored to cheer their drooping spirits : “ Let not your hearts be troubled.” Listen attentively to what I am going to deliver for your consolation : “ I am going to prepare a place for you ; I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” A reviving word of promise. They were one day to meet again their dear, their affectionate Master, in a place where they should live together to eternity.

But death makes so vast a distance between friends, and the disciples then knew so little of a future state, that they seemed to doubt whether they should, after their parting, meet their great Redeemer. They neither knew the place where he was going, nor the way that led to his kingdom : “ Lord,” said they, “ as we know not whither thou goest, how can we know the way ?” In answer to this question, he told them, that he was “ the way, the truth, and the life ;” as if he had said, Through the propitiatory sacrifice I am about to offer, the sacred truths I have delivered, and the divine assistance which I shall hereafter dispense, you are to obtain that happiness which I go to prepare for you.

But, lest all these arguments should not be sufficient to quiet their minds, he had still another, which could not fail of success : “ If ye love me,” says he, “ ye will rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father :” intimating that he would consider it as a proof of their love to him, if they ceased to mourn. They doubtless thought that by grieving for his death, they expressed their love to their Master, and it might seem strange that our Saviour should put so contrary an interpretation on their friendly sorrow, or require so unnatural a thing of them, as to rejoice at his departure. What (they might think), shall we rejoice at so amiable a friend’s removal from us ? or can we be glad that he retires and leave us in this vale of misery ? No, it is impossible ; the human heart, on so melancholy an occasion, can have no disposition to rejoice.

Our blessed Saviour, therefore, adds this reason, to solve the seeming paradox : because he was going to his Father ; that is, he was going to ascend to the right hand of infinite Power, from whence he would send them all the assistance they could desire. It must not, however, be supposed that he meant by these words that his disciples should not be concerned at his death, or that they could not love him unless they expressed a visible joy on this occasion. That would, indeed, have been a hard interpretation of their grief : he knew their grief flowed from love ; and that if their love had not been strong, their sorrow had been much less. Indeed, their Master was fully convinced that love was the occasion of their sorrow ; and, therefore, he used these arguments to mitigate it, and direct it in a proper course.

Nor did our Lord intend to intimate that all sorrow for so worthy a friend was unlawful, or an unbecoming expression of their love : doubtless he was not displeased to see his disciples so tenderly affected at his removal from them. He who shed tears at the grave of Lazarus, blended with sighs and groans, can not be thought to forbid them wholly at his own. He, therefore, did not chide his disciples with angry reproaches, as though they had been entirely in the wrong, but gently reasoned with them by kind persuasions : " Let not your hearts be troubled ;" as rather pitying than condemning their sorrow.

Soon after Jesus had spoken these things, his heart was greatly troubled to think that one of his disciples should prove his enemy ; he complained of it at the table, declaring that one of them should betray him. This moving declaration greatly affected the disciples ; and they began every one of them to say to their Master, " Lord, is it I ?" But Jesus giving them no decisive answer, John, the beloved disciple, whose sweet disposition and other amiable qualities, is perpetuated in the peculiar love his Master bore him, and was now reclining on his bosom, asked him, who among the disciples could be guilty of so detestable a crime ? Jesus told him, that the person to whom he should give the sop, when he had dipped it, was he who should betray him. Accordingly, as soon as our Saviour had dipped the sop in the dish,

he gave it to Judas Iscariot, saying to him, at the same time, "That thou doest, do quickly."

Judas received the sop, without knowing any thing of what his Master had told the beloved disciple: nor did any of the disciples, except St. John, entertain the least suspicion that Judas was the person who would betray their Master.

The innocent disciples were, indeed, so deeply affected with his declaration, that one of them should betray him, that they did not remark the words of Jesus to his apostate disciple; but continued to ask him who was the person that should be guilty of so base a crime? Willing, at last, to satisfy their importunity, the blessed Jesus declared, that the person who dipped his hand with him in the dish should betray him. This, to the eleven, was a joyful declaration, but confounding, in the highest degree, to Judas. Impudent as he was, it struck him speechless, pointing him out plainly, and displaying the foulness of his heart.

While Judas continued mute with confusion, the blessed Jesus declared that his death should be wrought according to the decrees of Heaven, though that would not, in the least, mitigate the crime of the person who betrayed him: adding, "it had been good for that man if he had never been born." Judas, having now recovered himself a little, asserted his innocence, by a question which implied a denial of the charge. But his Master soon silenced him, by positively affirming that he was really the person.

As various conjectures have been formed concerning the motives which induced the perfidious Judas cruelly to deliver up his Master into the hands of his enemies, it may not be improper to cite those which appear to be most probable, though the decision must be entirely left to the reader.

Some are of opinion that he was induced to commit this villainy by the resentment of the rebuke given him by his Master, for blaming the woman who came with the precious ointment, and anointed the head of Jesus, as he sat at meat in the house of Simon the leper. But, though this had, doubtless, its weight with the traitor, yet it could not, I think, be his only motive; because the rebuke was given in general

to all the disciples, who had certainly been forward with him in censuring the woman. Nor can we imagine, even if he had been rebuked alone, that so mild a reproof could provoke any person, however wicked, to the horrible act of murdering his friend ; much less Judas, whose covetous disposition must have disposed him to bear every thing from his Master, from whom he expected the highest preferment, if he should openly declare himself the Messiah, and take the reins of government into his own hands.

Others think that Judas betrayed his Master through covetousness. But, if we understand by covetousness, the reward given by the priests, this opinion is equally defective ; for the sum was too small for the most sordid wretch to think equivalent to the life of a friend, especially when he expected from him the highest posts and advantages.

Others attribute the perfidy of Judas to his doubting whether his Master was the Messiah ; and that he betrayed him in a fit of despair. But, of all the solutions, this is the worst founded. For, if Judas believed his Master to be an impostor, he must have observed something in his behaviour which led him to form such an opinion of him ; and, in that case, he would doubtless have mentioned it to the chief priests and elders, when he made the contract with them ; which it is plain he did not, as they would have reminded him of it, when he came back and expressed his remorse for what he had done. It should also be observed, that had Judas given them any intimations of this kind, they would doubtless have urged them against our blessed Saviour himself, in the course of his trial, when they were at so great a loss for witnesses to support their accusation ; and against the apostles, afterwards, when they reproved them for speaking in the name of Jesus. Besides, had Judas thought his Master an impostor, and proposed nothing by his treachery but the price he put upon his life, how came he to sell him for such a trifle, when he well knew that the chief priests and rulers would have given him any sum rather than not have got him into their hands.

In fine, the supposition that Judas believed his Master to be an impostor, is directly confuted by the solemn declaration he made to the priests, when he declared the deepest convic-

tion of the innocence of our great Redeemer: "I have sinned," says he, "in betraying innocent blood."

It must be remembered, that the remorse he felt for his crime, when he saw his Master condemned, was too bitter to be endured ; so that he fled even to the king of terrors for relief.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE great Redeemer, ever mindful of the grand design of his mission, even the salvation of lost and perishing sinners, was not in the least prevented by the treachery of his apostate disciple : for, knowing that he must become a sacrifice for sin, etc., he instituted the sacrament of his supper, to perpetuate the memory of it through all ages. Accordingly, as they were eating the paschal supper, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body." Matthew, xxvi. 26. Observe this rite no longer in remembrance of your deliverance from Egypt, but in remembrance of me, who, by dying for you, will bring you out of the spiritual bondage, a bondage far worse than the Egyptian, under which your fathers groaned, and will establish you in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Do it in remembrance of me, who, by laying down my life, will ransom you from sin, from death, from hell, and will set open the gates of heaven to you, that you may enter immortality in triumph.

Having given the bread to his disciples, he also took the cup, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matthew, xxvi. 27, 28.

All of you, and all of my disciples, in all ages, must drink of this cup, because it represents my blood shed for the remission of the sins of mankind : my blood by which the new covenant between God and man is ratified. It is, therefore, my blood of the new covenant ; so that this institution exhib-

its to your joyful meditation the grand basis of the hope of the children of men, and perpetuates the memory of it to the end of the world. He added, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matthew, xxvi. 29.

The manifestation of the Son of God is the most illustrious, the most momentous event, that is possible to engage the meditations of men. To his life and death, his resurrection and ascension into glory, we are indebted for our hopes and assurances of pardon, for our happiness. To procure our salvation, he made the most amazing condescension from the dignity he enjoyed with his Father, by putting on the vail of flesh ; he poured divine instruction from his lips, and shone forth with an all-perfect and all-lovely example. For our benefit, he submitted to a course of the most cruel treatment from his bitter enemies, to the agonies of the cross, and to the stroke of the king of terrors. For our happiness, he arose again with power and luster, ascended into the mansions of eternal happiness, manages our affairs with the Father, and holds the reins of government. With the greatest wisdom and goodness, therefore, the beneficent Jesus instituted a rite that should recall his love to our memories, and awake each pious passion in our breast ; a rite which, by the breaking of bread and the pouring out of wine, should represent to us, in a striking manner, that most signal proof of the affection both of him and his heavenly Father, when his tender frame was exposed to wounds and bruises, when streams of the most precious blood issued from his sacred veins.

Our blessed Saviour, after delivering the sacramental cup, and telling them that his blood was shed for them, mentioned the treachery of Judas a second time : "Behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." Matthew, xxvi. 46. This second declaration was made, very properly, after the institution of the sacrament, which exhibits the highest instance of our great Redeemer's love to mankind, his dying to obtain the remission of their sins ; for it abundantly proves, that the person who could be deliberately guilty of such an injury to so kind a friend, must have been a monster, the foulness of whose ingratitude can not be described by the force of language.

It is thought that some of the disciples, particularly struck with horror at the thought of Judas' treachery, rebuked him, by asking him, with surprise, how he could betray his Master? This accusation Judas, no doubt, repelled, by impudently denying the fact; but consciousness of guilt giving edge to the reproaches of his brethren, and to every circumstance of the affair, he immediately left the company, exceedingly displeased at thinking himself insulted and affronted.

The important, the awful scene now approached, when the great work was to be finished. The traitor Judas was gone to the chief priests and elders, for a band of soldiers to apprehend him; but this did not discompose the Redeemer of mankind: he took occasion to meditate on the glory that would accrue to himself and his Almighty Father, from those sufferings, and spake of it to his disciples. "Now," said he, "is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." He told them that, having already done honor to his Father, by the past actions of his life, and being about to honor him yet further by his sufferings and death, which would display his perfections, particularly his infinite love to the human race, in the most astonishing and amiable light, he was, in his turn, to receive honor from his father: intimating that his human nature was to be exalted to the right hand of Omnipotence, and that his mission from God was to be supported by irrefragable attestations. But his disciples, imagining that he spake of the glory of a temporal kingdom, their ambition was again revived, and they began to dispute, with as much keenness as ever, which of them should be greatest in that kingdom. This contention Jesus suppressed by the arguments he had formerly used for the same purpose. Among the Gentiles, said he, they are reckoned the greatest who have the greatest power, and have exercised it in the most absolute manner; but your greatness shall be very different from theirs: it shall not consist in being unlimited with regard to tyrannical power, even though it should be joined with an affectation of titles, which denote qualities truly honorable; whosoever desires to be great, or chief, among you, let him be so by his humility, and the service he renders to the rest, in imitation of me, your Master, whose greatness consists in

this, that I am become the servant of you all : adding, as they had continued with him in his temptation, he would bestow upon them such a kingdom as his Father had appointed for him. At the same time, to check their ambition, and lead them to form a just notion of his kingdom, he told them that he was soon to leave them, and that whither he was going, they could not at that time follow him ; for which reason, instead of contending with one another which of them should be greatest, they would do well to be united among themselves in the happy bond of love. For, by loving one another sincerely and fervently, they would prove themselves his disciples, to the conviction of mankind, who could not be ignorant that love was a distinguishing part of his character.

Having thus spoken, they finished the Passover with singing a hymn, and went out to the Mount of Olives.

On their arrival at the place which was to be the scene of his sufferings, he desired them to fortify themselves by prayer, and forewarned them of the terrible effects his sufferings would have upon them ; they would make them all stumble that very night, agreeable to the prophecy of Zechariah : “ I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.” To strengthen their faith, therefore, he not only mentioned his own resurrection, but told them they should see him in Galilee, after he was risen from the dead.

On our blessed Saviour’s mentioning the offense that his disciples would take at his suffering, Peter recollected what had been said to him in particular, before they left the house. Grieved, therefore, afresh, to find his Master entertain such thoughts of him, and being now armed with a sword, the vehemence of his temper urged him to boast a second time of his courageous and close attachment to his Master. “ Though all men,” said he, “ should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.” But Jesus, knowing that human confidence and security were weak and frail, thought proper to forewarn him again of his danger, and told him that the cock should not crow before he had denied him.

Peter, however, still continued to repeat his confidence : I will die with thee, but never deny thee. The disciples all joined with Peter in professing their fixed resolution of suf-

fering death, rather than they would deny their Master ; but the event fully confirmed the prediction of our Saviour. From hence we may learn how ignorant men are of their own hearts, and that the strongest resolutions in their own strength avail nothing.

The compassionate Redeemer of mankind, not willing to lose one single moment of the short time of his ministry that yet remained, continued to instruct his disciples in the great truths he came into the world to explain ; and, from the vines which were growing around him on the Mount of Olives, he began his excellent discourse with the parable of the vine, to the following import :

Hitherto, said the blessed Jesus, the Jewish church and nation have been the peculiar care of Providence ; as a choice and goodly vine, likely to bring forth much fruit, is the special care of the husbandman. But, from henceforth, my church, my disciples, and the professors of my religion, of what country or nation soever they be, shall become the people of God, and the peculiar care of Divine Providence. I will be to them as the root and stock of the vine, of which they are the branches, and my Father the husbandman and vine-dresser.

As, in the management of a choice vine, the skillful vine-dresser cuts off all the barren and superfluous branches, that they may not burden nor exhaust the trees, and prunes and dresses the fruitful branches, that they may grow continually, and so bear more fruit ; thus, in the government of my church, all useless, wicked and incorrigible members, my Father, sooner or later, by his judgment, cuts off and destroys ; but those who are sincerely pious and good, he by the various and merciful dispensations of his providence towards them, tries, purifies and amends, that they may daily improve, and be more and more abundant in all good works.

Now ye, my apostles, are such members as these, being purified in heart and mind, and prepared for every good work, by your lively faith in me, and sincere resolutions to obey my commands. Continue steadfastly in this state, and then you may be sure of deriving all spiritual blessing from me, as the branches receive sap and nourishment from the vine. But as

a branch, without continuing in the vine, can not bear any fruit, but presently dries up and perishes, so ye, unless ye continue steadfast in your communion with me (by a lively faith in your obedience, so as to receive grace and spiritual blessings,) can never bring forth any good fruit of true holiness and righteousness, but will fall into vanity, superstition and wickedness, and, at last, utterly perish.

I am, as it were, I say, the root and stock of the vine, whereof ye are the branches. He that continues to adhere to me, by a constant faith in me, shall bring forth much fruit unto everlasting life ; even as a branch which continues to grow in a vine, and receives sap and nourishment from it. But he that does not continue his relation to me in this manner, becomes a false and useless professor, and shall be cast out from me, and perish for ever ; even as a fruitless branch is cut off from the vine, and left to wither and dry, and is at last burned in the fire.

If you continue in me, by believing my words, and holding fast what ye believe, and obeying and practicing it accordingly, no power or malice, either of man or of devils, shall be able to hurt you or oppose your doctrines. For, though I be absent from you in body, I will hear your prayers, and my Father himself also will hear you ; and whatsoever ye shall ask, for the glory of the Almighty, and the propagation of my true religion in the world, shall certainly be granted you. But, above all things, carefully remember to demonstrate your continuance in me, by abounding in all good works of holiness, righteousness, and charity. This is the honor which my Father desires and expects from you ; even, as it is the glory and desire of a vine-dresser, that his vine should bring forth much fruit. And this is the honor that I myself expect from you, that ye shall prove yourselves to be really and indeed my disciples, by imitating my example, and obeying my commands. This ye are bound to do, not only in duty, but in gratitude also ; for, as my Father hath loved me, so have I also loved you ; and ye, in like manner, ought to love me again, that you may continue to be loved by me. But the way to express your love towards me, and to continue to be loved by me, is to keep my commandments ; even as I, by

keeping my Father's commandments, have expressed my love towards him, and continue to be loved by him.

These things have I spoken to you before my departure, that the comfort ye have taken in my presence may be continued in my absence, and ever increased until the coming of the Holy Spirit, as it will be upon this condition, which I have so often repeated to you, that you keep my commandments, that ye love one another: not after the common fashion of the world, but in such a manner as I have loved you; nor can you be ignorant what sort of love that is, when I tell you that I am now going to lay down my life for you. This is the highest instance in which it is possible for a man to express his love towards his greatest friends and benefactors; but this I am going to do for you, and for all mankind. I might, indeed, justly call you servants, considering the infinite distance between me and you, and the obligation ye have to obey my commandments, but I have not treated you as servants, (who are not admitted into their Master's counsels,) but as friends, revealing to you the whole will of my Father with all freedom and plainness.

I have, I say, behaved myself to you as to the nearest friends. Not that you first obliged me, or did any acts of kindness for me; but I have freely, and of my own good pleasure, chosen you to be my apostles, and the preachers of my gospel, that you may go and declare the will of God to the world, and bring forth much lasting fruit, in the conversion of men to the knowledge of the truth, and to the profession and practice of true religion. In the performance of this work, whatsoever ye shall ask of my Father, in my name, in order to enable you to perform it effectually and with full success, shall certainly be granted you.

Now all these things which I have spoken unto you concerning the greatness of my love towards you, in choosing you to be my apostles, in revealing unto you the whole will of my Father, and in laying down my life for you, I have urged and inculcated upon you for this reason chiefly, as I at first told you, that ye may learn, after my example, to "love one another." The world, indeed, you must expect, will hate and persecute you, upon my account. But this you ought

not to be surprised or terrified at, knowing that it is no worse treatment than I myself have met with before you.

Be not, therefore, surprised when you meet with opposition ; nor think to find better treatment in the world than I myself have done. Remember what I have already told you, that the disciple is not above his master ; nor is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If men had generally and readily embraced my doctrine, you might, indeed, have had some reason to expect that they would readily have received yours also. But since I myself have suffered great indignities and persecutions from wicked and perverse, from obstinate and incorrigible men, only for opposing their vices, it is highly reasonable that you should expect to undergo the like treatment, upon the like account. In all which sufferings you will, moreover, have this further comfortable consideration to support you, that the justice of your own cause, and the injustice of your persecutors, will, by that means, most evidently appear ; seeing ye are persecuted only for professing and preaching, in my name, the doctrine of true religion ; and they persecute you only because they know not God, and out of mere malice will not bear to be instructed in his commands.

Indeed, had not I appeared to the world with all possible demonstrations of authority and truth, teaching them a most holy and undeniable doctrine, sufficient to reform their manners and amend their lives, and moreover demonstrated my divine commission by such proofs as ought to satisfy and convince the most doubting and suspicious minds, they might have had some plea and excuse of ignorance for their unbelief. But now, since all reasonable evidence has been offered them, and proper methods used for their conversion and salvation, and yet they willfully and obstinately reject these means of grace, it is plain they have no excuse for their sin ; but they oppose and persecute you only because they will not forsake their worldly lusts, and out of mere malice will not bear to be instructed in the commands of the Almighty. So that they who oppose and persecute you, as they have before persecuted me, show plainly that they are haters of God, and of his most holy commandments ; which is, as I have already

told you, a plain evidence of the justice of your own cause, and of the injustice of your persecutors.

If I had not, I say, done such works among them as no man ever did, they might, indeed, have had some appearance of excuse for their sin. But now, having seen abundant proofs of my authority, and undeniable evidence of the truth of my doctrine, and yet willingly and obstinately persisting to oppose it, because inconsistent with their lusts, it is plain that their dishonoring me is a dishonor done to my Father himself, and a direct contempt of his commands; so that they are utterly inexcusable. But it is no wonder, when men have given themselves wholly up to be governed by worldly affections, passions, and vices, they should act contrary to all the reason and evidence in the world: for this is but the natural consequence of obstinate and habitual wickedness; and hereby is only fulfilled in me what holy David long since prophetically complained of, that they hated him without a cause.

But notwithstanding all the opposition that wicked and incorrigible men will make against my doctrine, there will not be wanting powerful promoters of it, who shall effectually overcome all opposition. For the Comforter, whom I said, I will send you from heaven, even that "Spirit of truth," which cometh forth and is sent by the Father, shall, when he cometh, with wonderful efficacy, bear testimony to the truth of my doctrine, and cause it to be spread through the world with incredible success. Nay, and ye yourselves also, though now so weak, fearful, and doubting, shall then very powerfully bear testimony to the truth of all the things whereof ye, having been all along present with me, have been witnesses from the beginning.

Thus have I warned you, beforehand, of the opposition and persecution ye must expect to meet with in the world, that when it cometh ye may not be surprised and terrified, so as to be discouraged thereby from persisting in the performance of your duty.

Having finished his discourse, "Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and prayed," with great fervency, to his Father. [The prayer itself is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John.]

His prayer being ended, Jesus and his disciples came down from the Mount of Olives, into a field below, called Gethsemane, through which the brook Cedron ran, and in it, on the other side of the brook, was a garden, called the garden of Gethsemane. Here he desired his disciples to sit down till he should retire to pray, taking with him Peter, James, and John, those three select disciples, whom he had before chosen to be witnesses of his transfiguration, and now to be eye-witnesses of his passion, leaving the other disciples at the garden door, to watch the approach of Judas and his band.

The sufferings which he was on the point of undergoing, were so great, that the very prospect of them excited this doleful exclamation : "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ; tarry ye here, and watch." On this great occasion, he sustained those grievous sorrows in his soul, by which, as well as by dying on the cross, he became a sincere offering, and accomplished the redemption of mankind.

He now withdrew from them about a stone's cast, and his human nature being overburdened beyond measure, he found it necessary to retire and pray, that if it was possible, or consistent with the salvation of the world, he might be delivered from the sufferings which were then lying on him. It was not the fear of dying on the cross which made him speak or pray in such a manner. To suppose this, would infinitely degrade his character. Make his sufferings as terrible as possible, clothe them with all the aggravated circumstances of distress ; yet the blessed Jesus, whose human nature was strengthened by being connected with the divine, could not but shrink at the prospect of such sufferings as he had to endure. He addresses his divine Father with a sigh of fervent wishes, that the cup might, if possible, be removed from him. In the Greek, it is, "O that thou wouldst remove this cup from me !" And having first knelt and prayed, he fell prostrate on his face, accompanying his address with due expressions of resignation, adding, immediately, "Not as I will but as thou wilt."

At length he obtained relief, being heard on account of his perfect and entire submission to the will of his heavenly Father." "And when he rose up from prayer, and was come

to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow." This circumstance shows how much his disciples were affected with their Master's sufferings. The sensations of grief which they felt on seeing his unspeakable distress, so overpowered them, that they sunk into a sleep.

Our blessed Saviour, for the last time, came to his disciples, and seeing them still asleep, he said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest ; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going : behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." Matthew, xxvi. 45, 46. The event will soon be over which causes your sorrow : I am betrayed, and ready to be delivered unto death.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JUDAS, who had often resorted to the garden of Gethsemane with the disciples of our Lord, knowing the spot, and the usual time of his Master's repairing thither, informed the chief priests and elders that the time for apprehending Jesus was now come. They therefore sent a band of soldiers with him, and servants carrying lanterns and torches to show them the way ; because, though it was always full moon at the passover, the sky might be dark with clouds, and the place whither they were going was shaded with trees. At the same time, a deputation of their number accompanied the band, to see that every one did his duty.

Judas having thus received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, they went thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons ; for they were exceedingly anxious to secure and get him into their hands ; and the soldiers having, perhaps, never seen Jesus before, found it necessary that Judas should distinguish him, and point him out to them by some particular sign

The treacherous Judas went before the band, at a small distance, to prepare them for the readier execution of their office, by kissing his Master, which was the token agreed

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upon, that they might not mistake him, and seize a wrong person. "And he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him." Stung with remorse at the horrid engagement into which he had entered, and not being now able to retract from the execution of it, he determined to make use of art in his vile proceedings, and weakly imagined he could deceive him whom he was about to betray, on a supposition that when he should give the kiss, it might be considered by his Master as a singular mark of his affection. When, therefore, they approached near the spot, Judas (who was at the head of the band) suddenly ran forward, and coming up to Jesus, said, "Hail Master ! and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come ? Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss ?" Before, however, Judas could make any reply, the band (who had fixed their eyes on the person he had kissed) arrived immediately, and surrounded Jesus.

The artifice and wicked designs of the base and perfidious Judas are here manifestly displayed. In order to conceal his villainy from his Master and his disciples, he walked hastily, and, without awaiting for the band, went up directly and saluted him, wishing, perhaps, to have that considered as a token of apprising him of his danger. But Jesus did not fail to convince him that he knew the meaning and intent of his salutation ; saying, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss ?" Judas certainly concealed his treachery so well that Peter did not suspect him, or it is probable he would have struck at him rather than at Malchus, the high priest's servant.

The appointed time of our Lord's sufferings being now come, he did not, as formerly, avoid his enemies ; but on the contrary, on their telling him they sought Jesus of Nazareth, he replied, "I am he ;" thereby intimating to them that he was willing to put himself into their hands. At the same time, to show them that they could not apprehend him without his own consent, he, in an extraordinary manner, exerted his divine power ; he made the whole band fall back, and threw them to the ground. "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto

them, Whom seek ye ? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am he ; and Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with them. As soon, then, as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." But the soldiers and the Jews, imagining, perhaps, that they had been thrown down by some demon or evil spirit, with whom the Jews said he was in confederacy, advanced toward him a second time. "Then he asked again, Whom seek ye ? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he ;" expressing again his willingness to fall into their hands. "If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way." If your business be with me alone, suffer my disciples to pass : for the party had surrounded them also. He seems to have made this request to the soldiers, that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." For, as he always proportioned the trials of his people to their strength, so here he took care that the disciples should escape the storm, which none but himself could sustain.

At length one of the soldiers, more daring than the rest, rudely caught Jesus and bound him ; upon which Peter drew his sword, and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant, who, probably, was showing greater forwardness than the rest in this business. "Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear : the servant's name was Malchus." The enraged disciple was on the point of singly attacking the whole band, when Jesus ordered him to sheath his sword, telling him that his unseasonable and imprudent defense might prove the occasion of his destruction. "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up thy sword into his place : for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matthew, xxvi. 52. He told him likewise, that it implied both a distrust of God, who can always employ a variety of means for the safety of his people, and also his ignorance in the Scriptures. "Thinkest thou," said he, "that I can not now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Matthew, xxvi. 53, 54.

The word legion was a Roman military term, being a name which they gave to a body of five or six thousand men ; wherefore, in regard that the band which surrounded them was a Roman cohort, our Lord might make use of this term by way of contrast, to show what an inconsiderable thing the cohort was in comparison of the force he could summon to his assistance ; more than twelve legions, not of soldiers, but of angels. He was yet tenderly inclined to prevent any bad consequences which might have followed Peter's rashness, by healing the servant, and adding, in his rebuke to him, a declaration of his willingness to suffer : "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?"

The circumstance of his healing the ear of Malchus by touching it, evidently implies that no wound or distemper was incurable in the hand of Jesus ; neither was any injury so great that he could not forgive. It seems somewhat surprising that this evident miracle did not make an impression upon the chief priests, especially as our Lord put them in mind, at the same time, of the other miracles ; for, having first said, "Suffer ye thus far ; and he touched his ear, and healed him," he added, "Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves ? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me : but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Luke, xxii. 51, etc. The priests had kept at a distance for some time, but drew near when they understood that Jesus was in their power ; for they were proof against all conviction, being obstinately bent on putting him to death. And the disciples, when they saw their Master in the hands of his enemies, forsook him, and fled, according to his prediction, notwithstanding they might have followed him without any danger, as the priests had no design against them. "Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. Then the band, and the captain and officers, took Jesus, and bound him." But it was not the cord which held him : his infinite love was, by far, the stronger band. He could have broken those weak ties, and exerted his divinity in a more wonderful manner : he could have stricken them all dead, with as much ease as he had before thrown them on the ground ; but he patiently submitted to this, as to every

indignity which they chose to offer him, so meek was he under the greatest injuries. Having thus secured him, they led him away. "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body ; and the young men laid hold on him ; and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." This, perhaps, was the proprietor of the garden, who, being awakened by the noise, came out with the linen cloth in which he had been lying, cast round his naked body ; and, having a respect for Jesus, followed him, forgetting the dress he was in.

They first led Jesus to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. Annas, having himself discharged the office of high priest, was consequently a person of distinguished character, which, together with his relation to the high priest, made him worthy of the respect they now paid him. But he refused, singly, to meddle in the affair ; they therefore carried Jesus to Caiaphas himself, at whose palace the chief priests, elders and scribes were assembled, having staid there all night, to see the issue of their stratagem. This Caiaphas was he that advised the council to put Jesus to death, even admitting he was innocent, for the safety of the whole Jewish nation. He seems to have enjoyed the sacerdotal dignity during the whole course of Pilate's government in Judea ; for he was advanced by Valerius Gratus, Pilate's predecessor, and was divested of it by Vittellius, governor of Syria, after he had deposed Pilate from his procuratorship.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE apprehending of their dear Master could not but strike his disciples with horror and amazement : though he had forewarned them of that event, such was their consternation, that they fled different ways ; some of them, however, recovering out of the panic that had seized them, followed the band at a distance, to see what the issue would be. Of this

number was Peter, and another disciple, whom John has mentioned without giving his name, and who therefore is supposed to have been John himself. This disciple, being acquainted at the high priest's, got admittance for himself first, and soon after for Peter, who had come with him. "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto them that kept the door, and brought in Peter. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them." The maid servant, who kept the door, concluding Peter to be a disciple also, followed after him to the fire, and looking earnestly at him, charged him with the supposed crime. "Then said the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou, also, one of this man's disciples?" This blunt attack threw Peter into such confusion that he flatly denied his having any connection with Jesus; replying "I am not," and adding, "I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest." As if he had said, I do not understand any reason for your asking me such a question.

Thus the very apostle who had before acknowledged his Master to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and had so confidently boasted of his fortitude and firm attachment to him in the greatest dangers, proved himself an arrant deserter of his cause upon trial. His shameful fears were altogether inexcusable, as the enemy who attacked him was one of the weaker sex, and the terror of the charge was in a great measure taken off by the insinuation made in it, that John was likewise known to be Christ's disciple; for, as he was known at the high priest's, he was consequently known in that character. "Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?" Art thou not one of them, as well as he who is sitting with you? Nothing can account for this conduct of Peter, but the confusion and panic which had seized him on this occasion. As his inward perturbation must have appeared in his countenance and gesture, he did not choose to stay long with

the servants at the fire. He went out, therefore, into the porch, where he was a little concealed. "And he went into the porch ; after he had been some time there, another maid saw him, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them ; and he again denied it, with an oath, I know not the man : " adding perjury to falsehood.

After Peter had been thus attacked without doors, he thought proper to return and mix with the crowd at the fire. "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself." From this circumstance, it is clear, that the ensuing was the third denial ; and that Peter left the porch, where the second denial happened, and was come again into the hall. " Here one of the servants of the high priest (being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off), saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him ? Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew." The words of Malchus's kinsman bringing to Peter's remembrance what he had done to that man, threw him into such a panic, that when those who stood by repeated the charge, he impudently denied it : " He even began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom you speak." For, when they heard Peter deny the charge, they supported it by an argument drawn from the accent with which he pronounced his answer. Surely thou art one of them ; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto ; so, that being pressed on all sides, to give his lie the better color, he profaned the name of God, by imprecating the bitterest curses on himself, if he was telling a falsehood. Perhaps he hoped, by these acts of impiety, to convince them effectually that he was not the disciple of the holy Jesus.

Thus the apostle denied his Master three distinct times, with oaths and asseverations, totally forgetting the vehement protestations he had made a few hours before, that he would never deny him. He was, probably, permitted to fall in this manner, to teach us two lessons ; first, that the strongest resolutions, formed in our own strength, can not withstand the torrent of temptation ; secondly, that the true disciples of Christ, though they fall, may be brought to a conviction of their sins ; for he no sooner denied his Master the third time, than the cock crew, and first awakened in him a con-

sciousness of his sin. "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter ; and Peter remembered the words of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly."

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN the band of soldiers arrived at the high priest's with Jesus, they found there all the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders, assembled : "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council. And the high priest asked Jesus of his disciples, and his doctrine." He inquired of him what his disciples were ? for what end he had gathered them ; whether it was to make himself a king ? and what the doctrine was which he taught them ? In these questions there was a great deal of art ; for, as the crime laid to our Saviour's charge, was, that he had set up for the Messiah, and deluded the people, they expected that he would claim that dignity in their presence, and so would, on his own confession, have condemned him without any further progress. This was unfair, as it was artful and ensnaring. To oblige a prisoner, on his trial, to confess what might take away his life, was a very inequitable method of proceeding ; and Jesus expressed his opinion thereof with very good reason, and complained of it, bidding them prove what they had laid to his charge, by witnesses. "Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world ; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me ? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them : behold, they know what I said." It was greatly to the honor of our blessed Redeemer, that all his actions were done in public, under the eye even of his enemies ; because, had he been carrying on any imposture, the lovers of goodness and truth had thus abundant opportunities of detecting him with propriety ; he, therefore,

in his defense, appealed to that part of his character, but his answer was construed to be disrespectful ; “for, when he had thus spoken, one of the officers, which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so ?” To which he meekly replied, with the greatest serenity, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil ; but if well, why smitest thou me ?” Show me, prove before this court, wherein my crime consists, or record it on the evidence on the face of my trial ; which if you can not, how can you answer for this inhuman treatment to a defenseless prisoner, standing on his trial before the world, and in open court ?

Thus Jesus became an example of his own precept, “Who-soever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also,” (Matthew, v. 39,) bearing the greatest injuries with a patience that could not be provoked.

When the council found that Jesus declined answering the questions, whereby they expected to have drawn from him an acknowledgment of his being the Messiah, they proceeded to examine many witnesses to prove his having assumed that character ; as they considered such a pretension as blasphemy in his mouth, who being only a man, according to their opinion, could not, without the highest affront to the divine Majesty, pretend to the title of the Son of God, as it belonged to the Messiah.

But, in this examination, they acted like interested and enraged persecutors, rather than as impartial judges, forming their questions in the most artful manner, in order, if possible, to draw expressions from him, which they might pervert into suspicions of guilt, as some foundation for condemning Jesus, who had so long and faithfully labored for their salvation.

Their witnesses, however, disappointed them, some of them disagreeing in their story, and others mentioning things of no manner of importance. At last, two persons agreed in their depositions ; namely, in hearing him say, that he was able to destroy the temple of God, and to raise it in three days. But this testimony was absolutely false ; for our great Redeemer never said he could destroy and build the temple of

Jerusalem in three days, as they had affirmed. It is true, that after banishing the traders from the temple, when the Jews desired to know by what authority he undertook to make such reformation, he referred them to the miracle of his resurrection; bidding them "destroy this temple," pointing probably to his body, "and in three days he would raise it up." The witnesses, therefore, either through malice or ignorance, perverted his answer into an affirmation that he was able to destroy and build the magnificent temple of Jerusalem in three days; and the judges considered this assertion as blasphemy, because it could only be done by the divine power.

Our Saviour made no reply to the evidences that were produced against him, which greatly incensed the high priest; who, supposing that he intended, by his silence, to put an affront on the council, rose from his seat, and, with great perturbation, demanded the reason of so remarkable a conduct. "Answerest thou nothing? said he: What is it which these witness against thee?" And some of the council added, "Art thou Christ?" To which our blessed Saviour answered, If I should tell you plainly, you would not believe me; and if I should demonstrate it to you by the most evident and undeniable arguments, ye would neither be convinced nor let me go.

The high priest, finding all his attempts to trepan our Saviour in vain, said to him, I adjure you solemnly, by the dreadful and tremendous name of God, in whose presence you stand, that you tell me plainly and truly, whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God.

The consequence attending the confession of the truth, did not intimidate the blessed Jesus; for being adjured by the chief magistrate, he immediately acknowledged his charge: adding, Ye shall shortly see a convincing evidence of this truth, in that wonderful and unparalleled destruction which I will send upon the Jewish nation; in the quick and powerful progress which the gospel shall make upon the earth; and finally, in my glorious appearance in the clouds of heaven, at the last day, the sign you have so often demanded in confirmation of my mission.

Upon our blessed Saviour's making this answer a number of them cried out at once, "Art thou the Son of God?" To which our great Redeemer replied, "Ye say that I am;" a manner of speaking among the Jews, which expressed a plain and strong affirmation of the thing expressed.

When the high priest heard this second assertion, he rent his clothes, with great indignation, and said unto the council, Why need we trouble ourselves to seek for more witnesses, that he hath spoken manifest and notorious blasphemy? What think ye? To which they all replied, that for assuming to himself the character of the Messiah, he deserved to be put to death.

Then began the servants and common people to fall upon him, as a man already condemned; spitting upon him, buffeting him, and offering all manner of rudeness and indignities. They blindfolded him; and some of the council, in order to ridicule him for having professed to be the great Prophet, bid him exercise his prophetic gift, in declaring who had smitten him.

Such was the treatment of the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, which, though derogatory to his character, he bore with patience and resignation, leaving his people an example to follow his steps, and to submit to the will of God in all things, nor murmur at any of the dispensations of his providence.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE blessed Jesus being thus condemned by the unanimous voice of the grand assembly, it was resolved to carry him before the governor, that he likewise might pass sentence on him. The Roman governors of Judea generally resided at Cæsarea; but at the great feast they came up to Jerusalem, to prevent or suppress tumults, and to administer justice, it being a custom for the Roman governors of provinces to visit the principal towns under their jurisdiction, on this latter

account. Pilate being accordingly come to Jerusalem, some time before the feast, had been informed of the great ferment among the rulers, and the true character of the person on whose account it was raised, for he entertained a just notion of it: "He knew that for envy they had delivered him." He knew the cause of their envy, was impressed with a favorable opinion of Jesus, and wished, if possible, to deliver him from his vile persecutors.

Early in the morning, the Jewish council brought Jesus to the hall of judgment or governor's palace. They, themselves, however, went not into the hall, but stood without, lest they should be defiled, and rendered incapable of eating the passover.

Now Judas Iscariot, who had delivered his Master into the hands of the council, finding his project turn out very different from what he expected, was filled with the deepest remorse for what he had done. He saw all his golden dreams of temporal honors and advantages sunk at once to nothing; he saw his kind, his indulgent Master, condemned and forsaken by all his followers. He saw all this, and determined to make all the satisfaction in his power for the crime he had committed.

Accordingly, he came and confessed openly his sin, before the chief priests and rulers, offered them the money they had given him to commit it, and earnestly wished he could recall the fatal transaction of the preceding night.

It seems he thought this was the most public testimony he could possibly give of his Master's innocence and his own repentance. I have, said he, committed a most horrid crime, in betraying an innocent man to death.

But this moving speech of Judas had no effect on the callous hearts of the Jewish rulers: They affirmed, that however he might think the prisoner innocent, and for that reason had sinned in bringing the sentence of death upon his head, they were not to blame; because they knew him a blasphemer, who deserved to die. "What is that to us?" said they, "see thou to that." Nay, they even refused to take the money they had given him as a reward for performing the base act of betraying his Master.

The deepest remorse now seized upon the wretched Judas, and his soul was agitated by the horrors of despair. The innocence and benevolence of his Master, the many favors he himself had received from him, and the kind offices he had done for the sons and daughters of affliction, crowded at once into his mind, and rendered his torments intolerable. Racked with these agonizing passions, and unable to support the misery, he threw down the wages of his iniquity in the temple, and confessing, at the same time, his own sin, and the innocence of his Master, went away in despair, and hanged himself.

Thus perished Judas Iscariot, the traitor, a miserable example of the fatal influence of covetousness, and a standing monument of divine vengeance, to deter future generations from acting in opposition to the dictates of conscience, through a love for the things of this world ; for which this wretched mortal betrayed his Master, his Friend, his Saviour, and accumulated such a load of guilt on himself as sunk his soul into the lowest pit of perdition.

The pieces of silver cast down by Judas were gathered up and delivered to the priests, who thinking it unlawful to put them into the treasury, because they were the wages of a traitor, agreed to lay them out in purchasing the potter's field, and to make it a common burial-place for strangers.

We have already observed that the chief priests and elders refused to go themselves into the judgment hall, lest they should contract some pollutions in the house of a heathen, which would have rendered them unfit for eating the Passover. The same reason also hindered them from entering the governor's palace, on other festivals, when that magistrate attended in order to administer justice ; a kind of structure was therefore erected, adjoining to the palace, which served instead of a tribunal or judgment seat. This structure, called, in the Hebrew, *Gabbatha*, was finely paved with small pieces of marble, of different colors, being always exposed to the weather. One side of this structure joined to the palace, and a door was made in the wall, through which the governor passed to this tribunal. By this contrivance the people might stand round the tribunal in the open air, hear and see the

governor when he spake to them from the pavement, and observe the whole administration of justice, without danger of being defiled, either by him or any of his retinue.

Before this tribunal the great Redeemer of mankind was brought, and the priests and elders having taken their places around the pavement, the governor ascended the judgment seat, and asked them what accusation they had brought against the prisoner? Though nothing was more natural than for the governor to ask this question, yet the Jews thought themselves highly affronted by it, and haughtily answered, If he had not been a very great and extraordinary malefactor, we should not have given you this trouble at all, much less at so unseasonable an hour.

Pilate then examined Jesus, and finding he had not been guilty either of rebellion or sedition, but that he was accused of particulars relating to the religion and customs of the Jews, grew angry, and said, What are these things to me? Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your own law: plainly insinuating that, in his opinion, the crime they laid to the prisoner's charge was not of a capital nature; and that such punishments as they were permitted by Cæsar to inflict, were adequate to any misdemeanor that Jesus was charged with. But this proposal of the Roman governor was absolutely refused by the Jewish priests and elders, because it condemned the whole proceeding; and therefore they answered, We have no power to put any one to death, as this man certainly deserves, who has attempted not only to make innovations in our religion, but also to set up himself for a king.

The eagerness of the Jews to get Jesus condemned by the Roman governor, who often sentenced malefactors to be crucified, tended to fulfill the saying of our great Redeemer, who, during the course of his ministry, had often mentioned what kind of death he was, by the counsel of his Father, appointed to die.

Pilate finding it impossible to prevent a tumult, unless he proceeded to try Jesus, ascended again the judgment seat, and commanded his accusers to produce their accusations against him. Accordingly they accused him of seditious practices,

affirming that he had used every method in his power to dissuade the people from paying taxes to Cæsar, pretending that he himself was the Messiah, the great King of the Jews, so long expected. But they brought no proof of these assertions. They only insinuated they had already convicted him of this assertion, which was absolutely false. Pilate, however, asked him, Is it true what these men lay to your charge, that you have indeed attempted to set up yourself as King of the Jews? To which Jesus replied, Have you ever, during your stay in this province, heard any thing of me that gave you reason to suspect me guilty of secret practices and seditious designs against the government: or do you found your question only on the present clamor and tumult that is raised against me? If this be the case, be very careful lest you be imposed on merely by the ambiguity of a word; for, to be "King of the Jews," is not to erect a temporal throne in opposition to Cæsar, but a thing of a very different nature; the kingdom of the Messiah is a heavenly kingdom.

To which Pilate replied, Am I Jew? Can I tell what your expectations are, and in what sense you understand these words? The rulers and chiefs of your own people, who are the most proper judges of these particulars, have brought you before me, as a riotous and seditious person: if this be not the truth, let me know what is, and the crime thou hast been guilty of.

Jesus answered, I have, indeed, a kingdom, and this kingdom I have professed to establish. But then it is not of this world, nor have my endeavors to establish it any tendency to cause disturbances in the government. For, had that been the case, my servants would not have suffered me to have fallen into the hands of the Jews. But I tell you plainly, my kingdom is wholly spiritual. I reign in the hearts of my people, and subdue their wills and affections into a conformity to the will of God.

You acknowledge, then, in general, answered Pilate, that you have professed to be a king? To which the blessed Jesus replied, In the sense I have told you, I have declared, and do now declare myself to be a king. For this very end I was born, and for this purpose I came into the world, that I should bear

witness to the truth ; and whosoever sincerely loves, and is always ready to embrace the truth, will hear my testimony, and be convinced of it.

Pilate answered, "What is truth?" and immediately went out to the Jews, and said unto them, I have again examined this man, but can not find him guilty of any fault, which, according to the Roman law, is worthy of death.

The generous declaration made by the governor, of the innocence of our blessed Saviour, had no effect on the superstitious and bigoted Jews. They even persisted in their accusations with more vehemence than before, affirming that he attempted to raise a sedition in Galilee: "He stirreth up," said they, "the people, beginning from Galilee to this place."

Jesus, however, made no answer at all to this heavy charge. Nay, he continued silent, notwithstanding the governor himself expressly required him to speak in his own defense. A conduct so extraordinary, in such circumstances, astonished Pilate exceedingly ; for he had great reason to be persuaded of the innocence of our dear Redeemer. The truth is, he was altogether ignorant of the divine counsel by which the whole affair was directed.

There were many reasons which induced the blessed Jesus not to make a public defense. He came into the world purely to redeem lost and undone sinners, by offering himself up a sacrifice for them ; but had he pleaded with his usual force, the people had, in all probability, been induced to ask his release, and consequently his death had been prevented. Besides, the gross falsehood of the accusation, known to all the inhabitants of Galilee, rendered any reply absolutely needless.

In the mean time, the chief priests continued to accuse him with great noise and tumult. And the meek and humble Jesus still continuing mute, Pilate spake again to him, saying, Wilt thou continue to make no defense? Dost thou hear how vehemently these men accuse thee?

But Pilate, recollecting what the chief priests had said with regard to a sedition in Galilee, asked, If Jesus came out of that country? and on being informed he did, he immediately ordered him to be carried to Herod, who was also then at Jerusalem.

The governor supposed that Herod, in whose dominion the sedition was said to have been raised, must be a much better judge of the affair than himself; besides, he being a Jew rendered him more versed in the religion of his own country, and gave him greater influence over the chief priests and elders; he therefore considered him as the most proper person to prevail on the Jewish council to desist from their cruel persecution. But if, contrary to all human probability, he should at their solicitation, condemn Jesus, Pilate hoped to escape the guilt and infamy of putting an innocent man to death. He might also propose, by this action, to regain Herod's friendship, which he had formerly lost, by encroaching, in all probability, on his privileges.

But however that be, or whatever motive induced Pilate to send our great Redeemer to Herod, the latter greatly rejoiced at this opportunity of seeing Jesus, hoping to have the pleasure of beholding him perform some great miracle.

In this he was, however, disappointed; for, as Herod had apostatized from the doctrine of John the Baptist, to which he was once probably a convert, and had even put his teacher to death, the blessed Jesus, however liberal of his miracles to the sons and daughters of affliction, would not work them to gratify the curiosity of a tyrant, nor even answer one of the many questions he proposed to him.

Herod finding his expectations thus cut off, ordered our blessed Saviour to be clothed with an old robe, resembling in color those worn by kings, and permitted his servants to insult him.

From Herod's dressing him in this manner, it evidently appears, that the chief priests and elders had accused him of nothing, but his having assumed the character of the Messiah; for the affront put upon him was plainly in derision of that profession.

The other head of accusation, namely, his having attempted to raise a sedition in Galilee, on account of tribute paid to Cæsar, they did not dare to mention, as Herod could not fail of knowing it to be a gross and malicious falsehood. And no crime worthy of death being laid to his charge, Herod sent him again to Pilate. It seems, that though he was displeased

with the great Redeemer of mankind for refusing to perform a miracle before him, yet he did not think proper to comply with the wishes of his enemies.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE Roman governor, in order to acquire popular applause, used generally, at the feast of the passover, to release a prisoner nominated by the people. At this feast there was one in prison, named Barabbas, who, at the head of a number of rebels, had made an insurrection in the city, and committed murder during the confusion.

The multitude, being now assembled before the governor's palace, began to call aloud on him to perform the annual office of mercy, customary at that festival.

Pilate glad of this opportunity, told them that he was very willing to grant the favor they desired : and asked them whether they would have Barabbas or Jesus released unto them ? But, without waiting for an answer, he offered to release Jesus, knowing that the chief priests had delivered him through envy, especially as Herod had not found him guilty of the crime laid to his charge.

While these particulars were transacting, Pilate received a message from his wife, then with him at Jerusalem, and who had that morning been greatly affected by a dream, which gave her much uneasiness. The dream had so great an effect on the Roman lady that she could not rest till she had sent an account of it to her husband, who was then sitting with the tribunal on the pavement, and begged him to have no hand in the death of the righteous person he was then judging.

The people had not yet determined whether they would have Jesus or Barabbas released to them ; therefore, when Pilate received the message from his wife, he called the chief priests and rulers together, and, in the hearing of the multitude, made a speech to them, in which he gave them an account of the examination which Jesus had undergone, both

at his own and Herod's tribunal, declaring that in both courts it had turned out honorably to his character : for which reason he proposed to them that he should be the object of the people's favor.

Pilate did the priests the honor of desiring to know their inclination in particular, perhaps with a design to soften their stony hearts, and, if possible, to move them for once to pity an injured but innocent man. But he was persuaded that if pity was absolutely banished from their callous breasts, his proposals would have been acceptable to the people, whom he expected would embrace the first opportunity of declaring in his favor ; yet, in this he was disappointed. They cried out, all at once, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."

Pilate himself was astonished at this determination of the multitude, and repeated his question ; for he could hardly believe what he had himself heard. But on their again declaring that they desired Barabbas might be released, he asked them what he should do with Jesus, which is called Christ. As if he had said, You demanded that Barabbas should be released ; but what shall I then do with Jesus ? You can not surely desire me to crucify him, whom so many of you have acknowledged as your Messiah ? "But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done ? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him."

They were so resolutely determined to have him destroyed, that notwithstanding the governor urged them again and again to desire his release, declared his innocence, and offered several times to dismiss him, they would not hear it, uttering their rage, sometimes in hollow, distant, inarticulate murmurs, and sometimes in furious outcries : to such a pitch were their passions raised by the craft and artful insinuations of their priests.

Pilate, finding it therefore in vain to struggle with their prejudices, called for water, and washed his hands before the multitude, crying out, at the same time, that the prisoner had no fault, and that he himself was innocent of his blood.

By this action and declaration, Pilate seems to have in-

tended to make an impression on the Jewish populace, by complying with the institution of Moses, which orders, in case of an unknown murder, the elders of the nearest city to wash their hands publicly, and say, "Our hands have not shed this blood," Deuteronomy, xxi. 7. And, in allusion to this law, the Psalmist says, "I will wash mine hands in innocence." According, therefore, to the Jewish rite, Pilate made the most solemn and public demonstration of the innocence of our Redeemer, and of his resolution of having no hand in his death.

But, notwithstanding the solemnity of this declaration, the Jews continued inflexible, and cried out, with one voice, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Dreadful imprecation ! it shocks humanity ! An imprecation which brought on them the dreadful vengeance of Omnipotence, and is still a heavy burden on that perfidious people !

The governor, finding it impossible to alter their choice, released unto them Barabbas. And, as it was the general practice of the Roman to scourge those criminals they condemned to be crucified, Pilate ordered the blessed Jesus to be scourged before he delivered him to the soldiers to be put to death.

The soldiers having scourged Jesus, and received orders to crucify him, carried him into the Prætorium, or common hall, where they added the shame of disgrace to the bitterness of his punishment ; for, sore as he was by reason of the stripes they had given him, they dressed him in a purple robe, in derision of his being King of the Jews. Having dressed him in a purple robe of mock majesty, they put a reed in his hand instead of a scepter, and, after plaiting a wreath of thorns, they put it on his head for a crown, forcing it down in so rude a manner, that his temples were torn, and his face besmeared with his most precious blood. To the Son of God, in this condition, the rude soldiers bowed the knee, pretending to do it out of respect ; but, at the same time, gave him severe blows on his head, which drove the points of the wreath afresh into his temples, and then spit on him, to express their highest contempt.

The governor, whose office obliged him to be present at this shocking scene of inhumanity, was ready to burst with

grief. The sight of an innocent and eminently holy person, treated with such shocking barbarity, raised in his breast the most painful sensations of pity. And though he had given sentence that it should be as the Jews desired, and had delivered our dear Redeemer to the soldiers to be crucified, he was in hopes that if he showed him to the people in that condition, they must relent, and earnestly petition for him to be released.

Filled with this thought, he resolved to carry him out, and exhibit to their view a spectacle capable of softening the most envenomed, obdurate, and enraged enemy ; and went out himself, and said unto them, Though I have sentenced this man to die, and have scourged him as one that is to be crucified, yet I once more bring him before you, that I may testify how fully I am persuaded of his innocence, and that ye may yet have an opportunity of saving his life.

As soon as the governor had finished his speech, Jesus appeared on the pavement, his hair, his face, his shoulders all clotted with blood, and the purple robe bedaubed with spittle of the soldiers. And that the sight of Jesus in this distress might make the greater impression on the people, Pilate, while coming forward, cried out, " Behold the man !" As if he had said, Will nothing make you relent ? Have ye lost all the feelings of humanity, and bowels of compassion ? Can you bear to see the innocent, a son of Abraham, thus injured ?

But all this was to no purpose ; the priests, whose rage and malice had extinguished not only the sentiments of justice and feelings of pity natural to any heart, but also that love which countrymen bear for each other, no sooner saw Jesus, than they began to fear the fickle populace might relent ; and, therefore, laying decency aside, they led the way to the multitude, crying out, with all their might, Crucify him ! crucify him !

Pilate, vexed to see the Jewish rulers thus obstinately bent on the destruction of one from whom they had nothing to fear that was dangerous, either with regard to their church or state, passionately told them, that if they would have him crucified, they must do it themselves ; because he would not suffer his people to murder a man who was guilty of no crime.

But this they also refused, thinking it dishonorable to receive permission to punish a person who had been more than once publicly declared innocent by his judge. Besides, they considered with themselves, that the governor might afterwards have called it sedition, as the permission had been extorted from him. Accordingly, they told him, that even though none of the things alleged against the prisoner were true, he had committed such a crime, in presence of the council itself, as by their law deserved the most ignominious death. He had spoken blasphemy, calling himself the Son of God, a title which no mortal could assume without the highest degree of guilt; "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard that Jesus called himself the Son of God, his fear was increased. Knowing the obstinacy of the Jews, in all matters of religion, he was afraid they would make a tumult in earnest; or, perhaps, he was himself more afraid than ever to take away his life, because he suspected it might be true. He doubtless remembered the miracles said to have been performed by Jesus, and therefore suspected that he really was the Son of God. For, it was well known, that the religion which the governor professed, directed him to acknowledge the existence of demigods and heroes, or men descended from gods. Nay, the heathen believed that their gods themselves appeared upon earth in the forms of men.

Reflections of this kind induced Pilate to go again to the judgment hall, and ask Jesus from what father he sprung, and from what country he came? But our blessed Saviour gave him no answer, lest the governor should reverse his sentence, and absolutely refuse to crucify him.

Pilate marveled greatly at his silence, and said unto Jesus, Why dost thou refuse to answer me? You can not be ignorant that I am invested with absolute power, either to release or crucify you. To which Jesus answered, I well know that you are Cæsar's servant, and accountable to him for your conduct. I forgive you any injury which, contrary to your inclination, the popular fury constrains you to do unto me. Thou hast thy power "from above," from the emperor; for which cause, the Jewish high priest, who hath put me into

thy hands, and, by pretending that I am Cæsar's enemy, forces thee to condemn me ; or, if thou refusest, will accuse thee as negligent of the emperor's interest : he is more guilty than thou. "He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

This sweet and modest answer made such an impression on Pilate, that he went out to the people, and declared his intention of releasing Jesus, whether they gave their consent or not. Upon which, the chief priests and rulers of Israel cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend : whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." If thou releasest the prisoner, who hath set himself up for a king, and has been accused of endeavoring to raise a rebellion in the country, thou art unfaithful to the interests of the emperor, thy master.

This argument was weighty, and shook Pilate's resolution to the very basis. He was terrified at the thought of being accused to the emperor, who, in all affairs of government, always suspected the worst, and punished the most minute crimes relative thereto with death.

The governor, being thus constrained to yield, contrary to his inclination, was very angry with the priests for stirring up the people to such a pitch of madness, and determined to affront them.

He therefore brought Jesus out, a second time, into the pavement, wearing the purple robe and crown of thorns ; and, pointing to him, said, "Behold your king !" ridiculing their national expectation of a Messiah.

This sarcastical expression stung them to the quick, and they cried out, "Away with him ! crucify him !" To which Pilate answered, with the same mocking air, "Shall I crucify your king ?" The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Thus did they publicly renounce their hope of the Messiah, which the whole economy of their religion had been calculated to cherish ; they also publicly acknowledged their subjection to the Romans, and, consequently, condemned themselves, when they afterwards rebelled against the emperor.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE solemn, the awful period, now approached, when the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, was to undergo the oppressive burden of our sins, upon the tree, and submit unto death, even the death of the cross, that we might live at the right hand of God for ever and ever.

Sentence being pronounced upon the blessed Jesus, the soldiers were ordered to prepare for his execution, a command which they readily obeyed ; and, after clothing him in his own garments, led him away to crucify him. It is not said that they took the crown of thorns from his temples ; probably he died wearing it, that the title placed over his head might be the better understood.

Being arrived at the place of execution, which was called Golgotha, or the Place of Skulls, from the criminals' bones which lay scattered there, some of our Redeemer's friends offered him a stupefying potion, to render him insensible to the ignominy and excruciating pain of this punishment. But as soon as he tasted the potion, he refused to drink it, being determined to bear his sufferings, however sharp, not by intoxicating and stupefying himself, but by the strength of patience, fortitude, and faith.

Jesus having refused the potion, the soldiers began to execute their orders, by stripping him quite naked, and in that condition began to fasten him to the cross. But while they were piercing his hands and his feet with nails, instead of crying out through the sharpness of the pain, he calmly, though fervently, prayed for them, and for all those who had any hand in his death ; beseeching his heavenly Father to forgive them, and excusing them himself by the only circumstance that could alleviate their guilt ; I mean their ignorance. "Father," said the compassionate Redeemer of mankind, "forgive them ; for they know not what they do." This was infinite meekness and goodness, truly worthy of the only-begotten Son of God an example of forgiveness, which, though it can never be equaled by any, should be imitated by all.

But, behold, the appointed soldiers dig the hole in which

the cross is to be erected !—the cross is placed in the ground, and the blessed Jesus lies on the bed of sorrows—they nail him to it—his nerves break—his blood distills—he hangs upon his wounds naked, a spectacle to heaven and earth !

Thus was the only-begotten Son of God, who came down from heaven to save the world, crucified by his own creatures ; and, to render the ignominy still greater, placed between two thieves. “ Hear O heavens ! O earth, earth, earth hear ! The Lord hath nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against him.”

It was usual for the crimes committed by malefactors to be written on a white board, with black, and placed over their heads on the cross. In conformity to this custom, Pilate wrote a title in the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages, that all foreigners, as well as natives, might be able to read it, and fastened it to the cross, over the head of Jesus ; and the inscription was, “ This is the King of the Jews.” But when the chief priests and elders read this title, they were greatly displeased ; because, as it represented the crime for which Jesus was condemned, it insinuated that he had been acknowledged for the Messiah. Besides, being placed over the head of one who was dying by the most infamous punishment, it implied that all who attempted to deliver the Jews should perish in the same manner. The faith and hope of the nation, therefore, being thus publicly ridiculed, it is no wonder that the priests thought themselves highly affronted, and accordingly came to Pilate, begging that the writing might be altered. But as he had intended the affront in revenge for their forcing him to crucify Jesus, contrary both to his judgment and inclination, he refused to grant their request : “ What I have written,” said he, “ I have written.”

When the soldiers had nailed the blessed Jesus to the cross, and erected it, they divided his garments among them. But his coat, or his vesture, being without seam, woven from the top throughout, they agreed not to rend it, but to cast lots for it ; by which the prediction of the prophet, concerning the death and sufferings of the Messiah, was fulfilled. “ They parted my garments among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots.” A sufficient indication that every circumstance of

the death and passion of the blessed Jesus was perfectly known long before in the court of heaven ; and accordingly, his being crucified between two malefactors was expressly foretold : "And he was numbered with the transgressors."

The common people, of the baser sort, whom the vile priests had incensed against the blessed Jesus, by the malicious falsehoods they had spread concerning him, and which they pretended to found on the deposition of witnesses ; the common people, I say, seeing him hang in so infamous a manner upon the cross, and reading the inscription placed over his head, expressed their indignation at him by sarcastical expressions : "Ah thou," said they, "that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross."

But the common people were not the only persons who mocked and derided the blessed Jesus, while he was suffering to obtain the remission of sins for all mankind. The rulers, who now imagined they had effectually destroyed his pretensions to the character of the Messiah, joined the populace in ridiculing him, and, with a meanness of soul which many infamous wretches would have scorned, mocked him, even while he was struggling with the agonies of death. They scoffed at the miracles by which he demonstrated himself to be the Messiah, and promised to believe on him, on condition of his proving his pretensions, by descending from the cross. "He saved others," said they, "himself he can not save : if he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him."

In the meantime, nothing could be more false and hypocritical than this pretension of the stiff-necked Jews ; for they afterwards continued in their unbelief, notwithstanding they well knew that he raised himself from the dead ; a much greater miracle than his coming down from the cross would have been ; a miracle attested by witnesses whose veracity they could not call in question. It was told them by the soldiers whom they themselves placed at the sepulchre to watch the body, and who they were obliged to bribe largely to conceal the truth. It is therefore abundantly evident, that if the blessed Jesus had descended from the cross, the Jewish

priests would have continued in their infidelity ; and consequently that their declaration was made with no other intention than to insult the Redeemer of mankind, thinking it impossible for him now to escape out of their hands.

The soldiers also joined in the general scene of mockery : "If thou be the King of the Jews," said they, "save thyself." If thou art the great Messiah expected by the Jews, descend from the cross by miracle, and deliver thyself from these excruciating torments.

Nor did even one of the thieves forbear mocking the great Lord of heaven and earth, though laboring himself under the most racking pains, and struggling with the agonies of death. But the other exercised a most extraordinary faith, at a time when our great Redeemer was in the highest affliction, mocked by men, and hanged upon the cross, as the most ignominious of malefactors. The Jewish criminal seems to have entertained a more rational and exalted notion of the Messiah's kingdom than even the disciples themselves. They expected nothing but a secular empire : he gave strong intimations of his having an idea of Christ's spiritual dominion ; for at the very time when Jesus was dying on the cross, he begged to be remembered by him when he came into his kingdom. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Nor did he make his request in vain : the great Redeemer of mankind answered him, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

But let us attentively consider the history of our blessed Saviour's passion, as it offers to our view events absolutely astonishing. For when we remember the perfect innocence of our great Redeemer, the uncommon love he bore to the children of men, and the many kind and benevolent offices he did for the sons and daughters of affliction ; when we reflect on the esteem in which he was held all along by the common people, how cheerfully they followed him to the remotest corners of the country, nay, even into the desolate retreats of the wilderness, and with what pleasure they listened to his discourses ; when we consider these particulars, I say, we can not help being astonished to find them at the conclusion rushing all of a sudden into the opposite extreme, and every

individual, as it were, combined to treat him with the most barbarous cruelty.

When Pilate asked the people if they desired to have Jesus released, his disciples, though they were numerous, and might have made a great appearance in his behalf, remained absolutely silent, as if they had been speechless or infatuated. The Roman soldiers, notwithstanding their general had declared him innocent, insulted him in the most inhuman manner. The scribes and Pharisees ridiculed him. The common people, who had received him with hosannas a few days before, mocked him as they passed by, and railed at him as a deceiver. Nay, the very thief on the cross reviled him.

This sudden revolution in the humor of the whole nation may seem unaccountable. But if we could assign a proper reason for the silence of the disciples, the principles which influenced the rest might be discovered in their several speeches. The followers of the blessed Jesus had attached themselves to him in the expectation of being raised to great wealth and power in his kingdom, which they expected would have been established long before this time. But seeing no appearance at all of what they had so long hoped for, they permitted him to be condemned, perhaps because they thought it would have obliged him to break the Roman yoke by a miracle.

With respect to the soldiers, they were angry that any one should pretend to royalty in Judea, where Cæsar had established his authority. Hence they insulted our blessed Saviour with the title of king, and paid him, in mockery, the honors of a sovereign.

As for the common people, they seem to have lost their opinion of him, probably because he had neither convinced the council, nor rescued himself when they condemned him. They began, therefore, to consider the assertion of his destroying the temple, and building it in three days, as a kind of blasphemy, because it required a divine power to execute such an undertaking.

The priests and scribes were filled with the most implacable and diabolical malice against him ; because he had torn off the mask of hypocrisy, and showed them to the people in their true colors. It is, therefore, no wonder that they

ridiculed his miracles, from whence he derived his reputation.

In short, the thief also fancied that he might have delivered both himself and them, if he had been the Messiah ; but, as no such deliverance appeared, he upbraided him for making pretensions to that high character.

But now, my soul, take one view of thy dying Saviour, breathing out his spirit upon the cross ! Behold his unspotted flesh lacerated with stripes, by which thou art healed ! See his hands extended and nailed to the cross—those beneficent hands which were incessantly stretched out to unloose thy heavy burdens, and to impart blessings of every kind ! Behold his feet riveted to the accursed tree with nails—those feet which always went about doing good, and traveled far and near to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation ! View his tender temples encircled with a wreath of thorns, which shoot their keen afflicting points into his blessed head—that head which was ever meditating peace to poor and lost undone sinners, and spent many a wakeful night in ardent prayer for their happiness ! See him laboring in the agonies of death ! breathing out his soul in the hands of his Almighty Father, and praying for his cruel enemies ! Was ever love like this ? was ever benevolence so gloriously displayed ?

But see the sun, that glorious luminary of heaven, as it were, hide his face from this detestable action of mortals, and is wrapt in the pitchy mantle of chaotic darkness ! This preternatural eclipse of the sun continued for three hours, to the great terror and astonishment of the people present at the crucifixion of our dear Redeemer. And surely nothing could be more proper than this extraordinary alteration in the face of nature, while the Sun of righteousness was withdrawing his beams, not only from the promised land, but from the whole world ; for it was at once a miraculous testimony, given by the Almighty himself to the innocence of his Son, and a proper emblem of the departure of him who was the light of the world, at least, till his luminous rays, like beams of the morning, shone out anew with additional splendor in the ministry of his apostles.

Nor was the darkness which now covered Judea, and the

neighboring countries, beginning about noon and continuing till Jesus expired, the effect of an ordinary eclipse of the sun. It is well known that this phenomenon can only happen at the change of the moon, whereas the Jewish passover, at which our great Redeemer suffered, was always celebrated at the full. Besides, the total darkness of an eclipse of the sun never exceeds twelve or fifteen minutes, whereas this continued full three hours. Nothing, therefore, but the immediate hand of that Almighty Being which placed the sun in the center of the planetary system, could have produced this extraordinary darkness. Nothing but Omnipotence, who first lighted this glorious luminary of heaven, could have deprived it of its cheering rays. Now, ye scoffers of Israel, whose blood ye have so earnestly desired, and wished it might fall upon you and your children, behold, all nature is dressed in a sable vail of sorrow, and, in a language that can not be mistaken, mourns the departure of its Lord and Master ; weeps for your crimes, and deprecates the vengeance of Heaven upon your guilty heads. Happy for you that this suffering Jesus is compassion itself, and even in the agonies of death prays to his heavenly Father to avert from you the stroke of his justice.

This preternatural eclipse of the sun was considered as a miracle by the heathen themselves ; and one of them cried out, " Either the world is at an end, or the God of nature suffers." And well might he use the expression ; for never since this planetary system was called from its primitive chaos, was known such a deprivation of light in the glorious luminary of day. Indeed, when the Almighty punished Pharaoh for refusing to let the children of Israel depart out of his land, the sable vail of darkness was for three days drawn over Egypt. But this darkness was confined to a part of that kingdom, whereas this that happened at our Saviour's crucifixion was universal.

When the darkness began the disciples naturally considered it as a prelude to the deliverance of their Master. For, though the chief priests, elders, and people had sarcastically desired him to descend from the accursed tree, his friends could not but be persuaded, that he who had delivered so

many from incurable diseases, who had restored limbs to the maimed and eyes to the blind, who had given speech to the dumb, and called the dead from the chambers of the dust, might easily save himself, even from the cross.

When, therefore, his mother, his mother's sister, Mary Magdalene, and the beloved disciple, observed the vail of darkness begin to extend over the face of nature, they drew near to the foot of the cross, probably in expectation that the Son of God was going to shake the frame of the universe, unloose himself from the cross, and take ample vengeance on his cruel and perfidious enemies.

The blessed Jesus was now in the midst of his sufferings. Yet when he saw his mother and her companions, their grief greatly affected his tender breast, especially the distress of his mother. The agonies of death, under which he was now laboring, could not prevent his expressing the most affectionate regard, both for her and for them. For, that she might have consolation to support her under the greatness of her sorrows, he told her the disciple whom he loved would, for the sake of that love, supply his place to her after he was taken from them, even the place of a son ; and, therefore, he desired her to consider him as such, and expect from him all the duties of a child. "Woman," said he, "behold thy son."

But now the moment, when he should resign his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, approached, and he repeated part, at least, of the twenty-second Psalm, uttering, with a loud voice, these remarkable words, "Eloi, eloi, lama sabac-thani ?" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"

Some believe that our blessed Saviour repeated the whole Psalm ; it having been the custom of the Jews, in making quotations, to mention only the first words of the Psalm or section which they cited. If so, as this Psalm contains the most remarkable particulars of our dear Redeemer's passion, being, as it were, a summary of the prophecies relating to that subject, by repeating it on the cross, the blessed Jesus signified that he was now accomplishing the things that were predicted concerning the Messiah. And as this Psalm is composed in the form of a prayer, by pronouncing it at this time, he

also claimed of his Father the performance of all the promises he had made, whether to him or his people.

Some of the people who stood by, when they heard our blessed Saviour pronounce the first words of the Psalm, misunderstood him, probably from their not hearing him distinctly, and concluded that he called for Elias. Upon which one of them filled a sponge with vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink ; being desirous to keep him alive as long as possible, to see whether Elias would come to take him down from the cross.

But as soon as Jesus had tasted the vinegar, he said, "It is finished ;" that is, the work of man's redemption is accomplished ; the great work, which the only-begotten Son of God came into the world to perform, is finished.

In speaking these words, he cried with an exceeding loud voice ; and afterwards addressed his Almighty Father, in words which form the best pattern of a recommendatory prayer at the hour of death, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And having uttered these words, "he bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost."

But behold, at the very instant the blessed Jesus resigned his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, the vail of the temple was miraculously rent from the top to the bottom, probably in the presence of the priest who burnt incense in the holy place, and who, doubtless, published the account when he came out ; for our blessed Saviour expired at the ninth hour, the very time of offering the evening sacrifice.

Nor was this the only miracle that happened at the death of the great Messiah ; the earth trembled from its very foundations ; the flinty rocks burst asunder, and the sepulchres hewn in them were opened ; and many bodies of saints deposited there awaked, after his resurrection, from the sleep of death, left the gloomy chambers of the tomb, went into the city of Jerusalem, and appeared unto many.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

It was expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, that the bodies of those that were hanged should remain all night on the tree. In conformity to this law, and because the Sabbath was at hand, the Jews begged the governor that the legs of the three persons crucified might be broken to hasten their death. To this request Pilate readily consented ; and, accordingly, gave the necessary order to the soldiers to put it in execution.

But on perceiving that Jesus was already dead, the soldiers did not give themselves the trouble of breaking his legs, as they had done those of the malefactors that were crucified with him. One of them, however, either out of wantonness or cruelty, thrust a spear into his side, and out of the wound flowed blood and water.

This wound, therefore, was of the greatest importance to mankind, as it abundantly demonstrated the truth of our Saviour's death, and consequently prevented all objections that the enemies to our holy faith would otherwise have raised against it. The evangelist adds, that the legs of our great Redeemer were not broken, but his side was pierced, that two particular prophecies might be fulfilled : "A bone of him shall not be broken : " and " They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

Among the disciples of Jesus, was one called Joseph of Arimathea, a person equally remarkable for his birth, fortune, and office. This man, who was not to be intimidated by the malice of his countrymen, went boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of his great Master. He had, indeed, nothing to fear from the Roman governor, who, during the whole course of our Saviour's trial, had shown the greatest anxiety to release him ; but he had reason to apprehend that this action might draw down upon him the malice of the rulers of the Jews, who had taken such great pains to get the Messiah crucified.

However, the great regard he had for the remains of his Master, made him despise the malice of the Jews ; being per-

suaded that Omnipotence would defend him, and cover his enemies with shame and confusion. And he well knew, that if no friend procured a grant of the body, it would be ignominiously cast out among the executed malefactors.

Pilate was at first surprised at the request of Joseph, thinking it highly improbable that he should be dead in so short a time. He had, indeed, given orders for the soldiers to break the legs of the crucified persons ; but he knew it was common for them to live many days after that operation was performed ; for, though the pain they felt must have been exquisite to the last degree, yet, as the vital parts remained untouched, life would continue some time in the miserable body.

The governor, therefore, called the centurion, to know the truth of what Joseph had told him ; and being convinced, from the answer of that officer, that Jesus had been dead some time, he readily gave the body to Joseph.

This worthy counselor having obtained his request, repaired to Mount Calvary ; and being assisted by Nicodemus, took the body down from the cross. The latter was formerly so cautious in visiting Jesus, that he came to him by night. But, in paying the last duties to his Master, he used no art to conceal his design. He showed a courage far superior to that of any of his apostles, not only assisting Joseph in taking down the body of Jesus from the cross, but bringing with him a quantity of spices necessary in the burial of our Saviour.

Accordingly, they wrapped the body with the spices, in fine linen, and laid it in a new sepulchre, which Joseph had hewn out of a rock for himself. The sepulchre was situated in a garden near Mount Calvary ; and, in which having carefully deposited the body of the blessed Jesus, they fastened the door, by rolling to it a very large stone. "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock : and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed." Matthew, xxvii. 59, 60.

The women of Galilee, who had watched their Redeemer in his last moments, and accompanied his body to the sepul-

chre, observing that the funeral rites were performed in a hurry, agreed among themselves, as soon as the Sabbath was past, to return to the sepulchre, and embalm the body of their Saviour, by anointing and swathing him in the manner then common among the Jews. Accordingly, they retired to the city, and purchased the spices necessary for that purpose, Nicodemus having furnished only a mixture of myrrh and aloes.

During these transactions, the chief priests and Pharisees remembering that Jesus had more than once predicted his own resurrection, came to the governor, and informed him of it ; begging, at the same time, that a guard might be placed at the sepulchre, lest his disciples should carry away the body, and affirm that he was risen from the dead. This happened a little before it was dark in the evening, called the next day that followed, by the evangelist, because the Jewish day began at sunset.

This request being thought reasonable by Pilate, he gave them leave to take as many soldiers as they pleased, out of a cohort, which, at the feast, came from the castle of Antonia, and kept guard at the porticoes of the temple. For, that they were not Jewish but Roman soldiers, whom the priests employed to watch the sepulchre, is evident from their asking them of the governor. Besides, when the soldiers returned with the news of our Saviour's resurrection, the priests desired them to report that his disciples had stolen him away while they slept : and, to encourage them to tell the falsehood boldly, promised, that if their neglect of duty came to the governor's ears, proper methods should be used to pacify him, and deliver them from any punishment : a promise which there was no need of making to their own servants.

The priests having thus obtained a guard of Roman soldiers, men long accustomed to military studies, and therefore the most proper for watching the body, set out with them to the sepulchre ; and, to prevent these guards from combining with the disciples in carrying on any fraud, placed them at their posts, and sealed the stone which was rolled to the door of the sepulchre.

Thus what was designed to expose the mission and doc-

trine of Jesus, as rank falsehood and vile imposture, proved, in fact, the strongest confirmation of the truth and divinity of the same, that could possibly be given ; and placed what they wanted to refute (which was his resurrection from the dead), even beyond a doubt.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

VERY early in the morning, after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, came to visit the sepulchre, in order to enbalm our Lord's body ; for the performance of which they had, in concert with several other women from Galilee, brought ointment and spices. But before they reached the sepulchre, there was a great earthquake preceding the most memorable event that ever happened among the children of men, the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead. "For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it ; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow ; and for fear of him, the keepers did shake, and became as dead men : " they fled into the city, and the Saviour of the world rose from the dead.

The angel, who had till then sat upon the stone, quitted his station, and entered into the sepulchre. In the meantime, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, were still on their way to the place, with Salome, who joined them on the road. As they proceeded on their way, they consulted among themselves with regard to the method of putting their design of embalming their Master into execution : particularly with respect to the enormous stone which they had seen placed there, with the utmost difficulty, two days before. "Who," said they, "shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre ?" But, in the midst of this deliberation, about removing this great and sole obstacle to their design (for it does not appear they knew any thing of the guard), they lifted up their eyes, and perceived it was already rolled away.

Alarmed at so extraordinary and unexpected a circumstance, Mary Magdalene concluded that the stone could not have been rolled away without some design ; and that those who rolled it away could have no other intent than that of removing our Lord's body. Imagining, by appearances, that they had really done so, she ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John of what she had seen, and what she suspected ; leaving Mary and Salome there, that if the other women should arrive during her absence, they might acquaint them with their surprise at finding the stone removed, and of Mary Magdalene's running to inform the apostles of it.

In the meantime, the soldiers, who were terrified at seeing an awful messenger from on high roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and open it in quality of a servant, fled into the city, and informed the Jewish rulers of these miraculous appearances. This account was highly mortifying to the chief priests, as it was a proof of our Saviour's resurrection that could not be denied : they, therefore, resolved to stifle it immediately ; and accordingly bribed the soldiers to conceal the real fact, and to publish everywhere, that his disciples had stolen the body out of the sepulchre.

While Mary Magdalene was going to inform the disciples that the stone was rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, and the body taken away, Mary and Salome continued advancing towards the place, and at their arrival found, what they expected, the body of their beloved Master gone from the sepulchre, where it had been deposited by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea ; but at the same time beheld, to their great astonishment, a beautiful young man in shining raiment, very glorious to behold, sitting on the right side of the sepulchre.

Matthew tells us, that it was the angel who had rolled away the stone, and frightened away the guards from the sepulchre. It seems he had now laid aside the terrors in which he was then arrayed, and assumed the form and dress of a human being, in order that these pious women, who had accompanied our Saviour during the greatest part of the time of his public ministry, might be as little terrified as possible.

But, notwithstanding his beauty and benign appearance,

they were greatly affrighted, and on the point of turning back, when the heavenly messenger to banish their fears, told them, in a gentle accent, that he knew their errand. "Fear not," said he, "for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here ; for he is risen, as he said : " and then invited them to come down into the sepulchre, and view the place where the Son of God had lain ; that is, to look on the linen clothes, and the napkin that had been about his head, and which he had left behind him when he arose from the dead ; for, to look at the place in any other view, would not have tended to confirm their faith of his resurrection.

The women, greatly encouraged by the agreeable news, as well as the peculiar accent with which this blessed messenger from the heavenly Canaan delivered his speech, went down into the sepulchre, when, behold, another of the angelic choir appeared.

They did not, however, yet seem to give sufficient credit to what was told them by the angel ; and therefore the other gently reproved them for seeking the living among the dead, with an intention to do him an office due only to the latter, and for not believing what was told them by a messenger from heaven, or rather for not remembering the words which their Master himself had told them with regard to his own resurrection. "Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here, but is risen : remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

When the women had satisfied their minds by looking at the place where the Lord had lain, and where nothing was to be found but the linen clothes, the angel who first appeared to them resumed the discourse, and bade them go and tell his disciples, particularly Peter, the glad tidings of his Master's resurrection from the dead ; that he was going before them into Galilee ; and that they should there have the pleasure of seeing him.

The reason why the disciples were ordered to go into Galilee, to meet their great and beloved Master, seems to be this : they were most of them at Jerusalem, celebrating the pass-

over ; and it may be easily imagined that, on receiving the news of their Lord's resurrection, many, if not all, would resolve to tarry at Jerusalem, in expectation of meeting him there : a thing that must have proven of great detriment to them at that time of the year, when the harvest was about to begin, the sheaf of first-fruits being always offered on the second day of the passover week.

In order, therefore, to prevent their staying so long from home, the message was sent directing them to return into Galilee, with full assurance that they should there have the pleasure of seeing their Lord and Master ; and by that means have all their doubts removed, and be fully convinced that he had patiently undergone all his sufferings for the sins of mankind.

The women, highly elated with the news of their Lord's resurrection, left the sepulchre immediately, and ran to carry the disciples the glad tidings.

During these transactions at the sepulchre, Peter and John, having been informed by Mary Magdalene that the stone had been rolled away, and the body of Jesus not to be found, were hastening to the grave, and missed the women who had seen the appearance of angels.

The disciples being astonished at what Mary Magdalene had told them, and desirous of having their doubts cleared up, made all the haste possible to the sepulchre ; and John, being younger than Peter, arrived at the place first, but did not go in, contenting himself with stooping down, and seeing the linen cloth lying, which had been wrapped about the Saviour's body. Peter soon arrived, and went to the sepulchre, where he saw the linen clothes and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Our Lord left the grave clothes in the sepulchre, probably to show that his body was not stolen away by his disciples, who, in such a case, would not have taken time to have stripped it. Besides, the circumstance of the grave clothes induced the disciples themselves to believe, when the resurrection was related to them. But at that time they had no suspicion that he was risen from the dead.

These two disciples having thus satisfied themselves that what Mary Magdalene had told them was really true, returned to their respective habitations, but Mary, who had returned, continued weeping at the door of the sepulchre. She had, it seems, followed Peter and John to the garden, but did not leave it with them, being anxious to find the body. Accordingly, stepping down into the place to examine it once more, she saw two angels sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They were now in the same position as when they appeared to the other women, but had rendered themselves invisible while Peter and John were at the sepulchre.

Mary, on beholding these heavenly messengers dressed in the robes of light, was greatly terrified. But they, in the most endearing accent, asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" To which she answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." On pronouncing these words, she turned herself about, and saw Jesus standing near her; but the terror she was in, and the garments in which he was now dressed, prevented her from knowing him for some time. Jesus repeated the same question used before by the angel, "Woman, why weepest thou?" To which Mary, who now supposed him to be the gardener, answered, Sir, if his body be troublesome in the sepulchre, and thou hast removed him, tell me where he is deposited, and I will take him away. But our blessed Saviour, willing to remove her anxiety, called her by her name, with his usual tone of voice; on which she immediately knew him, and falling down before him, would have embraced his knees, according to that modesty and reverence with which the women of the East saluted the men, especially those who were their superiors in station.

But Jesus refused this compliment, telling her that he was not going immediately to heaven. He was often to show himself to the disciples before he ascended; so that she would have frequent opportunities of testifying her regard to him. And, at the same time, said to her, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

Thus did the blessed Jesus contemplate, with a singular pleasure, the work of redemption he had just finished. The happy relation between God and man, which had long been canceled by sin, was now renewed.

The women, on their arrival, told as many of the disciples as they could find, that they had seen at the sepulchre the appearance of angels, who assured them that Jesus was risen from the dead. This new information astonished the disciples exceedingly ; and as they had before sent Peter and John to examine into the truth of what Mary Magdalene had told them, concerning the body being removed out of the sepulchre, so they now judged it highly proper to send some of their number to see the angels, and learn from them the joyful tidings of that great transaction, of which the women had given them an account.

That it was really the case, appears from what the disciples, in their journey to Emmaus, told their great Lord and Master ; namely, that when the women came and told them that they had seen the angels, certain of their number went to the sepulchre, and found it even as the women had said, but him they saw not.

The second deputation from the apostles did not go alone ; for, as Mary Magdalene returned with Peter and John, who were sent to examine into the truth of her information, so the women who brought an account of the appearance of angels, in all probability returned with those who were sent to be witnesses of the truth of their report. Besides curiosity, they had an errand thither. The angels had expressly ordered them to tell the news to Peter in particular ; for which reason, when they understood that he was gone to the sepulchre, it is natural to think they would return with the disciples to seek him. About the time that the disciples and women set out from the sepulchre, Peter and John reached the city ; but passing through a different street, did not meet their brethren.

The disciples having a great desire to reach the place, soon left the women behind ; and, just as they arrived, Mary Magdalene, having seen the Lord, was coming away. But they did not meet her, because they entered the garden at one

door, while she was coming out at another. When they came to the sepulchre, they saw the angels, and received from them the news of their blessed Master's resurrection, for St. Luke tells us, "They found it even as the women had said." Highly elated with what they saw, they departed, and ran back to the city, with such expedition, that they gave an account of what they had seen in the hearing of the two disciples, before Mary Magdalene arrived.

Nor will their speed appear at all incredible, if we consider that the nature of the tidings the apostles had to carry, gave them wings, as it were, to make their brethren partakers of their joy at this surprising transaction.

In the meantime, the company of women, who followed the disciples, happened to meet Peter and John. But they had not gone far from the sepulchre, before Jesus himself met them, and said, "All hail!" On which they approached their great Lord and Master, held him by the feet, and worshiped him. The favor of embracing his knees, Jesus had before refused to Mary Magdalene, because it was not then necessary; but he granted it to the women, because the angels' words having strongly impressed their minds with the notion of his resurrection, they might have taken his appearance for an illusion of their own imagination, had he not permitted them to touch him, and convince themselves, by the united reports of their senses, that he was their great Lord and Master, who was then risen from the dead, after having suffered on the cross for the sins of mankind.

This company of pious women having tarried some time with Jesus on the road, did not arrive with the joyful tidings of their great Master's resurrection till some time after Peter and John; and perhaps were overtaken by Mary Magdalene on the road, unless we suppose she arrived a few minutes before them. But be that as it may, this is certain, that they arrived either at or near the same time; so that their accounts of this miraculous event tended to confirm each other.

The disciples were now lost in astonishment at what the women had related; they considered the account they had before given them, of their having seen the angels, as an improbability, and now they seem to have considered this as

something worse, for the evangelist tells us, that they "believed not."

Peter, indeed, to whom the angel had sent the message, was disposed, by his sanguine temper, to give a little more credit to their words than the rest, possibly, because the messengers from the heavenly Canaan had done him the honor of naming him in particular.

Elated with the respect thus paid him, he immediately repaired again to the sepulchre; hoping, in all probability, that his Master would appear to him, or at least the angel who had so particularly distinguished him from the rest of the disciples.

As soon as Peter arrived at the sepulchre, he stooped down, and seeing the linen clothes lying in the same manner as before, he viewed their position, the form in which they were laid, and returned, wondering greatly in himself at what had happened.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Soon after the women's first return to the disciples with the news that they had seen the appearance of angels, who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead, two of the disciples departed on their journey to a village called Emmaus, about two miles distant from Jerusalem. The concern they were in, on account of the death of their great and beloved Master, was sufficiently visible in their countenances. And, as they pursued their journey, talking one with another, and debating about the things that had lately happened among them, concerning the life and doctrine, the sufferings and death of the holy Jesus, and of the report that was just spread among his disciples, of his being that very morning risen from the dead, Jesus himself overtook them, and joined company with them.

As he appeared like a stranger, they did not in the least suspect that their fellow-traveler was no other than the great

Redeemer of the sons of men. He soon entered into discourse with them, by inquiring what event had so closely engaged them in conversation, and why they appeared so sorrowful and dejected, as if they had met with some heavy disappointment?

One of them, whose name was Cleophas, being surprised at the question, replied, Is it possible that you can be so great a stranger to the affairs of the world, as to have been at Jerusalem, and not have heard the surprising events that have happened there? Events that have astonished the whole city, and are now the constant topic of conversation among all the inhabitants? Jesus asked, what surprising events he meant. To which Cleophas replied, The transactions which have happened concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who appeared as a great prophet and teacher sent from God; and accordingly, was highly venerated among the people, for the excellency of his doctrine, his humility of life, and the number, benefit and greatness of his miracles.

Our chief priests and elders, therefore, envying him as one who lessened their authority over the people, apprehended him, and found means to put him to death.

But we firmly believed he would have proved himself the Messiah, or great Deliverer; and this persuasion we a long time supported; nor were we willing to abandon it, even when we saw him put to death. But it is now three days since these things were done; and, therefore, begin to fear we were mistaken.

This very morning, indeed, a thing happened, which extremely surprised us, and we were very solicitous with regard to the event. Some women, who had entertained the same hopes and expectations as we, going early in the morning to pay the last sad duties to their Master, by embalming his body, returned with great haste to the city, and informed us that they had been at the sepulchre, but were disappointed in not finding the body; and to increase our surprise, they added, that they had seen the appearance of angels, who had told them that Jesus was risen from the dead.

This relation seemed, at first, to us not probable, nay, altogether incredible; but two of the company going immedi-

ately after to the sepulchre, found every thing exactly as the women had reported ; they saw the angels, but heard not any thing of the body ; so that we are still in doubt and perplexity with regard to this wonderful event. In reply, Jesus said, Why are ye so very averse to believe all that the prophets, have, with one voice, predicted of the Messiah ? Is it not clearly and very prophetically foretold, in all the prophetic writings, that it was appointed by the counsel of Omnipotence for the Messiah to suffer in this manner, and that after sustaining the greatest indignities, reproach, and contempt, from the malice and perverseness of mankind, and even undergoing an ignominious and cruel death, he should be exalted to a glorious and eternal kingdom ? Having said this, he began at the writings of Moses and explained to them, in order, all the principal passages, both in the books of that great legislator, and the writings of the other prophets, relating to his own sufferings, death, and glorious resurrection.

And this he did with such surprising plainness, and clearness, and strength, that the two disciples, not yet suspecting who he was, were as much amazed to find a stranger so well acquainted with all that Jesus did and suffered, as they at first wondered at his appearing to be so totally ignorant of these transactions. They were also astonished to hear him interpret and apply the Scriptures to their present purpose, with such readiness and convincing clearness of argument, as carried with it a strange and unusual authority and efficacy. When, therefore, they came to the village whither they were going, and Jesus seemed as if he would have passed on, and traveled farther, they, desirous of his company, pressed him, in the strongest manner, to tarry with them that night, as it was then late.

To this request the great Redeemer of mankind consented ; and when they were sat down to supper, he took bread, and gave thanks to God, and brake it, and gave it to them in the same manner he used to do while he conversed with them upon earth, before his death. This engaged their attention, and looking steadfastly on him, they perceived it was their great and benevolent Master.

But they had then no time to express their joy and aston-

ishment to their benevolent Redeemer ; for he immediately vanished out of their sight.

As soon as their Master departed, they said one to another, How slow and stupid were we before, not to know him upon the road, while he explained to us the Scriptures ; when, besides the affability of his discourse, and the strength and clearness of his argument, we perceived such an authority in what he said, and such a powerful efficacy attending his words, and striking our hearts with affection, that we could not but have known him (if we had not been remarkably stupid), to have been the very same that used to accompany his teaching, and was peculiar to it !

This surprising event would not permit them to stay any longer in Emmaus. They returned that very night to Jerusalem, and found the apostles, with several other disciples, discoursing about the resurrection of their Master ; and, on their entering the room, the disciples accosted them, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon."

They had given little credit to the reports of the women, supposing they were occasioned more by imagination than reality. But when a person of Peter's capacity and gravity declared he had seen the Lord, they began to think that he was really risen from the dead. And their belief was greatly confirmed by the arrival of the two disciples from Emmaus, who declared to their brethren, how Jesus appeared to them on the road, and how they discovered him to be their Master, by the circumstances before related.

While the disciples from Emmaus were thus describing the manner of the appearance of Jesus to them, and offering arguments to convince those who doubted the truth of it, their great Master himself put an end to the debate, by standing in the midst of them, and saying, "Peace be unto you."

This appearance of our blessed Saviour greatly terrified the disciples, who supposed they had seen a spirit ; for having secured the doors of the house where they assembled, for fear of the Jews, and Jesus having opened the locks by his miraculous power, without the knowledge of any in the house, it

was natural for them to think that a spirit only could enter. The circumstance, therefore, of the doors being shut, is very happily mentioned by St. John ; because it suggests a reason why the disciples took their Master for a spirit, notwithstanding many of them were convinced that he was really risen from the dead, and were at that moment conversing about his resurrection.

But to dispel their fears and doubts, Jesus came forward and spoke to them in the most endearing manner, showed them his hands and feet, and desired them to handle him, in order to convince themselves, by the united powers of their different senses, that it was he himself, and no specter or apparition. "Why are ye troubled," said the benevolent Redeemer of mankind, "and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

These infallible proofs sufficiently convinced the disciples of the truth of their Lord's resurrection, and they received him with exultation and rapture. But their joy and wonder had so great an effect upon their minds, that some of them, sensible of the great commotion they were in, suspended their belief till they had considered the matter more calmly. Jesus, therefore, knowing their thoughts, called for meat, and ate with them, in order to prove more fully the truth of his resurrection from the dead, and the reality of his presence with them on this occasion.

After giving this farther ocular demonstration of his having vanquished the power of death, and opened the tremendous portals of the grave, he again repeated his salutation, "Peace be unto you : " adding, "The same commission that my Father hath given unto me, I give unto you ; go ye therefore into every part of the world, and preach the gospel to all the children of men." Then breathing unto them, he said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, to direct and assist you in the execution of your commission. Whosoever embraces your doctrine, and sincerely repents and believes on me, ye shall declare unto him the free forgiveness of his sins, and your declaration shall be ratified and confirmed in the courts of heaven. And who-

soever either obstinately rejects your doctrine, disobeys it, or behaves himself unworthily after he hath embraced it, his sins shall not be forgiven him ; but the censure ye shall pass upon him on earth shall be confirmed in heaven.

Thomas, otherwise called Didymus, was absent at the meeting of the apostles ; nor did this happen without the special direction of Providence, that the particular and extraordinary satisfaction which was afterwards granted him, might be an abundant and undeniable testimony of the truth of our blessed Saviour's resurrection to all succeeding generations. The rest of the apostles, therefore, told him that they had seen the Lord, and repeated to him the words he had delivered in their hearing. But Thomas replied, This event is of such great importance, that unless, to prevent all possibility of deception, I see him with mine own eyes, put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, which the soldier pierced with the spear, I will not believe that he is really and truly risen from the dead.

Eight days after the resurrection of our great Redeemer, the blessed Jesus showed himself again to his disciples, while Thomas was with them, and upbraided his disciple for his unbelief ; but knowing that it did not, like that of the Pharisees, proceed from a wicked mind, but from an honest heart, and a sincere desire of being satisfied of the truth, he thus addressed himself to his doubting disciple : Thomas, said he, since thou wilt not be content to rely on the testimony of others, but must be convinced by the experience of thine own senses, behold the wounds in my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and doubt no longer of the reality of my resurrection.

Thomas was immediately induced to believe, by the invitation of his dear Master, and being fully satisfied, he cried out, I am abundantly convinced, thou art, indeed, my Lord, the very same that was crucified ; and I acknowledge thine Almighty power in having triumphed over death, and worship thee as my God.

To which the blessed Jesus replied, Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed that I am really risen from the dead. But blessed are they who, without such evi-

dence of the senses, shall, upon credible testimony, be willing to believe and embrace a doctrine which tends so greatly to the glory of God and the salvation of the sons of men.

St. John adds, that the blessed Jesus appeared, on several other occasions, to his disciples, after his resurrection ; and by many other clear and infallible proofs (not mentioned by the Evangelist), fully convinced them that he was alive after his passion. But those which are mentioned are abundantly sufficient to excite men to believe that Jesus was the Son of God, the great Messiah so often foretold by the ancient prophets ; and that by reason of that belief they may attain everlasting life in the happy regions of the heavenly Canaan.

Our blessed Saviour having, first by the angels, and afterwards in person, ordered his disciples to repair to their respective habitations in Galilee, it is reasonable to think they would leave Jerusalem as soon as possible. This they accordingly did, and on their arrival at their respective places of abode, applied themselves to their usual occupations ; and the apostles returned to their old trade of fishing, on the lake of Tiberias. Here they were toiling with their nets very early in the morning, and saw Jesus standing on the shore, but did not then know him to be their Master, as it was somewhat dark, and they at a considerable distance from him. He, however, called to them, and asked if they had taken any fish ? To which they answered, they had caught nothing. He then desired them to let down their net on the right side of the boat, and they should not be disappointed.

The disciples, imagining that he might be acquainted with the places proper for fishing, did as he directed them, and inclosed in their net such a prodigious multitude of fishes that they were not able to draw it into the boat, but were forced to drag it after them in the water towards the shore.

It seems they had toiled all the preceding night to no purpose ; and, therefore, such remarkable success could not fail of causing various conjectures among them, with regard to the stranger on the shore who had given them such happy advice. Some of the apostles declared they could not imagine who he was ; but others were persuaded that this person was no other than their great and beloved Master. John was fully

convinced of his being the Lord, and accordingly told his thoughts to Simon Peter, who, making no doubt of it, girded on his fisher's coat, and leaped into the sea, in order to get ashore sooner than the boat could be brought to land, dragging after it a net full of large fishes.

When the disciples came ashore, they found a fire kindled, and on it a fish broiling, and near it some bread. But neither being sufficient for the company, Jesus bade them bring of the same fish they had now caught, and invited them to eat with him. Thus did the blessed Jesus prove again to his disciples the reality of his resurrection, not only by eating with them, but by working a miracle like that which, at the beginning of his ministry, had made such an impression upon them, as disposed them to be his constant followers.

This was the third time that Jesus appeared publicly to a great number of his disciples in a body, besides his showing himself several times to particular persons upon special occasions.

When they had eaten, Jesus reminded Peter how diligent and zealous he ought to be, in order to wipe off the stain of his denying him when he was carried before the high priest : Simon, son of Jonas, said our blessed Saviour to him, art thou more zealous and affectionate in thy love towards me than the rest of my disciples ? To which Peter answered, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He was taught modesty and diffidence by his late fall ; and therefore would not compare himself with others, but humbly appealed to his Master's omniscience for the sincerity of his regard to him. Jesus answered, Express then thy love towards me by the care of my flock committed to thy charge. "Feed my lambs ; feed my sheep." Show thy love to me, by publishing the great salvation I have accomplished, and feeding the souls of faithful believers with that food which never perishes, but endures for ever and ever.

I well know, indeed, continued the blessed Jesus, that thou wilt continue my faithful shepherd, even until death. For the time will come, when thou who now girdest on thy fisher's coat voluntarily, and stretchest out thy hand to come to me, shall, in thine old age, be girt by others, and forced

to stretch out thy hands against thy will, in a very different manner, for the sake of the constant profession of my religion.

By these last words, Jesus signified the manner of Peter's death, and that he should finally suffer martyrdom, for the glory of God, and the testimony of the truth of the Christian religion.

The time being now come when the disciples were to meet their great Lord and Master, according to the messages he had sent them by the women, and, in all probability, appointed at some former appearance not mentioned by the Evangelist, the brethren set out for the mountain in Galilee, perhaps that on which he was transfigured. Here five hundred of them were gathered together, expecting the joyful sight of their Master, after he had triumphed over death and the grave; some of them not having yet seen him after his resurrection.

They did not wait long before Jesus appeared, on which they were seized with rapture, their hearts overflowed with gladness, they approached their kind, their benevolent Master, and worshiped him. Some few, indeed, doubted; it being natural for men to be afraid to believe what they vehemently wished, lest they should indulge themselves in false joys, which vanish like a morning cloud. But Jesus afterwards appeared frequently to them, and gave them full satisfaction, and instructed them in many things relating to their preaching the gospel, establishing the Church and spreading it through the whole earth.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A FEW days before the feast of Pentecost, or the "feast of weeks," the disciples went up to the city of Jerusalem, where the blessed Jesus made his last appearance to them; and after instructing them in many particulars concerning the kingdom of God, and the manner they were to behave themselves in propagating the doctrine of the gospel, he put them in mind, that during his abode with them in Galilee he had often told them that all things written in the law, the

prophets, and the Psalms, concerning him were to be exactly accomplished. At the same time "he opened their understandings" by divine illumination, he removed their prejudices by the operation of his Spirit, cleared their doubts, improved their memories, strengthened their judgments, and enabled them to discern the true meaning of the Scriptures.

Having thus qualified them for receiving the truth, he again assured them that both Moses and the prophets had foretold that the Messiah was to suffer in the very manner he had suffered ; that he was to rise from the dead on the third day, as he had done ; and that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the Messiah's name among all nations, beginning with the Jews in Jerusalem.

He next delivered unto them their commission to preach the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins, in his name, among all nations, and to testify unto the world the exact accomplishment, in him, of all things foretold concerning the Messiah ; and to enable them to perform this important work, promised to bestow on them the gift of the Holy Spirit, which he called the promise of his Father, because the Almighty had promised it by his prophets.

Having thus strengthened them for the important work they were going to undertake, he led them on to the Mount of Olives, as far as Bethany, where, standing on a hill above the town, he told them that he was going to ascend to his Father, for which reason they might go courageously through all the world, and preach the gospel to every rational creature ; that they who believed should be admitted into his church by the rite of baptism, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and be taught, in consequence of their baptism, to obey all the precepts he had enjoined upon them ; that such baptized believers should receive the pardon of their sins, together with eternal life in the happy mansions of his Father's kingdom ; but such as refused to embrace the doctrines of the gospel should be for ever excluded from those happy regions, and have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone ; that while they were employed in this work he should be constantly with them, to assist them by his Spirit, and protect them by his providence. Finally, that

those who should, through their preaching, be induced to believe, should themselves work most astonishing miracles, by which the gospel should be propagated with the greatest rapidity.

When the blessed Jesus had spoken these things, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And in the action of blessing them, he was parted from them ; in the midst of the day, a shining cloud received him out of their sight ; that is, this brilliant cloud encompassed him about, and carried him up to heaven, not suddenly, but at leisure, that they might behold him departing, and see the proof of his ascending into heaven, as he had promised them.

The cloud in which the blessed Jesus ascended was more bright and pure than the clearest lambent flame, being, as is supposed, no other than the shechinah, or glory of the Lord ; the visible symbol of the divine presence, which had so often appeared to the patriarchs of old, which filled the temple at its dedication, and which in its greatest splendor could not be beheld with mortal eyes ; for which reason it is called the light inaccessible.

As he ascended, the flaming cloud that surrounded him marked his passage through the air, but gradually lost its magnitude in the eyes of those who stood below, till it at last vanished, together with their beloved Master, out of their sight.

We shall conclude this chapter with a few observations on the general conduct of our blessed Redeemer during his abode with men on earth.

The human character of the blessed Jesus, as it results from the account given him by the evangelists (for they have not formally drawn it up), is entirely different from that of all other men whatsoever ; for whereas they have selfish passions deeply rooted in their breasts, and are influenced in them by almost every thing they do, Jesus was so entirely free from them that the most severe scrutiny can not furnish one single action in the whole course of his life wherein he consulted his own interest only. No, he was influenced by very different motives : the present happiness and eternal welfare of sinners regulated his conduct ; and while others followed their

respective occupations, Jesus had no other business than that of doing the will of his Father, and promoting the happiness of the sons of men. Nor did he wait till he was solicited to extend his benevolent hand to the distressed ; “he went about doing good,” and always accounted it “more blessed to give than to receive,” resembling God rather than man. Benevolence was the very life of his soul ; he not only did good to objects presented to him for relief, but he industriously sought them out in order to extend his compassionate assistance.

It is common for persons of the most exalted faculties to be elated with success and applause, or dejected by censure and disappointments ; but the blessed Jesus was never elated by the one or depressed by the other. He was never more courageous than when he met with the greatest opposition and cruel treatment, nor more humble than when the sons of men worshiped at his feet.

He came into the world inspired with the grandest purpose that ever was formed : that of saving from eternal perdition, not a single nation, but the whole world ; and in the execution of it went through the longest and heaviest train of labors that ever was sustained, with a constancy and resolution on which no disadvantageous impression could be made by any accident whatever. Calumny, threatenings, bad success, with many other evils constantly attending him, served only to quicken his endeavors in this glorious enterprise, which he unceasingly pursued, even till he had finished it by his death.

The generality of mankind are prone to retaliate injuries received, and all seem to take a satisfaction in complaining of the cruelties of those who oppress them ; whereas the whole of Christ’s labors breathed nothing but meekness, patience, and forgiveness, even to his bitterest enemies, and in the midst of the most excruciating torments. The words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” uttered by him when his enemies were nailing him to the cross, fitly express the temper which he maintained through the whole course of his life, even when assaulted by the heaviest provocations. He was destined to sufferings here below, in order that he might raise his people to honor, glory, and immortality in the realms

of bliss above ; and therefore patiently, yea joyfully, submitted to all that the malice of earth and hell could inflict. He was vilified that we might be honored ; he died that we might live for ever and ever.

To conclude : the greatest and best men have discovered the degeneracy and corruption of human nature, and shown them to have been nothing more than men ; but it was otherwise with Jesus. He was superior to all the men that ever lived, both with regard to the purity of his manners and the perfection of his holiness. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.

Whether we consider him as a teacher or as a man, "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." His whole life was perfectly free from spot or weakness ; at the same time it was remarkable for the greatest and most extensive exercises of purity and goodness. But never to have committed the least sin in word or in deed ; never to have uttered any sentiment that could be censured upon the various topics of religion and morality, which were the daily subjects of his discourses ; and that through the course of a life filled with action, and led under the observation of many enemies, who had always access to converse with him, and who often came to find fault, is a pitch of perfection evidently above the reach of human nature, and consequently he who possessed it must have been divine.

Such was the Person who is the subject of the evangelical history. If the reader, by reviewing his life, doctrines, and miracles, as they are here represented to him, united in one series, has a clearer idea of these things than before, or observes a beauty in his actions thus linked together, which, taken separately, do not appear so fully ; if he feels himself touched by the character of Jesus in general, or with any of his sermons or actions in particular, thus simply delineated in writing, whose principal charms are the beauties of truth ; above all, if his dying so generously for men strikes him with admiration, or fills him with hope, in the prospect of that pardon which is thereby purchased for the world, let him seriously consider with himself what improvement he ought to make of the divine goodness.

Jesus, by his death, hath set open the gate of immortality to the sons of men ; and by his word, spirit, and example, graciously offers to make them meet for the glorious rewards in the kingdom of the heavenly Canaan, and to conduct them into the inheritance of the saints of light. Let us, therefore, remember that being born under the dispensations of his gospel, we have, from our earliest years, enjoyed the best means of securing to ourselves an interest in that favor of God which is life, and that loving kindness which is better than life.

We have been called to aspire after an exaltation to the nature and felicity of the Almighty, exhibited to mortal eyes in the name of the man Christ Jesus, to fire us with the noblest ambition. His gospel teaches us that we are made for eternity ; and that our present life is, to our future existence, as infancy to manhood. But, as in the former, many things are to be learned, many hardships to be endured, many habits to be acquired, and that by a course of exercises which, in themselves though painful and possibly useless to the child, yet are necessary to fit him for the business and enjoyments of manhood ; so while we remain in this infancy of human life, things are to be learned, hardships to be endured, and habits to be acquired by a laborious discipline, which, however painful, must be undergone, because necessary to fit us for the employments and pleasures of our riper existence in the realms above, always remembering that whatever our trials may be in this world, if we ask for God's assistance, he has promised to give it. Inflamed, therefore, with the love of immortality and its joys, let us submit ourselves to our heavenly Teacher, and learn of him those lessons which alone can render life pleasant, death desirable, and fill our hearts with ecstatic joy.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WE can not close this delightful scene of the life of our dear Lord and Saviour more comfortably, than by considering the benefits resulting from a due attendance to his doctrines by all who shall, by faith, receive and embrace the same.

Probably none have been greater enemies to the progress of religion than those who delineate it in a gloomy and terrifying form ; nor any guilty of a more injurious calumny against the gospel, than those who represent its precepts as rigorous impositions, and unnecessary restraints.

True religion is the perfection of human nature, and the foundation of uniform exalted pleasure ; of public order, and private happiness. Christianity is the most excellent, and the most useful institution, having the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It is the voice of reason ; it is also the language of Scripture, "The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace ;" and our blessed Saviour himself assures us, that his precepts are easy, and the burthen of his religion light.

The Christian religion is a rational service, a worship "in spirit and truth," a worship worthy of the Almighty to receive, and of the nature of man to pay. It comprehends all we ought to believe, and all we ought to practice ; its positive rites are few, of plain and easy significance, and manifestly adapted to establish a sense of our obligation to God.

The gospel places religion, not in abstruse speculation, and metaphysical subtleties ; not in outward show, and tedious ceremony ; not in superstitious austerities, and enthusiastic visions ; but in purity of heart, and holiness of life. The sum of our duty, according to our great Master himself, consists in the love of God and of our neighbor ; according to St. Paul, in denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and in living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world ; according to St. James, in visiting the fatherless and widows in affliction, and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. This is the constant strain and tenor of the gospel.

This it inculcates most earnestly, and on this it lays the greatest stress.

But is the Christian system only a republication of the law of nature, or merely a refined system of morality? No, certainly; it is a great deal more. It is an act of grace, a stupendous plan of Providence designed for the recovery of mankind from a state of degradation and ruin, and to the favor of the Almighty, and to the hopes of a happy immortality, through a Mediator.

Under this dispensation, true religion consists in "repentance towards God," and "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," as the person appointed by the supreme authority of heaven and earth to reconcile apostate man to his offended Creator; as a *Sacrifice for Sin*; our vital Head, and governing Lord. This is religion, as we are Christians. And what hardship, what exaction is there in all this? Surely, none. Nay, the practice of religion is much easier than the servitude of sin.

Our rational powers, all will readily agree, are dreadfully impaired, and the soul weakened, by sin. The animal passions are strong and corrupt, and dreadfully oppose the dictates of the Spirit of God: objects of sense make powerful impressions on the mind. We are, in every situation, surrounded with many snares and temptations. In such a disordered state of things, we can not please God, till created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. We must be born again; born from above.

The God of all grace has planted in the human breast a quick sense of good and evil; a faculty which strongly dictates right and wrong: and though by the strength of appetite and warmth of passion men are often hurried into immoral practices, yet, in the beginning, especially when there has been the advantage of a good education, it is usually with reluctance and opposition of mind. What inward struggles precede! what bitter pangs attend their sinful excesses! what guilty blushes and uneasy fears! what frightful prospects and pale reviews. "Terrors are upon them, and a fire not blown consumeth them." To make a mock of sin, and to commit iniquity without remorse, is, in some instances, an attainment that requires length of time, and much painful labor; more labor than is requisite to attain that salvation which is the

glory of the man, the ornament of the Christian, and the chief of his happiness.

The soul can no more be reconciled to acts of wickedness and injustice, than the body to excess, but by suffering many bitter pains, and cruel attacks.

The mouth of conscience may, indeed, be stopped for awhile by false principles ; its sacred whispers may be drowned by the noise of company, and stifled by the entertainments of sense ; but this principle of conscience is so clear and strong, that the sinner's arts will be unable to lull her into a lasting security.

When the hour of calamity arrives, when sickness seizeth, and death approaches the sinner, conscience then restrains him to listen to her accusation, and will not suffer the temples of his head to take any rest. "There is no peace to the wicked ;" the foundations of peace are subverted ; they are at utter enmity with their reason, with their conscience, and with their God.

Not so is the case of true religion. For when religion, pure and genuine, forms the temper and governs the life, conscience applauds, and peace takes her residence in the breast. The soul is in its proper state. There is order and regularity both in the faculties and actions. Conscious of its own integrity, and secure of the divine approbation, the soul enjoys a calmness not to be described. But why do I call this happy frame mere calmness ? The air may be calm, and the day overcast with thick mists and dark clouds. The pious and virtuous mind resembles a serene day enlightened and enlivened with the brightest rays of the sun. Though all without may be clouds and darkness, there is light in the heart of a devout man. "He is satisfied with favor, and filled with peace and joy in believing." In the concluding scene, the awful moment of dissolution, all is peaceful and serene. The immortal part quits its tenement of clay, with the well-grounded hope of ascending to happiness and glory.

Nor does the gospel enjoin any duty but what is fit and reasonable. It calls upon all its professors to practice reverence, submission, love, and gratitude to God ; justice, truth, and universal benevolence to men ; and to maintain the govern-

ment of our minds. And what has any one to object against this? From the least to the greatest commandment of our dear Redeemer, there is not one which impartial reason can find fault with. "His law is perfect; his precepts are true and righteous altogether." Not even those excepted which require us "to love our enemies, to deny ourselves," and to "take up our cross." To forgive an injury is more generous and manly than to revenge it; to control a licentious appetite, than to indulge it; to suffer poverty, reproach, and even death itself, in the sacred cause of truth and integrity, is much wiser and better, than by base compliances to make "shipwreck of faith and a good conscience."

Thus in a storm at sea, or a conflagration on the land, a man with pleasure abandons his slumber to secure his jewels. Piety and virtue are the wisest and most reasonable things in the world, vice and wickedness the most irrational and absurd.

The all-wise Author of our being hath so framed our natures, and placed us in such relations, that there is nothing vicious but what is injurious, nothing virtuous but what is advantageous to our present interest, both with respect to body and mind. Meekness and humility, patience, and universal charity, and grace, give a joy "unknown to transgressors."

The divine virtues of truth, equity, and love, are the only support of society. Temperance and sobriety are the best preservatives of health and strength; but sin and debauchery impair the body, consume the substance, reduce to poverty, and form the direct path to an immature and untimely death. Now this is the chief excellency of all laws, and what will always render their burden pleasant and delightful, that they enjoin nothing unbecoming or injurious.

Besides, to render our duty easy, we have the example, as well as the commands, of the blessed Jesus. The masters of morality among the heathen gave excellent rules for the regulation of men's manners; but they wanted either the honesty or the courage to try their own arguments upon themselves. It was a strong presumption that the yoke of the scribes and Pharisees was grievous, when they laid "heavy burdens upon men's shoulders," which they themselves refused

to touch with one of their fingers. Not thus our great law-giver, Jesus Christ the righteous, His behaviour was, in all respects, conformable to his doctrine. His devotion, how sublime and ardent ! benevolence towards men, how great and diffusive ! He was in life an exact pattern of innocence ; for he “ did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” In the Son of God, incarnate, is exhibited the brightest, the fairest resemblance of the Father, that earth or heaven ever beheld ; an example peculiarly persuasive, calculated to inspire resolution, and to animate us to use our utmost endeavors to imitate the divine pattern, the example of “ the author and finisher of our faith,” of him “ who loved us, and gave himself for us.” Our profession and character, as Christians, obliges us to make his example the model of our lives. Every motive of decency, gratitude, and interest, constrains us to tread the paths he trod before us.

We should also remember that our burden is easy ; because God, who “ knoweth whereof we are made, who considereth that we are but dust,” is ever ready to assist us. The heathen sages themselves, had some notion of this assistance, though guided only by the glimmering lamp of reason. But what they looked upon as probable, the gospel clearly and strongly asserts. We there hear the apostle exhorting, “ Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” We there hear the blessed Jesus himself arguing in this convincing manner : “ If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ?”

Another particular, which renders the Christian religion delightful, is its leading us to the perfect, eternal life of heaven. It can not be denied but that we may draw from the light of reason strong presumptions of a future state. The present existence does not look like an entire scene, but rather like the infancy of human nature, which is capable of arriving at a much higher degree of maturity ; but whatever solid foundation the doctrine of a future state may have in nature and reason, certain it is, through the habitual neglect of reflection, and the force of irregular passions, this doctrine was, before

the coming of our blessed Saviour, very much disfigured, and in a great measure lost, among the sons of men.

In the heathen world, a future state of rewards and punishments was a matter of mere speculation and uncertainty ; sometimes hoped for, sometimes doubted of, and sometimes absolutely denied. The law of Moses, though of divine origin, is chiefly enforced by promises of temporal blessings ; and, even in the writings of the prophets, a future immortality is very sparingly mentioned, and obscurely represented ; but the doctrine of our Saviour hath “brought life and immortality to light.” In the gospel we have a distinct account of another world, attended with many engaging circumstances ; about which the decisions of reason were dark and confused. We have the testimony of the Author of our religion, who was raised from the dead, and who afterwards, in the presence of his disciples, ascended into heaven. In the New Testament, it is expressly declared, that good men, “when absent from the body, are present with the Lord.” Here we are assured of the resurrection of the body in a glorious form, clothed with immortal vigor, suited to the active nature of the animating spirit, and assisting its most enlarged operations and incessant progress towards perfection. Here we are assured, that “the righteous shall go into life everlasting ;” that they shall enter into the kingdom of the heavenly Canaan, where no ignorance shall cloud the understanding, no vice disturb the will. In these regions of perfection, nothing but gratitude employs the tongue ; there the righteous shall be united to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born ; there they shall see their exalted Redeemer at the right hand of Omnipotence, and sit down with him on his throne ; there they shall be admitted into the immediate presence of the supreme Fountain of life and happiness, and, beholding his face, be farther changed into the same image from glory to glory. Here language, here imagination fails me ! It requires the genius, the knowledge, and the pen of an angel, to paint the happiness and blissful scene of the New Jerusalem, which human eyes can not behold, till this mortal body shall be purified from its corruption, and dressed in the

robes of immortality : " eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart to conceive, the joys which God hath prepared for those that love him."

What is the heaven of the heathen, compared with the heaven of the Christian ? The hope, the prospect of this is sufficient to reconcile us to all the difficulties that may attend our progress, sweeten all our labors, alleviate every grief, and silence every murmur.

But why, says the libertine, in the gayety of his heart, should there be any difficulties or restraint at all ? God hath made nothing in vain. The appetites he hath planted in the human breast are to be gratified. To deny or restrain them, is ignominious bondage ; but to give full scope to every desire and passion of the heart, without check or control, is true manly freedom.

In opposition to this loose and careless way of reasoning, let it be considered, that the liberty of a rational creature doth not consist in an entire exemption from all control, but in following the dictates of reason, as the governing principle, and in keeping the various passions in due subordination. To follow the regular motion of those affections which the wise Creator hath implanted within us, is our duty ; but as our natural desires, in this state of trial, are too often irregular, we are bound to restrain their excesses, and not to indulge them, but in a strict subserviency to the integrity and peace of our minds, and to the order and happiness of human society established in the world. Those who allow the supreme command to be usurped by sensual and brutal appetites, may " promise themselves liberty," but are truly and absolutely the " servants of corruption." To be vicious, is to be enslaved. We behold with pity those miserable objects that are chained in the galleys, or confined in dark and loathsome dungeons : but much more abject and vile is the slavery of the sinner ! No slavery of the body is equal to the bondage of the mind ; no chains press so closely, or gall so cruelly, as the fetters of sin, which corrode the very substance of the soul, and fret every faculty.

It must, indeed, be confessed, that there are some profligates, so hardened by custom, as to be past all feeling ; and

because insensible of their bondage, boast of this insensibility as a mark of their native freedom, and of their happiness. Vain men ! they might extol, with equal propriety, the peculiar happiness of an apoplexy, or the profound tranquillity of a lethargy.

Thus have we endeavored to place in a plain and conspicuous light some of the peculiar excellencies of the Christian religion ; and from hence many useful reflections will naturally arise in the mind of every attentive reader. It is the religion of Jesus that hath removed idolatry and superstition, and brought immortality to light, when concealed under the vail of darkness almost impenetrable. This hath set the great truths of religion in a clear and conspicuous point of view, and proposed new and powerful motives to influence our minds, and to determine our conduct. Nothing is enjoined to be believed but what is worthy of God, nothing to be practiced but what is friendly to man. All the doctrines of the gospel are rational and consistent ; all its precepts are truly wise, just, and good. The gospel contains nothing grievous to an ingenuous mind ; it debars us from nothing, but doing harm to ourselves, or to our fellow-creatures ; and permits us to range anywhere, but in the paths of danger and destruction. It only requires us to accept the remedy provided, to act up to its excellent commands, and to prefer to the vanishing pleasures of sin, the smiles of a reconciled God, and “an eternal weight of glory.” And is this a rigorous exaction, a heavy burden not to be endured ? How can sinful mortals harbor so unworthy a thought ?

Surely no man, who is a real friend to the cause of religion, and to the interest of mankind, can ever be an enemy to Christianity, if he truly understands it, and seriously reflects on its wise and useful tendency. It conducteth us to our journey's end by the plainest and securest path ; where the “steps are not straitened, and where he that runneth stumbleth not.” Let us who live under this last and most gracious dispensation of God to mankind, “count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord ;” and not suffer ourselves, by the slight cavils of unbelievers, to be “moved away from the hope of the gos-

pel. Let us demonstrate that we believe the superior excellency of the Christian dispensation, by depending on Christ, and conforming to his precepts. Let us show that we are Christians in deed and in truth ; not by endless disputes about trifles, and the transports of a blind zeal, but by abounding in those "fruits of righteousness, which are, through Christ, to the praise and glory of God."

From what has been said, we may clearly perceive how groundless all these prejudices are, which some conceive against religion, as if it were a peevish, morose scheme, burdensome to human nature, and inconsistent with the true enjoyment of life. Such sentiments are too apt to prevail in the heat of youth, when the spirits are brisk and lively, and the passions warm and impetuous ; but it is wholly a mistake, and a mistake of the most dangerous tendency. The truth is, there is no pleasure like that of a good conscience ; no real peace but what results from the sense of the divine favor. This strengthens the mind, and can alone support it under all the various and unequal scenes of the present state of trial. This lays a sure foundation of an easy, comfortable life, of a serene and peaceful death, and of eternal joy and happiness hereafter ; whereas vice is ruinous to all our most valuable interests ; spoils the native beauty, and subverts the order of the soul ; renders us the scorn of man, the rejected of God, and, without timely repentance, will rob us of a happy eternity. Religion is the health, the liberty, and the happiness of the soul ; sin is the disease, the servitude, and destruction of it.

If this be not sufficient to convince you, let me lead you into the chamber of an habitual rioter, the lewd debauchee, worn out in the cause of iniquity, "his bones full of the sins of his youth," that from his own mouth, as he lies on his expiring bed, you may learn that "the way of transgression is hard," and that, however sweet sin may be in the commission, "it stings like a serpent and bites like an adder."

I am going, reader, to represent to you the last moments of a person of high birth and spirits, of great parts and strong passions, every way accomplished, but unhappily attached to those paths which lead us to vice and destruction.

His unkind treatment was the cause of the death of a most amiable wife, and his monstrous extravagance, in effect, disinherited his only child. And surely the death-bed of a profligate is next in horror to that abyss to which it leads ! It has the most of hell that is visible upon earth, and he that hath seen it hath more than faith to confirm him in his creed. I see now (says the worthy divine, from whom I shall borrow this relation,) for who can forget it ? Are there in it no flames and furies ? You are ignorant, then, of what a scared imagination can figure ! what a guilty heart can feel ! How dismal it is ! The two great enemies of soul and body, sickness and sin, sink and confound his friends ; silence and darkness are the dismal scene. Sickness excludes the light of heaven, and sin its blessed hope. Oh, double darkness, more than Egyptian ! actually to be felt !

The sad evening before the death of that noble youth whose last hours suggested these thoughts, I was with him. No one else was there but his physician and an intimate acquaintance whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming he said,

“ You and the physician are come too late : I have neither life nor hope. You both aim at miracles. You would raise the dead.”

“ Heaven,” I said, “ was merciful.”

“ Or I could not,” answered he, “ have been thus guilty. What has it not done to bless and to save me ? I have been too strong for Omnipotence. I plucked down ruin.”

I said, “ The blessed Redeemer”——

“ Hold, hold,” said he, “ you wound me ! This is the rock on which I have split ! I denied his name !”

Refusing to hear anything from me, or take anything from his physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then he cried out, with vehemence, “ Oh, time ! time ! it is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart. How art thou fled for ever ! A month !—oh, for a single week ! I ask not for years, though an age were too little for the much I have to do !”

On my saying to him, “ We could not do too much—that heaven was a blessed place”——

"So much the worse," replied he, "'tis lost ! 'tis lost ! Heaven is to me the severest part of hell !"

Soon after, I proposed prayer. To which he answered,

"Pray, you that can—I never pray ! I can not pray. My conscience is too much wounded. I have deserted my benevolent Maker, and my soul is enveloped in the deepest horrors."

His friend, being much troubled—even to tears—at this, (for who could forbear ?—I could not,) he, with the most affectionate look, said,

"Keep these tears for thyself, I have undone thee. Dost thou weep for me ? That is cruel. What can pain me more ?"

Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him.

"No," said he, "stay. You still may hope ; therefore hear me. How madly have I talked—how madly hast thou listened and believed ! But look on my present state as a full answer to thee and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain ; but my soul, as if stung up by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason—full mighty to suffer ; and that which thus triumphs within the jaws of mortality is doubtless immortal. And as for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict the pain I feel."

I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary confession—in his asserting the two prime articles of his creed extorted by the rack of nature—when he thus very passionately added,

"No, no ! let me speak on—I have not long to speak. My much injured friend ! my soul, as my body, lies in ruins—in scattered fragments of broken thoughts. Remorse for the past throws my thoughts on the future, whose dread of the future strikes it back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless Heaven for the flame ; that it is not an everlasting flame—that it is not an unquenchable fire."

How were we struck ! yet, soon after, still more. With an eye of distraction, with a face of despair, he cried out, "My principles have poisoned my friend ; my extravagance

has beggared my boy ; my unkindness has murdered my wife ! And is there another hell ? Oh, thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord God ! Hell itself is a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown."

Soon after, his understanding failed ; his terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgotten ; and before the sun (which I hope has seen few like him) arose, this gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched mortal expired.

It will, perhaps, be said, that the sons of vice and riot have pleasure in sensual indulgences. Allowed ; but it is altogether of the lower kind, empty, fleeting, and transient : "like the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the mirth of the wicked." It makes a noise and a blaze for the present, but soon vanishes away into smoke and vapor.

On the other hand, the pleasure of religion is solid and lasting ; and will attend us through all, even the last stages of life. When we have passed the levity of youth, and have lost our relish for the gay entertainments of sense ; when old age steals upon us, and stoops us toward the grave, this will cleave fast to us, and give us relief. It will be so far from terminating at death, that it then commences perfect, and continually improves, with new additions.

PART III.

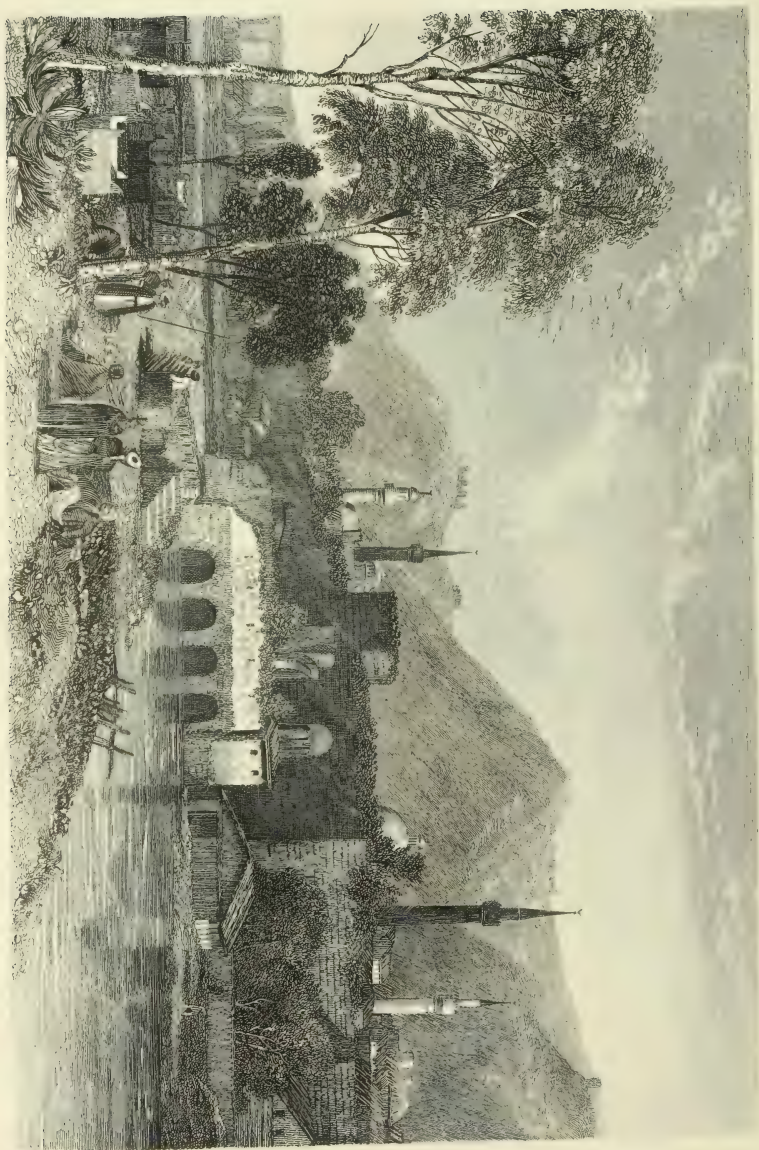
THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

ST. PETER.

ST. PETER was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, situate on the banks of the lake of Gennesareth, called also the sea of Galilee, from its being situated in that country, and the lake of Tiberias, from that city being built on its banks. The particular time of this great apostle's birth can not be known ; the evangelist and other writers among the primitive Christians having been silent with regard to this particular. It is, however, pretty certain, that he was at least ten years older than his Master ; the circumstances of his being married, and in a settled course of life, when he first became a follower of the great Messiah, and that authority and respect the gravity of his person procured him among the rest of the apostles, sufficiently declare this conjecture to be just.

As he was a descendant of Abraham, he was circumcised according to the rites of the Mosaic law and called by his parents Simon or Simeon, a name common at that time among the Jews. But after his becoming a disciple of the blessed Jesus the additional title of Cephas was conferred upon him by his Master, to denote the firmness of his faith ; the word Cephas, in the Syriac, the common language of the Jews at that time, signifying a stone or rock ; and thence he is called, in Greek, *Petros*, and by us Peter, which implies the same thing.

With regard to the parents of St. Peter, the evangelists have also been silent, except in telling us that his father's name was Jonah, who was highly honored by our blessed Saviour, who chose two of his sons, Andrew and Peter, to be



his apostles, and preachers of the glad tidings of salvation to the children of men.

St. Peter, in his youth, was brought up to the trade of fishing on the lake of Bethsaida, famous for different kinds of fish, which excelled all others in the fineness of their taste.

Here he followed the trade of fishing, but afterwards removed to Capernaum, where he settled ; for we find he had a house there when our Saviour began his public ministry, and there he paid tribute. Nicephorus tells us that Helen, the mother of Constantine, erected a beautiful church over the ruins of St. Peter's house, in honor of that apostle.

Sacred history hath not ascertained of what sect the apostle was. We know indeed, that his brother Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist, that preacher of repentance ; and it is very unlikely that he, who was ready to carry his brother the early tidings of the Messiah, that the "Sun of righteousness" was already risen in those parts, should not be equally solicitous to bring him under the discipline and influence of John the Baptist, the day-star which appeared to usher in the appearance of the Son of God.

He became acquainted with the immaculate Lamb of God, in the following manner : The blessed Jesus having spent thirty years in the solitude of a private life, had lately been baptized by John in Jordan, and there owned by the solemn attestation of Heaven to be the Son of God ; whereupon he was immediately hurried into the wilderness, and there for forty days maintained a personal contest with the devil. But having conquered this great enemy of mankind, he returned to "the place beyond Jordan," where John was baptizing his proselytes, and endeavoring to answer the Jews, who had sent a deputation to him to inquire concerning this new Messiah that appeared among them. To satisfy these curious inquirers of Israel, John faithfully related every thing he knew concerning him, gave him the greatest character, and soon after pointed him out to his disciples ; upon which two of them presently followed the great Redeemer of mankind, one of which was Andrew, Simon's brother.

Not did he conceal the joyful discovery he had made ; for

early in the morning he hastened to acquaint his brother Simon that he had found the Messiah.

Simon was one of those who waited for the redemption of Israel, ravished with the joyful news, and impatient of delay, presently followed his brethren to the place ; and on his arrival our blessed Saviour immediately gave him a proof of his divinity ; saluting him at first sight by his name, and telling him both who he was, his name and kindred, and what title should soon be conferred upon him.

From this time Peter and his companions became the inseparable and constant disciples of the great Messiah, living under the rules of his discipline and institutions.

The blessed Jesus, having entered upon his important mission, thought proper to select some peculiar persons from among his followers to be constant witnesses of his miracles and doctrine, and who, after his departure, might be entrusted with the care of building his church, and planting that religion in the world, for which he himself left the mansions of heaven, and put on the vail of mortality. In order to this, he withdrew privately, in the evening, to a solitary mountain, where he spent the night in solemn addresses to his Almighty Father, for rendering the great work he was going to undertake prosperous and successful.

The next day, early in the morning, the disciples came to him, out of whom he made choice of twelve to be his apostles, and the attendants on his person.

These he afterwards invested with the power of working miracles, and sent them into different parts of Judea, in order to carry on with more rapidity the great work which he himself had so happily begun.

We have no farther account of St. Peter in particular, till the night after our Saviour's miraculously feeding the multitude in the wilderness. Jesus had ordered his disciples to take ship, and pass over to the other side, while he sent the multitude away. But a violent storm arising, they were in great danger of their lives, when their Master came unto them, walking on the surface of the boisterous billows, with the same ease as if it had been dry ground.

At his approach the disciples were greatly terrified, sup-

posing they had seen a spirit. But their compassionate Master soon dispelled their fears, by telling them it was he himself, and therefore they had no reason to be terrified.

Peter, who was always remarkable for bold resolutions, desired his Master to give him leave to come to him on the water; and on obtaining permission, he left the ship, and walked on the sea to meet his Saviour. But when he heard the deep roar around him, and the waves increase, he began to be afraid; and as his faith declined, his body sunk in the water; so that in the greatest agony he called for assistance to him who was able to save. Nor was his cry in vain; the compassionate Redeemer of mankind stretched out his hand, and again placed him on the surface of the water, with this gentle reproof, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And no sooner was the blessed Jesus and his disciple entered into the ship, than the winds ceased, the waves subsided, and the ship was at the land whither they were going.

Some time after, the great Redeemer of the souls of men, being to receive a specimen of his future glorification, took with him three of his most intimate apostles, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and went up into a very high mountain, and while they were employed in earnest addresses to the Almighty, he was transfigured before them, darting such luster from his face as exceeded the meridian rays of the sun in brightness; and such beams of light issued from his garments, as exceeded the light of the clearest day; an evident and sensible representation of that state, when the "just shall walk in white robes, and shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

In the meantime Peter and the two apostles were fallen asleep; but on their waking were strangely surprised to see the Lord surrounded with so much glory, and those two great persons conversing with him. They, however, remained silent till those visitants from the courts of heaven were going to depart, when Peter, in rapture and ecstasy of mind, addressed himself to his Master, declared their infinite pleasure and delight in being favored with this glorious spectacle; and desired his leave to erect three tabernacles, one for him, one

for Moses, and one for Elias. But while he was speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed these two great prophets, and a voice came from it, uttering these remarkable words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him." On which the apostles were seized with the utmost consternation, and fell upon their faces to the ground ; but Jesus touching them, bid them dismiss their fears, and look up with confidence ; they immediately obeyed, but saw their Master only.

After this heavenly scene our blessed Lord traveled through Galilee, and at his return to Capernaum, the tax-gatherers came to Peter and asked him, whether his Master was not obliged to pay tribute. When our blessed Saviour was informed of this demand, rather than give offense, he wrought a miracle to pay it. Our great Redeemer was going, for the last time, to Jerusalem ; and he ordered two of his disciples, probably Peter and John, to fetch him an ass, that he might enter into the city on it, as had been foretold. The disciples obeyed their Master, and brought the ass to Jesus, who being mounted thereon, entered the city amidst the hosannas of a numerous multitude, with palm-branches in their hands, proclaiming at once both the majesty of a prince, and the triumph of a Saviour.

The blessed Jesus proceeded from Jerusalem to Bethany, from whence he sent two of his disciples, Peter and John, to make preparation for his celebrating the passover.

Every thing being ready, our blessed Saviour and his apostles entered the house, and sat down to the table. But their great Master, who often taught them by example as well as precept, arose from his seat, laid aside his upper garment, took the towel, and pouring water into a basin, began to wash his disciples' feet, to teach them humility and charity, by his own example. But on his coming to Peter, he would by no means permit his Master to perform so mean and condescending an office. What, the Son of God stoop to wash the feet of a sinful mortal ! A thought which shocked the apostle, who strenuously declared, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But the blessed Jesus told him, that if he washed him not, he could have no part with him ; intimating, that this action was mystical, and signified the remission of sins,

and the purifying virtue of the Spirit of the Most High, to be poured upon all true Christians. This answer sufficiently removed the scruples of Peter, who cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Wash me in every part, rather than let me lose my portion in thee.

The blessed Jesus, having set this pattern of humility, began to reflect on his approaching sufferings, and on the person who should betray him into the hands of wicked and cruel men, telling them, that not a stranger, or an enemy, but one of his friends, one of his apostles, and even one of them who then sat at the table, would betray him.

This declaration exceedingly affected them all in general, and Peter in particular, who made signs to St. John to ask him particularly who it was. Jesus complied with this request, and gave them to understand that it was Judas Iscariot.

Our great Redeemer now began the institution of his supper, that great and solemn institution, which he resolved to leave behind him, to be constantly celebrated in his church, as a standing monument of his love in dying for mankind ; telling them at the same time that he himself was now going to leave them, and that "whither he went, they could not come."

Supper being now ended, they sung a hymn, and departed to the Mount of Olives ; where Jesus again put them in mind how greatly the things he was going to suffer would offend them. To which Peter replied, that "though all men should be offended because of him, yet he himself would never be offended."

They now repaired to the garden of Gethsemane ; and leaving the rest of the apostles near the entrance, our blessed Saviour, taking with him Peter, James, and John, retired into the most solitary part of the garden, to enter on the preparatory scene of the great tragedy that was now approaching.

Here the blessed Jesus labored under the bitterest agony that ever human nature suffered, during which he prayed with the utmost fervency to his Father, "offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears ; and his

sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

While our blessed Redeemer was thus interceding with the Almighty, his three disciples were fallen asleep, though he had made three several visits to them, and calling to Peter, asked him if he could not watch one hour with him. Advising them all to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation, adding, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

While he was discoursing with them, a band of soldiers, from the chief priests and elders, preceded by the traitor Judas, to conduct and direct them, rushed into the garden, and seized the great high priest of our profession. Peter, whose ungovernable zeal would admit of no restraint, drew his sword, and, without the least order from his Master, struck at one of the persons who seemed to be remarkably busy in binding Jesus, and cut off his right ear. This wild and unwarrantable zeal was very offensive to his Master, who rebuked Peter, and entreated the patience of the soldiers while he miraculously healed the wound.

But now the fidelity of the apostles, which they had urged with so much confidence, was put to the trial. They saw their Master in the hands of a rude and inconsiderate band of men; and therefore should have exerted their power to release him, or at least have been the companions of his sufferings, and endeavored by every kind, endearing action, to have lessened his grief. But alas! instead of assisting or comforting their great Master, they forsook him and fled.

The soldiers after binding Jesus, led him away, and delivered him to the chief priests and elders, who carried him from one tribunal to another, first to Annas, and then to Caiaphas, where the Jewish Sanhedrim were assembled, in order to try and condemn him.

In the meantime, Peter, who had followed the other disciples in their flight, recovered his spirits, and being encouraged by his companion, St. John, returned to seek his Master. Seeing him leading to the high priest's hall, he followed at a distance to know the event; but on his coming to the door, was refused admittance, till one of the disciples who

was acquainted there, came out, and prevailed upon the servant who kept the door, to let him in. Peter, being admitted, repaired to the fire, burning in the middle of the hall, round which the officers and servants were standing ; where being observed by the maid-servant who let him in, she charged him with being one of Christ's disciples ; but Peter publicly denied the charge, declaring that he did not know him, and presently withdrew into the porch, where being secluded from the people, the reflection of his mind awakened his conscience into a quick sense of his duty, and the promise he had a few hours before made to his Master. But alas ! human nature, when left to itself, is remarkably frail and inconstant. This Peter sufficiently experienced ; for while he continued in the porch, another maid met him, and charged him with being one of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, which Peter firmly denied, and, the better to gain belief, ratified it with an oath.

About an hour after this, the servant of the high priest, he whose ear Peter had cut off, charged him with being a disciple of Christ, and that he himself had seen him in the garden with him : adding that his very speech sufficiently proved that he was a Galilean. Peter, however, still denied the fact ; and, to his sin, ratified it not only by an oath, but a solemn curse and execration, that "he was not the person," and that "he knew not the man." But no sooner had he uttered this denial, (which was the third time,) than the "cock crew ;" at which his Master turned about, and earnestly looked upon him in a manner that pierced him to the heart, and brought to his remembrance what his Saviour had more than once foretold, namely, that he would basely and shamefully deny him. Peter was now no longer able to conceal his sorrow : he flew from the palace of the high priest, and "wept bitterly," passionately bewailing his folly, and the aggravations of his sin.

It is certain, from various circumstances, that Peter, after the crucifixion of his Lord and Master, stayed at Jerusalem, or at least in the neighborhood ; for when Mary Magdalene returned from the sepulchre to inform the disciples that the stone was rolled away from the door, and the body not to be

found, Peter and John set out immediately towards the garden. John, who was the younger, arrived at the sepulchre first, looked into it, but did not enter, either out of fear or reverence to our Saviour. Peter came soon after, and resolutely went into the sepulchre, where he found the linen clothes lying together in one place, and the napkin that was about his head wrapped together in another, a sufficient indication that the body was not stolen away ; for had that been the case, so much care and order would not have been observed in disposing of the linen clothes.

But Peter did not wait long in suspense with regard to his great Lord and Master ; for the same day Jesus appeared to him ; and as he was the first of the disciples who had made a signal confession of the divinity of the Messiah's mission, so it was reasonable he should first see him after his resurrection, and at the same time to convince him that the crime he had been guilty of, in denying him, was pardoned, and that he was come, like the good Samaritan, to pour oil into the wounded conscience.

Soon after the apostles prepared to obey the command of their great Master, of retiring into Galilee ; and we find that Peter, Nathaniel, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, returned to their old trade of fishing in the lake.

One morning early, as they were laboring at their employment, having spent the whole night to no purpose, they saw on the shore a grave person, who called to them, and asked them if they had any meat ? To which they answered, No. Cast then, replied he, the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They followed his directions, and caught a prodigious number of large fish. Astonished at such remarkable success, the disciples looked upon one another for some time, till St. John told Peter, that the person on the shore was, doubtless, their great Lord and Master, whom the winds, the sea, and the inhabitants of the watery region were ready to obey.

Peter no sooner heard the beloved disciple declare his opinion concerning the stranger, than his zeal took fire, and, notwithstanding the coldness of the season, he girt on his fisher's coat, threw himself into the sea, and swam to shore ;

his impatience to be with his dear Lord and Master not suffering him to stay the few minutes necessary to bring the ship to land.

As soon as the disciples came on shore, they found a fire kindled, and fish laid upon it, either immediately created by the power of their divine Master, or which came ashore of its own accord, and offered itself to his hand. But notwithstanding there were fish already on the fire, he ordered them to bring those they had now caught, and dress them for their repast, he himself eating with them ; both to give them an instance of mutual love and friendship, and also to assure them of the truth of his human nature, since he was risen from the dead.

When the repast was ended, our blessed Saviour addressed himself particularly to Peter, urging him to the utmost diligence in the care of souls : and because he knew that nothing but a sincere love to himself could support him under the trouble and dangers of so laborious and difficult an employment, he inquired of him, whether he loved him more than the rest of the apostles : mildly reproving him for his overconfident resolution. Peter, whom fatal experience had taught humility, modestly answered that none knew so well as himself the integrity of his affections. Thou knowest the hearts of all men, nothing is hid from thee, and therefore thou knowest that I love thee. The question was three several times repeated by our blessed Saviour, and as oftentimes answered by the apostle ; it being but just, that he, who by a threefold denial had given so much reason to question his affection, should now by a threefold confession, give more than common assurance of his sincere love to his Master ; and to each of these confessions our great Redeemer added this signal trial of his affection, "Feed my sheep." Instruct and teach them with the utmost care, and the utmost tenderness.

Not long after, our blessed Saviour appeared to his disciples at Jerusalem, to take his last farewell of them who had attended him during his public ministry among the sons of men. He led them out as far as Bethany, a small village on the Mount of Olives, where he briefly told them that they were the persons he had chosen to be the witnesses, both of

his death and resurrection ; a testimony which they should publish in every part of the world. In order to which, he would, after his ascension into heaven, pour out his Spirit upon them, in an extraordinary manner, that they might be the better enabled to struggle with that violent rage and fury, with which the doctrine of the gospel would be opposed by men and devils. Adding, that in the meantime, they should return to Jerusalem, and there wait till those miraculous powers were given them from on high.

Having finished this discourse, he laid hands upon them, and gave them his solemn benediction ; during which he was taken from them, and received up into the regions of the heavenly Canaan. The apostles, who beheld their Master visibly ascend into heaven, were filled with a greater sense of his glory than they had ever been while he conversed with them familiarly on earth. And having performed their solemn adoration to him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, there to wait for the accomplishment of their great Master's promise.

The apostles, though deprived of the personal presence of their dear Lord and Master, were indefatigable in fulfilling the commission they had received from him. The first object that engaged their attention, after their return to Jerusalem, was to fill up the vacancy in their number, lately made by the unhappy fall and apostacy of Judas. In order to this, they called together the church, and entered into "an upper room," when Peter, as president of the assembly, proposed to them the choice of a new apostle.

He put them in mind that Judas, one of the disciples of their great and beloved Master, being betrayed by his covetous and insatiable temper, had lately fallen from the honor of his place and ministry. That this was no more than what the prophet had long since foretold should come to pass, and that the care of the church, which had been committed to him, should devolve upon another ; that therefore it was highly necessary that some person who had been familiarly conversant with the blessed Jesus, from first to last, and consequently, a competent witness both of his doctrine and miracles, his death, resurrection, and ascension, should be substituted in his room.

After filling up the vacancy in the apostolic number, they spent their time in prayer and meditation, till the feast of Pentecost ; when the promise of their great Master in sending the Holy Ghost was fulfilled. The Christian assembly were met as usual to perform the public services of their worship, when suddenly a sound, like that of a mighty wind, rushed in upon them ; representing the powerful efficacy of that divine Spirit which was now to be communicated to them. Upon this they were all immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, which, in an instant, enabled them to speak fluently several languages they had never learned, and probably never heard.

The report of so sudden and strange an action was soon spread through every part of Jerusalem, which at that time was full of Jewish proselytes, "devout men of every nation under heaven, Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia and Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Lybia and Cyrene," from Rome, from Crete, and from Arabia. These no sooner heard of this miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit, than they flocked in prodigious numbers to the Christian assembly, where they were amazed to hear these Galileans speaking to them in their own native languages, so various and so very different from one another.

This surprising transaction had different effects on the minds of the people : some attributing it to the effect of a miracle, and others to the power and strength of "new wine." Upon which the apostles all stood up, and Peter, in the name of the rest, undertook to confute the injurious calumny.

The effect of his discourse was equally wonderful and surprising ; for great numbers of those, who before ridiculed the religion of Jesus, now acknowledged him for their Saviour, and flew to him for refuge from the impending storm : and St. Luke tells us, that there were that day added to the church no less than three thousand souls, who were all baptized and received into the flock of the great Shepherd of Israel, the bishop of our souls.

Soon after this wonderful conversion, Peter and John, going up to the temple about three in the afternoon, near the conclusion of one of the solemn hours of prayer, saw a poor

impotent cripple, near forty years of age, who had been lame from his birth, lying at the "beautiful gate of the temple," and asking alms of those who entered the sacred edifice. This miserable object moved their compassion ; and Peter beholding him with attention, said, The riches of this world, the silver and gold so highly coveted by the sons of men, are not in my power to bestow ; but I possess the power of restoring life and health, and am ready to assist thee.

Then taking the man by the hand, he commanded him in the name of "Jesus of Nazareth, to rise up and walk." Immediately the nerves and sinews were strengthened, and the several parts of the diseased members performed their natural functions. Upon which the man accompanied them into the temple, walking, exulting, and praising God.

So strange and extraordinary a cure filled the minds of the people with admiration, and their curiosity drew them around the apostle, to view the man who had performed it. Peter, seeing the multitude gathering round them, took the opportunity of speaking to them in the following manner : "Men and brethren, this remarkable cure should not excite your admiration of us, as if we had performed it by our own power. It was wrought in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, our crucified Master, by the power of that very Christ, that holy and just person, whom you yourselves denied, and delivered to Pilate."

While Peter was speaking to the people in one part of the temple, John was, in all probability, doing the same in the other ; and the success plainly indicated how powerful the preaching of the apostles was ; five thousand persons embracing the doctrines of the gospel, and acknowledging the crucified Jesus for their Lord and Saviour.

The labors of the apostles were crowned with abundant success, and it seems that such was the aversion of the inveterate Jews to those who became converts to the faith of Christ, that they were deprived of business, in their respective callings ; for we find that the professors of the religion of the holy Jesus sold their effects, and brought the money to the apostles, that they might deposit it in one common treasury, and from thence supply the several exigencies of the church.

The Christian doctrine had been propagated hitherto without much violence or opposition, in Jerusalem, but now a storm commenced with the death of the protomartyr Stephen, nor did it end but with the dispersion of the disciples, by which means the glad tidings of the gospel, which had till now been confined to Judea, was preached to the Gentile world, and an ancient prophecy fulfilled, which says, "Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the law from Jerusalem." Thus does the Almighty bring good out of evil, and cause the malicious intentions of the wicked to redound to his praise.

The storm, though violent, being at length blown over, the church enjoyed a time of calmness and security ; during which St. Peter went to visit the churches lately planted in those parts by the disciples whom the persecution had dispersed. And at his arrival at Lydda, he miraculously healed Æneas, who had been afflicted with the palsy, and confined to his bed eight years ; but on Peter's bidding him arise in the name of Jesus, he was immediately restored to perfect health. Nor was the success of his miracle confined to Æneas and his family ; the fame of it was blazed through all the neighboring country, and many believed in the doctrine of the Son of God. It was even known at Joppa, a sea-port town about six miles from Lydda, and the brethren immediately sent for Peter, on the following melancholy occasion : Tabitha, whose Greek name was Dorcas, a woman venerable for her piety and extensive charity, was lately dead, to the great loss of mankind, who loved genuine benevolence, especially the poor and afflicted, who were supported by her charity.

At Peter's arrival, he found her dressed for funeral solemnity, and surrounded by mournful widows, who showed the coats and garments wherewith she had clothed them, the monument of her liberality. But Peter put them all out, and kneeling down prayed with the utmost fervency ; then turning to the body, he commanded her to arise, and taking her by the hand, presented her in perfect health to her friends and others, who were assembled to pay their last duties to so good a woman. This miracle confirmed those who had newly embraced the doctrine of Jesus, and converted many more to

the faith. After which he staid a considerable time at Joppa, lodging in the house of one Simon, a tanner.

Peter, after having finished his visitation to the newly-planted churches, returned to Jerusalem, and was indefatigable in instructing the converts in the religion of Jesus, and preaching the glad tidings of salvation to the descendants of Jacob. But he did not long continue in this pleasing course ; Herod Agrippa, in order to ingratiate himself into the favor of the Jews, put the apostle James to death, and finding the action was highly acceptable to that stiff-necked people, he resolved to extend his cruelty to Peter, and accordingly cast him into prison. But the churches were incessant in their prayers to God for his safety ; and what have mortals to fear, when guarded by the hand of Omnipotence ? Herod was persuaded he should soon accomplish his intentions, and sacrifice Peter to the insatiable cruelty of the Jews.

But the night before this intended execution, a messenger from the court of heaven visited the gloomy horrors of the dungeon, where he found Peter asleep between his keepers. The angel raised him up, took off his chains, and ordered him to gird on his garments, and follow him. Peter obeyed, and having passed through the first and second watch, they came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. The angel also accompanied him through one of the streets, and then departed from him ; on which Peter came to himself, and perceived that it was no vision, but that his great and beloved Master had really sent a messenger from above, and released him from prison.

In the morning the officers came from Herod to the prison, with orders to bring Peter out to the people, who were gathered together to behold his execution. But when they came to the prison, the keepers informed them that the apostle had made his escape ; which so exasperated Herod, that he commanded those who were entrusted with the care of the prisoner, to be put to death.

As we have now related the principal transactions of this apostle, that are founded on Scripture authority, we shall have recourse to ancient historians for the residue of his life.

Towards the latter end of the reign of Nero, when Peter

was in Rome, orders were given by that emperor for apprehending him, together with his companion, Paul.

St. Ambrose tells us, that when the people perceived the danger to which St. Peter was now exposed, they prayed him to quit Rome, and repair for a while to some secure retreat, that his life might be preserved for the benefit of the church. Peter, with great reluctance, yielded to their entreaties, and made his escape by night; but as he passed the gate, he was met by a person in the form of his great and beloved Master, and on his asking him whither he was going, answered, "To Rome, to be crucified a second time:" which Peter taking for a reproof of his cowardice, returned again into the city, and was soon after apprehended, and cast, together with St. Paul, into the Mamertime prison. Here they were confined eight or nine months; but spent their time in the exercise of religion, especially in preaching to the prisoners, and those who resorted to them. And during this confinement, it is generally thought, St. Peter wrote the second epistle to the dispersed Jews, wherein he endeavors to confirm them in the belief and practice of Christianity, and to fortify them against those poisonous and pernicious principles and actions which even then began to break in upon the Christian church.

Nero at last returning from Achaia, entered Rome in triumph; and soon after his arrival resolved that the apostles should fall as victims and sacrifices to his cruelty and revenge. While the fatal stroke was daily expected, the Christians in Rome were continually offering up their prayers to Heaven to protect those two holy persons. But the Almighty was now willing to put an end to their sorrows; and after sealing the truth they had preached with their own blood, to receive them into the regions of eternal bliss and happiness, and exchange their crowns of martyrdom for crowns of glory. Accordingly they were both condemned by the cruel emperor of Rome; and St. Peter having taken his farewell of the brethren, especially of St. Paul, was taken from the prison and led to the top of the Vatican mount, near the Tiber, where he was sentenced to surrender up his life on the cross.

At his coming to the place of execution, he begged the

favor of the officers that he might be executed not in the common manner, but with his head downward, affirming that he was unworthy to suffer in the same posture in which his Lord had suffered before him. This request was accordingly complied with ; and the great apostle St. Peter surrendered up his soul into the hands of his great and beneficent Master, who came down from heaven to ransom mankind from destruction, and open for them the gates of the heavenly Canaan.

His body, being taken down from the cross, is said to have been embalmed by Marcellimus, the presbyter, after the manner of the Jews, and then buried in the Vatican, near the Appian way, two miles from Rome.

ST. PAUL.

THIS great apostle of the Gentiles was a descendant from the ancient stock of Abraham. He belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacob. Tarsus, the place of his nativity, was the metropolis of Cilicia, and situated about three hundred miles distant from Jerusalem ; it was exceedingly rich and populous, and a Roman municipium, or free corporation, invested with the privileges of Rome by the first two emperors, as a reward for the citizens' firm adherence to the Cæsars in the rebellion of Crassus. St. Paul was therefore born a Roman citizen, and he often pleads this privilege on his trials.

It was common for the inhabitants of Tarsus to send their children into other cities for learning and improvement, especially to Jerusalem, where they were so numerous that they had a synagogue of their own, called the synagogue of the Cilicians. To this capital our apostle was also sent, and brought up at the school of that eminent rabbi, Gamaliel, in the most exact knowledge of the law of Moses. Nor did he fail to profit by the instructions of that great master, for he so diligently conformed himself to precepts that, without

boasting, he asserts of himself that, touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless, and defied even his enemies to allege any thing to the contrary, even in his youth. He joined himself to the sect of the Pharisees, the most strict order of the Jewish religion, but, at the same time, the proudest and greatest enemies to Christ and his holy religion.

With regard to his double capacity, of Jewish extraction and Roman freedom, he had two names, Saul and Paul ; the former Hebrew, and the latter Latin. We must also consider his trade of tent-making as a part of his education ; it being a constant practice of the Jews to bring up their children to some honest calling, that, in case of necessity, they might provide for themselves by the labor of their own hands.

The first action we find him engaged in was the disputation he and his countrymen had with the martyr Stephen with regard to the Messiah. The Christian was too hard for them in the dispute ; but they were too powerful for him in their civil interests, for being enraged at his convincing arguments, they carried him before the high priest, who by false accusations condemned him to death. How far Saul was concerned in this cruel action is impossible to say ; all we know is that he "kept the raiment of them that slew him."

The storm of persecution against the church being thus begun, it increased prodigiously, and the poor Christians of Jerusalem were miserably harassed and dispersed. In this persecution our apostle was a principal agent, searching all the adjacent parts for the afflicted saints, beating some in the synagogue, inflicting other cruelties, confining some in prison, and procuring others to be put to death.

But it was the will of Providence he should be employed in a work of very different nature ; and accordingly, he was stopped in his journey. For as he was traveling between Jerusalem and Damascus, to execute the commission of the Jewish Sanhedrim, a refulgent light, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, darted upon him ; at which both he and his companions were terribly amazed and confounded, and immediately fell prostrate on the ground. While they lay in this state, a voice was heard, in the Hebrew language, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?" To which Saul

replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" And was immediately answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." As if the blessed Jesus had said, "All thy attempts to extirpate the faith in me will prove abortive; and like kicking against the spikes, wound and torment thyself."

In the meantime our blessed Saviour appeared in a vision to Ananias, a very devout and religious man, highly esteemed by all the inhabitants of Damascus. "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street, which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas, for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for behold he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

Ananias, who was ever ready to obey the commands of the Most High, startled at the name, having heard of the bloody practices of Saul at Jerusalem, and what commission he was now come to execute in Damascus. He, therefore, suspected that his conversion was nothing more than a snare artfully laid by him against the Christians. But our blessed Saviour soon removed his apprehensions, by telling him that his suspicions were entirely destitute of foundation; and that he had now taken him, as a chosen vessel, to preach the Gospel both to the Jews and Gentiles, and even before the greatest monarchs of the earth. "Go thy way," said he, "for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." At the same time he acquainted him with the great persecutions he should undergo for the sake of the gospel: "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

This quieted the fears of Ananias, who immediately obeyed the heavenly vision, repaired to the house of Judas, and, laying his hands upon Saul, addressed him in words to this effect:—"That Jesus," said he, "who appeared to thee in the way, hath sent me to restore thy sight, and by the infusion of his Spirit to give thee the knowledge of those truths which thou hast blindly and ignorantly persecuted; but who now is willing to receive thee by baptism into his church, and make thee a member of his body."

This speech was no sooner pronounced, than there fell from his eyes thick films, resembling scales, and he received his sight : and after baptism conversed with the Christians at Damascus. Nor did he only converse with them, he also, to the great astonishment of the whole church, preached the gospel to those Christians he came with an intention to destroy, at the same time boldly asserting, “ that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God ;” and proving it to the Jews, with such demonstrative evidence that they were confounded, and found it impossible to answer him.

The miraculous convert, at the instance of the divine command, retired into Arabia Petraea, where he received a full revelation of all the mysteries of Christianity : for he himself declares that he conversed not with flesh and blood. Having preached in several parts of that country some time, he returned again to Damascus, applying himself, with the utmost assiduity, to the great work of the ministry, frequenting the synagogues there, powerfully confuting the objections commonly made by the descendants of Jacob against Jesus of Nazareth, and converting great numbers of Jews and Gentiles.

He was, indeed, remarkably zealous in his preaching, and blessed with a very extraordinary method of reasoning, whereby he proved the fundamental points of Christianity, beyond exception. This irritated the Jews to the highest degree ; and at length, after a two or three years’ continuance in those parts, they found means to prevail on the governor of Damascus to have him put to death. But they knew it would be difficult to take him, as he had so many friends in the city ; they therefore kept themselves in a continual watch, searched all the houses where they supposed he might conceal himself, and also obtained a guard from the governor, to observe the gates, in order to prevent his escaping from them.

In this distress his Christian friends were far from deserting him : they tried every method that offered to procure his escape, but finding it impossible for him to pass through either of the gates of the city, they let him down from one of their houses, through a window, in a basket, over the wall, by which means the cruel designs of his enemies were rendered abortive.

During this interval, he was remarkably assiduous in preaching the gospel of the Son of God, and confuting the Hellenist Jews with the greatest courage and resolution. But snares were laid for him, as malice can as easily cease to be, as to remain inactive. Being warned by God in a vision that his testimony would not be received at Jerusalem, he thought proper to depart, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Accordingly, being conducted by his brethren to Cæsarea Philippi, he set sail for Tarsus, his native city : from whence he was soon after brought, by Barnabas, to Antioch, to assist him in propagating Christianity in that city.

Soon after their arrival, they entered the synagogue of the Jews on the Sabbath day, and after the reading of the law, Paul, being invited by the rulers of the synagogue, delivered an address so powerful, that it obtained from the converted Jews a request that it should again be delivered the ensuing Sabbath ; when almost the whole city flocked to hear the apostle ; at which the Jews were filled with envy, and contradicted Paul, uttering many blasphemous expressions against the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

This increased the malice and fury of the Jews, who, by false and artful insinuations, prevailed on some of the more bigoted and honorable women to bring over their husbands to their party ; by which means Paul and Barnabas were driven out of the city.

Among the converts at Lystra was a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, and never had walked. But Paul perceiving that he had faith to be saved thought proper to add the cure of his body to that of his soul, knowing that it would not only be beneficial to him but to all the rest of the believers, by confirming their faith. And that the miracle might be wrought in the most conspicuous manner, he, in the midst of the congregation, said, in an audible voice, to the man, "Stand upright on thy feet." And the words were no sooner pronounced than his strength was at once restored, and he leaped up and walked.

The apostles indefatigably persevered in the execution of their important commission, declaring, wherever they went, the glad tidings of salvation, through repentance unto life,

and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the malice of the Jews still pursued them ; for some of these bigoted Israelites coming from Antioch and Iconium exasperated and stirred up the multitude ; so that those very persons who could hardly be restrained from offering sacrifice to them now used them like slaves, stoning them in so cruel a manner that Paul was thought to be dead, and as such they dragged him out of the city ; but while the Christians of Lystra were attending on the body, probably in order to carry him to the grave, he arose, and returned with them into the city, and the next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe, where they preached the gospel, and converted many ; no danger being able to terrify them from the work of the ministry, and publishing the glad tidings of salvation in every place.

They did not, however, long continue at Derbe, but returned to Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, and Pisidia, confirming the Christians of those places in the faith, earnestly persuading them to persevere, and not to be discouraged with those troubles and persecutions which they must expect would attend the profession of the gospel. And that the affairs of the church might be conducted with more regularity they ordained elders and pastors, to teach, to instruct, and to watch over them, and then left them to the protection of the Almighty, to whose care they recommended them by prayer and fasting.

After leaving Antioch they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphilia ; and after preaching the gospel at Perga they went down to Attalia.

Having thus finished the circuit of their ministry they returned back to Antioch, in Syria, from whence they at first departed. Here they summoned the church, and gave them an account of their ministry, the success it had met in different parts, and how great a door had thus been opened for the conversion of the Gentile world.

The controversy concerning the observation of Jewish ceremonies in the Christian church being decided in favor of St. Paul, he and his companions returned back to Antioch ; and soon after Peter himself came down. On reading the decretal epistle in the church, the converts conversed freely and inof-

fensively with the Gentiles, till some of the Jews coming thither from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew his conversation, as if it had been a thing unwarrantable and unlawful. By such a strange method of proceeding the minds of many were dissatisfied, and their consciences very uneasy. St. Paul with the greatest concern observed it, and publicly rebuked Peter, with that sharpness and severity his unwarrantable practice deserved.

Soon after this dispute Paul and Barnabas resolved to visit the churches they had planted among the Gentiles, and Barnabas was desirous of taking with them his cousin Mark ; but this Paul strenuously opposed, as he had left them in their former journey. This trifling dispute arose to such a height that these two great apostles and fellow-laborers in the gospel parted ; Barnabas, taking Mark with him, repaired to Cyprus, his native country, and Paul having made choice of Silas, and recommended the success of his undertaking to the care of Divine Providence, set forward on his intended journey.

They first visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, confirming the people in the faith by their instructions and exhortations. Hence they sailed to Crete, where Paul preached the gospel, and constituted Titus to be the first bishop and pastor of the island. From hence Paul and Silas returned back to Cilicia, and came to Lystra, where they found Timothy, whose father was a Greek, but his mother a Jewish convert, and by her he had been brought up under all the advantages of a pious and religious education. This person St. Paul designed for the companion of his travels, and a special instrument in the ministry of his gospel. But knowing that his being uncircumcised would prove a stumbling-block to the Jews he caused him to be circumcised ; being willing, in lawful and indifferent matters, to conform himself to the tempers and apprehensions of men in order to save their souls.

Every thing being ready for their journey, St. Paul and his companions departed from Lystra, passed through Phrygia, and the country of Galatia, where the apostle was entertained with the greatest kindness and veneration, the people looking upon him as an angel sent immediately from heaven : and

being by revelation forbidden to go into Asia, he was commanded by a second vision to repair to Macedonia to preach the gospel. Accordingly our apostle prepared to pass from Asia into Europe.

Here St. Luke joined them, and became ever after the inseparable companion of St. Paul, who, being desirous of finding the speediest passage into Macedonia, took ship with his companions, Silas, Luke, and Timothy, and came to Samothracia, an island in the *Ægean* Sea, not far from Thrace ; and the next day he went to Neapolis, a port of Macedonia. Leaving Neapolis they repaired to Phillippi, the metropolis of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, where they stayed some days.

In this city, Paul, according to his constant practice, preached in a proseucha, or oratory of the Jews, which stood by the river side, at some distance from the city, and was much frequented by the devout women of their religion, who went there to pray and hear the law. And after several days, as they were repairing to the same place of devotion, there met them a damsel who possessed a spirit of divination, by whom her masters acquired very great advantage. This woman followed Paul and his companions, crying out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation !" Paul, at first, took no notice of her, not being willing to multiply miracles without necessity. But when he saw her following them several days together, he began to be troubled, and commanded the spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of her. The evil spirit with reluctance obeyed, and left the damsel that very instant.

This miraculous cure proving a great loss to her masters, who acquired large gains from her soothsayings, they were filled with envy and malice against the apostles ; and by their instigation, the multitude arose, and seized upon Paul and his companions, hurried them before the magistrates and governors of the colony ; accusing them of introducing many innovations which were prejudicial to the state, and unlawful for them to comply with, as being Romans.

The magistrates being concerned for the tranquillity of the state, and jealous of all disturbances, were very forward

to punish the offenders, against whom great numbers of the multitude testified ; and therefore commanded the officers to strip them, and scourge them severely, as seditious persons.

This was accordingly executed ; after which the apostles were committed to close custody, the gaoler receiving more than ordinary charge to keep them safely ; and he accordingly thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But the most obscure dungeon, or the pitchy mantle of the night, can not intercept the beams of divine joy and comfort from the souls of pious men. Their minds were all serenity ; and at midnight they prayed and sang praises so loud, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Nor were their prayers offered to the throne of grace in vain : an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opened the doors, loosed the chains, and set the prisoners at liberty.

This convulsion of nature roused the gaoler from his sleep ; and concluding from what he saw that all his prisoners were escaped, he was going to put a period to his life ; but Paul observing him, hastily cried, “ Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.” The keeper was now as greatly surprised at the goodness of the apostles, as he was before terrified at the thoughts of their escape : and calling for a light, he came immediately into the presence of the apostles, fell down at their feet, and took them from the dungeon, brought them to his own house, washed their stripes, and begged of them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God who was so mighty to save.

St. Paul readily granted his request, and replied, That if he believed in Jesus Christ, he might be saved with his whole house ; accordingly, the gaoler, with all his family, were, after a competent instruction, baptized, and received as members of the church of Christ.

As soon as it was day, the magistrates, either hearing what had happened, or reflecting on what they had done as too harsh and unjustifiable, sent their sergeant to the gaoler, with orders to discharge the apostles. The gaoler joyfully delivered the message, and bid them “ depart in peace ;” but Paul, that he might make the magistrates sensible what in-

jury they had done them, and how unjustly they had punished them, without examination or trial, sent them word, that as they had thought proper to scourge and imprison Romans, contrary to the laws of the empire, he expected they should come themselves and make them some satisfaction.

The magistrates were terrified at this message ; well knowing how dangerous it was to provoke the formidable power of the Romans, who never suffered any freeman to be beaten uncondemned ; they came therefore to the prison, and very submissively entreated the apostles to depart without any further disturbance.

This small recompense for the cruel usage they had received was accepted by the meek followers of the blessed Jesus ; they left the prison, and retired to the house of Lydia, where they comforted their brethren with an account of their deliverance, and departed.

During the stay of the apostles at Thessalonica, they lodged in the house of a certain Christian, named Jason, who entertained them very courteously. But the Jews would not suffer the apostles to continue at rest. They refused to embrace the gospel themselves, and therefore envied its success, and determined to oppose its progress. Accordingly, they gathered together a great number of lewd and wicked wretches, who beset the house of Jason, intending to take Paul, and deliver him up to an incensed multitude. But in this they were disappointed ; Paul and Silas being removed from thence by the Christians, and concealed in some other part of the city, and finally sent away by night to Beræa, a city about fifty miles south of Thessalonica, but out of the power of their enemies. Here also Paul's great love for his countrymen, the Jews, and his earnest desire of their salvation, excited him to preach to them in particular ; accordingly, he entered into their synagogue, and explained the gospel unto them, proving, out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the truth of the doctrines he advanced.

Paul leaving Beræa under the conduct of certain guides, it was said he designed to retire by sea out of Greece, that his restless enemies might cease their persecution ; but the

guides, according to Paul's order, brought him to Athens, and left him there after receiving from him an order for Silas and Timotheus to repair to him as soon as possible.

While St. Paul continued at Athens, expecting the arrival of Silas and Timothy, he walked up and down, to take a more accurate survey of the city, which he found miserably overrun with superstition and idolatry.

Their superstitious practices grieved the spirit of the apostle ; accordingly he exerted all his strength for their conversion ; he disputed on the Sabbath days in the synagogues of the Jews, and at other times took all opportunities of preaching to the Athenians the coming of the Messiah to save the world.

During St. Paul's stay at Athens, Timothy, according to the order he had received, came to him, out of Macedonia, and brought an account that the Christians of Thessalonica were under persecution from their fellow-citizens, ever since his departure : at which St. Paul was greatly concerned, and at first inclined to visit them in person, to confirm them in the faith they had embraced ; but being hindered by the enemies of the gospel, he sent Timothy to comfort them, and put them in mind of what they had at first heard, namely, that persecution would be the constant attendant on their profession.

On Timothy's departure, St. Paul left Athens, and traveled to Corinth, a very populous place, and famous for its trade.

During his stay at Corinth, he wrote his second epistle to the Thessalonians, to supply his absence. In this epistle he again endeavors to confirm their minds in the truth of the gospel, and prevent their being shaken with those troubles which the wicked and unbelieving Jews would be continually raising against them.

St. Paul, on his leaving the church at Corinth, took ship at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, for Syria, taking with him Aquila and Priscilla ; and on his arrival at Ephesus, he preached awhile in the synagogue of the Jews, promising to return to them, after keeping the passover at Jerusalem. Accordingly, he again took ship, and landed at Cæsarea, and



from thence traveled to Jerusalem, where he kept the feast, visited the church, and then repaired to Antioch. Here he staid some time, and then traversed the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the newly-converted Christians, till he came to Ephesus, where he fixed his abode for three years, bringing with him Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica, Timotheus and Erastus of Corinth, and Titus.

After this, he entered into the Jewish synagogues, where, for the first three months, he contended and disputed with the Jews, endeavoring, with great earnestness and resolution, to convince them of the truth of the Christian religion. But when, instead of success, he met with nothing but obstinacy and infidelity, he left the synagogue, and taking those with him whom he had converted, instructed them and others who resorted to him, in the school of one Tyrannus, a place where scholars used to be instructed.

About this time the apostle wrote his epistle to the Galatians ; for he had heard that, since his departure, corrupt opinions had crept in among them, with regard to the necessity of observing the legal rites.

Soon after the great tumult at Ephesus, about the goddess Diana, Paul called the Christians together, and took his leave of them with the most tender expressions of love and affection. He had now spent almost three years at Ephesus, and founded there a very considerable church, of which he had ordained Timothy the first bishop. He first traveled about two hundred miles northward, to Troas, before he took ship, expecting to meet Titus there. But missing him, he proceeded on his voyage to Macedonia.

On his arrival there, he preached the gospel in several places, even as far as Illyricum, now called Sclavonia. During this journey he met with many troubles and dangers, "without were fightings, and within were fears."

During the stay of Titus in Macedonia, Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, and sent it to them by Titus and Luke.

About this time he also wrote his first epistle to Timothy, whom he left at Ephesus.

During his stay in Greece, he went to Corinth, where he

wrote his famous epistle to the Romans, which he sent by Phoebe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, near Corinth.

St. Paul being now determined to return into Syria, in order to convey the contributions to the brethren at Jerusalem, set out on his journey ; but being informed that the Jews had formed a design of killing and robbing him by the way, he returned back into Macedonia, and came to Phillippi, from whence he went to Troas, where he staid seven days. Here he preached to them on the Lord's day, and continued his discourse till midnight, being himself to depart in the morning.

The night being thus spent in holy exercises, St. Paul took his leave of the brethren in the morning, traveling on foot to Assos, a sea-port town, whither he had before sent his companions by sea. From thence they sailed to Mytilene, a city in the isle of Lesbos. They next sailed from thence, and came over against Chios, and the day following landed at Trogyllium, a promontory of Ionia, near Samos. The next day they came to Miletus, not putting in at Ephesus, because the apostle was resolved, if possible, to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

On his arrival at Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, to summon the elders of the church : and on their coming, reminded them of the manner in which he had conversed among them, how faithfully and affectionately he had discharged the offices of his ministry, and how incessantly he had labored for the good of the souls of men.

Paul with his companions, now departed from Miletus, and arrived at Coos, from whence they sailed the next day to Rhodes, a large island in the Ægean Sea. Leaving this place, they came to Patara, the metropolis of Lycia, where they went on board another vessel bound for Tyre, in Phœnicia. On his arrival, he visited the brethren there, and continued with them a week, and was advised by some of them, who had the gift of prophecy, not to go up to Jerusalem. But the apostle would by no means abandon his design, or refuse to suffer any thing, provided he might spread the gospel of his Saviour. Finding all persuasions were in vain, they jointly accompanied him to the shore, where he kneeled down, and

prayed with them ; and after embracing them with the utmost affection, he went on board, and came to Ptolemias, and the next day to Cæsarea.

During their stay in this place, Agabus, a Christian prophet, came thither from Judea, who, taking Paul's girdle, bound his own hands and feet with it, signifying, by this symbol, that the Jews would bind Paul in that manner, and deliver him over to the Gentiles. Whereupon both his own companions and the Christians of Cæsarea earnestly besought him that he would not go up to Jerusalem. But the apostle asked them if they intended by these passionate dissuasives to add more affliction to his sorrow. "For I am ready," continued he, "not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."

When the disciples found that his resolution was not to be shaken, they importuned him no further, leaving the event to be determined according to the pleasure of the Most High. And all things being ready, Paul and his companions set forward on their journey, and were kindly and joyfully received by the Christians on their arrival at Jerusalem.

Our apostle, soon after his arrival, encountered Tertullus, who, in a short, but eloquent speech, began to accuse him, charging him with sedition, heresy, and the profanation of the temple.

The orator having finished his charge against the apostle, Felix told St. Paul that he was now at liberty to make his defense, which he did in the following manner :

"I answer this charge of the Jews with the greatest satisfaction before thee, because thou hast for many years been a judge of this nation. About twelve days since, I repaired to Jerusalem, to worship the God of Jacob. But I neither disputed with any man, or endeavored to stir the people in the synagogues or the city. Nor can they prove the charge they have brought against me.

"This, however, I really confess, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, and according to this faith, I am careful to maintain a clear and quiet conscience, both towards God and man."

Felix having thus heard both parties, refused to pass any

final sentence till he had more fully advised about it, and consulted Lysias, the governor of the castle, who was the most proper person to give an account of the sedition and tumult.

Some time after St. Paul had appealed unto Cæsar, king Agrippa, who succeeded Herod in the Tetrarchate of Galilee, and his sister Bernice, came to Cæsarea to visit the new governor. Festus embraced this opportunity of mentioning the case of our apostle to king Agrippa, together with the remarkable tumult this affair had occasioned among the Jews, and the appeal he had made to Cæsar. This account excited the curiosity of king Agrippa, and he was desirous of hearing himself what St. Paul had to say in his own vindication.

Accordingly, the next day, the king and his sister, accompanied with Festus the governor, and several other persons of distinction, came into the court with a pompous and splendid retinue, when the prisoner was brought before them. On his appearing, Festus informed the court how greatly he had been importuned by the Jews, both at Cæsarea and Jerusalem, to put the prisoner to death as a malefactor.

Festus having finished his speech, Agrippa told Paul he was now at liberty to make his own defense : and silence being made, he delivered himself in the following manner, addressing his speech particularly to Agrippa :

“I consider it as a particular happiness, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defense against the accusations of the Jews before thee : because thou art well acquainted with all their customs, and the questions commonly debated among them : I therefore beseech thee to hear me patiently. All the Jews are well acquainted with my manner of life, from my youth, the greatest part of it having been spent with my own countrymen at Jerusalem. They also know that I was educated under the institutions of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion, and am now arraigned for a tenet believed by all our fathers ; a tenet sufficiently credible in itself, and plainly revealed in the Scriptures, I mean the resurrection of the dead. Why should any mortal think it either incredible or impossible, that God should raise the dead ?

“I, indeed, formerly thought myself indispensably obliged to oppose the religion of Jesus of Nazareth. Nor was I satis-

fied with imprisoning and punishing with death itself the saints I found at Jerusalem ; I even persecuted them in strange cities, whither my implacable zeal pursued them, having procured authority for that purpose from the chief priests and elders.

“Accordingly I departed for Damascus, with a commission from the Sanhedrim : but as I was traveling towards that city, I saw at mid-day, O king, a light from heaven, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, encompassing me and my companions. On seeing this awful appearance, we all fell to the earth, and I heard a voice which said to me, in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.’ To which I answered, ‘Who art thou, Lord?’ and he replied, ‘I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.’ But be not terrified, arise from the earth : for I have appeared unto thee, that thou mightest be both a witness of the things thou hast seen, and also of others which I will hereafter reveal unto thee. My power shall deliver thee from the Jews and Gentiles, to whom now I send thee to preach the gospel ; to withdraw the vail of darkness and ignorance ; to turn them from falsehood unto truth, ‘and from the power of Satan unto God.’

“Accordingly, king Agrippa, I readily obeyed the heavenly vision. I preached the gospel first to the inhabitants of Damascus, then to those of Jerusalem and Judea, and afterwards to the Gentiles ; persuading them to forsake their iniquities, and, by sincere repentance, turn to the living God.

“These endeavors to save the souls of sinful mortals exasperated the Jews, who caught me in the temple, and entered into a conspiracy to destroy me. But, by the help of Omnipotence, I still remain a witness to all the human race, preaching nothing but what Moses and all the prophets foretold, namely, that the Messiah should suffer, be the first that should rise from the chambers of the grave, and publish the glad tidings of salvation, both to the Jews and Gentiles.”

While the apostle thus pleaded for himself, Festus cried out, “Paul, thou art mad ; too much study hath deprived thee of thy reason.” But Paul answered, “I am far, most

noble Festus, from being transported with idle and distracted ideas ; the words I speak are dictated by truth and sobriety, and I am persuaded that the king, Agrippa himself, is not ignorant of these things." To which Agrippa answered, "Thou hast almost persuaded me to embrace the Christian faith." Paul replied, "I sincerely wish that not only thou, but also all that hear me; were not almost, but altogether. the same as I myself, except being prisoners."

It being now finally determined that Paul should be sent to Rome, he was, with several other prisoners of consequence, committed to the care of Julius, commander of a company belonging to the legion of Augustus, and was accompanied in his voyage by St. Luke, Aristarchus, Trophimus, and some others not mentioned by the sacred historian.

In the month of September, they embarked on board a ship of Adramyttium, and sailed to Sidon, where the centurion courteously gave the apostle leave to go on shore to visit his friends and refresh himself.

After a short stay, they sailed for Cyprus, and arrived opposite the Fair-Havens, a place near Myra, a city of Lycia. Here, the season being far advanced, and Paul foreseeing it would be a dangerous voyage, persuaded them to put in and winter there. But the Roman centurion preferring the opinion of the master of the ship, and the harbor being at the same time incommodious, resolved, if possible, to reach Phœnice, a port of Crete, and winter there. But they soon found themselves disappointed ; for the fine southerly gale which had favored them for some time, suddenly changed into a stormy and tempestuous wind at north-east, which blew with such violence that the ship was obliged to sail before it ; and to prevent her sinking they threw overboard the principal part of her lading.

In this desperate and uncomfortable condition they continued fourteen days, and on the fourteenth night the mariners discovered they were near some coast, and, therefore, to avoid the rocks, thought proper to come to an anchor, till the morning might give them better information.

The country near which they were was, as Paul had foretold, an island called Melita, now Malta, situated in the

Lybian Sea, between Syracuse and Africa. Here they landed, and met with great civility from the people, who treated them with humanity, and entertained them with every necessary accommodation. *

After three months' stay in this island, the centurion, with his charge, went on board the *Castor and Pollux*, a ship of Alexandria, bound to Italy. They put in at Syracuse, where they tarried three days; then they sailed to Regium, and from thence to Puteoli, where they landed, and, finding some Christians there, staid, at their request, a week with them, and then set forward on their journey to Rome. The Christians of this city, hearing of the apostle's coming, went to meet him as far as the distance of about thirty miles from Rome, and others as far as the *Apii* forum, fifty-one miles distant from the capital. They kindly embraced each other, and the liberty he saw the Christians enjoy at Rome greatly tended to enliven the spirits of the apostle.

Having refreshed himself after the fatigue of his voyage, the apostle sent for the heads of the Jewish consistory at Rome, and related to them the cause of his coming, in the following manner: "Though I have been guilty of no violence of the laws of our religion, yet I was delivered by the Jews at Jerusalem to the Roman governors, who more than once would have acquitted me as innocent of any capital offense; but, by the perverseness of my persecutors, I was obliged to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had anything to accuse my nation of—I had recourse to this method merely to clear my own innocence."

For two whole years Paul dwelt at Rome, in a house he had hired for his own use, wherein he assiduously employed himself in preaching and writing for the good of the church.

St. Paul lived about three years at Ephesus, preaching the gospel to the numerous inhabitants of that city, and was therefore well acquainted with the state and condition of the place; so that, taking the opportunity of Tychicus's going thither, he wrote his epistle to the Ephesians, wherein he endeavors to countermine the principles and practices both of the Jews and Gentiles, to confirm them in the belief and

practices of the Christian doctrine, and to instruct them fully in the great mysteries of the gospel.

Having thus discharged his ministry, both by preaching and writing, in Italy, St. Paul, accompanied by Timothy, prosecuted his long-intended journey into Spain; and, according to the testimony of several writers, crossed the sea and preached the gospel in Britain.

He continued there eight or nine months, and then returned again to the East, visited Sicily, Greece, and Crete, and then repaired to Rome.

Here he met with Peter, and was, together with him, thrown into prison, doubtless in the general persecution raised against the Christians under pretense that they had set fire to the city. How long he remained in prison is uncertain, nor do we know whether he was scourged before his execution. He was, however, allowed the privilege of a Roman citizen, and therefore beheaded.

Being come to the place of execution, which was the *Aquæ Salvæ*, three miles from Rome, he cheerfully, after a solemn preparation, gave his neck to the fatal stroke; and from this vale of misery passed to the blissful regions of immortality, to the kingdom of his beloved Master, the great Redeemer of the human race.

He was buried in the *Via Ostiensis*, about two miles from Rome; and about the year 317, Constantine the Great, at the instance of Pope Sylvester, built a stately church over his grave, adorned it with a hundred marble columns, and beautified it with the most exquisite workmanship.

ST. ANDREW.

THIS apostle was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, built on the banks of the lake of Gennesareth, and was son to John, or Jonas, a fisherman of that town. He was brother to Simon Peter, but whether older or younger is not certainly known, though the generality of the ancients intimate that he

was the younger. He was brought up to his father's trade, at which he labored till our blessed Saviour called him to be a fisher of men, for which he was, by some preparatory instructions, qualified even before the appearance of the Messiah.

John the Baptist had lately preached the doctrine of repentance, and was, by the generality of the Jews, from the impartiality of his precepts and the remarkable strictness and austerity of his life, held in great veneration.

In the number of his followers was our apostle, who accompanied him beyond Jordan, when the Messiah, who had some time before been baptized, came that way. Upon his approach, the Baptist pointed him out as the Messiah, styling him the Lamb of God, the true sacrifice that was to expiate the sins of the world. As soon as the Baptist had given this character of Jesus, Andrew and another disciple, probably St. John, followed the Saviour of mankind to the place of his abode.

Something more than a year after, Jesus, passing through Galilee, found Andrew and Peter fishing on the sea of Galilee, where he fully satisfied them of the greatness and divinity of his person, by a miraculous draught of fishes, which they took at his command.

After the ascension of the blessed Jesus into heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, to qualify them for their great undertaking, St. Andrew, according to the generality of ancient writers, was chosen to preach the gospel in Scythia and the neighboring countries.

Accordingly he departed from Jerusalem, and first traveled through Cappadocia, Galatia and Bythia, instructing the inhabitants in the faith of Christ, and continued his journey along the Euxine Sea, into the deserts of Scythia. An ancient author tells us that he first came to Amynsus, where, being entertained by a Jew, he went into the synagogue, preached to them concerning Jesus, and from the prophecies of the Old Testament proved him to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world.

He went next to Trapezium, a maritime city on the Euxine Sea; from whence, after visiting many other places, he came to Nice, where he stayed two years, preaching and

working miracles with great success. After leaving Nice, he passed to Nicodemia, and from thence to Chalcedon, whence he sailed through the Propontis, came by the Euxine Sea to Heraclea, and afterwards to Amastris.

He next came to Synope, a city situated on the same sea, and famous both for the birth and burial of king Mithridates; here he met with his brother Peter, and stayed with him a considerable time.

Departing from Synope, he returned to Jerusalem; but he did not continue long in that neighborhood. He returned again to the province allotted him for the exercise of his ministry, which greatly flourished through the power of the divine grace that attended it.

He traveled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia and Epirus, preaching the gospel, propagating Christianity, and then confirming the doctrine he taught with signs and miracles. At last he came to Petrea, a city of Achaia, where he gave his last and greatest testimony to the gospel of his divine Master, sealing it with his blood.

Ægenas, proconsul of Achaia, came at this time to Petrea, where, observing that multitudes had abandoned the heathen religion, and embraced the gospel of Christ, he had recourse to every method, both of favor and cruelty, to reduce the people to their old idolatry. The apostle observed to him, that if he would renounce his idolatries, and heartily embrace the Christian faith, he should, with him and the numbers who had believed in the Son of God, receive eternal happiness in the Messiah's kingdom. The proconsul answered, that he himself should never embrace the religion he mentioned. The apostle replied, that he saw it was in vain to endeavor to persuade a person incapable of sober counsels, and hardened in his own blindness and folly. Ægenas could hold no longer; and after treating him with very opprobrious language, and showing him the most distinguished marks of contempt, he passed sentence upon him that he should be put to death.

He first ordered the apostle to be scourged, and seven lictors successively whipped his naked body; but seeing his invincible patience and constancy, he commanded him to be crucified; but to be fastened to the cross with cords, in-

stead of nails, that his death might be more lingering and tedious.

On his coming near the cross, he saluted it in the following manner : "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it, and adorned with his members as with so many inestimable jewels."

After offering up his prayer to the throne of grace, and exhorting the people to constancy and perseverance in the faith he had delivered to them, he was fastened to the cross, on which he hung two whole days, teaching and instructing the people in the best manner his wretched situation would admit, being sometimes so weak and faint as scarce to have the power of utterance.

In the meantime great interest was made to the proconsul to spare his life : but the apostle earnestly begged of the Almighty that he might now depart, and seal the truth of his religion with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he expired on the last day of November, but in what year is uncertain.

His body having been taken down from the cross, was decently and honorably interred by Maximillia, a lady of great quality and estate, and whom Nicephorus tells us, was wife to the proconsul.

Constantine the Great afterwards removed his body to Constantinople, and buried it in the great church he had built to the honor of the apostles.

ST. JAMES THE GREAT.

THIS apostle (who was surnamed the Great, by way of distinction, from another of that name) was the son of Zebedee, and by trade a fisherman, to which he applied himself with remarkable assiduity, and was exercising his employment when the Saviour of the world, passing by the sea of Galilee, saw him with his brother in the ship, and called them both to be his disciples.

Soon after this he was called from the station of an ordinary disciple to the apostolic office, and even honored with some particular favors beyond most of the apostles, being one of the three whom our Lord made choice of as his companions in the more intimate transactions of his life, from which the rest were excluded. Thus, with Peter, and his brother John, he attended his Master when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead ; he was admitted to Christ's glorious transfiguration on the mount ; and when the holy Jesus was to undergo his bitter agonies in the garden, as preparatory sufferings to his passion, James was one of the three taken to be a spectator of them.

When our Lord was determined on his journey to Jerusalem, he sent some of his disciples before him to make preparations for his coming ; but, on their entering a village of Samaria, they were rudely rejected, from the old grudge that subsisted between the Samaritans and Jews, and because the Saviour, by going up to Jerusalem, seemed to slight their place of worship on Mount Gerizim. This piece of rudeness and inhumanity was so highly resented by St. James and his brother, that they came to Jesus desiring to know if he would not imitate Elias, by calling fire down from heaven to consume this barbarous, inhospitable people ?

Herod, who was a bigot to the Jewish religion, as well as desirous of acquiring the favor of the Jews, began a violent persecution of the Christians, and his zeal animated him to pass sentence of death on St. James immediately. As he was led to the place of execution, the officer that guarded him to the tribunal, or rather his accuser, having been converted by that remarkable courage and constancy shown by the apostle at the time of his trial, repented of what he had done, came and fell down at the apostle's feet, and heartily begged pardon for what he had said against him. The holy man, after recovering from the surprise, tenderly embraced him. "Peace," said he, "my son, peace be unto thee, and pardon of thy faults." Upon which the officer publicly declared himself a Christian, and both were beheaded at the same time. Thus fell the great apostle St. James, taking cheerfully that cup of which he had long since told his Lord he was ready to drink.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

FROM the very minute and circumstantial account this evangelist gives of John the Baptist, he is supposed to have been one of his followers, and is thought to be that other disciple who, in the first chapter of his gospel, is said to have been present with Andrew, when John declared Jesus to be "the Lamb of God," and thereupon to have followed him to the place of his abode.

He was by much the youngest of the apostles, yet he was admitted into as great a share of his Master's confidence as any of them. He was one of those to whom he communicated the most private transactions of his life ; one of those whom he took with him when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead : one of those to whom he displayed a specimen of his divinity, in his transfiguration on the mount : one of those who were present at his conference with Moses and Elias, and heard that voice which declared him "the beloved Son of God ;" and one of those who were companions in his solitude, most retired devotions, and bitter agonies in the garden.

After the ascension of the Saviour of the world, when the apostles made a division of the provinces among themselves, that of Asia fell to the share of St. John, though he did not immediately enter upon his charge, but continued at Jerusalem till the death of the blessed Virgin, which might be about fifteen years after our Lord's ascension. Many churches of note and eminence were of his foundation, particularly those of Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others ; but his chief place of residence was at Ephesus, where St. Paul had many years before founded a church, and constituted Timothy bishop of it.

After spending several years at Ephesus, he was accused to Domitian, who had begun a persecution against the Christians, as an eminent asserter of atheism and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire ; so that by his command the proconsul sent him bound to Rome, where he met with the treatment that might have been expected from

so barbarous a prince, being thrown into a caldron of boiling oil. But the Almighty, who reserved him for further service in the vineyard of his Son, restrained the heat, as he did in the fiery furnace of old, and delivered him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction. And surely one would have thought that so miraculous a deliverance should have been sufficient to have persuaded any rational man that the religion he taught was from God, and that he was protected from danger by the hand of Omnipotence. But miracles themselves were not sufficient to convince this cruel emperor, or abate his fury. He ordered St. John to be transported to an almost desolate island in the Archipelago, called Patmos, where he continued several years, instructing the poor inhabitants in the knowledge of the Christian faith ; and here, about the end of Domitian's reign, he wrote his book of Revelations, exhibiting by visions and prophetic representations, the state and condition of Christianity in the future periods and ages of the church.

Upon the death of Domitian, and the succession of Narva, who repealed all the odious acts of his predecessor, and by public edicts recalled those whom the fury of Domitian had banished, St. John returned to Asia, and fixed his seat again at Ephesus ; the rather because the people of that city had lately martyred Timothy the bishop.

In this manner St. John continued to labor in the vineyard of his great Master, until death put an end to all his toils and sufferings, which happened in the beginning of Trajan's reign, in the ninety-eighth year of his age ; and, according to Eusebius, his remains were buried near Ephesus.

The greatest instance of our apostle's care for the souls of men is in the writings he left to posterity ; the first of which in time, though placed last in the sacred canon, is his Apocalypse, or book of Revelations, which he wrote during his banishment at Patmos.

Next to the Apocalypse, in order of time, are his three epistles ; the first of which is catholic, calculated for all times and places, containing the most excellent rules for the conduct of a Christian life, pressing to holiness and pureness of manners, and not to be satisfied with a naked and empty profession

of religion. The other two epistles are but short, and directed to particular persons; the one to a lady of great quality, the other to the charitable and hospitable Gaius, the kindest friend and most courteous entertainer of all indigent Christians.

Before he undertook the task of writing the gospel, he caused a general fast to be kept by all the Asiatic churches, to implore the blessing of Heaven on so great and momentous an undertaking. When this was done, he set about the work, and completed it in so excellent and sublime a manner, that the ancients generally compared him to an eagle soaring aloft among the clouds, whither the weak eye of man was not able to follow him.

Such is the character given of the writings of this great apostle and evangelist, who was honored with the endearing title of being the beloved disciple of the Son of God: a writer so profound as to deserve, by way of eminence, the character of "St. John the Divine."

ST. PHILIP.

THIS apostle was a native of Bethsaida, "the city of Andrew and Peter." He had the honor of being first called to be a disciple of the great Messiah, which happened in the following manner: our blessed Saviour, soon after his return from the wilderness, where he had been tempted by the devil, met with Andrew and his brother Peter, and after some discourse parted from them. The next day, as he was passing through Galilee, he found Philip, whom he presently commanded to follow him, the constant form he made use of in calling his disciples, and those that inseparably attended him.

It can not be doubted, that notwithstanding St. Philip was a native of Galilee, yet he was excellently skilled in the law and the prophets. Metaphrastes assures us, that he had, from his childhood, been excellently educated; that he fre-

quently read over the books of Moses, and attentively considered the prophecies relating to the Messiah.

Nor was our apostle idle after the honor he had received of being called to attend the Saviour of the world ; he immediately imparted the glad tidings of the Messiah's appearance to his brother Nathaniel, and conducted him to Jesus.

After being called to the apostleship we have very little record of him by the evangelists. It was, however, to him that our Saviour proposed the question, where they should find bread sufficient to satisfy the hunger of so great a multitude. Philip answered, that it was not easy to procure so great a quantity ; not considering that it was equally easy for Almighty power to feed double the number, when it should be his divine will.

The compassionate Jesus had been fortifying their minds with proper considerations against his departure from them, and had told them that he was going to prepare for them a place in the mansions of the heavenly Canaan ; that he was "the way, the truth, and the life ;" and that no man could come to the Father but by him.

Philip, not thoroughly understanding the force of his Master's reasonings, begged of him, that he would "show them the Father."

Our blessed Lord gently reproved his ignorance, that after attending so long to his instructions, he should not know that he was the image of his Father, the express character of his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, appearing in him ; that he said and did nothing but by his Father's appointment ; which, if they did not believe, his miracles were a sufficient evidence : that such demands were, therefore, unnecessary and impertinent ; and that it was an indication of great weakness in him, after three years' education under his discipline and instruction, to appear so ignorant with regard to these particulars.

The ancients tell us, that in the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the world, the Upper Asia fell to his share, where he labored with an indefatigable diligence and industry.

After several years successfully exercising his apostolical

office in all those parts, he came at last to Hierpolis in Phrygia, a city remarkably rich and populous, but at the same time overrun with the most enormous idolatry.

St. Philip being grieved to see the people so wretchedly enslaved by error and superstition, continually offered his addresses to Heaven, till, by his prayers, and often calling on the name of Christ, he procured the death, or at least the vanishing of an enormous serpent, to which they paid adoration.

Having thus demolished their deity, he demonstrated to them how ridiculous and unjust it was for them to pay divine honors to such odious creatures: showed them that God alone was to be worshiped as the great parent of all the world, who in the beginning made man after his glorious image, and when fallen from that innocent and happy state, sent his own Son into the world to redeem him. This discourse roused them from their lethargy, they were ashamed of their late idolatry, and great numbers embraced the doctrines of the gospel.

This provoked the great enemy of mankind, and he had recourse to his old methods, cruelty and persecution. The magistrates of the city seized the apostle, and having thrown him into prison, caused him to be scourged. When this preparatory cruelty was over, he was led to execution, and, being bound, was hanged against a pillar; or, according to others, crucified. The apostle being dead, his body was taken down by St. Bartholomew, his fellow-laborer in the gospel, and Mariamne, St. Philip's sister, the constant companion of his travels, and decently buried; after which, they confirmed the people in the faith of Christ, and departed from them.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

THIS apostle is mentioned amongst the twelve immediate disciples of our Lord under the appellation of Bartholomew, though it is evident from divers passages of Scripture, that he was also called Nathaniel: we shall, therefore, in our ac-

count of his life, consider the names of Nathaniel and Bartholomew as belonging to one and the same person.

With regard to his descent and family, some are of opinion that he was a Syrian, and that he was descended from the Ptolemies of Egypt. But it is plain from the evangelical history, that he was a Galilean ; St. John having expressly told us that Nathaniel was of Cana, in Galilee.

The Scripture is silent with regard to his trade and manner of life, though, from some circumstances, there is room to imagine that he was a fisherman. He was at the first coming to Christ, conducted by Philip, who told him they had now found the long-expected Messiah, so often foretold by Moses, and the prophets, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And when he objected that the Messiah could not be born at Nazareth, Philip desired him to come and satisfy himself that he was the Messiah.

At his approach, our blessed Saviour saluted him with this honorable appellation, that he was an "Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile ;" not in an absolute, but restricted sense ; for perfection can not be attached to human nature, but in the character of the blessed Jesus, of whom it is said, with peculiar propriety, that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from *sinners* ;" also, that he "knew no sin, neither was guile," that is, fraud or deception, found in his tongue.

He was greatly surprised at our Lord's salutations, wondering how he could know him at first sight, as imagining he had never before seen his face.

Our apostle having his peculiar spot allotted him for the promulgation of the gospel of his blessed Master, who had now ascended into heaven, and dispensed his Holy Spirit to fit and qualify his disciples for the important work, visited different parts of the world to preach the gospel, and penetrated as far as the Hither India.

After spending considerable time in India, and the eastern extremities of Asia, he returned to the northern and western parts, and we find him at Hierpolis, in Phrygia, laboring in concert with St. Philip to plant Christianity in those parts ; and to convince the blind idolaters of the evil of their ways,

and direct them in the paths that lead to eternal salvation. This enraged the bigoted magistrates, and he was, together with St. Philip, designed for martyrdom, and in order to this, fastened to a cross ; but their consciences pricking them for a time, they took St. Bartholomew down from the cross and set him at liberty.

From hence he retired to Lycaonia, and St. Chrysostom assures us that he instructed and trained up the inhabitants in the Christian discipline. His last remove was to Albano-ple, in Great Armenia, a place miserably overrun with idolatry, from which he labored to reclaim the people. But his endeavors to “turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God,” were so far from having the desired effect, that it provoked the magistrates, who prevailed on the governor to put him to death, which he cheerfully underwent, sealing the truth of the doctrine he had preached with his blood.

ST. MATTHEW.

ST. MATTHEW, called also Levi, though a Roman officer, was a true Hebrew, and probably a Galilean. His trade was that of a publican or tax-gatherer to the Romans, an office detested by the generality of the Jews, on two accounts ; first, because having farmed the custom of the Romans, they used every method of oppression to pay their rents to the Romans ; secondly, because they demanded tribute of the Jews, who considered themselves as a free people, having received that privilege from God himself.

Our blessed Saviour having cured a person long afflicted with the palsy, retired out of Capernaum, to walk by the seaside, where he taught the people that flocked after him.

Here he saw Matthew sitting in his office, and called him to follow him. The man was rich, had a large and profitable employment, was a wise and prudent person, and doubtless understood what would be his loss to comply with the call of Jesus. He was not ignorant that he must exchange wealth

for poverty, a custom-house for a prison, and rich and powerful masters for a naked and despised Saviour. But he overlooked all those considerations, left all his interest and relations, to become our Lord's disciple, and to embrace a more spiritual way of life.

After St. Matthew's election to the apostleship, he continued with the rest till the ascension of his great and beloved Master ; but the evangelical writers have recorded nothing particular concerning him during that period.

After our blessed Saviour's ascension into heaven, St. Matthew, for the first eight years at least, preached in different parts of Judea ; but afterwards he left the country of Palestine, to convert the Gentile world.

After his leaving Judea, he traveled into several parts, especially Ethiopia, but the particular places he visited are not known with any certainty.

However, after laboring indefatigably in the vineyard of his Master, he suffered martyrdom at a city of Ethiopia, called Nadabar ; but by what kind of death is not absolutely known, though the general opinion is, that he was slain with an halbert.

St. Matthew was a remarkable instance of the power of religion in bringing men to a better temper of mind. If we reflect upon his circumstances while he continued a stranger to the great Redeemer of mankind, we shall find that the love of the world had possessed his heart.

His contempt of the world appeared in his exemplary temperance and abstemiousness from all delights and pleasures ; nay, even from the ordinary conveniences and accommodations of it. He was mean and modest in his own opinion, always preferring others to himself ; for whereas the other evangelists, in describing the apostles by pairs, constantly places him before St. Thomas, he modestly places him before himself. The rest of the evangelists are careful to mention the honor of his apostleship, but speak of his former sordid, dishonest, and disgraceful course of life, only under the name of Levi ; while he himself sets it down with all the circumstances, under his own proper and common name.

The last thing we shall remark in the life of this apostle,

is his gospel, written at the entreaty of the Jewish converts, while he abode in Palestine ; but at what time is uncertain ; some will have it to have been written eight, some fifteen, and some thirty years after our Lord's ascension. It was originally written in Hebrew, but soon after translated into Greek by one of the disciples.

After the Greek translation was admitted, the Hebrew copy was chiefly owned and used by the Nazarei, a middle sect between Jews and Christians ; with the former they adhered to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and with the latter they believed in Christ, and embraced his religion ; and hence this Gospel has been styled "The Gospel according to the Hebrews," and "The Gospel of the Nazarenes."

ST. THOMAS.

EVANGELICAL history is entirely silent with regard either to the country or kindred of Thomas. It is, however, certain that he was a Jew, and in all probability a Galilean.

He was, together like the rest, called to the apostleship ; and, not long after, gave an eminent instance of his being ready to undergo the most melancholy fate that might attend him. For when the rest of the apostles dissuaded their Master from going into Judea, at the time of Lazarus' death, because the Jews lately endeavored to stone him, Thomas desired them not to hinder his journey thither, though it might cost them all their lives.

When the holy Jesus, a little before his sufferings, had been speaking to them of the joys of heaven, and had told them that he was going to prepare mansions for them, that they might follow him, and that they knew both the place whither he was going, and the way thither ; our apostle replied, that they knew not whither he was going, much less the way that would lead them thither. To which our Lord returned this short but satisfactory answer, "I am the way ;" I am the person whom the Father has sent into the world

to show mankind the paths that lead to eternal life, and therefore you can not miss the way, if you follow my example.

After the disciples had seen their great Master expire on the cross, their minds were distracted by hopes and fears concerning his resurrection, about which they were not then fully satisfied ; which engaged him the sooner to hasten his appearance, that by the sensible manifestation of himself he might put the matter beyond all possibility of dispute. Accordingly, the very day in which he arose from the dead, he came into the house where they were assembled, while the doors about them were close shut, and gave them sufficient assurance that he was risen from the dead.

At this meeting Thomas was absent, having probably never joined their company since their dispersion in the garden, where every one's fears prompted him to consult his own safety. At his return, they told him that the Lord had appeared to them ; but he obstinately refused to give credit to what they said, or believe that it was really he, presuming it rather a specter or apparition, unless he might see the very print of the nails, and feel the wounds in his hands and side.

But our compassionate Saviour would not take the least notice of his perverse obstinacy, but on that day seven-night came again to them, as they were solemnly met at their devotions, and calling to Thomas, bade him look upon his hands, put his fingers into the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, to satisfy his faith by a demonstration from the senses. Thomas was soon convinced of his error and obstinacy, confessing that he now acknowledged him to be his Lord and Master, saying, " My Lord and my God."

Our great Redeemer having, according to promise before his ascension, poured an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples to qualify them for the great work of preaching the gospel, St. Thomas, as well as the rest, preached the gospel in several parts of Judea ; and after the dispersion of the Christian church in Jerusalem, repaired into Parthia, the province assigned him for his ministry. After which, as Sempronius and others inform us, he preached the

gospel to the Medes, Persians, Carmanians, Hyrcani, Bractarians, and the neighboring nations.

Leaving Persia, he traveled into Ethiopia, preaching the glad tidings of the gospel, healing their sick, and working other miracles, to prove he had his commission from on high. And after traveling through these countries he entered India.

When the Portuguese first visited these countries after their discovery of a passage by the Cape of Good Hope, they received the following particulars, partly from constant and uncontroverted traditions preserved by the Christians in those parts ; namely, that St. Thomas came first to Socotora, an island in the Arabian Sea, and then to Cranganor, where, having converted many from the error of their ways, he traveled further into the East ; and having successfully preached the gospel, returned back to the kingdom of Coromandel, where at Maliapour, the metropolis of that kingdom, not far from the mouth of the Ganges, he began to erect a place for divine worship, till prohibited by the idolatrous priests, and Sagamo, prince of that country. But after performing several miracles, the work was suffered to proceed, and Sagamo himself embraced the Christian faith, whose example was soon after followed by great numbers of his friends and subjects.

This remarkable success alarmed the Brachmans, who plainly perceived that their religion would soon be extirpated, unless some method could be found of putting a stop to the progress of Christianity ; and therefore resolved to put the apostle to death. At a small distance from the city was a tomb, whither St. Thomas often retired for private devotions. Hither the Brachmans and their armed followers pursued him, and while he was at prayer, they first shot at him with a shower of darts, after which one of the priests ran him through with a lance.

His body was taken up by his disciples and buried in the church he had so lately erected, and which was afterwards improved into a fabric of great magnificence.

ST. JAMES THE LESS.

It has been doubted by some whether this was the same with that St. James who was afterwards bishop of Jerusalem; two of this name being mentioned in the sacred writings, namely, St. James the Great, and St. James the Less, both apostles. The ancients mention a third, surnamed the Just, which they will have to be distinct from the former, and bishop of Jerusalem. But this opinion is built on a sandy foundation, for nothing is plainer than that St. James the apostle (whom St. Paul calls "our Lord's brother," and reckons, with Peter and John, one of the pillars of the church), was the same who presided among the apostles, doubtless by virtue of his episcopal office, and determined the causes in the synod of Jerusalem. It is reasonable to think that he was the son of Joseph, afterwards the husband of Mary, by his first wife, whom St. Jerome styles Escha, and adds that she was the daughter of Aggi, brother to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. Hence he was reputed our Lord's brother.

After the resurrection, he was honored with the particular appearance of our Lord to him, which, though passed over in silence by the evangelists, is recorded by St. Paul.

Some time after this appearance, he was chosen bishop of Jerusalem, and preferred before all the rest for his near relation to Christ.

When St. Paul came to Jerusalem after his conversion, he applied to St. James, and was honored by him with "the right hand of fellowship." And it was to St. James that Peter sent the news of his miraculous deliverance out of prison. "Go," said he, "show these things unto James and to the brethren;" that is, to the whole church, especially to St. James the pastor of it.

He performed every part of his duty with all possible care and industry, omitting no particular necessary to be observed by a diligent and faithful guide of souls, strengthening the weak, instructing the ignorant, reducing the erroneous, and reproving the obstinate.

But a person so careful, so successful in his charge, could not fail of exciting the spite and malice of his enemies ; a sort of men to whom the apostle has given too true a character, that "they please not God, and are contrary to all men." They were vexed to see St. Paul had escaped their hands, by appealing unto Cæsar ; and therefore turned their fury against St. James : but being unable to effect their design under the government of Festus, they determined to attempt it under the procuratorship of Albinus his successor, Ananus the younger, of the sect of the Sadducees, being high priest.

In order to this a council was summoned, and the apostle, with others, arraigned and condemned as violators of the law. But that the action might appear more plausible and popular, the scribes and Pharisees, masters in the art of dissimulation, endeavored to ensnare him ; and, at their first coming, told him that they had all placed the greatest confidence in him ; that the whole nation as well as they, gave him the title of a just man, and one that was no respecter of persons ; that they therefore desired that he would correct the error and false opinion the people had conceived of Jesus, whom they considered as the Messiah, and take this opportunity of the universal confluence to the paschal solemnity to set them right in their opinions in this particular, and would go with them to the top of the temple, where he might be seen and heard by all.

The apostle readily consented ; and being advantageously placed on a pinnacle of the temple, they addressed him in the following manner : "Tell us, for we have all the reason in the world to believe, that the people are thus generally led away, with the doctrine of Jesus who was crucified ; tell us. what is the instruction of the crucified Jesus ?" To which the apostle answered, with an audible voice, "Why do you inquire of Jesus the Son of Man ? He sits in heaven, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again in the clouds of heaven." The people below hearing this, glorified the blessed Jesus, and openly proclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

The scribes and Pharisees now perceived that they had acted foolishly ; that instead of altering, he had confirmed the

people in their belief ; and that there was no way left but to dispatch him immediately, in order to warn others by his sufferings, not to believe in Jesus of Nazareth. Accordingly they suddenly cried out, that James himself was seduced, and become an impostor : and they immediately threw him from the pinnacle on which he stood, into the court below ; but not being killed on the spot, he recovered himself so far as to rise on his knees, and pray fervently to Heaven for his murderers. But malice is too diabolical to be pacified with kindness, or satisfied with cruelty. Accordingly his enemies, vexed that they had not fully accomplished their work, poured a shower of stones upon him, while he was imploring their forgiveness at the throne of grace ; and one of them, dissatisfied with this cruel treatment, put an end to his misery with a fuller's club.

Thus did this great and good man finish his course, in the ninety-sixth year of his age, and about twenty-four years after our blessed Saviour's ascension into heaven. His death was lamented by all good men, even by the sober and just persons among the Jews, as Josephus himself confesses.

ST. SIMON THE ZEALOT.

ST. SIMON, in the catalogue of the apostles, is styled "Simon the Canaanite," whence some conjecture he was born in Cana in Galilee, and others will have him to have been the bridegroom mentioned by St. John, at whose marriage our blessed Saviour turned the water into wine. But this word has no relation to his country, or the place of his nativity, being derived from the Hebrew word "kana," which signifies "zeal," and denotes a warm and sprightly temper. What some of the evangelists therefore call "Canaanite," others, rendering the Hebrew by the Greek word, style "Zealot ;" not from his great zeal, his ardent affection to his Master, and his desire of advancing his religion in the world, but from his warm, active temper, and zealous forwardness in some particular sect of religion before his coming to our Saviour.

St. Simon continued in communion with the rest of the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem ; and at the feast of Pentecost received the same miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost ; so that as he was qualified with the rest of his brethren for the apostolical office, in propagating the gospel of the Son of God, we can not doubt of his exercising his gifts with the same zeal and fidelity, though in what part of the world is uncertain. Some say he went into Egypt, Cyrene and Africa, preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of those remote and barbarous countries. And others add, that after he had passed through those burning wastes, he took ship, and visited the frozen regions of the north, preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of the western parts, and even to Britain, where having converted great multitudes and sustained the greatest hardships and persecutions, he was at last crucified, and buried in some part of Great Britain, but the place where, is unknown.

ST. JUDE.

THIS apostle is mentioned by three several names in the evangelical history, namely, Jude or Judas, Thaddeus and Lebbeus.

He was brother to St. James the Less, afterwards bishop of Jerusalem, being the son of Joseph the reputed father of Christ, by a former wife. It is not known when or by what means he became a disciple of our blessed Saviour, nothing being said of him, till we find him in the catalogue of the twelve apostles ; nor afterwards, till Christ's last supper, when discoursing with them about his departure, and comforting them with a promise that he would return to them again, (meaning after his resurrection,) and that the " world should see him no more, though they should see him," our apostle said to his Master, " Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world ?"

Paulinus tells us that the province which fell to the share of St. Jude, in the apostolic division of the provinces, was

Lybia ; but he does not tell us whether it was the Cyrenian Lybia, which is thought to have received the gospel from St. Mark, or the more southern parts of Africa. But however that be, in his first setting out to preach the gospel, he traveled up and down Judea and Galilee ; then through Samaria unto Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia and the neighboring countries, and afterwards to Syria and Mesopotamia. Nicephorus adds, that he came at last to Edessa, where Abagarus governed, and where Thaddeus, one of the seventy, had already sown the seeds of the gospel. Here he perfected what the other had begun ; and having by his sermons and miracles established the religion of Jesus, he died in peace ; but others say that he was slain at Berytus, and honorably buried there. The writers of the Latin church are unanimous in declaring that he traveled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolical ministry for many years, he was at last, for his freely and openly reproving the superstitious rites and customs of the Magi, cruelly put to death.

St. Jude left only one epistle, which is placed the last of those seven styled catholic, in the sacred canon. It was some time before this epistle was generally received in the Church. The author, indeed, like St. James, St. John, and sometimes St. Paul himself, does not call himself an apostle, styling himself only "the servant of Christ." But he has added what is equivalent, "Jude the brother of James," a character that can belong to no one but our apostle. And surely the humility of a follower of Jesus should be no objection against his writings.

ST. MATTHIAS.

AS MATTHIAS was not an apostle of the first election, immediately called and chosen of the Son of God himself, it can not be expected that any account of him can be found in the evangelical history. He was one of our Lord's disciples, probably one of the seventy ; he had attended on him the

whole time of his public ministry, and after his death was elected into the apostleship, to supply the place of Judas, who, after betraying his great Lord and Master, laid violent hands on himself.

The defection of Judas having made a vacancy in the apostolic college, two persons were proposed, Joseph, called Barnabas, and Matthias, both duly qualified for the important office. The method of election was by lots ; and this course seems to have been taken by the apostles because the Holy Ghost was not yet given, by whose immediate dictates and inspirations they were afterwards chiefly guided. The prayer being ended, the lots were drawn, by which it appeared that Matthias was the person, and he was accordingly numbered among the twelve apostles.

St. Matthias spent the first year of his ministry in Judea, where he reaped a very considerable harvest of souls, and then traveled into different parts of the world, to publish the glad tidings of salvation to a people who had never before heard of a Saviour, but the particular parts he visited are not certainly known.

It is uncertain by what kind of death he left the regions of mortality, and sealed the truth of the gospel he had so assiduously preached, with his blood. Dorotheus says he finished his course at Sebastople, and was buried there, near the temple of the sun. An ancient Martyrology reports him to have been seized by the Jews, and as a blasphemer to have been stoned and then beheaded. But the Greek offices, supported herein by several ancient breviaries, tell us that he was crucified.

ST. MARK.

ST. MARK was descended from Jewish parents, of the tribe of Levi. The ancients generally considered him as one of the seventy disciples ; and Epiphanius expressly tells us that he was one of those who, taking exception at our Lord's discourse of " eating his flesh and drinking his blood," went

back and walked no more with him. But there appears no manner of foundation for these opinions, nor likewise for that of Nicephorus, who will have him to be the son of St. Peter's sister.

Eusebius tells us that St. Mark was sent into Egypt by St. Peter to preach the gospel, and accordingly planted a church in Alexandria, the metropolis of it. He did not, however, confine himself to Alexandria, and the oriental parts of Egypt, but removed westward to Lybia, passing through the countries of Marmacia, Pentapolis, and others adjacent, where the people were both barbarous in their manners and idolatrous in their worship, yet by his preaching and miracles he prevailed on them to embrace the tenets of the gospel ; nor did he leave them till he had confirmed them in the faith.

After this long tour he returned to Alexandria, where he preached with the greatest freedom, ordered and disposed of the affairs of the church, and wisely provided for a succession, by constituting governors and pastors of it. But the restless enemy of the souls of men would not suffer our apostle to continue in peace and quietness ; for while he was assiduously laboring in the vineyard of his Master, the idolatrous inhabitants, about the time of Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, tumultuously entered the church, forced St. Mark, then performing divine service, from thence ; and binding his feet with cords, dragged him through the streets, and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, leaving him there in a lonesome prison for that night ; but his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision, comforting and encouraging his soul, under the ruins of his shattered body. The next morning early the tragedy began afresh, for they dragged him about in the same cruel and barbarous manner, till he expired. But their malice did not end with his death : they burnt his mangled body after they had so inhumanly deprived it of life : but the Christians, after the horrid tragedy was over, gathered up his bones and ashes, and decently interred them near the place where he used to preach. His remains were afterwards, with great pomp, removed from Alexandria to Venice, where they

were religiously honored, and he was adopted the tutelar saint and patron of that state.

He suffered martyrdom on the 25th of April, but the year is not absolutely known: the most probable opinion, however, is, that it happened about the end of Nero's reign.

His Gospel, the only writing he left behind him, was written at the entreaty and earnest desire of the converts at Rome, who not content with having heard St. Peter preach, pressed St. Mark, his fellow-disciple, to commit to writing an historical account of what had been delivered to them, which he performed with equal faithfulness and brevity, and being perused and approved by St. Peter, it was commanded to be publicly read in their assemblies.

ST. LUKE.

THIS disciple of the blessed Jesus was born at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, a city celebrated for its schools of learning, which produced the most renowned masters in the arts and sciences. So that, being born, as it were, in the lap of the muses, he could not well fail of acquiring an ingenious and liberal education. But he was not contented with the learning of his own country; he traveled for improvement into several parts of Greece and Egypt, and became particularly skilled in physic, which he made his profession.

St. Luke was a Jewish proselyte; but at what time he became a Christian is uncertain. It is the opinion of some, from the introduction to his Gospel, that he had the facts from the reports of others, who were eye-witnesses, and suppose him to have been converted by St. Paul.

But, however this be, St. Luke became the inseparable companion of St. Paul, in all his travels, and his constant fellow-laborer in the work of the ministry. This endeared him to that apostle, who seems delighted with owning him for his fellow-laborer, and in calling him "the beloved physician," and the "brother whose praise is in the gospel."

St. Luke wrote two books for the use of the Church, his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

His Gospel contains the principal transactions of our Lord's life ; and the particulars omitted by him are in general of less importance than those of the other evangelists.

With regard to the Acts of the Apostles, written by St. Luke, the work was, no doubt, performed at Rome, about the time of St. Paul's residing there, with which he concludes his history.

ST. BARNABAS.

ST. BARNABAS was a descendant of the tribe of Levi, of a family removed out of Judea, and settled in the isle of Cyprus, where they had purchased an estate, as the Levites might do out of their own country. His parents finding him of a promising genius and disposition, placed him in one of the schools of Jerusalem, under the tuition of Gamaliel, St. Paul's master ; an incident which, in all probability, laid the first foundation for that intimacy that afterwards subsisted between those two eminent servants of the blessed Jesus.

The first mention we find of St. Barnabas in the holy Scriptures, is the record of that great and worthy service he did the church of Christ, by succoring it with the sale of his patrimony in Cyprus, the whole price of which he laid at the apostles' feet, to be put into the common stock, and disposed of as they should think fit among the indigent followers of the holy Jesus.

And now St. Barnabas became considerable in the ministry and government of the church ; for we find that St. Paul, coming to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, and not readily procuring admittance into the church, because he had been so grievous a persecutor of it, and might still be suspected of a design to betray it, addressed himself to Barnabas, a leading man among the Christians, and one that had personal knowledge of him. He accordingly introduced him to Peter and James, and satisfied them of the sincerity of his conver-

sion, and in what a miraculous manner it was brought about. This recommendation carried so much weight with it, that Paul was not only received into the communion of the apostles but taken into Peter's house, "and abode with him fifteen days." Galatians, i. 18.

About four or five years after this, the agreeable news was brought to Jerusalem, that several of their body who had been driven out of Judea by the persecutions raised about St. Stephen, had preached at Antioch with such success that a great number, both of Jews and proselytes, embraced Christianity; and were desirous that some of the superior order would come down and confirm them. This request was immediately granted, and Barnabas was deputed to settle the new plantation. But there being too large a field for one laborer, he went to fetch Saul from Tarsus, who came back with him to Antioch, and assisted him a whole year in establishing that church.

When the apostles had fulfilled their charitable embassy, and stayed some time at Jerusalem to see the good effects of it, they returned again to Antioch, bringing with them John, whose surname was Mark, the son of Mary, sister to Barnabas, and at whose house the disciples found both security for their persons and conveniency for the solemnities of their worship. But soon after the apostles returned to Antioch, an express relation was made to the church by the mouth of one of the prophets who ministered there, that Barnabas and Saul should be set apart for an extraordinary work, unto which the Holy Ghost had appointed them. Upon this declaration, the church set apart a day for a solemn mission; after devout prayer and fasting, they laid their hands upon them, and ordained them to their office; which was to travel over certain countries, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul and Barnabas being thus consecrated "the apostles of the Gentiles," entered upon their province, taking with them John Mark, for their minister or deacon, who assisted them in many ecclesiastical offices, particularly in taking care of the poor.

The first city they visited after their departure from Antioch, was Seleucia, a city of Syria, adjoining the sea; from

whence they sailed to the island of Cyprus, the native place of St. Barnabas, and arrived at Salamis, a port formerly remarkable for its trade. Here they boldly preached the doctrines of the gospel in the synagogues of the Jews ; and from thence traveled to Paphos, the capital of the island, and famous for a temple dedicated to Venus, the tutelar goddess of Cyprus. Here their preaching was attended with remarkable success ; Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, being, among others, converted to the Christian faith.

Leaving Cyprus, they crossed the sea to preach in Pamphilia, where their deacon John, to the great grief of his uncle Barnabas, left them and returned to Jerusalem : either tired with continual travels, or discouraged at the unavoidable dangers and difficulties which experience had sufficiently informed him would constantly attend the preachers of the gospel from hardened Jews and idolatrous Gentiles.

Soon after their arrival at Lystra, Paul cured a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, which so astonished the inhabitants, that they believed them to be gods, who had visited the world in the forms of men. Barnabas they treated as Jupiter, their sovereign deity, either because of his age or the gravity and comeliness of his person ; for all the writers of antiquity represent him as a person of venerable aspect and a majestic presence. But the apostles, with the greatest humility, declared themselves to be but mortals : and the inconstant populace soon satisfied themselves of the truth of what they had asserted ; for at the persuasion of their indefatigable persecutors, who followed them thither also, they made an assault upon them, and stoned Paul, till they left him for dead. But, supported by an invisible power from on high, he soon recovered his spirits and strength, and the apostles immediately departed for Derbe. Soon after their arrival, they again applied themselves to the work of the ministry, and converted many to the religion of the blessed Jesus.

From Derbe they returned back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, in Pisidia, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith ; and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God." Acts, xiv. 22. After a short stay they again visited

the churches of Pamphilia, Perga and Attala, where they took ship and sailed to Antioch, in Syria, the place from whence they first set out. Soon after their arrival, they called the church of this city together, and gave them an account of their travels, and the great success with which their preaching in the Gentile world had been attended.

After some time Paul made a proposal to Barnabas, that they should repeat their late travels among the Gentiles, and see how the churches they had planted increased in their numbers, and improved in the doctrines they had taught them. Barnabas very readily complied with the motion ; but desired they might take with them his reconciled nephew, John Mark. This Paul absolutely refused, because, in their former voyage, Mark had not shown the constancy of a faithful minister of Christ, but consulted his own ease at a dangerous juncture ; departed from them without leave at Pamphilia, and returned to Jerusalem. Barnabas still insisted on taking him ; and the other continuing as resolutely opposed to it, a short debate arose, which terminated in a separation, whereby these two holy men, who had for several years been companions in the ministry, and with united endeavors propagated the gospel of the Son of God, now took different provinces. Barnabas, with his kinsman, sailed to his own country, Cyprus ; and Paul, accompanied by Silas, traveled to the churches of Syria and Cilicia.

After this separation from St. Paul, the sacred writings give us no account of St. Barnabas ; nor are the ecclesiastical writers agreed among themselves with regard to the actions of this apostle after his sailing for Cyprus. This, however, seems to be certain, that he did not spend the whole remainder of his days in that island, but visited different parts of the world preaching the glad tidings of the gospel, healing the sick, and working other miracles among the Gentiles. After long and painful travels, attended with different degrees of success in different places, he returned to Cyprus, his native country, where he suffered martyrdom, in the following manner : certain Jews coming from Syria and Salamis, where Barnabas was then preaching the gospel, being highly exasperated at his extraordinary success, fell upon him as he was disputing in the

synagogue, dragged him out, and after the most inhuman tortures, stoned him to death. His kinsman, John Mark, who was a spectator of this barbarous action, privately interred his body in a case, where it remained till the time of the Emperor Zeno, in the year of Christ 485, where it was discovered, with St. Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew, written with his own hand, lying on his breast.

ST. STEPHEN.

BOTH the Scriptures and the ancient writers are silent with regard to the birth, country, and parents of St. Stephen. Epiphanius is of opinion that he was one of the seventy disciples; but this is very uncertain. Our blessed Saviour appointed his seventy disciples to teach the doctrines and preach the glad tidings of the gospel; but it does not appear that St. Stephen and the six other first deacons had any particular designation before they were chosen for the service of the table; and therefore St. Stephen could not have been one of our Lord's disciples, though he might have followed him, and listened to his discourses.

He was remarkably zealous for the cause of religion, and full of the Holy Ghost, working many wonderful miracles before the people, and pressing them with the greatest earnestness to embrace the doctrine of the gospel.

This highly provoked the Jews; and some of the synagogues of the freed-men of Cyrenia, Alexandria, and other places, entered into dispute with him; but being unable to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke, they suborned false witnesses against him, to testify that they heard him blaspheme against Moses and against God. Nor did they stop here; they stirred up the people by their calumnies, so that they dragged him before the council of the nation, or great Sanhedrim, where they produced false witnesses against him, who deposed that they heard him speak against the temple, and against the law, and affirm that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the holy place, and abolish the law of Moses. Stephen, supported by his own innocence, and an

invisible power from on high, appeared undaunted in the midst of this assembly, and his countenance shone like that of an angel ; when the high priest asking him what he had to offer against the accusation laid to his charge, he answered in a plain and faithful address to the Jews, which he closed in the following manner :

“ Ye stiff-necked, ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye will for ever resist the Holy Ghost. Ye tread in the paths of your fathers : as they did, so do you still continue to do. Did not your fathers persecute every one of the prophets ? Did not they slay them who showed the coming of the Holy One, whom ye yourselves have betrayed and murdered ? Ye have received the law by the disposition of angels, but never kept it.”

At these words they were so highly enraged that they all gnashed their teeth against him. But Stephen lifting up his eyes to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of Omnipotence. Upon which he said to the council, “ I see the heavens open, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” This so greatly provoked the Jews that they cried out with one voice, and stopped their ears, as if they had heard some dreadful blasphemy ; and falling upon him, they dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death.

Stephen, while they were mangling his body with stones, was praying to Omnipotence for their pardon. “ Lord,” said he, “ lay not this sin to their charge.” And then calling on his dear Redeemer to receive his spirit, he yielded up his soul.

TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY was a convert and disciple of St. Paul. He was born, according to some, at Lystra ; or, according to others, at Derbe. His father was a Gentile, but his mother a Jewess, whose name was Eunice, and that of his grandmother Lois.

These particulars are taken notice of, because St. Paul

commends their piety, and the good education which they had given Timothy. When St. Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, about the year of Christ 51 or 52, the brethren gave a very advantageous testimony of the merit and good disposition of Timothy ; and the apostle would have him along with him, and he initiated him at Lystra before he received him into his company. Timothy applied himself to labor with St. Paul in the business of the gospel, and did him many important services through the whole course of his preaching.

This holy disciple accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia, to Phillippi, to Thessalonica, to Berea ; and when the apostle went from Berea, he left Timothy and Silas there to confirm the converts. When he came to Athens, he sent for Timothy to come thither to him ; and when he was come, and had given him an account of the churches of Macedonia, St. Paul sent him back to Thessalonica, from whence he afterwards returned with Silas, and came to St. Paul at Corinth.

Some years after this, St. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia ; and gave Timothy orders to call at Corinth, to refresh the minds of the Corinthians, with regard to the truths he had inculcated in them. Some time after, writing to the same Corinthians, he recommends them to take care of Timothy, and send him back in peace ; after which Timothy returned to St. Paul in Asia, who there staid for him. They went together into Macedonia ; and the apostle puts Timothy's name with his own, before the second epistle to the Corinthians, which he wrote to them from Macedonia, about the middle of the year of Christ 57. And he sends his recommendations to the Romans in the letter which he wrote to them from Corinth the same year.

When St. Paul returned from Rome, in 64, he left Timothy at Ephesus to take care of that church, of which he was the first bishop, as he is recognized by the council of Chalcedon. St. Paul wrote to him from Macedonia the first of the two letters which are addressed to him. He recommends him to be more moderate in his austerities, and to drink a little wine because of the weakness of his stomach, and his frequent infirmities. After the apostle came to Rome, in the year 65, being now very near his death, he wrote to him his second

letter, which was full of the marks of kindness and tenderness for this, his dear disciple ; and which is justly looked upon as the last will of St. Paul. He desires him to come to Rome before winter, and bring with him several things which St. Paul had left at Troas. If Timothy went to Rome, as it is probable he did, he must have been a witness of the martyrdom of this apostle, in the year of Christ 66.

If he did not die before the year 97, we can hardly doubt but that he must be the pastor of the church of Ephesus, to whom John writes in his Revelations : though the reproaches with which he seems to load him for his instability in having left his first love, do not seem to agree to so holy a man as Timothy was.

TITUS.

TITUS was a Gentile by religion and birth, but converted by St. Paul, who calls him his son. St. Jerome says that he was St. Paul's interpreter ; and that probably, because he might write what St. Paul dictated, or explained in Latin what this apostle said in Greek ; or rendered into Greek what St. Paul said in Hebrew or Syriac. St. Paul took him with him to Jerusalem, when he went thither in the year 51 of the vulgar era, about deciding the question which was then started, whether the converted Gentiles ought to be made subject to the ceremonies of the law ? Some would then have obliged him to circumcise Titus ; but neither he nor Titus would consent to it. Titus was sent by the same apostle to Corinth, upon occasion of some disputes which then divided the church. He was very well received by the Corinthians and very much satisfied with their ready compliance ; but would receive nothing from them, imitating thereby the disinterestedness of his master.

From hence he went to St. Paul in Macedonia, and gave him an account of the state of the church at Corinth. A little while after, the apostle desired him to return again to

Corinth, to set things in order preparatory to his coming. Titus readily undertook this journey, and started immediately, carrying with him St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. Titus was made bishop of the isle of Crete, about the 63d year of Christ, when St. Paul was obliged to quit that island, in order to take care of the other churches. The following year he wrote to him, to desire that as soon as he should have sent Tychicus or Artemus to him for supplying his place in Crete, Titus would come to him to Nicopolis in Macedonia, or to Nicopolis in Epirus, upon the gulf of Ambracia, where the apostle intended to pass his winter.

Titus was deputed to preach the gospel in Dalmatia ; and he was still there in the year 65, when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy. He afterwards went into Crete ; from which it is said he propagated the gospel into the neighboring islands. He died at the age of 94, and was buried in Crete. We are assured that the cathedral of the city of Candia is dedicated to his name ; and that his head is preserved there entire. The Greeks keep his festival on the 25th of August, and the Latins on the 4th of January.

THE VIRGIN MARY.

As we are taught by the predictions of the prophets that a virgin was to be the mother of the promised Messiah, so we are assured, by the unanimous concurrence of the evangelists, that this virgin's name was Mary, the daughter of Joachim and Anna, of the tribe of Judah : and married to Joseph of the same tribe.

What is said concerning the birth of Mary and her parents, is to be found only in some apocryphal writings. St. John says, that Mary the wife of Cleophas was the virgin's sister Mary, that was of the royal race of David.

That the mother of our Lord, notwithstanding her marriage, was even in that state to remain a pure virgin, and to conceive Christ in a miraculous manner is the clear doctrine

of the holy Scriptures. "Behold," says Isaiah, in chapter vii., "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son."

Though we can not doubt but that God, who ordained this mystery, provided for all circumstances requisite to its accomplishment ; yet we may consider which way a decorum was preserved in this case by marriage. St. Matthew says, "The virgin was espoused to Joseph ; and that before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost."

Notwithstanding the various circumstances relating to this affair, as told us in apocryphal books, are not to be relied on as certain ; yet, however, Mary's resolution of continency, even in a married state, can not be called in question, since her virginity is attested by the gospel ; and that herself, speaking to the angel, who declared to her that she would become the mother of a son, told him, "That she knew not a man," or that she lived in continency with her husband.

The virgin Mary then being espoused, or married, to Joseph, the angel Gabriel appeared to her, in order to acquaint her that she should become the mother of the Messiah. Mary asked him how that could be, since she knew no man. To which the angel replied that the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and that the power of the Highest should overshadow her, so that she should conceive without the concurrence of any man. Whether the holy virgin, immediately after the annunciation, went up to the passover of Jerusalem or not, we have no account from the Evangelist St. Luke, but this he assures us, that a little while after she set out for Hebron, a city in the mountains of Judah, in order to visit her cousin Elizabeth, to congratulate her on her pregnancy.

After Mary had continued here about three months, till Elizabeth was delivered, she then returned to her own house.

When she was ready to be delivered, an edict was published by Cæsar Augustus, in the year of the world 4000, the first of Christ and the third before the vulgar era, which decreed that all the subjects of the Roman empire should go to their respective cities and places, there to have their names registered according to their families. Thus Joseph and

Mary, who were both of the lineage of David, repaired to the city of Bethlehem—the original and native place of their family. But while they were in this city, the time being fulfilled in which Mary was to be delivered, she brought forth her first-born son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger of the stable or cavern whither they had retired.

The Greek fathers generally agree that the place of Christ's birth was a cavern. Justin and Eusebius place it out of the city, but in the neighborhood, and St. Jerome says it was at the extremity of the city towards the south. It was commonly believed that the virgin brought forth Jesus the night after her arrival at Bethlehem, or on the 25th of December. Such is the ancient tradition of the church.

At the same time the angels made the birth of Christ known to the shepherds, who were in the fields near Bethlehem, and who came in the night to see Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger, in order to pay him their tribute of adoration. Mary took notice of all these things, and laid them up in her heart. Some time after came the Magi, or wise men, from the East, and brought to Jesus the mysterious presents of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, having been directed thither by a star which led the way before them, to the very place where the babe lay.

But the time of Mary's purification being come, that is, forty days after the birth of Jesus, she went to Jerusalem in order to present her son in the temple, and there to offer the sacrifice appointed by the law, for the purification of women after childbirth.

Afterwards, when Joseph and Mary were preparing to return to their own country of Nazareth, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, bidding him to retire into Egypt with Mary and the child, because Herod had a design to destroy Jesus. Joseph obeyed the admonition, and continued in Egypt till after the death of Herod, when both he and Mary returned to Nazareth, not daring to go to Bethlehem, because it was the jurisdiction of Archelaus, the son and successor of Herod the Great.

Joseph and Mary went every year to Jerusalem, to the

feast of the passover, and when Jesus was twelve years of age they brought him with them to the capital. When the days of the festival were ended, they set out on their return home ; but the child Jesus continued at Jerusalem, without their perceiving it ; and thinking that he might be with some of the company, they went on a day's journey. When not finding him among their acquaintance, they returned to Jerusalem seeking for him. Three days after, they found him in the temple, sitting among the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. When they saw him they were filled with astonishment ; and Mary said to him, My son, why have you served us thus ? Behold your father and myself, who have sought you in great affliction. Jesus answered them, Why did you seek me ? did not you know that I must be employed about my Father's business ? Afterwards he returned with them to Nazareth, and lived in filial submission to them ; but his mother laid up all these things in her heart. The gospel says nothing more of the Virgin Mary till the marriage at Cana of Galilee, where she was present, with her son Jesus.

In process of time, according to the divine appointment respecting his mission, our Saviour resolved to manifest himself to the world, and therefore went to the baptism of St. John, from thence into the wilderness, and thence to the before-mentioned wedding, to which he, with his mother and disciples, had been invited. At this entertainment, the provision of wine being somewhat scanty, Christ's mother told her son they had no wine, not doubting of his power to supply them ; to which Jesus answered, in terms which had some appearance of a rebuke, Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come.

There being in the room six great stone pitchers, Jesus ordered them to be filled brim-full of water ; and afterwards commanded the servants to fill out and carry it to the master of the feast, who, on tasting, found it was excellent wine. And this is the first miracle Jesus wrought at the beginning of his public ministry.

From hence our Lord went to Capernaum with his mother and brethren ; that is, with his relations and disciples, in

order to fix the Virgin Mary in a settled habitation, while he traveled about the country in the exercise of his ministry.

The gospel informs us, that as our blessed Saviour, in the course of his travels for the fulfillment of his divine mission, was on a certain day teaching in a house at Capernaum, so great a crowd of people stood about him, that neither he nor his disciples had time to take any refreshment, which caused a report to be spread abroad that he had fainted away.

The mother of Jesus and his brethren, as it was natural for them, upon hearing such a report, came instantly to seek him, and endeavored to take him out of the crowd, in order to give him all the relief in their power. But when they could not get into the house for the throngs of people, they caused a message to be conveyed from one to another, till it was told Jesus "that his mother and his brethren were at the door, and desired to speak with him." Jesus being accordingly informed of their coming, and that they waited to speak to him, being at that instant engaged in the work of his ministry, preaching the word of God, he asked this question: Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? and looking upon those who were round about him, he said, These are my mother and brethren; declaring, "That whosoever did the will of his heavenly Father, the same was his mother, his sister, and brother."

From this time we have no further account of the holy Virgin, till we find her in Jerusalem, at the last passover our Saviour celebrated in that city. Here she saw all that was transacted against him, followed him to Mount Calvary, and stayed at the foot of the cross during the passion of her blessed Son. We can not doubt that her soul was at this time pierced through, as old Simeon prophesied, with the most acute pains for the death of such a Son. Yet her constancy was remarkable; for when the apostles were frightened away from their Master, she, with a courage undaunted and worthy of the mother of Christ, continued even in the midst of the executioners, being prepared to die with her Son.

Our blessed Saviour, being now ready to leave the world, and seeing his own mother at the foot of the cross, and his beloved disciple, St. John, near her, he bequeathed her to him

by his last will and testament, saying to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son." And to the disciple, "Behold thy mother;" and from that hour the disciple took her home to his own house.

St. Luke acquaints us, in the first chapter of the Acts, that the Virgin Mary was with the apostles and others, and continued with them when assembled at Jerusalem after his ascension, waiting for the descent of the Holy Ghost. After this she dwelt in the house of St. John the Evangelist, who took care of her as his own mother. It is thought he took her along with him to Ephesus, where she continued some time, and there is a letter of the council of Ephesus, importing, that in the fifth century it was believed she was buried there.

Yet this opinion was not so universally received, but that some authors of the same age think the Virgin Mary died and was buried at Jerusalem: or rather in her sepulchre at Gethsemane, near that city, where to this day it is shown in a magnificent church dedicated to her name.

Epiphanius, the most learned father of the fourth century, declares he could not tell whether she died a natural death, or by martyrdom: or whether she was buried or not. "None (says he) know any thing of her decease: but that it was glorious can not be doubted."

A learned writer has added to the before-cited passage of the council of Ephesus, another remark from their act: "That the cathedral church of Ephesus was dedicated under the name of the Virgin Mary; and that we find no other church of her name at that time in any approved author."

The sentiments of the Roman church are, that she is dead; but they are divided as to her having risen again: or whether she stays for the general resurrection at Ephesus, Jerusalem, or any other place.

With regard to the age at which she died, and the precise year of her death, it is needless to trouble ourselves about this inquiry; since nothing can be said on these matters but what is very doubtful: and they can not be fixed but at random.

MARY, THE SISTER OF LAZARUS.

THIS holy woman has been preposterously confounded with the sinful person who sat at the feet of the blessed Jesus weeping, while he was at meat in the house of Simon the leper. (See Luke, vii. 37, 39.) Who this sinner was is unknown : some will have her to be Mary Magdalene ; but this opinion has nothing more than conjecture for its basis.

But whoever that sinner was, she was a very different person from Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who, with her sister Martha, lived with their brother at Bethany, a village near Jerusalem. The blessed Jesus had a particular affection for this family and often retired to their house with his disciples. One day, and perhaps the first time that Jesus went thither, Martha received him with remarkable affection, and took the greatest pains in providing a proper entertainment for him : but Mary, her sister, continued sitting at our Saviour's feet, listening to his words with peculiar attention. This Martha considered as an instance of disrespect, and therefore said to Jesus, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone ? Bid her therefore that she help me." But the blessed Jesus justified Mary, by telling her sister, that she had chosen the better part, which should not be taken from her.

Some time after, their brother Lazarus fell sick, and his sisters sent to acquaint Jesus of the misfortune ; but he did not arrive at Bethany till after Lazarus was dead. Martha, hearing Jesus was come into the neighborhood, went and told him, that if he had not been absent her brother had been still alive. Jesus promised her that her brother should rise again. To which Martha answered, "I know that he shall rise again at the last day." Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this ?" Martha answered, "Yea, Lord : I believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Having said this, she departed, and gave her sister notice privately, that Jesus was come. Mary, as soon as she heard

the welcome tidings, arose and went to Jesus ; and as Martha had done before her, said, " Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." The blessed Jesus was greatly moved at the pathetic complaints of these two worthy sisters, and on asking where they had buried him, they conducted him to the sepulchre.

On his arrival at the place where the body of Lazarus was deposited, the great Redeemer of mankind groaned deeply in his spirit ; he wept, he prayed to his Father, and then cried with a loud voice, " Lazarus, come forth." The dead obeyed the voice of the Son of God ; Lazarus immediately revived, and Jesus restored him to his sisters.

After performing this stupendous miracle, Jesus departed from the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and did not return thither till some days before the passover. Six days before that festival, Jesus came again to Bethany with his disciples, and was invited to a supper at the house of Simon the leper. Martha attended, and Lazarus was one of the guests.

During the supper, Mary, to express her gratitude, took a pound of spikenard; a very precious perfume, and poured it on the head and feet of Jesus, wiping his feet with the hair of her head ; and the whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Judas Iscariot was highly offended at this generous action ; but his Master vindicated Mary, and told him, that by this she had prevented his embalmment, signifying that his death and burial were at hand.

After this we have no account of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, in the sacred writings. Several authors, indeed, by not distinguishing properly between Mary, the sister of Martha, and Mary Magdalene, say, that she was present at the crucifixion of the great Redeemer of mankind : and also that both she and her sister accompanied the women who went to embalm the body. This is not, indeed, improbable ; but it is certain neither of them are particularly mentioned by the evangelists. The ancient Latins believed, and the Greeks are still of the same opinion, that both Martha and Mary continued at Jerusalem, and died there ; and several ancient Martyrologists place their feast on the 19th of January.

JOSEPH.

JOSEPH, or Joses, was the son of Mary Cleophas, brother to St. James the Less, and a near relation to the blessed Jesus, according to the flesh ; being the son of Mary, the holy Virgin's sister, and Cleophas, who was Joseph's brother, or son to Joseph himself, as several of the ancients suppose ; who have asserted that Joseph was married to Mary Cleophas, of Escha, before he was married to the holy Virgin. Some believe Joseph, the son of Mary Cleophas, to be the same with Joseph Barsabas, surnamed the Just, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and was proposed, with St. Matthias, to fill up the traitor Judas's place ; but in this there is no certainty. We learn nothing particular in Scripture concerning Joseph, the brother of our Lord. If he was one of those among his near kinsmen who did not believe in him, when they would have persuaded him to go to the feast of the tabernacles, some months before our Saviour's death, it is probable that he was afterwards converted ; for it is intimated in Scripture, that at last all our Saviour's brethren believed in him ; and St. Chrysostom says, that they were signalized for the eminence of their faith and virtue.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

JOSEPH of Arimathea, or of Ramatha, Rama, or Ramula, a city between Joppa and Jerusalem, was a Jewish senator, and privately a disciple of Jesus Christ : he was not consentient with the designs of the rest of the Jews, particularly the members of the Sanhedrim, who condemned and put Jesus to death : and when our Saviour was dead, he went boldly to Pilate, and desired the body of Jesus in order to bury it. This he obtained, and accordingly buried it after an honorable manner in a sepulchre newly made in a garden ; which was upon the same Mount Calvary where Jesus had been crucified. After he had placed it there, he closed the

entrance of it with a stone cut particularly for this purpose, and which exactly filled the open part of it.

The Greek church keeps the festival of Joseph of Arimathea, July the 31st.

We do not meet with his name in the old Latin Martyrologies ; nor was it inserted in the Roman till after the year 1585. The body of Joseph of Arimathea was, it is said, brought to the abbey of Moyenmontier by Fortunatus, archbishop of Grada ; to which Charlemagne had given this monastery under the denomination of a benefice. His remains were honored till the tenth age ; but then the monastery being given to canons, who continued seventy years there, the relics were carried away by some foreign monks, and so lost with many others.

NICODEMUS.

NICODEMUS, one of the disciples of our blessed Saviour, was a Jew by nation, and by sect a Pharisee. The gospel calls him a ruler of the Jews ; and Christ gives him the name of a Master of Israel. When our Saviour began to manifest himself by his miracles, at Jerusalem, at the first passover which he celebrated there after his baptism, Nicodemus made no doubt but he was the Messiah, and came to him by night, that he might learn of him the way of salvation. Jesus told him, that no one could see the kingdom of heaven except he should be born again. Nicodemus taking this in the li'eral sense, made answer, How can a man be born again ? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb ? To which Jesus replied, If a man be not born again of water and the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. Nicodemus asked him, How can these things be ? Jesus answered : " Art thou a master of Israel, and ignorant of these things ? We tell you what we know, and you receive not our testimony. If you believe not common things, and

which may be called earthly, how will you believe me if I speak to you of heavenly things?"

After this conversation, Nicodemus became a disciple of Jesus Christ ; and there is no doubt to be made but he came to hear him as often as our Saviour came to Jerusalem. It happened on a time that the priests and Pharisees had sent officers to seize Jesus, who returned to them, and made this report, that never man spoke as he did ; to which the Pharisees replied, " Are you also of his disciples ? Is there any one of the elders or Pharisees that have believed in him ?" Then Nicodemus thought himself obliged to make answer, saying, " Does the law permit us to condemn any one before he is heard ?" To which they replied, " Are you also a Galilean ? Read the Scriptures, and you will find that never any prophet came out of Galilee." After this the council was dismissed. At last Nicodemus declared himself openly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when he came with Joseph of Arimathea to pay the last duties to the body of Christ crucified : which they took down from the cross, embalmed, and laid in the sepulchre.

Nicodemus received baptism from the disciples of Christ ; but it is uncertain whether before or after his passion.

The Jews being informed of this, deposed him from his dignity of senator, excommunicated and drove him from Jerusalem. It is said, also, that they would have put him to death ; but that in consideration of Gamaliel, who was his uncle, or cousin-german, they contented themselves with beating him almost to death, and plundering his goods.

Gamaliel conveyed him to his country-house, and provided him with what was necessary for his support ; and when he died, Gamaliel buried him honorably near St. Stephen.

His body was discovered in 415, together with those of St. Stephen and Gamaliel ; and the Latin church pays honor to all three on the 3d of August.

JOHN MARK.

JOHN MARK, cousin to St. Barnabas, and a disciple of his, was the son of a Christian woman, named Mary, who had a house in Jerusalem, where the apostles and the faithful generally used to meet. Here they were at prayers in the night, when St. Peter, who was delivered out of prison by the angel, came and knocked at the door : and in this house the celebrated church of Sion was said to have been afterwards established.

John Mark, whom some very improperly confound with the evangelist St. Mark, adhered to St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and followed them in their return to Antioch : he continued in their company and service till they came to Perga, in Pamphylia, but then seeing that they were undertaking a longer journey, he left them, and returned to Jerusalem. This happened in the year 45 of the common era.

Some years after, that is to say in the year 51, Paul and Barnabas preparing to return into Asia, in order to visit the churches which they had formed there, Barnabas was of opinion that John Mark should accompany them in this journey : but Paul would not consent to it : upon which occasion these two apostles separated. Paul went to Asia, and Barnabas, with John Mark, to the isle of Cyprus. What John Mark did, after this journey, we do not know, till we find him at Rome in the year 63, performing signal service for St. Paul during his imprisonment.

The apostle speaks advantageously of him in his epistle to the Colossians : " Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, saluteth you. If he come unto you, receive him." He makes mention of him again in his epistle to Philemon, written in the year 62, at which time he was with St. Paul at Rome ; but in the year 65 he was with Timothy in Asia. And St. Paul writing to Timothy, desires him to bring Marcus to Rome ; adding, that he was useful for him in the ministry of the gospel.

In the Greek and Latin churches, the festival of John Mark is kept on the 27th of September. Some say that he was a bishop of Biblis, in Phœnicia ; the Greeks give him the

title of apostle ; and say that the sick were cured by his shadow only. It is very probable that he died at Ephesus, where his tomb was very much celebrated and resorted to. He is sometimes called simply John, or Mark. The year of his death we are strangers to ; and shall not collect all that is said of him in apocryphal and uncertain authors.

C L E M E N T .

CLEMENT is mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Philippians, where the apostle says that Clement's name is written in the book of life. The generality of the fathers, and other interpreters, make no question but that this is the same Clement who succeeded St. Peter after Linus and Cletus, in the government of the church of Rome ; and this seems to be intimated, when in the office of St. Clement's day, that church appoints this part of the epistle to the Philippians to be read.

We find several things relating to Clement's life in the recognitions and constitutions called apostolical ; but as those works are not looked upon as authentic, though there may be truths in them derived from the tradition of the first ages, little stress is to be laid upon their testimony. The constitutions inform us that Linus was ordained by St. Paul ; Tertullian and Epiphanius say that St. Peter ordained Clement. Rufinus tells us that this apostle chose St. Clement for his successor. But Epiphanius believes that after he had been made bishop of Rome by St. Peter, he refused to exercise his office till, after the death of Linus and Anaclet, he was obliged to take upon himself the care of the church ; and this is the most generally received opinion. St. Peter's immediate successor was Linus ; Linus was succeeded by Anacletus ; and Anacletus by Clement, in the year of Christ 91, which was the tenth of Domitian's reign.

During his pontificate, the church of Corinth having been disturbed by a spirit of division, St. Clement wrote a large

letter to the Corinthians, which is still extant, and was so much esteemed by the ancients that they read it publicly in many churches. The emperor Domitian intended to declare war against the church of Christ ; his design was made known to Hermas, and he ordered to give a copy of it to Clement, that he might communicate it to other churches, and exhort them to provide against the storm. We have no certain account of what happened to St. Clement during this persecution, but we are very well assured that he lived to the third year of Trajan. His festival is set down by Bede and all the Latin Martyrologies on the 23d of November. The Greeks honor him on the 24th and 25th of the same month. Rufinus and Pope Zozimus give him the title of martyr ; and the Roman church, in its canon, places him among the saints who have sacrificed their lives for Jesus Christ. We read in an ancient history, to the authenticity of which, however, there are some exceptions, that St. Clement was banished by Trajan to the Chersonesus, beyond the Euxine Sea ; besides other particulars in the history which we shall not mention, as not being well authenticated.

MARY MAGDALENE.

MARY MAGDALENE was a native either of Magdala, a town in Galilee, on the other side of Jordan, or Magdalos, a town situated at the foot of Mount Carmel, and had her surname from the place of her birth. Some will have it that she was the sinner mentioned by St. Luke, chapter vii. 37, etc., but this opinion is built only on conjecture. The evangelists, Luke and Mark, tell us that Jesus had cast out of her seven devils, which some understand in a literal and others in a figurative sense.

But, however this be, she became a constant attendant on the blessed Jesus after he had removed her plagues. She followed him to Mount Calvary, continued amidst the Roman guards at the foot of the cross with the holy Virgin, and saw

his precious body laid in the tomb. After which she returned to Jerusalem to purchase spices to embalm him as soon as the Sabbath was over.

It was she who carried the welcome tidings to Peter and John ; and to her our blessed Lord himself first appeared after his resurrection. The apostles did not, however, believe her report till it was confirmed by others, and they themselves had seen the Saviour of the world.

We have no further account of Mary Magdalene in the sacred writings. But Modestus, archbishop of Constantinople, in the seventh century, tells us that she continued at Jerusalem till the death of the holy Virgin, after which she retired to Ephesus, and resided with St. John till she sealed the faith she had so long professed with her blood. She was buried by the Christians at Ephesus, where her tomb was shown in the seventh century.

But the emperor, Leo the Wise, caused her body to be removed from Ephesus to Constantinople the latter end of the ninth century, in order to its being interred in the church erected to the honor of the apostles.

Thus have we given the fullest account of the followers of the blessed Jesus ; the persons who spread the light of the gospel over the whole world, removed the vail of ignorance and superstition drawn over the kingdoms of the earth, and taught us the method of attaining eternal happiness in the courts of the New Jerusalem.

May we all follow their glorious example ! May we imitate their faith, their piety, their charity, and their love ! Then shall we pass "through things temporal in such a manner that we shall finally gain the things eternal, and through the merits of an all-perfect Redeemer be admitted as worthy guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb."



PART IV.

GREAT REFORMERS.

LUTHER.

MARTIN LUTHER was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, in the year 1483, on the 10th of November ; and if in the histories of great men, it is usual to note with accuracy the day of their nativity, that of Luther has a peculiar claim on the biographer, since it has been the especial object of horoscopical calculations, and has even occasioned some serious differences among very profound astrologers. Luther has been the subject of unqualified admiration and eulogy ; he has been assailed by the most virulent calumnies ; and, if any thing more were wanted to prove the *personal* consideration in which he was held by his cotemporaries, it would be sufficient to add, that he has also been made a mask for their follies.

He was of humble origin. At an early age he entered with zeal into the order of Augustine Hermits, who were monks and mendicants. In the schools of the Nominalists he pursued with acuteness and success the science of sophistry. And he was presently raised to the theological chair at Wittemberg ; so that his first prejudices were enlisted in the service of the worst portion of the Roman Catholic church ; his opening reason was subjected to the most dangerous perversion ; and a sure and early path was opened to his professional ambition. Such was not the discipline which could prepare the mind for any independent exertion ; such were not the circumstances from which an ordinary mind could have emerged into the clear atmosphere of truth. In dignity a professor, in theology an Augustinian, in philosophy a Nominalist, by education a mendicant monk, Luther seemed des-

tined to be a pillar of the Roman Catholic church, and a patron of all its corruptions.

But he possessed a genius naturally vast and penetrating, a memory quick and tenacious, patience inexhaustible, and a fund of learning very considerable for that age ; above all, he had an erect and daring spirit, fraught with magnanimity and grandeur, and loving nothing so well as truth ; so that his understanding was ever prepared to expand with the occasion, and his principles to change or rise, according to the increase and elevation of his knowledge. Nature had endowed him with an ardent soul, a powerful and capacious understanding : education had killed the one and contracted the other ; and when he came forth into the fields of controversy, he had many of those trammels still hanging about him, which patience, and a succession of exertions, and the excitement of dispute, at length enabled him for the most part to cast away.

In the year 1517, John Tetzel, a Dominican monk, was preaching in Germany the indulgences of Pope Leo X. ; that is, he was publicly selling to all purchasers, remissions of all sins, past, present, or future, however great their number, however enormous their nature. The expressions with which Tetzel recommended his treasure appear to have been marked with peculiar impudence and indecency.

But the act had in itself nothing novel or uncommon ; the sale of indulgences had long been recognized as the practice of the Roman Catholic church, and even sometimes censured by its more pious, or more prudent members. But the crisis was at length arrived in which the iniquity could no longer be repeated with impunity. The cup was at length full ; and the hand of Luther was destined to dash it to the ground. In the schools of Wittenberg the professor publicly censured in ninety-five propositions, not only the extortion of the indulgence-mongers, but the coöperation of the Pope in seducing the people from the true faith, and calling them away from the only road to salvation.

This first act of Luther's evangelical life has been hastily ascribed by at least three eminent writers of very different descriptions, (Bossuet, Hume and Voltaire,) to the narrowest

monastic motive, the jealousy of a rival order. It is asserted that the Augustinian friars had usually been invested in Saxony with the profitable commission, and that it only became offensive to Luther when it was transferred to a Dominican. There is no ground for that assertion. The Dominicans had been for nearly three centuries the peculiar favorites of the Holy See, and objects of all its partialities ; and it is particularly remarkable that, after the middle of the fifteenth century, during a period scandalously fruitful in the abuse in question, we very rarely meet with the name of any Augustinian as employed in that service. Moreover, it is almost equally important to add, that none of the cotemporary adversaries of Luther ever advanced the charge against him, even at the moment in which the controversy was carried on with the most unscrupulous rancor.

The matter in dispute between Luther and Tetzl went in the first instance no further than this—whether the Pope had authority to remit the divine chastisements denounced against offenders in the present and in the future state, or whether his power only extended to such human punishments as form a part of ecclesiastical discipline—for the latter prerogative was not yet contested by Luther. Nevertheless, his office and his talents drew very general attention to the controversy ; the German people, harassed by the exactions, and disgusted with the insolence of the papal emissaries, declared themselves warmly in favor of the Reformer ; while, on the other hand, the supporters of the abuse were so violent and clamorous, that the sound of the altercation speedily disturbed the festivities of the Vatican.

Leo X., a luxurious, indolent and secular, though literary pontiff, would have disregarded the broil, and left it, like so many others, to subside of itself, had not the Emperor Maximilian assured him of the dangerous impression it had already made on the German people. Accordingly he commanded Luther to appear at the approaching diet of Augsburg, and justify himself before the papal legate. At the same time he appointed the Cardinal Caietan, a Dominican, and a professed enemy of Luther, to be arbiter of the dispute. They met in October, 1518 : the legate was imperious ; Luther was not

submissive. He solicited reasons, he was answered only with authority. He left the city in haste, and appealed "to the Pope *better informed*"—yet it was still to the Pope that he appealed—he still recognized his sovereign supremacy. But in the following month, Leo published an edict, in which he claimed the power of delivering sinners from *all* punishments due to every sort of transgression: and thereupon Luther, despairing of any reasonable accommodation with the pontiff, published an appeal from the Pope to a general Council.

The Pope then saw the expediency of conciliatory measures, and accordingly dispatched a layman, named Miltitz, as his legate with commission to compose the difference by private negotiations with Luther. Miltitz united great dexterity and penetration with a temper naturally moderate and not inflamed by ecclesiastical prejudices. Luther was still in the outset of his career. His opinions had not yet made any great progress towards maturity; he had not fully ascertained the foundations on which his principles were built; he had not proved by any experience the firmness of his own character. He yielded, at least, so far as to express his perfect submission to the commands of the Pope, to exhort his followers to persist in the same obedience, and to promise silence on the subject of indulgences, provided it were also imposed upon his adversaries.

It is far too much to say (as some have said) that had Luther's concession been carried into effect, the Reformation would have been stifled in its birth. The principles of the Reformation were too firmly seated in reason and in truth, and too deeply ingrafted in the hearts of the German people, to remain long suppressed through the infirmity of any individual advocate. But its progress might have been somewhat retarded had not the violence of its enemies afforded it seasonable aid. A doctor named Eckius, a zealous satellite of papacy, invited Luther to a public disputation in the castle of Pleissenburg. The subject on which they argued was the supremacy of the Roman pontiff; and it was a substantial triumph for the Reformer, and no trifling insult to papal despotism, that the appointed arbiters left the question undecided.

Eckius repaired to Rome, and appealed in person to the offended authority of the Vatican. His remonstrances were reiterated and inflamed by the furious zeal of the Dominicans, with Caietan at their head ; and thus Pope Leo, whose calmer and more indifferent judgment would probably have led him to accept the submission of Luther, and thus put the question for the moment at rest, was urged into measures of at least unseasonable vigor. He published a bull on the 15th of June, 1520, in which he solemnly condemned forty-one heresies extracted from the writings of the Reformer, and condemned these to be publicly burnt. At the same time he summoned the author, on pain of excommunication, to confess and retract his pretended errors within the space of sixty days, and to throw himself upon the mercy of the Vatican.

Open to the influence of mildness and persuasion, the breast of Luther only swelled more boldly when he was assailed by menace and insult. He refused the act of humiliation required of him ; more than that, he determined to anticipate the anathema suspended over him, by at once withdrawing himself from the communion of the Church ; and again, having come to that resolution, he fixed upon the manner best suited to give it efficacy and publicity. With this view he caused a pile of wood to be erected without the walls of Wittemberg, and there, in the presence of a vast multitude of all ranks and orders, he committed the bull to the flames ; and with it the Decree, the Decretals, the Clementines, the Extravagants, the entire code of Romish jurisprudence. It is necessary to observe, that he had prefaced this measure by a renewal of his former appeal to a general Council, so that the extent of his resistance may be accurately defined ; he continued a faithful member of the Catholic church, but he rejected the despotism of the Pope, he refused obedience to an unlimited and usurped authority. The bull of excommunication immediately followed, (January 6, 1521,) but it fell without force, and any dangerous effect which it might otherwise have produced, was obviated by the provident boldness of Luther.

Here was the origin of the Reformation. This was the irreparable breach, which gradually widened to absolute dis-

ruption. The Reformer was now compromised, by his conduct, by his principles, perhaps even by his passions. He had crossed the bounds which divided insubordination from rebellion, and his banners were openly unfurled, and his legions pressed forward on the march to Rome. Henceforth the champion of the gospel entered with more than his former courage on the pursuit of truth ; and having shaken off one of the greatest and earliest of the prejudices in which he had been educated, he proceeded with fearless independence to examine and dissipate the rest.

Charles V. succeeded Maximilian in the empire in the year 1519 ; and since Frederic of Saxony persisted in protecting the person of the Reformer, Leo X. became the more anxious to arouse the imperial indignation in defense of the injured majesty of the Church. In 1521 a diet was assembled at Worms, and Luther was summoned to plead his cause before it. A safe-conduct was granted him by the Emperor, and on the 17th of April he presented himself before the august aristocracy of Germany. This audience gave occasion to the most splendid scene in his history. His friends were yet few, and of no great influence ; his enemies were numerous and powerful, and eager for his destruction. The cause of truth, the hopes of religious regeneration, appeared to be placed at that moment in the discretion and constancy of one man. The faithful trembled ; but Luther had then cast off the incumbrances of early fears and prepossessions, and was prepared to give a free course to his earnest and unyielding character. His manner and expression abounded with respect and humility ; but in the matter of his public apology, he declined in no one particular from the fullness of his conviction. Of the numerous opinions which he had by this time adopted at variance with the injunctions of Rome, there was not one which in the hour of danger he consented to compromise. The most violent exertions were made by the papal party to effect his immediate ruin ; and there were some who were not ashamed to counsel a direct violation of the imperial safe-conduct. It was designed to reënact the crimes of Constance, after the interval of a century, on another theater. But the infamous proposal was soon rejected ; and it was on this oc-

casion that Charles is recorded to have replied, with princely indignation, that if honor were banished from every other residence it ought to find refuge in the breasts of kings.

Luther was permitted to retire from the diet; but he had not proceeded far on his return when he was surprised by a number of armed men and carried away into captivity. It was an act of friendly violence. A temporary concealment was thought necessary for his present security, and he was hastily conveyed to the solitary castle of Wartenburg. In the meantime the assembly issued the declaration known in history as the "Edict of Worms," in which the Reformer was denounced as an excommunicated schismatic and heretic; and all his friends and adherents, all who protected or conversed with him, were pursued by penalties and censures. The cause of papacy obtained a momentary, perhaps only a seeming triumph, for it was not followed by any substantial consequences; and while the anathematized Reformer lay in safety in his secret *Patmos*, as he used to call it, the Emperor withdrew to other parts of Europe, to prosecute schemes and interests which then seemed far more important than the religious tenets of a German monk.

While Luther was in retirement his disciples at Wittemberg, under the guidance of Carlostadt, a man of learning and piety, proceeded to put into force some of the first principles of the Reformation. They would have restrained by compulsion the superstition of private masses, and torn away from the churches the proscribed images. Luther disapproved of the violence of these measures; or it may also be, as some impartial writers have insinuated, that he grudged to any other than himself the glory of achieving them. Accordingly, after an exile of ten months, he suddenly came forth from his place of refuge and appeared at Wittemberg. Had he then confined his influence to the introduction of a more moderate policy among the reformers, many plausible arguments might have been urged in his favor. But he also appears unhappily to have been animated by a personal animosity against Carlostadt, which was displayed both then and afterwards in some acts not very far removed from persecution.

The marriage of Luther, and his marriage to a nun, was

the event of his life which gave most triumph to his enemies and perplexity to his friends. It was in perfect conformity with his masculine and daring mind that having satisfied himself of the nullity of his monastic vows he should take the boldest method "of displaying to the world how utterly he rejected them." Others might have acted differently, and abstained, either from conscientious scruples, or, being satisfied in their own minds, from fear to give offense to their weaker brethren, and it would be presumptuous to condemn either course of action. It is proper to mention that this marriage did not take place till the year 1525, after Luther had long formally rejected many of the observances of the Roman Catholic church ; and that the nun whom he espoused had quitted her convent and renounced her profession some time before.

The war of the peasants and the fanaticism of Munster and his followers, presently afterwards desolated Germany, and the papal party did not lose that occasion to vilify the principles of the reformers, and indentify the revolt from a spiritual despotism with general insurrection and massacre. It is therefore necessary here to observe that the false enthusiasm of Munster was, perhaps, first detected and denounced by Luther ; and that the pen of the latter was incessantly employed in deprecating every act of civil insubordination. He was the loudest in his condemnation of some acts of spoliation by laymen who appropriated the monastic revenues, and at a subsequent period so far did he carry his principles, so averse was he, not only from the use of offensive violence, but even from the employment of force in the defense of his cause, that on some later occasions he exhorted the Elector of Saxony by no means to oppose the imperial edicts by arms but rather to consign the persons and principles of the reformers to the protection of Providence. For he was inspired with a holy confidence that Christ would not desert his faithful followers, but rather find means to accomplish his work without the agitation of civil disorders or the intervention of the sword. That confidence evinced the perfect earnestness of his professions and his entire devotion to the truth of his principles. It also proved that he had given himself up to the cause in

which he had engaged, and that he was elevated above the consideration of personal safety. This was no effeminate enthusiasm, no passionate aspiration after the glory of martyrdom ! It was the working of the Spirit of God upon an ardent nature, impressed with the divine character of the mission with which it was entrusted and assured, against all obstacles, of final and perfect success.

As this is not a history of the Reformation, but only a sketch of the life of an individual reformer, we shall at once proceed to an affair strongly, though not very favorably illustrating his character. The subject of the Eucharist commanded, among the various doctrinal differences, perhaps the greatest attention ; and in this matter Luther receded but a short space, and with unusual timidity, from the faith in which he had been educated. He admitted the real corporeal presence in the elements, and differed from the Church only as to the manner of that presence. He rejected the actual and perfect change of substance, but supposed the flesh to subsist in or with the bread, as fire subsists in red-hot iron. Consequently he renounced the term transubstantiation, and substituted consubstantiation in its place. In the meantime, Zuinglius, the reformer of Zurich, had examined the same question with greater independence, and had reached the bolder conclusion, that the bread and wine are no more than external signs, intended to revive our recollections and animate our piety. This opinion was adopted by Carlostadt, Œcolampadius and other fathers of the Reformation, and followed by the Swiss Protestants, and generally by the free cities of the empire. Those who held it were called Sacramentarians. The opinion of Luther prevailed in Saxony, and in the northern provinces of Germany.

The difference was important. It was felt to be so by the reformers themselves ; and the Lutheran party expressed that sentiment with too little moderation. The papists or Papalini (Papalini) were alert in perceiving the division, in exciting the dissension, and in inflaming it, if possible, into absolute schism ; and in this matter it must be admitted that Luther himself was too much disposed, by his intemperate vehemence, to further their design. These discords were be-

coming dangerous, and in 1529, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, the most ardent among the protectors of the Reformation, assembled the leading doctors of either party to a public disputation at Marburg. The particulars of this conference are singularly interesting to the theological reader ; but it is here sufficient to mention, without entering into the doctrinal merits of the controversy, that whatever was imperious in assertion and overbearing in authority, and unyielding and unsparing in polemical altercation, proceeded from the mouth and party of Luther ! that every approach to humility and self-distrust, and mutual toleration and common friendship, came from the side of Zuinglius and the Sacramentarians ; and we are bound to add, that the same uncompromising spirit which precluded Luther from all coöperation or fellowship with those whom *he thought* in error (it was the predominant spirit of the church which he had deserted,) continued on future occasions to interrupt, and even to endanger, the work of his own hands. But that very spirit was the vice of a character which endured no moderation or concession in any matter wherein Christian truth was concerned, but which too hastily assumed its own infallibility in ascertaining that truth. Luther would have excommunicated the Sacramentarians ; and he did not perceive how precisely his *principle* was the same with that of the Church which had excommunicated himself.

Luther was not present at the celebrated Diet of Augsburg, held under the superintendence of Charles V. in 1530 ; but he was in constant correspondence with Melanethon during that fearful period, and in the reproofs which he cast on the temporizing, though perhaps necessary, negotiations of the latter, he at least exhibited his own uprightness and impetuosity. The "Confessions" of the Protestants there published, were constructed on the basis of seventeen articles previously drawn up by Luther ; and it was not without his counsels that the faith permanently adopted by the church which bears his name was finally digested and matured. From that crisis the history of the Reformation took more of a political, less of a religious character, and the name of Luther is therefore less prominent than in the earlier proceed-

ings. But he still continued, for sixteen years longer, to exert his energies in the cause which was peculiarly his own, and to influence by his advice and authority the new ecclesiastical system.

He died in the year 1546—the same, as it singularly happened, in which the Council of Trent assembled for the self-reformation and reunion of the Roman Catholic church. But that attempt—even had it been made with judgment and sincerity—was then too late. During the twenty-nine years which composed the public life of Luther, the principles of the gospel, having fallen upon hearts already prepared for their reception, were rooted beyond the possibility of extirpation ; and when the great Reformer closed his eyes upon the scenes of his earthly toils and glory, he might depart in the peaceful confidence that the objects of his mission were virtually accomplished, and the work of the Lord placed in security by the same heaven-directed hand which had raised it from the dust.

KNOX.

JOHN KNOX was born in East Lothian, in 1505—probably at the village of Gifford ; but, according to some accounts, at the small town of Haddington, in the grammar school of which he received the rudiments of his education. His parents were of humble rank, but sufficiently removed from want to support their son at the University of St. Andrews, which Knox entered about the year 1524. He passed with credit through his academical course and took orders at the age of twenty-five, if not sooner. In his theological reading, he was led by curiosity to examine the works of ancient authors quoted by the scholastic divines. These gave him new views of religion, and led him to the perusal of the Scriptures themselves. The change in his opinions seems to have commenced about 1535. It led him to recommend to others, as well as to practice, a more rational course of study than that prescribed by the ancient usage of the university. This in-

novation brought him under suspicion of being attached to the principles of the Reformation, which was making secret progress in Scotland, and having ventured to censure the corruptions which prevailed in the Church, he found it expedient to quit St. Andrews, in 1542, and to return to the south of Scotland, where he openly avowed his adherence to the Reformed doctrines.

Having cut himself off from the emoluments of the established church, Knox engaged as tutor in the family of Douglas, of Languiddric, a gentleman of East Lothian. As a man of known ability, and as a priest, he was especially obnoxious to the hierarchy ; and it is said that Archbishop Beatoun sought his life by private assassination, as well as openly under color of the law. At Easter, 1547, Knox, with many other Protestants, took refuge in the castle of St. Andrews, which was seized and held after the archbishop's murder, by the band of conspirators who had done the deed. He here continued his usual course of instruction to his pupils, combined with public reading and explanation of the Scriptures to those who sought his assistance. His talents pointed him out as a fit person for the ministry ; but he was very reluctant to devote himself to that important charge, and was only induced to do so after a severe internal struggle, by a solemn call from the minister and the assembled congregation. He distinguished himself during his short abode at St. Andrews by zeal, boldness and success in preaching. But in the following July the castle surrendered, and by a scandalous violation of the articles of capitulation the garrison were made prisoners of war, and subjected to great and unusual ill-treatment. Knox, with many others, was placed in a French galley, and compelled to labor like a slave at the oar. His health was greatly injured by the hardship which he underwent in that worst of prisons, but his spirit rode triumphant over suffering. During this period he committed to writing an abstract of the doctrines which he had preached, which he found means to convey to his friends in Scotland, with an earnest exhortation to persevere in the faith through persecution and trial. He obtained liberty in February, 1549, but by what means is not precisely known.

At that time, under the direction of Cranmer, and with the zealous concurrence of the young King Edward VI., the Reformation in England was advancing with rapid pace. Knox repaired thither, as to the safest harbor, and in the dearth of able and earnest preachers which then existed, he found at once a welcome and active employment. The North was appointed to be the scene of his usefulness, and he continued to preach there, living chiefly at Berwick and Newcastle till the end of 1552. He was then summoned to London to appear before the Privy council on a frivolous charge, of which he was honorably acquitted. The king was anxious to secure his services to the English Church, and caused the living of All Hallows, in London, and even a bishopric, to be offered him. But Knox had conscientious scruples to some points of the English establishment. He continued, however, to preach, itinerating through the country, until after the accession of Mary, the exercise of the Protestant religion was forbidden by act of Parliament, December 20, 1553. Shortly afterwards he yielded to the importunity of his friends and consulted his own safety by retiring to France. Previous to his departure, he solemnized his marriage with Miss Bowes, a Yorkshire lady of good family, to whom he had been some time engaged.

Knox took up his board in the first instance at Dieppe, but he soon went to Geneva, and there made acquaintance with Calvin, whom he loved and venerated, and followed more closely than any other of the fathers of the Reformation in his views both of doctrine and ecclesiastical discipline. Towards the close of 1554 he was invited by a congregation of English exiles resident at Frankfort to become one of their pastors. Internal discords, chiefly concerning the ritual and matters of ceremonial observance, in which, notwithstanding the severe and uncomplying temper usually ascribed to him, no blame seems justly due to Knox, soon forced him to quit his charge; and he returned to Geneva, where he spent more than a year in a learned leisure, peculiarly grateful to him after the troubled life which he had led so long. But in August, 1555, moved by the favorable aspect of the times, and by the entreaties of his family, from whom he had now been

separated near two years, he returned to Scotland, and was surprised and rejoiced at the extraordinary avidity with which his preaching was attended. He visited various districts, both north and south, and won over two noblemen, who became eminent supporters of the Reformation, the heir apparent of the earldom of Argyle, and Lord James Stuart, afterwards Earl of Murray. But in the middle of these successful labors he received a call from an English congregation at Geneva to become their pastor, and he seemed to have felt it a duty to comply with their request.

It would have seemed more consonant to his character to have remained in Scotland, to watch over the seed which he had sown ; and that his own country had the most pressing claim upon his services. But the whole tenor of his life warrants the belief that he was actuated by no unworthy or selfish motive ; and in the absence of definite information, some insight into the nature of his feelings may probably be gained from a letter addressed to some friends in Edinburgh, in March, 1557 : "Assure of that, that whenever a greater number among you shall call upon me, than now hath bound me to serve them, by His grace it shall not be the fear of punishment, neither yet of the death temporal, that shall impede my coming to you."

He quitted Scotland in July, 1556. During this absence Knox maintained a frequent correspondence with his brethren in Scotland, and both by exhortation, and by his advice upon difficult questions submitted to his judgment, was still of material service in keeping alive their spirit. Two of his works, composed during this period require mention, his share in the English translation of the Scriptures, commonly called the Geneva Bible, and the "Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regimen of Women," a treatise expressly directed against the government of Mary of England, but containing a bold and unqualified enunciation of the principle that to admit a woman to sovereignty is contrary to nature, justice, and the revealed will of God. In January, 1559, at the invitation of the leading persons of the Protestant congregation, he again returned to Scotland. Matters at this time were drawing to a crisis. The Queen Regent, after temporizing

while the support of a large and powerful party was essential to her, had thrown off disguise and openly avowed her determination to use force for the suppression of heresy ; while the leading Protestants avowed as plainly their resolution of protecting their preachers ; and becoming more and more sensible of their own increasing strength, resolved to abolish the Roman and set up the Reformed method of worship in those places to which their influence or feudal power extended. St. Andrews was fixed on for the commencement of the experiment ; and under the protection of the Earl of Argyle, and Lord James Stuart, Prior of St. Andrews, Knox, who, on his landing had been proclaimed a rebel and outlaw, undertook to preach publicly in the cathedral of that city. The archbishop sent word that he should be fired upon if he ventured to appear in the pulpit, and as that prelate was supported by a stronger force than the retinue of the Protestant noblemen, they thought it best that he should abstain, at this time, from thus exposing his life. Knox remained firm to his purpose. After reminding them that he had first preached the gospel in that church, of the sufferings of his captivity, and of the confident hope which he had expressed to many that he should again perform his high mission in that same church, he besought them not to stand in the way when Providence had brought him to the spot. "As to the fear of danger that may come to me," he continued, "let no man be solicitous ; for my life is in the custody of Him whose glory I seek. I desire the hand nor weapon of no man to defend me. I only crave audience, which, if it be denied here unto me at this time, I must seek it where I may have it." The archbishop's proved to be an empty threat. Knox preached for four successive days, without interruption, and with such effect that the magistrates and the inhabitants agreed to set up the reformed worship in their town ; the monasteries were destroyed, and the churches stripped of images and pictures. Both parties now rose in arms. During the contest which ensued, Knox was a chief agent in conducting the correspondence between Elizabeth and the Lords of the congregation. The task suited neither his profession nor his character, and he rejoiced when he was relieved from it. In July, 1560, a treaty was concluded with

the King and Queen of France, by which the administration of the Queen Regent was terminated ; and in August a parliament was convoked, which abolished the papal jurisdiction, prohibited the celebration of mass, and rescinded the laws enacted against Protestant worship.

From the persecuted and endangered teacher of a proscribed religion, Knox had now become, not indeed the head, but a leader and venerated father of an established church. He was at once appointed the Protestant minister of Edinburgh, and his influence ceased not to be felt from this time forward in all things connected with the Church, and in many particulars of civil policy. Still his anxieties were far from an end. Many things threatened and impeded the infant Church. Far from acquiescing in the recent acts of the Parliament, the young King and Queen of France were bent on putting down the rebellion, as they termed it, in Scotland, by force of arms. The death of Francis put an end to that danger ; but another no less serious was opened by the arrival of Mary in August, 1561, to assume her paternal sovereignty, with a fixed determination of reviving the supremacy of the religion in which she had been brought up, and to which she was devotedly attached. There were also two subjects upon which Knox felt peculiarly anxious, and in which he was thwarted by the lukewarmness, as he considered it, of the legislature—the establishment of a strict and efficacious system of church discipline, and the entire devotion of the wealth of the Catholic priesthood to the promotion of education and the maintenance of the true religion. In both these points he was thwarted by the indifference or interestedness of the nobility, who had possessed themselves of a large amount of the lands and tithes formerly enjoyed by monasteries.

It soon became evident that the queen disliked and feared Knox. She regarded his “Blast against the Regimen of Women” as an attack upon her own right to the throne : and this is not surprising, although Knox always declared that book to be leveled solely against the late Queen of England, and professed his perfect readiness to submit to Mary’s authority in all things lawful, and to waive all discussion or allusion to the obnoxious tenet. His freedom of speech in

the pulpit was another constant source of offense ; and it is not to be denied that, although the feelings of that age warranted a greater latitude than would now be tolerated in a teacher of religion, his energetic and severe temper led him to use violent and indiscreet language in speaking of public men and public things. For Mary herself he prayed in terms which, however fitting for a minister to employ towards one of his flock whom he regarded to be in deadly and pernicious error, a queen could hardly be expected to endure from a subject without anger.

Accordingly, he was several times summoned to her presence, to apologize or answer for his conduct. The narrations of these interviews are very interesting ; they show the ascendancy which he had gained over the haughty spirit of the Queen, and at the same time exonerate him from the charge urged by her apologists, of having treated her with personal disrespect, and even brutality. He expressed uncourtly opinions in plain and severe language ; further than this he neither violated the courtesies due from man to woman, nor the respect due from a subject to a superior.

In addition to the causes of offense already specified, he had remonstrated, from her first landing, against the toleration of the mass in her own chapel. And at a later time he spoke so freely concerning the probable consequence to the Reformed church from her marrying a Papist, that in reprimanding and remonstrating with him she burst into a passion of tears. He remained unmoved, protesting that he saw her majesty's tears with reluctance, but was constrained, since he had given her no just ground of offense, rather to sustain her tears than to hurt his conscience and betray the commonwealth through his silence. This interview is one of the things upon which Mr. Hume has sought to raise a prejudice against the reformer in his partial account of this period.

Many of the nobility who aided in the establishment of the Reformation, gained over either by the fascination of Mary's beauty and manners, or by the still more cogent appeal of personal interest, were far from seconding Knox's efforts or partaking in his apprehensions. The Earl of Murray was so far won over to adopt a temporizing and concili-

atory policy, that a quarrel ensued in 1563 between him and Knox which lasted for two years, until quenched, as Knox expresses it, by the water of affliction. Maitland of Lethington, once an active reformer, a man of powerful and versatile talents, who was now made Secretary of State, openly espoused the Queen's wishes. In the summer of 1563, Knox was involved in a charge of high treason, for having addressed a circular to the chief Protestant gentlemen, requesting them to attend the trial of two persons accused of having created a riot at the Queen's chapel. It appears that he held an especial commission from the General Assembly to summon such meetings, when occasion seemed to him to require them. Upon this charge of treasonably convoking the lieges, he was brought before the privy council.

Murray and Maitland were earnest to persuade him into submission and acknowledgment of error. Knox, however, with his usual firmness and uprightness, refused positively to confess a fault when he was conscious of none, and defended himself with so much power, that by the voice of a majority of the council he was declared free of all blame.

In March, 1564, more than three years after the death of his first wife, Knox contracted a second marriage with a daughter of Lord Ochiltree, a zealous Protestant. Throughout that year and the following, he continued to preach as usual. Meanwhile the Protestant establishment, though confirmed by the Parliament, remained still unrecognized by the Queen, whose hasty marriage to Lord Henry Darnly, in July, 1565, increased the alarm with which her conduct had already inspired the Reformers. But early in the following year, when Mary, in conjunction with her uncles of the house of Lorraine, had planned the formal reestablishment of Catholicism, her dissensions with her husband led to the assassination of Rizzio, and in rapid succession to the murder of Darnly, her marriage with Bothwell and the train of events which ended in her formal deposition and the coronation of her infant son, James VI. It is denied that Knox was privy to the assassination of Rizzio, and the tenor of his actions warrant us in disbelieving that he would have been an accomplice in any deed of blood, but after that event he spoke of

it in terms of satisfaction, indiscreet, liable to perversion, and unbecoming a Christian preacher. The Queen's resentment for this and other reasons became so warm against him that it was judged proper for him to retire from Edinburgh. He preached at the coronation of James VI. After Mary was made prisoner and confined at Lochleven, he, in common with most of the ministers and the great body of the people insisted strongly on the duty of bringing her to trial for the crimes of murder and adultery, and of inflicting capital punishment if her guilt were proved.

During the short regency of Murray, Knox had the satisfaction not only of being freed from the personal disquietudes which had been his portion almost through life, but of seeing the interests of the Church, if not maintained to the full extent which he could wish, at least treated with respect, and advocated, as far as the crooked course of state policy would permit. The murder of that distinguished nobleman, January 23, 1570, affected Knox doubly, as the premature decease of a loved and esteemed friend, and as a public calamity to church and state.

In the following October he suffered a slight fit of apoplexy, from which, however, he soon recovered so far as to resume his Sunday preachings. But the troubled times which followed on the death of the Regent Murray denied to him in Edinburgh that repose which his infirmities demanded, and in May, 1571, he was reluctantly induced to retire from his ministry and again to seek a refuge in St. Andrews.

The following account of his appearance and manner in the pulpit at this time of his life is given by Melville, then a student at St. Andrews; and though the language be obscure to the English reader, it will be sufficiently intelligible, and would only be weakened by translation: "Of all the benefits I haid that year (1571) was the coming of that most notable profit and apostle of our nation, Mr. Ihone Knox, to St. Andrews, who, be the faction of the queen occupeing the castell and town of Edinburgh, was compellit to remove therefra with a number of the best, and chusit to come to St. Andrews. I heard him teache there the prophecies of Daniel that simmer and the wintar following. I haid my pen and

my little buike and tuk away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text he was moderat the space of a half houre ; but when he enterit to application, he made me so to grew and tremble, that I could not hald a pen to wryt. He was very weik. I saw him everie day of his doctrine, go hulie and fear,* with a furring of marticks abut his neck, a staffe in the ane hand, and gud, godlie Richart Ballenden, his servand, halding up the uther ofter† from the abbey to the parish kirk, and be the same Richart and another servand, lifted up to the pulpit, whar he behovit to lean at his first entrie ; bot, er he haid done with his sermone, he was sa active and vigorous that he was like to *ding the pulpit in blads*,‡ and flie out of it." It would appear that Wilkie had taken the figure of Knox, in his fine picture of the reformer preaching before Queen Mary, from this description.

His residence in that city was not one of peace or ease, for he was troubled by a party favorable to the Queen's interests, especially by that Archibald Hamilton who afterwards apostatized to the Roman Catholic church, and became his bitter calumniator ; and he was placed in opposition to the regent Morton with respect to the filling up of vacant bishoprics, and the disposal of church property, which, far from being applied to the maintenance of religion and the diffusion of education, was still in great measure monopolized by the nobility. In August, 1572, his health being rapidly declining, he returned to Edinburgh at the earnest request of his congregation, who longed to hear his voice in the pulpit once more. He felt death to be nigh at hand, and was, above all things, anxious to witness the appointment of a zealous and able successor to the important sation in the ministry which he filled. This was done to his satisfaction. On Sunday, November 9, he preached and presided at the installation of his successor, James Lawson, and he never after quitted his own house. He sickened on the 11th, and expired November 24, 1572, after a fortnight's illness, in which he displayed unmixed tranquillity and assured trust in a happy futurity through the promises of the gospel which he had preached.

* Slowly and cautiously.

† Armpit.

‡ Pieces.

It is the more necessary to state this, because his calumniators dared to assert that his death was accompanied by horrid prodigies, and visible marks of divine reprobation. The same tales have been related of Luther and Calvin.

On the 26th, he was interred in the church-yard of St. Giles, and his funeral was attended by the Regent Morton, and by those of the nobility who were in the city, as well as by a great concourse of people. When his body was laid in the grave, the Regent emphatically pronounced his eulogium in the well-known words : "There lies he who never feared the face of man."

Knox's moral character we may safely pronounce to have been unblemished, notwithstanding the outrageous charges of dissolute conversation which have been brought by some writers against him, calumnies equally leveled against Beza, Calvin, and other fathers of the Reformation, and which bear their own refutation in their extravagance. As a preacher he was energetic and effective, and uncommonly powerful in awakening the negligent or the hardened conscience. As a reformer and leader of the Church, he was fitted for the stormy times and the turbulent people among whom his lot was cast, by the very qualities which have been made a reproach to him in a more polished age, and by a less zealous generation. He was possessed of strong natural talents and a determined will, which shunned neither danger nor labor. He was of middle age when he began the study of Greek, and it was still later in life when he acquired the Hebrew language, tasks of no small difficulty when we consider the harassed and laborious tenor of his life. No consideration of temporizing prudence could seduce him into the compromise of an important principle ; no thought of personal danger could make him shrink when called to confront it. His deep sense and resolute discharge of duty, coupled with a natural fire and impetuosity of temper, sometimes led him into severity. But that his disposition was deeply affectionate is proved by his private correspondence ; and that his severity proceeded from no acerbity of temper, may be inferred from his having employed his powerful influence as a mediator for those who had borne arms against his party, and from his having never used

it to avenge an injury. The best apology for his occasional harshness, is that contained in the words of his own dying address to the elders of his church, as quoted by Dr. McCrie: "I know that many have frequently complained, and do still loudly complain of my too great severity ; but God knows that my mind was always void of hatred to the persons of those against whom I thundered the severest judgments. I can not deny but that I felt the greatest abhorrence at the sins in which they indulged, but still I kept this one thing in view, that, if possible, I might gain them to the Lord. What influenced me to utter whatever the Lord put into my mouth so boldly and without respect to persons, was a reverential fear of my God, who called, and of his grace appointed me, to be a steward of divine mysteries, and a belief that he will demand an account of the manner in which I have discharged the trust committed to me, when I shall at last stand before his tribunal."

A list of Knox's printed works, nineteen in number, is given by Dr. McCrie at the end of his notes. They consist chiefly of short religious pieces, exhortations, and sermons. In addition to those more important books which we have already noticed, his "History of the Church of Scotland" requires mention. The best edition is that printed at Edinburgh in 1732, which contains a life of the author, the "Regimen of Women," and some other pieces. Dr. McCrie's admirable Life of Knox will direct the reader to the original source of the history of this period.

CALVIN.

JOHN CAUVIN (afterwards called Calvin), was born of humble parents, his father following the trade of a cooper, at Noyon, in Picardy, July 10, 1509. He was intended, in the first instance, for the profession of the Church, and two benefices were already set apart for him, when, at a very early age, from what motive is not exactly known, his destination

was suddenly changed, and he was sent first to Orleans and then to Bourges, to learn under distinguished teachers the science of jurisprudence. He is said to have made great proficiency in that study ; but nevertheless he found leisure to cultivate other talents, and made himself acquainted with Greek, Hebrew and Syriac, during his residence at Bourges. His natural inclination seems ever to have bent him towards those pursuits to which his earliest attention was directed ; and though he never attended the schools of theology, nor had at any time any public master in that science, yet his thoughts were never far away from it ; and the time which he could spare from his professional labors was employed on subjects bearing more or less directly upon religion.

Thus it was that he failed not to take part in the discussions which arose in France during his early years respecting the principles of the Reformation ; and it may be that his happy escape from theological tuition made him even more disposed to embrace them. It is certain that his opposition to the church of Rome became very soon notorious, and made him, young as he was, an object of jealousy to some of its powerful adherents. Even the moderate Erasmus viewed his aspiring talents and determined character with some undefined apprehension : and he is related (after a conversation with Calvin at Strasbourg) to have remarked to Bucer, who had presented him—"I see in that young man the seeds of a dangerous pest, which will some day throw great disorder into the Church." The weak and wavering character of Erasmus renders it difficult for us to understand what sort of disorder it was that he anticipated, or what exactly was the *Church* on which the apprehended mischief was to fall. In 1535 Calvin published his great work, the "Christian Institute," which was intended as a sort of confession of faith of the French reformers, in answer to the calumnies which confounded them with the frantic Anabaptists of Germany.

In 1536, finding that his person was no longer secure in France, Calvin determined to retire into Germany, and was compelled by accident to pass through Geneva. He found this city in a state of extreme confusion. The civil government was popular, and in those days tumultuous ; the eccle-

siastical had been entirely dissolved by the departure of the bishops and clergy on the triumph of the Reformation, and only such laws existed as the individual influence of the pastors was able to impose upon their several flocks. It was a tempting field for spiritual ambition, and Calvin was readily persuaded to enter into it. He decided to remain at Geneva, and forthwith opened a theological school.

In the very year following his arrival, he formed the design of introducing into his adopted country a regular system of ecclesiastical polity. He assembled the people, and not without much opposition prevailed on them at length to bind themselves by oath; *first*, that they would not again, on any consideration, ever submit to the dominion of Rome; *secondly*, that they would render obedience to a certain code of ecclesiastical laws, which he and his colleagues had drawn up for them. Some writers do not expressly mention that this second proposition was accepted by the people—if accepted it was immediately violated; and as Calvin and his clerical coadjutors (who were only two in number) refused with firmness to administer the holy communion to such as rejected the condition, the people, not yet prepared to endure that bondage, banished the spiritual legislators from the city in April, 1538.

Calvin retired to Strasbourg, where he renewed his intimacy with Bucer, and became more and more distinguished for his talents and learning. He was present at the Conferences at Worms and Ratisbon, where he gained additional reputation. He founded a French reformed church at Strasbourg, and obtained a theological chair in that city; at the same time he continued in communication with Geneva, and in expressions of unabated affection for his former adherents. Meanwhile the disorders which had prevailed in that city were in no manner alleviated by his exile, and a strong reaction gradually took place in his favor, insomuch that, in the year 1541, there being a vacancy in the ministry, the senate and the assembly of the people proclaimed with equal vehemence their wish for the return of Calvin. "We will have Calvin, that good and learned man, Christ's minister." "This," says Calvin, Epistle 24, "when I understood I could not choose

but praise God ; nor was I able to judge otherwise, than that this was the Lord's doings, and that it was marvelous in our eyes ; and that the stone which the builders refused was now made the head of the corner."

It was on September 13 that he returned from his exile in the pride of spiritual triumph : and he began without any loss of time, while the feelings of all classes were yet warm in his favor, to establish that rigid form of ecclesiastical discipline which he may formerly have meditated, but which he did not fully propound till now. He proposed to institute a standing court, (the consistory,) consisting of all the ministers of religion, who were to be perpetual members, and also of twice the same number of laymen to be chosen annually. To these he committed the charge of public morality, with power to determine all kinds of ecclesiastical causes ; with authority to convene, control and punish, even with excommunication, whomsoever they might think deserving. It was in vain that many advanced objections to this scheme ; that they urged the despotic character of this court ; the certainty too, that the perpetual judges, though fewer in number would in fact predominate over a majority annually elected ; and that Calvin, through his power over the clergy, would be master of the decisions of the whole tribunal. He persisted inflexibly ; and since there now remained with the people of Geneva only the choice of receiving his laws or sending him once more into exile, they acquiesced reluctantly in the former determination. On the 20th of November, in the same year (1541) the Presbytery was established at Geneva.

From this time forward Calvin became, not pontiff only, but also caliph of Geneva ; since the unbounded influence which he possessed in the Consistory extended to the council, and no important state affair was transacted without his advice or approbation. At the same time he enlarged the limits of his spiritual power, and made it felt in every quarter of Europe. In France, most especially, he was regarded personally as the head of the Reformed church ; he composed a liturgy for its use ; and secured from persecution by his residence and dignity, he gave laws, by his writings and his emissaries to the scattered congregations of Reformers. The fruits of

his unwearied industry were everywhere in their hands. His Institute and his learned expositions of Scripture were substantial foundations of spiritual authority ; and he became to his church what the "Master of the Sentences," almost what Augustine himself had been to the church of Rome. And he did the Reformed church an essential service by procuring the establishment of the Academy or University of Geneva ; which was long the principal nursery of Presbyterian ministers, and which was the chief instrument of communicating to the citizens of its little state that general mental culture and love of literature for which they have been remarkable.

The peculiarities of his religious opinions are known to all our readers ; nor, indeed, at any rate, have we space in this brief outline of the life of the reformer so to detail his tenets as to avoid the chance of misconception, either by his followers or his adversaries. We shall, therefore, proceed to another subject, respecting which there will be little difference, either as to the facts themselves or the judgment to be formed of them—we mean that darkest act of his life, which being, as far as we learn, unatoned and unrepented, throws so deep a shadow over all the rest, as almost to make us question his sincerity in any good principle, or his capability of any righteous purpose.

A Spaniard named Servetus, born at Villa Nueva, in Aragon, in the same year with Calvin, had been long engaged in a correspondence with the latter, which had finally degenerated into angry and abusive controversy. He had been educated as a physician, and had acquired great credit in his profession ; when, in an evil hour, he entered the field of theological controversy, and professed without fear, and defended without modification, the Unitarian doctrine, adding to it some obscure and fanciful notions peculiar, we believe, to his own imagination. He published, very early in life, "Seven Books Concerning the Errors of the Trinity," and he continued in the same principles until the year 1553, when he put forth (at Vienne, in Dauphine), a work entitled "The Restoration of Christianity, etc.," in further confirmation of his views.

Now it is very true, that the propagation of these opinions, by a professed reformer, was, at that crisis, a matter of great scandal, and perhaps even of some danger to the cause of the Reformation. It was felt as such by some of the leading reformers. Zuinglius and Œcolampadius eagerly disclaimed the error of Servetus. "Our church will be very ill spoken of," said the latter in a letter to Bucer, "unless our divines make it their business to cry him down ;" and had they been contented to proclaim their dissent from his doctrine, or to assail it by reasonable argument, they would have done no more than their duty to their own communion absolutely demanded of them.

But Calvin was not a man who would argue where he could command, or persuade where he could overthrow. Full of vehemence and bitterness, inflexible and relentless, he was prepared to adopt and to justify extreme measures, wheresoever they answered his purpose best. He was animated by the pride, intolerance, and cruelty of the church of Rome, and he planted and nourished those evil passions in his little consistory at Geneva.

Servetus, having escaped from confinement at Vienne, and flying for refuge to Naples, was driven by evil destiny, or his own infatuation, to Geneva. Here he strove to conceal himself till he should be enabled to proceed on his journey, but he was quickly discovered by Calvin, and immediately cast into prison. This was in the summer of 1553. Presently followed the formality of his trial ; and when we read the numerous articles of impeachment, and observe the language in which they are couched ; when we peruse the humble petitions which he addressed to the "Syndics and Council," praying only that an advocate might be granted him, which prayer was haughtily refused ; when we perceive the misrepresentations of his doctrine, and the offensive terms of his condemnation, we appear to be carried back again to the halls of Constance, and to be witnessing the fall of Huss and Jerome beneath their Roman Catholic oppressors. So true it is (as Grotius had sufficient reason to say), "that the spirit of Antichrist did appear at Geneva as well as at Rome."

But the magistrates of this republic did not venture

completely to execute the will of Calvin, without first consulting the other Protestant cities of Switzerland, namely, Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Schaffhausen. The answers returned by these all indicated very great anxiety for the extinction of the heresy, without, however, expressly demanding the blood of the heretic. The people of Zurich were the most violent, and the answer of their "pastors, readers and ministers," which is praised and preserved by Calvin, is worthy of the communion from which they had so lately seceded. As soon as these communications reached Geneva, Servetus was immediately condemned to death, on the 26th of October, 1553, and was executed on the day following.

There is extant a letter written by Calvin to his friend and brother minister, William Farrel, dated the 26th, which announces that the fatal sentence had been passed, and would be executed on the morrow. It is only remarkable for the cold conciseness and heartless indifference of its expressions. Not a single word indicates any feeling of compassion or repugnance. And as the work of persecution was carried on without mercy, and completed without pity, so likewise was it recollected without remorse; and the Protestant republican minister of Christ continued, for some years afterwards, to insult with abusive epithets the memory of his victim.

Soon after the death of Servetus, Calvin published a vindication of his proceedings, in which he defended, without any compromise, the principle on which he had acted. It is entitled "A Faithful Exposition and Short Refutation of the Errors of Servetus, wherein it is shown that Heretics should be restrained by the Power of the Sword." His friend and biographer, Beza, also put forth a work on the propriety of punishing heretics by the civil authority. Thus Calvin not only indulged his own malevolent humor, but also sought to establish among the avowed principles of his own church the duty of exterminating all who might happen to differ from it.

He lived eleven years longer, and expired at Geneva on the 27th of May, 1564, having maintained his authority to the end of his life, without acquiring any of the affection of those about him. Neither of these circumstances need sur-

prise us, for it was his character to awe, to command, and to repel. Fearless, inflexible, morose, and imperious, he neither courted any one, nor yielded to any one, nor conciliated any one ; yet he was sensible of, and seemingly contrite for his defects of temper, for he writes to Bucer, "I have not had harder contests with my vices, which are great and many, than with my impatience. I have not yet been able to subdue that savage brute." His talents were extremely powerful, both for literature and for business. His profound and various learning acquired for him the general respect which it deserved. He was active and indefatigable ; he slept little and was remarkable for his abstemious habits. With a heart inflated and embittered with spiritual pride, he affected a perfect simplicity of manner ; and professed, and may indeed have felt a consummate contempt for the ordinary objects of human ambition. Besides this, he was far removed from the besetting vice of common minds, by which even noble qualities are so frequently degraded—avarice. He neither loved money for itself, nor grasped at it for its uses ; and at his death, the whole amount of his property, including his library, did not exceed, at the lowest statement, one hundred and twenty-five crowns, at the highest, three hundred.

We may thus readily understand how it was that Calvin acquired, through the mere force of personal character thrown into favorable circumstances, power almost uncontrolled over a state of which he was not so much as a native, and considerable influence, besides, over the spiritual condition of Europe—power and influence of which deep traces still exist, both in the country which adopted him, and in others where he was only known by his writings and his doctrines. His doctrines still divide the Christian world ; but that ecclesiastical principle, which called in the authority of the sword for their defense, has been long and indignantly disclaimed by all his followers.

MELANTHON.

PHILIP was the son of a respectable engineer, named Schwartzerde, that is, Black-earth, a name which he Grecised at a very early age, as soon as his literary taste and talents began to display themselves—assuming, in compliance with the suggestion of his distinguished kinsman Reuchlin or Capnio, and according to the fashion of the age, the classical synonym of Melancthon. He was born at Bretten, a place near Wittemberg, February 16, 1497. He commenced his studies at Heidelberg in 1509 ; and after three years was removed to Tübingen, where he remained till 1518. These circumstances are in this instance not undeserving of notice, because Melancthon gave from his very boyhood abundant proofs of an active and brilliant genius, and acquired some juvenile distinctions which have been recorded by grave historians, and have acquired him a place among the “*Enfans Célèbres*” of Baillet. During his residence at Tübingen he gave public lectures on Virgil, Terence, Cicero and Livy, while he was pursuing with equal ardor his biblical studies ; and he had leisure besides to furnish assistance to Reuchlin in his dangerous contests with the monks, and to direct the operations of a printing-press. The course of learning and genius, when neither darkened by early prejudice, nor perverted by personal interests, ever points to liberality and virtue. In the case of Melancthon, this tendency was doubtless confirmed by the near spectacle of monastic oppression and even bigotry ; and thus we can not question that he had imbibed, even before his departure from Tübingen, the principles which enlightened his subsequent career, and which throw the brightest glory on his memory.

In 1518 (at the age of twenty-one), he was raised to the professorship of Greek in the University of Wittemberg. The moment was critical. Luther, who occupied the theological chair in the same university, had just published his “*Ninety-five Propositions against the Abuse of Indulgences*,” and was entering, step by step, into a contest with the Vatican. He was in possession of great personal authority ; he was older

by fourteen years, and was endowed with a far more commanding spirit than his brother professor ; and thus in that intimacy which local circumstances and similarity of sentiments immediately cemented between those two eminent persons, the ascendancy was naturally assumed by Luther, and maintained to the end of his life. Melancthon was scarcely established at Wittenberg when he addressed to the Reformer some very flattering expressions of admiration, couched in indifferent Greek iambics, and in the year following he attended him to the public disputations which he held with Eckius on the supremacy of the Pope. Here he first beheld the strife into which he was destined presently to enter, and learned the distasteful rudiments of theological controversy.

Two years afterwards, when certain of the opinions of Luther were violently attacked by the faculty of Paris, Melancthon interposed to defend their author, to repel some vain charges which were brought against him, and to ridicule the pride and ignorance of the doctors of the Sorbonne. About the same time, he engaged in the more delicate question respecting the celibacy of the clergy, and opposed the popish practice with much zeal and learning. This was a subject which he had always nearest his heart, and in the discussions to which it led, he surpassed even Luther in the earnestness of his argument ; and he at least had no personal interest in the decision, as he never took orders.

In 1528 it was determined to impose a uniform rule of doctrine and discipline upon the ministers of the Reformed churches ; and the office of composing it was assigned to Melancthon. He published, in eighteen chapters, an "Instruction to the Pastors of the Electorate of Saxony," in which he made the most formal exposition of the doctrinal system of the Reformers. The work was promulgated with the approbation of Luther ; and the article concerning the bodily presence in the Eucharist conveyed the opinion of the master rather than the disciple. Yet were there other points so moderately treated, and set forth in so mild and compromising a temper, as sufficiently to mark Melancthon as the author of the document ; and so strong was the impression produced upon the Roman Catholics themselves, by its character and spirit,

that many considered it the composition of a disguised friend ; and Faber even ventured to make personal overtures to the composer, and to hold forth the advantages that he might hope to attain by a seasonable return to the bosom of the apostolic church.

The Diet of Augsburg was summoned soon afterwards, and it assembled in 1530 for the reconciliation of all differences. This being at least the professed object of both parties, it was desirable that the conference should be conducted by men of moderation, disposed to soften the subjects of dissension, and to mitigate, by temper and manner, the bitterness of controversy. For this delicate office, Luther was entirely disqualified, whereas the reputation of Melancthon presented precisely the qualities that seemed to be required ; the management of the negotiations was accordingly confided to him, but not without the near superintendence of Luther. The latter was resident close at hand, he was in perpetual communication with his disciple, and influenced most of his proceedings ; and at least, during the earlier period of the conferences, he not only suggested the matter, but even authorized the form of the official documents.

It was thus that the "Confession of Augsburg" was composed ; and we observe on its very surface thus much of the spirit of conciliation, that of its twenty-eight chapters, twenty-one were devoted to the exposition of the opinions of the Reformers, while seven only were directed against the tenets of their adversaries. In the tedious and perplexing negotiations that followed, some concessions were privately proposed by Melancthon, which could scarcely have been sanctioned by Luther, as they were inconsistent with the principles of the Reformation and the independence of the Reformers. In some letters written towards the conclusion of the Diet, he acknowledged in the strongest terms the authority of the Roman church and all its hierarchy ; he asserted that there was positively no doctrinal difference between the parties ; that the whole dispute turned on matters of discipline and practice, and that if the Pope would grant only a provisional toleration on the two points of the double communion and the marriage of the clergy, it would not be difficult to remove

all other differences not excepting that respecting the mass. "Concede," he says to the Pope's legate, "or pretend to concede those two points, and we will submit to the bishops; and if some slight differences shall still remain between the two parties, they will not occasion any breach of union, because there is no difference on any point of faith, and they will be governed by the same bishops; and these bishops, having once recovered their authority, will be able, in process of time to correct defects which must now of necessity be tolerated." On this occasion, Melancthon took counsel of Erasmus rather than of Luther. It was his object at any rate to prevent the war with which the Protestants were threatened, and from which he may have expected their destruction. But the perfect and almost unconditional submission to the Roman hierarchy which he proposed as the only alternative would have accomplished the same purpose much more certainly; and Protestant writers have observed that the bitterest enemy of the Reformation could have suggested no more effectual or insidious method of subverting it, than that which was so warmly pressed upon the Roman Catholics by Melancthon himself. Luther was indignant when he heard of these proceedings; he strongly urged Melancthon to break off the negotiations and to abide by the Confession. Indeed, it appears that these degrading concessions to avowed enemies produced, as is ever the case, no other effect than to increase their pride, and exalt their expectations, and so lead them to demand still more unworthy conditions and a still more abject humiliation.

Howbeit the reputation of Melancthon was raised by the address which he displayed during these deliberations, and the variety of his talents and the extent of his erudition became more generally known and more candidly acknowledged. The modesty of his character, the moderation of his temper, the urbanity of his manners, his flexible and accommodating mind, recommended him to the regard of all, and especially to the patronage of the great. He was considered as the peace-maker of the age. All who had any hopes of composing the existing dissensions, and preventing the necessity of absolute schism, placed their trust in the mildness of his expe-

dients. The service which he had endeavored to render to the Emperor was sought by the two other powerful monarchs of that time. Francis I. invited him to France in 1535, to reconcile the growing differences of his subjects; and even Henry VIII. expressed a desire for his presence and his counsels; but the Elector could not be persuaded to consent to his departure from Saxony.

In 1541 he held a public disputation with Eckius, at Worms, which lasted three days. The conference was subsequently removed to Ratisbon, and continued with pacific professions and polemic arguments during the same year, with no other result than an expressed understanding that both parties should refer their claims to a general Council, and abide by its decision.

In the meantime, as the Popes showed great reluctance to summon any such council, unless it should assemble in Italy, and deliberate under their immediate superintendence, and as the Reformers constantly refused to submit to so manifest a compromise of their claims, it seemed likely that some time might elapse before the disputants should have any opportunity of making their appeal. Wherefore, the Emperor, not brooking this delay, and willing by some provisional measure to introduce immediate harmony between the parties, published, in 1548, a formulary of temporary concord, under the name of the Interim. It proclaimed the conditions of peace, which were to be binding only till the decision of the "general Council." The conditions were extremely advantageous, as might well have been expected, to the Roman Catholic claims. Nevertheless, they gave complete satisfaction to neither party, and only animated to further arrogance the spirit of those whom they favored.

The Interim was promulgated at the Diet held at Augsburg, and it was followed by a long succession of conferences, which were carried on at Leipsig, and in other places, under the Protestant auspices of Maurice of Saxony. Here was an excellent field for the talents and character of Melancthon. All the public documents of the Protestants were composed by him. All the acuteness of his reason, all the graces of his style, all the resources of his learning were brought into light

and action ; and much that he wrote in censure of the Interim, was written with force and truth. But here, as on former occasions, the effects of his genius were marred by the very moderation of his principles, and the practical result of his labors was not beneficial to the cause he intended to serve. For in this instance, he not only did not conciliate the enemies to whom he made so large concessions, but he excited distrust and offense among his friends ; and these feelings were presently exasperated into absolute schism.

On the death of Luther, two years before these conferences, the foremost place among the Reformers had unquestionably devolved upon Melancthon. He had deserved that eminence by his various endowments and his uninterrupted exertions ; yet was he not the character most fitted to occupy it at that crisis. His incurable thirst for universal esteem and regard ; his perpetual anxiety to soothe his enemies and soften the bigotry of the hierarchy, frequently seduced him into unworthy compromises, which lowered his own cause, without obtaining either advantage or respect from his adversaries. It is not thus that the ferocity of intolerance can be disarmed. The lust of religious domination can not be satisfied by soothing words, or appeased by any exercise of religious charity. It is too blind to imagine any motive for the moderation of an enemy except the consciousness of weakness. It is too greedy to accept any partial concession, except as a pledge of still further humiliation, to end in absolute submission. It can be successfully opposed only by the same unbending resolution which itself displays, tempered by a calmer judgment, and animated by a more righteous purpose.

The general principle by which the controversial writings of Melancthon at this time were guided, was this—that there were certain essentials which admitted of no compromise ; but that the Interim might be received as a rule in respect to things which were *indifferent*. Hence arose the necessary inquiry, what could properly be termed indifferent. It was the object of Melancthon to extend the number, so as to include as many as possible of the points in dispute, and narrow the field of contention with the Roman Catholics.

In the pursuance of this charitable design he did not fore-

see—first, that he would not advance thereby a single step towards the conciliation of their animosity—next, that he would sow amongst the Reformers themselves the seeds of intestine discord ! but so unhappily it proved ; and the feeble expedient which was intended to repel the danger from without, multiplied that danger by introducing schism and disorder within.

Indeed, we can scarcely wonder that it was so ; for we find that among the matters to be accounted indifferent, and under that name conceded, Melancthon ventured to place the doctrine of justification by faith alone ; the necessity of good works to eternal salvation ; the number of the sacraments ; the jurisdiction claimed by the Pope and the bishops ; extreme unction ; and the observance of certain religious festivals and several superstitious rites and ceremonies. It was not possible that the more intimate associates of Luther—the men who had struggled by his side, who were devoted to his person and his memory, who inherited his opinions and his principles, and who were animated by some portion of his zeal—should stand by in silence and permit some of the dearest objects of their own struggles and the vigils of their master to be offered up to the foe by the irresolute hand of Melancthon.

Accordingly, a numerous party rose, who disclaimed his principles and rejected his authority. At their head was Illyricus Flacius, a fierce polemic, who possessed the intemperance without the genius of Luther. The contest commonly known as the Adiaphoristic Controversy broke out with great fury ; it presently extended its character so as to embrace various collateral points : and the Roman Catholics were once more edified by the welcome spectacle of Protestant dissension.

Melancthon held his last fruitless conference with the Roman Catholics at Worms, in the year 1557, and he died three years afterwards, at the age of sixty-three, the same age that had been attained by Luther. His ashes were deposited at Wittemberg, in the same church with those of his master. Some days before his death, while it was manifest that his end was fast approaching, Melancthon wrote on a scrap of

paper some of the reasons which reconciled him to the prospect of his departure. Among them were these—that he should see God and the Son of God ; that he should comprehend some mysteries which he was unable to penetrate on earth—such as these : why is it that we are created such as we are ? what was the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ ? that he should sin no more ; that he should no longer be exposed to vexations ; and that he should escape *from the rage of the theologians*. We need no better proof than this how his peaceable spirit had been tortured during the decline of life by those interminable quarrels, which were entirely repugnant to his temper, and yet were perpetually forced upon him, and which even his own lenity had seemingly tended to augment. And it is even probable that the theologians, from whose rage it was his especial hope to be delivered, were those who had risen up last against him, and with whom his differences were as nothing compared to the points on which they were agreed—his brother reformers. For, being in this respect unfortunate, that his endeavors to conciliate the affections of all parties had been requited by the contempt and insults of all, he was yet more peculiarly unhappy that the blackest contumely and the bitterest insults proceeded from the dissentients of his own. Thus situated, after forty years of incessant exertions to reform and at the same time to unite the Christian world, when he beheld discord multiplied and its fruits ripening in the very bosom of the Reformation ; when he compared his own principles and his own conscience with the taunts which were cast against him ; when he discovered how vain had been his mission of conciliation, and how ungrateful a task it was to throw oil upon the waters of theological controversy ; when he reflected how much time and forbearance he had wasted in this hopeless attempt—he could scarcely avoid the unwelcome suspicion that his life had been in some degree spent in vain, and that in one of the dearest objects of his continual endeavors he had altogether failed.

The reason was that the extreme mildness of his own disposition blinded him to the very nature of religious contests, and inspired him with amiable hopes, which could not possibly be realized. He may have been a better man than Lu-

ther ; he may have even been a wiser ; he had as great acuteness ; he had more learning, and a purer and more perspicuous style ; he had a more charitable temper ; he had a more candid mind ; and his love for justice and truth forbade him to reject, without due consideration, even the argument of an adversary. He was qualified to preside as a judge in the forum of theological litigation ; yet he was not fitted for that which he was called upon to discharge, the office of an advocate. He saw too much, for he saw both sides of the question ; his very knowledge, acting upon his natural modesty, made him diffident. He balanced, he reflected, he doubted ; and he became, through that very virtue, a tame sectarian, and a feeble partisan.

But his literary talents were of the highest order, and were directed, with great success, to almost all the departments of learning. He composed abridgments of all the branches of philosophy, which continued long in use among the students of Germany, and purified the liberal arts from the dross that was mixed up with them. And it was thus that he would have purified religion ; and as he had introduced the one reformation without violence, so he thought to accomplish the other without schism. But he comprehended not the character of the Roman Catholic priesthood ; nor could he conceive the tenacity and the passion with which men, in other respects reasonable and respectable, will cling to the interests, the prejudices, the abuses, and the very vices which are associated with their profession. It was an easy matter to him to confound the superstitious rites and tenets of Rome by his profound learning and eloquent arguments ; but it was another and far different task to deal with the offended feelings of an implacable hierarchy.

And thus it is, that while we admire his various acquirements and eminent literary talents, and praise the moderation of his charitable temper, we remark the wisdom of that Providence which intrusted the arduous commencement of the work of reformation to firmer and ruder hands than his.

Melancthon's printed works are very numerous. The most complete edition of them is that of Wittemberg, in 1680-3, in four volumes folio.

PART V.

REMAINS OF ANCIENT EASTERN CITIES.

THE RUINS OF PETRA.

It would be impossible to convey a full account of this marvelous scene unless a volume were devoted to its details. We therefore merely glance at its history, and briefly describe the entrance to the place, with some of its most prominent ruins.

The name of Petra, Selah, the Rock, is one of the most descriptive ever applied to any place, as the whole wondrous scene is one mass of living rock. There are houses of rock, and a theater of rock, and tombs innumerable of rock, and stairs, and excavations, and works without number and without end, all exquisitely chiseled or elaborately dug in the solid rock. Petra was the ancient capital of Edom, and it is utterly unlike any other ruin of which history tells or which modern enterprise has brought to light. The descendants of Esau are reckoned its founders; and, as the Edomites are known from Scripture to have been a powerful and a numerous people many centuries before our era, their capital may date far back in the dimness of remote antiquity. In Genesis, xxxvi., we have an abstract of its history, or a catalogue of its princes; and we there learn that the place was governed first by dukes and princes, then by many successive kings, and then by dukes again, and all that prior to the foundation of Israel as a kingdom—"before there reigned any king over Israel." In the time of Saul, Edom was subdued and became tributary to the kingdom of Judah. It revolted, but was again vanquished in the days of David. When the Romans overran the East, Edom was absorbed, and some of their

emperors did much to adorn it. Under Augustus it was a flourishing place, the abode of many Romans. Adrian patronized Petra, and changed its name into Adriane; but soon after his death it ceases to be mentioned in history. Its singular position, "in the clefts of the rock," sequestered it from the eyes of all excepting the wandering Arab; and the unique and magnificent capital became a dwelling only for robbers, for wild beasts and birds, for scorpions and bats. It had once been a center or a focus of commerce. The roads from the East to the West, and from various other quarters, all converged upon Petra; and the caravans of those remote times occasioned an activity of trade, a bustle among the merchants of all nations there, such as even fancy can scarcely reproduce amid these stupendous ruins, so deserted now that even the footfall of the traveler appears to mar the solitude. But as Petra flourished artificially, by the commerce of the nations, it fell in their fall. When Nineveh and Babylon were no more, when Egypt sank low among the nations, and when Palestine was peeled and trodden down, the great marketplace of the desert faded with them—its occupation was gone; and we know concerning it now only that prophecy has there been marvelously fulfilled: "O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, and holdest the height of the hill, though thou shouldest make thy nest as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also, Edom shall be desolate: every one that goeth by shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. . . . The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high. . . . I laid the mountains of Esau and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." Never a more explicit prediction—never a more exact fulfillment. For many centuries the name of Petra was never heard, till the enterprising traveler, Seitzen, brought it once more into notice about the commencement of the present century; and we need scarcely tarry to tell how changed all this was from the time when this capital of the Nabatheans was the focus of all the commodities of the East, when caravans from the interior of Arabia, from the Persian Gulf, from Yeman, spread their cargoes thence to Damascus, to Jerusalem,

to Gaza, to Tyre, and other places. It is unprecedented in all history, that a spot so arid and dreary by nature should have been forced into such prominence, or become such a depot of all forms of wealth ; yet long before Israel was a kingdom, and long after that kingdom had withered away, Petra flourished, as we have seen, while it is now perhaps the most wondrous monument on the globe.

The Wady Mousa, where these remarkable ruins are found, is about two days' journey from the Red Sea ; and so vast is the solitude, that we travel for days all round this capital without beholding a trace of man, except it be some horde of Arab robbers prowling for plunder. But it *was* not always so. Eighteen centuries ago, Edom could furnish a contingent of 30,000 men to help to repel the Romans from Jerusalem ; and the ruins of more than thirty towns can be counted in the territory of Edom within a circuit of a few miles. It is amid such scenes that the believer can realize most vividly the truth of his religion. He who sees the end from the beginning laid its foundation on the everlasting rock, and it is waxing stronger and stronger the more the world's history and condition are explored.

Amid scenes so wonderful, it will be difficult to convey a very satisfactory account of the ruins without the help of the pencil or the daguerreotype. The ENTRANCE to Petra is by a narrow gorge, lined by lofty precipices, formed by the channel of a rivulet. This defile is nearly two miles in length. At some places the overhanging rocks approach so near to each other that *only* two horsemen can proceed abreast. Along this pass, however, merchandise which enriched thousands, and corrupted thousands more, once flowed into the place. The ledge-like path is lined with tombs cut from the live rock, which is at some places not less than from 200 to 300 feet high ; and near the city the pathway is absolutely a street formed by tombs. In that neighborhood stands a magnificent temple, the Khuzné, or Treasury, all cut from the solid rock ; and all the details of decoration, though tasteless in themselves, are fresh and sharp, and well defined, except where the hand of violence has damaged them, as if only a few years had passed since they were reared. The sight, it may well be sup-

posed, has roused the genius of poetry. The befitting strain, in such a place would be a dirge—an anticipation of the cry, “Woe, woe, woe!” and one has sung in words applicable to the place,

“Across yon cliff a bridge seems hung in air,
While, mingling life with death, a thousand caves
Yawn far and near,—the ancient dwellers’ graves.”

But no poetry can really depict the scene. Under the bridge the pass is only twelve feet wide. “I was perfectly fascinated with this splendid work of ancient art (the Khuzné) in this wild spot,” wrote one not apt to speak in raptures; “and the idea of it was uppermost in my mind during the day and all the night. In the morning I returned, and beheld it again with increased admiration. There it stands, as it has stood for ages, in beauty and loveliness: the generations which admired and rejoiced over it of old have passed away; the wild Arab, as he wanders by, regards it with stupid indifference or scorn; and none are left but strangers from far distant lands to do it reverence. Its rich roseate tints, as I bade it farewell, were lighted up and gilded by the mellow beams of the morning sun; and I turned away from it at length with an impression which will be effaced only at death.”

When the visitor to Petra emerges from the ravine, which is the main approach to the place, the city opens before him in all its loveliness. The site forms a natural amphitheater, about two miles and a half in circumference, while the lofty hills stand sentinels all around. The dwellings, the temples, the tombs, are all fresh and youthful in their aspect; and though pillars have fallen, the friezes, are there, for they are parts of the rock. Cornices have given way, yet the entablatures above them remain. Gazed at, in short, with the eye of mere wonder, Petra is a mystery in stone. Judged of by other ruins, it is unique and unmatched. Viewed historically, it is a mighty monument of fallen grandeur: in the light of Scripture it proclaims that God is true, and every man a liar.

“Pillar and arch, defying Time’s rude shock,
Gleam on each side, upstarting from the rock;

but the Eternal has done what time has failed to achieve, and the sin of Petra has found it out. It is its own grave, its own monument, and its own epitaph.

In this area one is struck by a strange combination. The rock is honey-combed, Stanley says, with cavities of all shapes and sizes ; and through these you advance till the defile once more opens, and you see—strange and unexpected sight, with tombs above, below, and in front—a Greek theater hewn out of the rock, its tiers of seats literally red and purple alternately—all in the living rock—an amazing monument at once of folly and of taste. Its diameter at the base is 120 feet. It has thirty-three rows of seats, rising one above another, in the side of the cliff behind. Above the seats, in the circle of the rock, a row of small chambers is excavated, whose occupants could survey the whole scene below. The theater is estimated by some to contain about 3,000 people, but others deem that number too small. Such a structure or fabric, carved entire, we repeat, from the living rock, is surely an architectural marvel, but here we have a moral wonder as well. The frivolities of the stage had their zest deepened, and the fetters of the frivolous were pleasantly riveted by the magnificence of the adjoining tombs : it was “amusement in a cemetery, a theater in the midst of sepulchres.” But the surpassing marvels of this city of the dead must be visited by us in person, if we would know all its wonders, or become familiar with all its beauty. Wrapt in the silence which has long enshrouded the place, the remains of a convent, with crosses carved within, and called Ed-Dier, are found among the ruins ; but we need not such a memento to tell us of a present God. He is here fulfilling his word. He is here in the glory of his justice ; and, we must add, there are few spots on all the earth where there is less to remind us of his mercy.

Before leaving the immediate vicinity of Petra, we may refer to the ruins which crown the summit of Mount Hor, which is well known to terminate the view from one of the principal ruins.

Mount Hor, in Arabia Petræa, is a mass of red sandstone, and forms part of the mountains of Seir, or Edom. Its form

is irregularly truncated, and it terminates in three ragged peaks. On its summit Aaron died when he was 123 years of age, transferring his priesthood to Eleazar his son, according to the divine command (Numbers, xx. 22-29). That son and Aaron's brother, Moses, buried him in a cave of the mountain; and from the fact that the first Hebrew high priest died there, the mountain is still known as Jebel Haran—the Mount of Aaron. Doubts, indeed, are entertained by some whether the height which is crowned by the edifice now to be named be really the Mount Hor of Scripture; but this at least may be said: no eminence in the region has an equal claim to be the scene of Aaron's death, and we therefore assume that it was so; nay, that the proof regarding it is as complete as such a case admits of.

For part of the way, the traveler can ascend Mount Hor on horseback; but at a certain point the pathway becomes steep and difficult, insomuch that he who would mount to the summit, must at some places clamber upon his hands and knees. The ascent of this portion requires about an hour. At some of the more difficult passes rude stairs are cut in the rock, or steps are roughly laid with stone. The juniper tree, or rather bush, is found in abundance on the mountain, as well as some flowers of great beauty. The ascent is guarded with lynx-eyed care by the Arabs; and Laborde, Robinson, and others were not permitted to ascend at all.

Having reached the summit, the alleged tomb of Aaron is found to be quite paltry in the exterior, and quite as tawdry within. It is enclosed in a small building, which is supposed to be of modern construction, as it contains some pillars embedded in its walls, while some fragments of granite and slabs of white marble are lying in its neighborhood. The tomb is composed of fragments of stone and marble, which must once have belonged to some other more sumptuous fabric. It is covered with a pall; and rags and shreds of yarn, ostrich eggs, with glass beads and paras, have been left there, the miserable votive offerings of a people miserable themselves in all respects.

The pilgrim to the summit of Mount Hor finds his way by some steps to a vault beneath the tomb; but there is noth-

ing venerable there, and it is difficult to decide whether the cave be natural or the work of man's hands. Gazing from the summit, the eye wanders over all the scenes of the forty years of Hebrew pilgrimage ; and when, on the other hand, the traveler looks from the Deir of Petra towards Mount Hor—which can be distinctly seen from the elevated part of the ruins, he has before him associations and sights, mountains and ruins, such as can not be surpassed in all the world besides. The changes, indeed, which *must* have passed over these scenes since the Hebrew pilgrims in myriads were there, all marshaled and shielded by their God, can scarcely be comprehended by the modern pilgrim to such dreary regions. But the wilderness will yet blossom as the rose ; symptoms at least of its budding appear, and “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years.”

THE RUINS OF JERUSALEM.

WE ought perhaps to search for moral rather than materials ruins in “The City of the Great King.” It was there that a nation's conscience grew seared, and there that that nation made shipwreck of a faith first announced from heaven, and attested by Almighty Power. It was there that the blood of Christian martyrs, and more, touched the blood of the holy prophets ; and there that a people's guilt culminated in the appalling cry, a cry whose echoes are still ringing in woe in the hearts of myriads—“His blood be on us and on our children !”

Though Jerusalem be now trodden down of the Gentiles, and though its former glory be gone, there are fewer remains of ancient times existing there than in some provincial towns in Palestine. Controversy has thrown doubts and shadows around many a spot, and the student of Jerusalem is sometimes tempted to seek relief from the pain of local disputations in a general skepticism. The very name of the city is an arena. Jebus or Jebusi, Jerusalem or Jerushalaim, Salem

or Solyma, Hierosolyma, Jebus-Salem, and still other names, are applied to the capital of the Holy Land—not to mention Jion, or Ælia Capitolina in ancient times, and El-Kbuds, or Beit-el-Makhuddis among Mohammedans. We may safely discard all these, however, and abide by the name by which the place is best known—a place which has been historical for eight-and-thirty centuries, and which was at least 1168 years of age when Rome was only a collection of huts.

Though the visible ruins of Jerusalem may not be so numerous as we might at first sight suppose, yet a thousand spots are invested with sacredness to the uttermost. Let us take our stand, in thought, on a summit of Olivet, from 918 to 1310 yards from St. Stephen's Gate, according to the footpath we select for our ascent, and from that gentle elevation we see, on the south, the Mount of Corruption, where Solomon sinned; Beth-haccerem, where the bones of the truculent Herod were buried; and then beyond these, undulation swelling upon undulation, forming the hill country of Judea. On the east one beholds the mountains of Moab and Ammon, with the ruins of Kir-Moab. Pisgah *is* seen, though we can not absolutely decide which summit in the range forms that mount. Then nearer at hand is the Dead Sea, with all its dark associations; and the Jordan with more numerous associations still. To the north is Mizpah, Gibeon, the valley of Ajalon, Michmash, Ramah, and Anathoth. But venerable as these names may be, there is something more venerable still at your feet—it is Jerusalem. There was Golgotha, although it is now unknown; near these walls was Gethsemane; within them were a thousand spots which the Redeemer's presence hallowed: and with such associations pressing on the mind, one cares not, for a while, to think of aught besides. Gethsemane alone, for the time, absorbs all that the heart can feel.

It may tend to show with what pains all that relates to Jerusalem and its various localities has been explored, if we submit the following measurements. In order to fix the distance traveled by the Great Sufferer, and the places between the upper Room and Golgotha, visited by Him just previous to his crucifixion, Dr. Barclay has said that—

From Zion, where the Upper Room was, to Gethsemane, was from.....	850 to 900 yards.
From Gethsemane to the house of Annas.....	2300 to 2400 "
Thence to the High Priest's palace.....	1400 to 2100 "
Thence to the Council House.....	200 to 400 "
Thence to the Prætorium (in Antonia).....	350 to 400 "
Thence to Herod's palace.....	950 to 1000 "
Thence back to the Prætorium.....	950 to 1000 "
Thence to Golgotha.....	500 to 600 "

Or from 7500 to 8800 yards.

But some of the places here referred to are only conjecturally known, and we can only in general terms refer to the antiquities of the place. It is well known, then, that a large portion of modern Jerusalem is built over the ruins or debris of the ancient city. In digging for foundations, or in other excavations, many feet of rubbish, in some cases forty or fifty, have to be cleared ere a firm foundation can be obtained. The Tyropæon has been to a great extent filled up with ruins and the accumulated rubbish of ages, and in some places such accumulations have turned a wady into a plain. But instead of dwelling vaguely upon such topics, we proceed to enumerate some of the more remarkable ruins recorded in history or still known to exist.

1. Josephus tells of a gallery, or xystus—a covered colonnade, which stood in the Valley of the Tyropæon, at the base of the north-east cliff of Mount Zion, and just below the royal palace. It was built about 175 B.C. The colonnade, it is conjectured, surrounded a quadrangular area in that region of the old city, adorned with fountains and reservoirs. It is believed to have been built as a gymnasium by the infamous high priest, Jason, who purchased the privilege of erecting it at the price of 150 talents. It was long appropriated to athletic exercises, in imitation of the heathen nations, but became at last the great gathering-place—the Forum of Jerusalem. The people were assembled there when that Herod who was “almost persuaded to be a Christian” addressed them, while his half-sister, the noted Bernice, stood near. Here, also, the Jews were convened when Titus their conqueror harangued them from the cloisters of the temple. It is

conjectured that Peter's congregation on the day of Pentecost also met there. But whatever truth there may be in these conjectures regarding the colonnade, it is an undistinguished ruin now, buried deep under the debris of that city which has seen fire and sword, pillage and bloodshed, again and again, and again do their work within its walls, till, it is said, on one occasion 600,000 dead were carried out by the gates.

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thy cross thou bearest now;
An iron yoke is on thy neck, and blood is on thy brow:
The golden crown, the crown of truth, thou didst reject as dross,
And now thy cross is on thee laid—the *Crescent is thy Cross!*"

But, 2. One of the most remarkable of all the ruins of Jerusalem is found in the substructions of what men begin to call the Tyropæon Bridge. The King's Palace stood of old on Mount Zion, which was separated from Moriah, the Temple Mount, by the Tyropæon Valley, and the monarch could not pass from the one to the other except by a circuitous descent and ascent. But to remedy that inconvenience, the founder of Tadmor in the Wilderness, the builder of the temple, and of other magnificent structures, caused a bridge to be built across the valley, connecting Zion on the west with Moriah on the east. This, it is believed, is one of the wonders which astonished the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings, x. 5); but, on the other hand, some dispute the existence of the structure in Solomon's day. Owing to the piles of rubbish long collected at the base of Zion, no remains of the bridge are visible there; but on the eastern side considerable portions exist. The valley is here about 118 yards wide, and that must have been about the length of the structure. Its breadth was $51\frac{1}{2}$ feet, its length at least 350, and the remains enable us to ascertain with perfect accuracy the span of each of the arches, or 41 feet, supposing them to have been equal. Some of the blocks which remain as the spring of a broken arch are $5\frac{3}{4}$ feet thick, and vary from 21 feet to 25 in length.

The discovery of these remains, which we owe to Dr. Robinson, has led to much discussion, for some deny that the arch was in use so early as the days of Solomon. But its discovery in Chaldea and Assyria refutes that objection. The

arch is found, moreover, under Solomon's Pools, near Jerusalem ; so that we can now cherish the hope that in examining these long-concealed remains upon Mount Moriah, we are in contact with a relic of Solomon's time, a portion alike of his Palace and of his Temple.

The bridge now mentioned was at the north-west corner of the Temple ; but another structure, called the Bridge of the Red Heifer, is believed to have stood on the east side, spanning the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and connecting the Temple Mount with the Mount of Olives. According to the Mishna, says Dr. Barclay, the red heifer was conducted through the eastern gate of the Temple, across the Kedron, to be burned on the Mount of Olives. By the same path, it is said, the scape-goat was led away to the wilderness, and though some allege that a temporary structure was raised every year for these purposes, others explicitly and circumstantially say, " They built at no small cost a foot causeway, upheld with arches, from the Mount of the Temple to the Mount of Olives, upon which they led away the red heifer to be burned. It was double-arched, arches upon arches—one arch upon two arches, so that the foot of one arch stood upon two arches that were there underneath it."

3. We might now advert to some ruins which are found in one of the streets of Jerusalem, supposed to be the remains of " Millo in the city of David." The walls there are six feet thick ; arches are also traced, and other tokens of strong underground work, now utterly defaced. Or we might mention the remains discovered at the Damascus Gate, and connected with it, supposed to belong to the times of Solomon, and said to be the best specimens of ancient Jewish mural structures which the battering-ram and the tooth of time have spared. But we pass from these to speak of the Tower of Hippicus—the best preserved of all the ruins in Jerusalem. It stands near the Jaffa Gate, and is now generally known as the Tower of David. Time, the elements and man have reduced it to the height of only about 40 feet. It is entirely solid, at least no hollow has been detected in the pile, which has bid defiance alike to the battering-ram, to cannon-balls, to prying curiosity and the wasting elements, for nineteen centuries.

It is 70 feet on one side, by 56 on the other ; but the stones which compose it are much smaller than those of the temple wall, and altogether it is obvious that Hippicus is less ancient than many other structures in the city. The Crusaders have added some 15 or 20 feet to the original 40, and Josephus says " that over the solid building . . . there was a reservoir 20 cubits deep ; over which there was a house of two storys, whose height was 25 cubits, and turrets all round of 3 cubits high ; so that the entire height was 80 cubits."

4. But few of the remains of ancient Jerusalem can be more interesting than its Tombs, and some of these we now proceed to describe. It is well known that at several places in the environs of the city the rocks are honey-combed with cave-sepulchres. At some other spots, as in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the grave-stones appear to pave the ground. But a Jewish tomb of some mark has been thus described. It is found at El Messahney, and is hewn in the solid rock, the façade being dressed so as to imitate the beveled stones of the ancient temple wall. Though time here has done its work, much of the pile continues fresh and sharp in its decorations, as if it were only a thing of yesterday. Some would carry the date of this tomb back to the time of King Saul, and though it now forms the winter abode of a goat-herd and also the fold of his flock, it bears the marks of having formed the resting-place of some distinguished person. It contains seventeen niches. The style is Roman Doric, and the conjecture which ascribes it to the age of Saul can not therefore be correct.

The Tombs of the Judges, so called, form another remarkable group of rock-hewn sepulchres. The doorway is surmounted by a sculptured Grecian pediment, and leads into the main room, which contains thirteen recesses. Another doorway conducts from that to a second apartment, containing nine repositories. By a stair there is a descent into a lower room, which contains ten or twelve receptacles. About sixty niches are found in these catacombs, but tradition, exaggerating as usual, first makes them seventy-two, and then calls the ruin the resting-place of the Sanhedrim.

The Tomb of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, who became a

convert to Judaism about A.D. 44, has given rise to much antiquarian controversy. Without discussing any questionable points, we refer to that tomb which appears to possess the best claim to the honor of once containing the dust of the queen. There are loose rocks and rubbish on the spot, indicating a structure above ground, as some suppose this monument to have been. In the sepulchre there are three niches much superior to the rest, supposed to have belonged to the queen and others of equal rank. These, however, and all similar structures, must give place to the Tombs of the Kings, the Kubr-el-Moluk, or Kubr-es-Sultan—a costly and imposing structure, which has given rise to not a few discussions. These we omit and only describe the remains of the cemetery. It is situated just a mile to the north of the Damascus Gate. On the west side of a low court, about 90 feet square, and more than 20 feet deep, the catacombs are entered through a splendid though dilapidated portico and hall $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, and $28\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide. From this apartment a door less than 3 feet high opens into an anteroom about 19 feet square. Another door leads from that apartment into another chamber which is $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet square, where there are about twelve niches for the dead. In a story still lower there is a room 10 feet by 12; and several other chambers of a similar construction, all furnished with recesses for entombment, are described as existing in these royal vaults. In one of them sarcophagi have been found, which are now for the most part reduced to fragments. Large pieces of richly paneled stone doors are also found scattered about the rooms. These doors swung on mortise-and-tenon hinges of stone, and the jambs of the interior door-ways have such an inclination that the ponderous doors closed from the force of gravity. The outer door was closed by a unique contrivance, which, however, it is difficult to explain without a drawing. The niches here are about thirty in number.

The portal of this subterranean abode was ornamented by pillars and pilasters. The perpendicular surface of the rock above the portal was richly adorned with classic mouldings, clusters of grapes, and wreaths of flowers; and so difficult is it to assign the style to any recognized standard, that

some have invented a name and given it the designation of Romanized Hebro-Grecian. The whole range of these marvelous catacombs, let it be remembered, was chiseled from the solid rock ; and with that in view, we may readily concede to such vast excavations the rank of one of the greatest wonders of Jerusalem.

But what were they ? Not the tombs of the kings of Judah ; these were on Mount Zion. Not of the Maccabees ; they were buried at Modin. Perhaps the tomb of Helena, already mentioned, say some. Perhaps the resting-place of some of Herod's line, say others. But we must wait for further discoveries, should any ever be made, before we can finally decide, and meanwhile we only remark that the decorations of these catacombs are all of a joyous kind. No souvenirs of death are there, but roses and garlands, as if the associations of the dead were rather with festoons and flowers than with the cypress or a skeleton. If they were believers in Him who is the Life, they were right. *Their* "place of peace" should not be transmuted into woe.

The Tombs of the Prophets, called also of the Apostles, form another labyrinth of sepulchres, excavated on the slope of Olivet. They extend about twenty-eight yards from north to south, and thirty to forty from east to west. About thirty niches are still accessible, but many of the passages are so choked with rubbish that the whole space can not be explored. They have been regarded as in some way connected with the idolatrous worship of Baal, while others surmise that they may have belonged to the school of the prophets.

Besides these, Jehoshaphat has a tomb assigned to him by tradition in the glen of the Kedron. So has *some* Zechariah ; so has St. James, and so has the rebel Absalom. Of these, we mention first the alleged tomb of Zechariah. It is a monolith cut from the rock, from which it is separated on three sides by a passage several yards wide. Its appearance is that of a four-sided pyramid, mounted on a cube about twenty feet high. At least a fourth part of the lower portion is buried in rubbish ; but the Ionic capitals which crown the pillars and pilasters give a certain pleasing air to the pile. As no entrance has been detected, this monolith is supposed

to be solid ; and though the architecture is not imposing, the effect is said to be highly impressive. Strange that the history or special design of such a work should be utterly unknown.

Like the tomb just described, Absalom's Pillar, called also Tantour Pharoun, is monolithic, being cut from the rock which skirts Mount Olivet in the same way as the former monument. About a fourth part of the pile is buried in rubbish, but its height may be about fifty feet, and its breadth twenty-three or twenty-four. Some of the ornaments are Doric, while the capitals of the pillars are Ionic. The interior appears never to have been finished, and it is well known that neither Christian or Moslem ever passes this structure without casting a stone to indicate the indignation felt against the rebel son. We need not reason against the genuineness of this ruin. Nothing but all-devouring tradition could assign such a pile to such an age as that of Absalom, and the different names attached to the cenotaph at different times are sufficient to provoke our suspicions. Hezekiah, Uzziah, Isaiah, Jehoshaphat, Simon the Just, and others have had their names associated with it.

It were tedious even to catalogue the traditional tombs of this valley ; but one remark may illustrate how little faith can be placed in the traditions which assign their modern names. In 2 Chronicles, xxi. 1, we read " that king Jehoshaphat was buried with his fathers in the city of David ;" but a legend, on the other hand, insists we shall believe that he was buried in the valley which bears his name. It even leads us to his very tomb. But that and the titles given to perhaps all the rest of the ruins which line the valley, sober truth compels us to discard.

Among the ruins of Jerusalem we may also place the fountains and reservoirs, though at first sight the collocation may appear incongruous. The fountains under the Temple, the aqueducts, the lower pool of Gihon—which, when full, presented an area of nearly four acres of water—as well as others, are all associated with remains of ancient architecture which proclaim the elaborate pains with which the city was supplied with water. Here, however, the first place is due to

the Pool of Siloam, which, next to Olivet, may be regarded as the most popular and most veritable remnant of former times. It is now known to be not an independent spring, but only the outflow of one further up the valley, called the Virgin's Fount, through a channel cut in the rock under the hill Ophel, and traced by Dr. Robinson with some danger. The present pool and its surrounding ruins, consisting mainly of six pillars of Jerusalem marble, the remains of a basilica over the pool, are no doubt the representatives of the place as it existed in the days of Isaiah, Nehemiah, and the Saviour. There is reason to believe, however, that it is much reduced in size, though still fifty feet long and fourteen and a half feet wide at one end, and seventeen at the other. It is a placid sheet of water, fed by some intermittent fountain; and around it many plants, nourished by the water, give verdure and beauty to the spot. Both the past and the present, both Isaiah's allusion to the waters "which go softly," and the Saviour's injunction to the blind man to wash in Siloam and receive his sight, as well as the goodly green which beautifies the spot—combine to render it one of the fairest near Jerusalem.

The pool of Bethesda, unhappily another scene of controversy, is also another spot which the power of Jesus made illustrious. But where was it? Some describe it as existing near the site where the Castle of Antonia is known to have stood; and there to this day, not far from St. Stephen's Gate, a tank 360 feet in length, 130 feet wide, and seventy-five feet deep, is found, with some ruins which *appear* to be the remains of the porches mentioned by John (v. 2). Others, however, utterly discard this idea, and deem that tank or trench a portion of the moat which surrounded the castle. Some, again, regard Siloam as the true Bethesda; while another opinion makes the Fountain of the Virgin, with which Siloam is connected, the scene of Christ's miracle on the poor paralytic. Others still give the honor to a little tank called Birket-el-Hejjeh, outside the city walls, to the north of St. Stephen's Gate. But the most recent investigations would lead to the conclusion that the remains of Bethesda, as well as the pool itself, are covered over with ruins in

a space immediately east from the Temple. We must be content, then, for the present to remain as ignorant of the site of the real Bethesda as we are of the nature of that power which the angel imparted to its waters to render them healing, eighteen centuries ago (John, v. 2-9).

It were tedious to plunge into the discussions raised by topographers regarding the walls and gates of Jerusalem. The four modern gates—the Jaffa or Bethlehem on the west, the Damascus on the north, St. Stephen's on the east, and the Zion or David's Gate on the south—are respectable in point of architecture. But the only gate that we need specify is the Golden Gate—the Bab-ed-Dahareych of the Arabs, the Porta Aurea of the Crusaders, and others. It is a work apparently of Roman times, and stands on the east side of the city, but has been shut up for many generations; and one reason at least is manifest—the Bedawin on that side of the city might be too near or too offensive to admit of a gate fifty-five feet wide being often opened. The interior recess occasioned by the wall which closes up the gate is used by the Moslem as a place of prayer; and many traditions are connected with the gate. Some say that by it the Saviour rode in triumph into the city; the Emperor Heraclius is reported to have done the same when he brought back the fabled Holy Cross, which he had recovered from the Persians; and finally, some allege that this gate was shut by Omar himself, and will never be re-opened till the Saviour return. At no great distance, part of an ancient pillar projecting from the wall above the Valley of Jehoshaphat is regarded by Moslems as the seat on which Mohammed is to judge the world. Some fragments of other gates, and vast stones in various parts of the Temple wall, are mentioned among the ruins of Jerusalem, but on these we need not dwell.

The Wailing Place of the Jews, however, is a portion of the ruins to which the attention of travelers is always turned. It occupies a space of about forty yards in length. The stones in the wall, like others in the vicinity, are dressed in the form supposed to be peculiar to the buildings of ancient Jerusalem; and there, within the precincts of what was their Temple, the Jews assemble to mourn, and wail, and pray.

Though fancy-pictures of the scene be presented by some, it is unquestionably one of the saddest spectacles in this city of sad memories, to behold the children of Abraham thus brought low, the victims of oppression, if we should not rather say of their own unbelief.

We have already said that the ruins of ancient Jerusalem are for the most part buried under the present city ; and of these we can, of course, only get casual glimpses. Yet in some respects the under-ground world of Jerusalem has marvels as well as that portion which sees the sun. Under the hill Bezetha, for example, Dr. Barclay traced a series of chambers, scooped in some degree by nature, but more by art, in the rock. There he found many meandering passages leading to immense halls, as white, he says, as the driven snow, and supported by colossal pillars of irregular shape, sustaining the roofs of the various grottoes. It is a quarry, and the pillars have been left to prevent the sinking of the city. There are marks of the cross there, indicating that the place was known to Christians ; but the jackal and other wild animals now reign undisturbed in the cave. Clambering over huge blocks of stone and piles of chippings, indicates too painfully to explorers that they are in a vast quarry ; and Dr. Barclay says, "This, without doubt, is the very magazine from which much of the Temple rock was hewn—the pit from which was taken the material for the silent growth of the Temple." He even fears that when the roof gives way, as it is slowly doing, much of the city may be laid in ruins. At the extreme end of the last chamber blocks of stones were found half quarried, and still attached by one side to the rock, where the marks of the tools were as fresh and distinct as if the workmen had but yesterday left the work. The length of these excavations was reckoned rather more than a quarter of a mile, and the greatest breadth less than a furlong. Dr. Robinson is of opinion that this vast cave carries us back to the times of Solomon ; so that, bit by bit, the Jerusalem of our day becomes united to the Jerusalem of two or three thousand years ago ; though many years must elapse ere that can be thoroughly accomplished, unless some of the eastern political complications, more speedily than men sup-

pose, hasten on the grand consummation towards which all things are majestically tending.

And we thus close our glance at the ruins of Jerusalem. Well may we resort to her own Place of Wailing, and there exclaim—

“Reft of thy sons, amid thy foes forlorn,
Mourn, widowed Queen! forgotten Zion, mourn!

* * * * *

No prophet bards thy glittering courts among
Wake the full lyre and swell the tide of song;
But lawless Force and meager Want are there,
And the quick-darting eye of restless Fear;
While cold Oblivion, 'mid the ruins laid,
Folds his dark wing beneath the ivy shade.”

The ruins of Baalbec are in many respects a mystery; Palmyra, at least in vastness, surpasses even Baalbec; Athens, Pæstum, Rome, and other scenes of decay, appeal to our pity and touch our hearts; but for Jerusalem—the city of the Great King, the joy of the whole earth, for many generations the focal point of heavenly light—we can only, like her own captives of old, hang the harp upon the willows and weep. Wherever we turn, the eye seems to rest on desolation. It is a city clothed with a pall; and yet our affections cling to it as to the most sacred spot on earth. It has long been wasted by the self-imprecated curse. When will the blessing come? Will Jerusalem soon, or at all, be made a praise in the whole earth?

THE RUINS OF TYRE.

THAT was a fearful display of the atrocity of despotic power, when Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, swept 250,000 men, women and children, from the Delta, to dig the Mahmoudieh Canal. He allowed them provisions only for a month; their implements of labor were few; yet, under pain of death by starvation, the canal must be dug in that brief

period ! The men worked with the energy of despair ; children bore away the earth in tiny handfuls ; nursing mothers laid aside their children and toiled, for had they halted to nourish them the scourge would have mingled their blood with nature's aliment. The work was not finished in the time allotted by the despot ; famine soon appeared, and five-and-twenty thousand are said to have found a grave on the banks of that canal which conducts the waters of the Nile to Alexandria.

Five-and-twenty thousand ! Yet what is even that holocaust to despotism compared with the myriads immolated in battles and sieges ? We are now to glance at the ruins of a place famous of old for its sieges and its slaughters, in one case amounting to 50,000, either butchered or sold as slaves.

Tyre, now Sur, a Rock, was founded by a colony from Sidon, and is hence called "the daughter of Sidon," though it rose to be itself the planter of colonies like Carthage and Cadiz. Its foundation took place about 240 years before the building of Solomon's temple. It is commonly supposed that the original city stood upon the mainland ; and it was already a stronghold when Canaan was divided among the tribes, (Joshua, xix.) It had become more noted still in the days of David ; and when Solomon reigned at Jerusalem the Tyrians inhabited the island—the rock. In the year 720, B. C., the chief city was on the island, while the portion on the mainland already bore the name of Old Tyre. Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, besieged or blockaded the island for five years, but without success. Nebuchadnezzar, the Bonaparte of antiquity, afterwards besieged it for thirteen years ; and then came the memorable siege under Alexander the Great, about 322, B. C. He took the island after seven months of labor and struggle, and succeeded only by bringing wood from Lebanon, for constructing a mole or causeway from the mainland to the walls of the island city. For that purpose Old Tyre was razed for the sake of its stones. The place was subsequently besieged and taken by Antigonus after a period of fourteen months spent in that undertaking. Eventually Tyre passed into the hands of the Romans. It was under their dominion in the days of the Redeemer's sojourn here,

and we know that he and his followers sometimes frequented "the coasts of Tyre." It afterwards became the seat of a Christian bishopric, and in the fourth century it is described as trading "with all the world." But in common with the rest of Phœnicia and the East, it felt the desolating force of the Moslem and Mameluke power, and was ravaged again and again during the wars of the Crusades.

The Crusaders had held Jerusalem for five-and-twenty years ere they could lay siege to Tyre. It was then strongly fortified, at some places with double walls, nay, even with treble defenses, some of which are said to have been 150 feet high, so important was the occupation of the place. But in June, 1125, Tyre was delivered up to the Crusaders, and for more than a century and a half it remained in their possession; strictly guarded for its safety, but energetic as before in its trading. After the battle of Hattin, which laid Palestine at the feet of Saladin, Tyre was besieged by that emperor; but he was forced to raise the siege in 1188. The Sultan Bibars, under various politic pretexts, gradually hemmed in the power of Tyre, and in the year 1291, after the Sultan of Egypt and Damascus had taken Ptolemais, the Frank inhabitants of Tyre embarked on board their ships, and abandoned their stronghold to the Saracens.

Not long subsequent to these events Tyre is described as fortified by quadruple walls, which on the land side were connected with a citadel which had seven towers, and was then deemed impregnable. But it soon became a ruin, and sank deeper and deeper in its desolation. It is described in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as only a heap of rubbish, consisting of broken arches, tottering walls and fallen towers, with a few miserable inhabitants occupying the vaults among the ruins. Attempts were made to restore it to some of its former importance, but Maundrell saw "not so much as one entire house left," while only a few poor fishermen found a harbor among its cells. About the year 1740 considerable quantities of grain were exported from Tyre, yet only a handful of inhabitants could be found there. In 1751, Hasselquist described Tyre "as a miserable village, having scarcely more than ten inhabitants . . . who lived by fishing." In 1766 a

partial revival began. Twenty years thereafter, Volney spoke of Tyre as consisting of wretched huts, covering a third part of the peninsula—that is the rock joined to the mainland by the mole ; and its trade has continued in some measure to revive. After all, however, its glory has departed, and even Tyre, with all its wealth, its commerce and its world-wide influence, is now rather a thing of the past than the present.

The actual Sur is a small sea-port, and those who have seen it say that it hardly deserves the name of city. The houses are, for the most part, mere hovels ; the streets are narrow and filthy ; the population is computed at 3000 souls ; but the presence of palm-trees and other eastern plants imparts a pleasing aspect to the scene. Yet the effects of earthquakes and that untidiness which is so common in cities of the East, render the place offensive and poor in its appearance. “Here was the little isle, once covered by her palaces,” Dr. Robinson says of Tyre, “and surrounded by her fleets, where her builders perfected her beauty in the midst of the seas, where her merchants were princes, and her traffickers the honorable of the earth ; but alas ! thy riches and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war that were in thee, and all thy company, where are they ? Tyre has indeed become like the top of a rock, a place to spread nets upon. The sole remaining tokens of her more ancient splendor lie strewed beneath the waves in the midst of the sea, and the hovels which now nestle upon a portion of her site present no contradiction of the dread decree, ‘Thou shalt be built no more.’”

Meager as this account may seem, it is nearly all that we can say of Tyre, until we apply to the Scriptures of truth for information. The ruins of the ancient city—that is, Tyre before the Christian era—have now been swept all but utterly away. The modern city is placed upon the eastern part of the island, and a broad strip of land under tillage lies between the houses and the western shore. “That shore is strewed, through all its length, along the edge of the water and in it, with columns of red and gray granite of various sizes—the only remaining monuments of the splendor of ancient Tyre.

At the north-west point, forty or fifty such columns are thrown together in one heap beneath the waves," as if some magnificent fane had once stood there. When we look, then, for the ruins of Tyre, we need for the most part to dive below the waves of the Mediterranean. *That* is the grave of the ancient mistress of the seas—the prototype of Britain in maritime adventure and power—must we add, of eventual decline and fall?

Yet Van de Velde has given us some account of remains which he saw, and which should not be passed over. The sea, he states, has swallowed up a large part of the magnificence of Tyre, yet vestiges of its sumptuous temples and towers lie buried under ground, especially on the south side of the city. Excavations have there been made, and rich fragments of columns, of statues, and other relics, have been disinterred. They well recall the magnificence of "the crowning city;" for the ground for many feet under the present surface is a complete mass of building stones, pillars, shafts, and marble, porphyry, and granite rubbish. Even fragments of the rare and costly verde antique lie scattered around, and Van de Velde felt assured that enough could be discovered to reward the researches of any who would undertake the task.

Tyre has been compared to Alexandria in ancient times, and to London in our day. For about a thousand years that Rock was so ascendant that no production of the East passed to the West, or of the West to the East, but by means of the merchants of Tyre. Her ships alone crossed the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. Spain, Britain, and even the coasts of Malabar, saw her fleets. The Tyrian bravery was equal to its enterprise, and though now lower than the dust—even sunk in the sea—the daughter of Sidon has so stamped her character on the past, that not even Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander, her conquerors, have left more indelible traces of their power than Tyre has done of hers. The Christian clings, however, to such facts as the Redeemer's visit to the region and the incidents connected therewith, as shedding a halo round the place more sacred and perennial than all that its heaped-up gold could have purchased.

We have heard much of the Tyrian dye or purple, and the

Tyrian traffic, and Ezekiel (chapter xxvii.) may enable us to understand the extent of the latter. First, then, Hermon and Lebanon supplied timber for building, cedar or fir ; Bashan furnished oaks ; Greece conveyed ivory ; Egypt gave fine linen ; Peloponnesus furnished blue and purple cloths for awnings ; Sidon and Arad contributed mariners ; and Tyre itself gave pilots and captains. Persia and Africa sent mercenary troops. Tarshish yielded iron, tin, lead, and silver—the tin pointing, as some suppose, to Britain. Further, slaves and brass ware came from Greece. Armenia furnished horses, mules and horsemen. The Gulf of Persia sent ebony, ivory, and rich cloths ; while Syria contributed emeralds, coral, agates, and other productions ; Judah furnished wheat, honey, oil, and balsam ; Damascus sent various manufactures and productions ; and the tribe of Dan supplied iron, cassia, cinnamon, and other articles of commerce. Lambs, rams, and goats, came from Arabia Petraea and Hedjaz. Sabea yielded spices, and India furnished gold and precious stones ; while Mesopotamia and the adjacent countries brought many exquisite products, such as blue cloth and brodered work, and rich apparel in chests of cedar wood. Such is a mere glimpse of the merchandise of Tyre, or “the multitude of wares of her making,” as a prophet describes it ; but glimpse as it is, we see enough to warrant the words that that city was indeed the mart of the world, as the world was then known.

It is, however, in regard to the fulfillment of prophecy concerning it that Tyre is perhaps most frequently referred to, and we give, in conclusion, a few specimens of these. Ezekiel, then, recorded a sentence of condemnation against Tyre (xxvi. 13) ; and before a generation passed away Nebuchadnezzar verified the prediction, by making a fort, and casting up a mount, and lifting up a buckler against the city. Isaiah (xxiii. 15) uttered another prediction against Tyre ; and that also was in due time fulfilled, though she had “heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.” Again, Ezekiel (xxvi. 12) had explicitly foretold that men “would lay her stones and her timber and her dust in the midst of the water ;” and it was precisely by doing so with the materials of Tyre on the mainland that Alex-

ander constructed the mole which led him to Insular Tyre—a mole which continues to this day. And, to name no more, Ezekiel prophesied further (xxvi. 21), Tyre “shall be no more ; though thou be sought for yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God ;” and so completely has that been verified, that the site of Tyre on the mainland is still disputed or unknown, while Tyre on the rock must be sought in a few granite columns scattered on the sea-beach or sunk beneath the waves of the Mediterranean ; so mighty is the word of God, so unfailing his truth, and so inevitable the decree which links iniquity with woe, pride with a fall, and the oblivion of our God with the forsaking of our mercies.

Finally : in wandering amid the ruins of these memorable sites, one often longs to know how far the light of heavenly truth has yet penetrated the darkness, and regarding Tyre we can add a single sentence which bids us hope for it and other places. One Christian friend addressing another, says, “There is an interesting movement at Tyre (1854). Several have declared for the gospel, and are urging us to give them a good schoolmaster who can also instruct adults in the way of truth. I hope we shall be able to do so soon. Sidon was the mother of Tyre, and now the new-born Protestants of Sidon are teaching their relatives of Tyre the truth as it is in Jesus.” He who sometimes of old visited the coasts of Tyre and Sidon will yet see of the travail of His soul in those regions, not in costly cathedrals such as that in which the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa was so pompously interred at Tyre after he was drowned in the river Cydnus, but in lowly hearts, in renewed souls—in men who live for heaven. An infidel has written regarding this region that “a mournful and solitary silence now prevails along the shore which once resounded with the world’s debate ;”—but that shore will yet resound with far other voices.

It would be pleasant to dwell on the associations linked with Zarephath (now Surafend) and Elijah in this district, or even to refer to the tradition which connects the Saviour’s miracle on the daughter of the woman of Canaan with Ras-el-Ain, at no great distance south from Tyre ; but we can not linger here, though all around seems consecrated and solemn.

THE RUINS OF BA'ALBEK.

AT the distance of two days' journey from Damascus, more or less according to the route pursued, we find one of the marvels of all time—the town of Ba'albek, with its stupendous ruins. We submit first a brief history of the place, and then advert to the temples.

Ba'albek and Heliopolis appear to the most exact inquirers to be perfectly identified. Its name, "The City of the Sun," indicates at once who was the chief god there. He was the Jupiter of Syria, or at least of this portion of it; but it is a remarkable fact, that, except what may be collected from collateral references, we have no historical notice of this marvelous place earlier than the fourth century. There can be little doubt that long prior to that period some distinguished buildings stood here: the ancient substructions—somewhat like the most ancient of the ruins in Jerusalem—sufficiently attest that fact; but we must be content with inference and conjecture. Whether is Baniās or Ba'albek the Baal-gad of Scripture? Or, is Ba'albek rather the Baalath which Solomon built along with Tadmor? Or again, is it the Baalhamon of Solomon (Canticles, viii. 11), where he had his vineyards and retreats? Or, once more, is it "The plain of Aven,"—Bikath-aven, mentioned by Amos (i. 5)? All these have their advocates, and the last seems to be countenanced by the fact that Ba'albek has always been the capital of the magnificent plain of Cœle-syria, now called Buka'a in Arabic; by Amos, Bikath, in Hebrew; each meaning a plain or level among hills.

But we may hasten away from the regions of conjecture to such certainty as we can obtain. During the second and third centuries our knowledge of Heliopolis is derived from medals, which date from the Emperor Nerva to Gallienus. In the seventh century John Malala wrote that "Ælius Antoninus Pius erected at Heliopolis, in Phœnicia of Lebanon, a great temple to Jupiter—one of the wonders of the world." Now, if this record may be credited, written so long after the event to which it refers, it is sufficiently definite; and various

considerations appear to confirm it. The style of architecture agrees with that of the period of the Antonines ; some of the inscriptions found at Ba'albek point in the same direction ; and these things, together with later coins, leave little doubt that we know *about* the period when these structures began to be reared. They most probably supplanted former temples. Baal, as the Sun—or perhaps a whole Pantheon of gods—was worshiped there ; and when we read that Venus was also adored by rites the most disgusting that ever ripened men for woe, we may have no difficulty in explaining the present desolation of the place.

When Constantine assumed the Christian name, the worship of Venus ceased, and a Christian church was founded. But Julian the Apostate restored the old paganism and its abominations for a season ; and Heliopolis became prominent in the atrocities of those times. Such was the hatred of its people to the followers of Christ, that in at least one case they feasted on the liver of one of their victims. But these enormities could not last. Other emperors arose who favored Christianity ; and Christian ministers officiated at Ba'albek till about the year 636, when the place passed into the hands of the victorious Mohammedans. The great temple now became a fortress. It continued an object of strife among rival factions, and was alternately the property of one royal master and then of another. In 1139, 1157, and 1170, it was shaken by earthquakes, while the Crusaders ravaged the adjoining country. In 1400, Ba'albek became the property of Tamerlane ; and until about 1550 no further notice of the place is known. The temple was then a fortress, as it had been for centuries ; but in the eighteenth century it became famous again. In 1784, Volney gave one of the best accounts of Ba'albek ; but prior to his visit, an earthquake, in 1759, had overthrown three out of nine majestic columns remaining till that date. Arabic cupidity and Turkish plunderers have helped further to demolish and deface ; but, in spite of all, Ba'albek still continues a wonder. "Diana's marvel" at Ephesus was a mere shrine to this, or like a mere side chapel to some gorgeous fane.

We have been thus particular in outlining the history of

Ba'albek because few are at all acquainted with its wonders ; and next proceed to as brief an account of these majestic remains.

The walls and towers of ancient Ba'albek are now in ruins, and the modern village is miserable enough : it contains perhaps about 100 families with 400 or 500 souls. Standing in the region where the Orontes or the Aasy, the Leontes or the Litani, and the Jordan, take their rise, the native beauty of the place may be assumed. Its height above the sea is 3769 feet ; but in a region like that of Syria, under the shelter at once of the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon range, the climate is more than temperate. Here, however, every thing must give place to the temples, the greater and the less. The former was 1000 feet in length from east to west, and is raised by an artificial platform about 25 feet above the adjacent country. The six remaining columns of the peristyle constitute, by universal consent, the crowning glory of the place ; what then must the whole have been, when the wondrous fane was entire, gleaming in a Syrian sun, and looking forth upon the Buka'a, Mount Lebanon, and a thousand other glories ? The material is everywhere the compact limestone of the country. The portico of the Great Temple was 180 feet long, and about 37 deep. It had twelve columns in front, of which only the pedestals remain. Their diameter was 4 feet 3 inches. There was a pavilion at each end of the portico, and a single stone in one of these measured 24 feet 5 inches long. The pilasters, cornices, and other decorations, are all dwelt on with very special care by every visitor. The first court is a hexagon 200 feet by about 250. The great quadrangle in front of the temple proper is about 440 feet by 370 ; and the divisions of this vast area, with its decorations of Syenite granite, are all carefully noted. We can only allude to what is said of the pillars, the friezes, the sphinxes, and other decorations.

Fronting this quadrangle was the peristyle, 290 feet long by 160 broad. Nineteen Corinthian columns stood on each side, and at each end ten (counting the corner pillars), making fifty-four in all. At the base, their diameter was seven feet, and five at the top. The shafts were sixty-two feet high ;

the entablature was about fourteen more : the whole seventy-six. Each shaft consisted of three stones strongly cramped together with iron ; for the sake of which the Arabs have laboriously undermined the pillars. This peristyle, elevated altogether about fifty feet above the surrounding country, though only six of its columns now remain, is one of the architectural wonders of the world. There are some beveled stones in the substructions which remind us of the architecture of Jerusalem, of perhaps the time of Solomon.

Of these substructions, the western wall is amazing. One stone is sixty-four feet long, another sixty-three feet, eight inches, and a third sixty-three feet. Their height is about thirteen feet, their breadth about the same. They are placed about twenty feet above the ground, and there are seven others of like dimensions. The three large stones gave rise to one of the ancient names of this temple—the Trilithon. We can not trace the vaults and alleys of the substruction, forming as they do an underground world.

But there is a second temple. Its length is 225 feet, its breadth about 120. It is surrounded by a magnificent peristyle of fifteen columns on each side, and eight at each end. Some of the columns are six feet three inches in diameter at the base, and five feet eight higher up. They are forty-five feet high, including the Corinthian capitals. The entablature is seven feet high, and the cornice is elaborately wrought. But only four of the columns remain in their place on the south side, six on the west, and nine on the north. The rest are scattered in fragments or demolished by Vandal hands.

The portal of this temple is called the gem of the whole ; and an artist has said, "This is perhaps the most elaborate work, as well as the most exquisite in its details, of any thing of its kind in the world. The pencil can convey but a faint idea of its beauty. One scroll alone of acanthus leaves, with groups of children and panthers intertwined, might form a work of itself." The carved ornaments, the crested eagles, the garlands, and other decorations, all crowd upon us for a notice ; but we can only name them, and add that the earthquake of 1759 shivered much of their beauty to pieces. The size of some of the columns may be inferred from the fact that

they enclose and conceal a spiral staircase, leading to the top of the fabric.

"What an entrance!" a traveler exclaims on the spot. "Here are accumulated vast heaps of mighty ruins; immense shafts of broken columns; gigantic architraves, cornices, and ceilings, all exquisitely sculptured—all now trodden under foot, and forming perhaps the most imposing and impressive avenue in the world." The symmetry and grace give an airy lightness to the whole, yet the first impression is described as actually overwhelming. These structures, when compared with those of Athens, are said to equal them in lightness, but surpass them in massiveness; with those of Thebes, they are as massive, but far more graceful; and though some might desire a simpler and severer style than that which reigns at Ba'albek, it is to be confessed that in many respects they are unmatched in the world.

There is a third temple in the vicinity, which is circular, very small, and composite in its character. It is surrounded by eight columns on the outside, and has two tiers of pillars, the lower Ionic, the upper Corinthian, in the interior. But though beautiful exceedingly, every thing seems tame or diminutive beside the magnificent peristyle of the Trilithon.

"Where'er we tread, 'tis haunted holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tale seems truly told."

One object of interest more deserves to be named—the quarries whence materials for these colossal piles were obtained. They are situated a furlong or two south from the town, and display at a glance the ancient mode of quarrying. The stones were commonly hewn from the face of the rock in an upright position, by cutting away a space of a few inches all round; and many stones still remain in that position, attached to their native rock only at the bottom of the column. One stone remains in those quarries which attracts all eyes by its prodigious and apparently incredible magnitude. Its length is eighty-four feet four inches; its breadth, seventeen feet two inches; and its height, fourteen feet seven inches. Travelers are at a loss to say for what this mass was designed.

THE RUINS OF PALMYRA.

A CITY which owed its origin to Solomon, and waned to its extinction after the reign of the heroic and intrepid Zenobia, deserves and will repay our study. We submit, first, a brief historical account of the place, and then glance at the marvelous ruins which are there.

In 1 Kings, ix. 18, and elsewhere in Scripture, we read that Solomon built "Tadmor in the wilderness." The name means Place of Palms. That wise and wide-viewed man saw that the position was favorable as a commercial center, for at that period the wealth and productions of the East passed through Tadmor or Palmyra, to gratify, enrich and corrupt the western nations. Near it there are copious streams—themselves a treasure in the East. The place was about midway between the Euphrates and Syria, and the wealth of India and the stores of Mesopotamia hence found an exchange, or an entrepôt at Tadmor. For nearly a thousand years, however, the place is not mentioned in history; and when it became known again, about the commencement of our era, it was a city of importance, of some architectural beauty, and of magnitude enough at least to attract the cupidity of imperial Rome.

About A. D., 130, it submitted to the Emperor Adrian, who made it a Roman colony, and adorned it with some of the stately colonnades which still amaze and awe every visitor, even in their decay. Prior to that time, however, the Palmyrenes themselves had erected some magnificent structures, as if they would make the grandeur of their city compensate for the sterility of its environment. But from the time of Adrian, who died A. D., 138, Tadmor rapidly grew in wealth and beauty. It was self-governed, and raised to the rank of a capital; and for nearly a hundred and fifty years its opulence increased, while its pride became proportionally inflated. But this is not the place to detail the ambitious projects, the martial achievements, or the massacres of the Palmyrenes; and we proceed at once to the times of Zenobia—a woman of extraordinary sagacity, virtue and power. As the widow of

Odenathus, the associate of Gallienus in the empire of Rome, she was more than royal ; and when her husband was murdered by a nephew, she assumed the title of " Queen of the East." By conquest, she added Egypt, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor to her empire ; but having incurred the displeasure of Rome, Aurelian marched against Zenobia, A. D., 270, defeated her in several battles, laid siege to Palmyra, and took it after a protracted and bloody struggle. The queen was captured on the banks of the Euphrates, and led to grace the emperor's triumph at Rome, A. D. 272, where she appeared bound to his chariot by chains made of her own gold. Her subjects rose and massacred the garrison left in Palmyra by the emperor ; but, in revenge, the city was pillaged and in great measure destroyed. The Temple of the Sun was rebuilt, but the place never recovered its former glory, though successive emperors attempted to arrest its decline. Palmyra became the seat of a bishop. The Saracens took early possession of it ; a large colony of Jews made it their home ; but it gradually dwindled down to a village, and in our day a few miserable huts, clinging like parasitic insects to the noble ruins of Palmyra, are all that remain of the city of Solomon and Zenobia, of Adrian, of Aurelian, of Diocletian and Constantius. Caravans halt there, and the Bedawin prowl around it for plunder ; but Palmyra is a city of the dead rather than of the living—a grave for ambition—an antidote, one would think, to pride.

But we are to speak of the ruins themselves, situated in the great desert, about four days' journey east from Damascus. On approaching the place from the west, numbers of tower-like tombs are seen in the valley and along the slopes of the neighboring hills ; but all else fades into insignificance when Tadmor in the desert first flashes on the view. The remains stretch from the base of the adjoining mountains to the Temple of the Sun, all as white as marble, and unshaded by a single tree or twig. The ruin is unutterable—columns and colonnades, porticoes and temples, mouldering capitals, shivered shafts, triumphal arches, and monuments of the illustrious forgotten—all, all in architecture that can indicate man's mingled littleness and greatness, there meet the eye of

the visitor, while at the same time all is still and lifeless as the limestone of the pillars.

Among the ruins, the temple of the Sun is generally the first that is visited, as it is the most gigantic ; but we give an account of another portion, which must nearly suffice for the whole. At the north-west angle of the walls of Palmyra stood a peripteral temple. The doorway was surrounded by a broad border of festooning vine branches and grapes, all exquisitely sculptured in *alto-relievo*. A Corinthian capital, with a monolithic shaft, is all that remains of the front row of the portico. But the delicate workmanship and decorations of that capital, the rich scroll-work of the frieze, and the other beauties of these lovely fragments, all proclaim how exquisite the structure in its entirety was. The original plan of the temple was this : it had a portico of four columns in front, with a portico on each side of twenty columns. Near that fabric is a smaller temple, where fragments of fluted columns are still standing ; and at a little distance to the south-east, a mausoleum, with a portico still nearly perfect, formed by six columns, all monoliths, and exquisitely proportioned, enhances the beauty of the spot.

But we feel that *words* can give no adequate idea of this scene. It is a chaos of ruins—of rifled sarcophagi, of subterranean tombs, of shattered columns ; a blending of modern Vandalism and ancient art—a forest in stone—a tomb worthy indeed to contain the dust of an empire rather than to encircle or shade the miserable huts of the modern Palmyrenes. The decorations, criticised in detail, are inferior to those at Ba'albek, and can not rival those of Athens or Rome ; but viewed in their grandeur and their mass, even the ruthless bands of the Bedawin who demolish columns for the sake of the iron clamps, the waste of centuries, and the devastations of war, have not been able to efface the beauty of this wondrous scene. While we gaze upon such magnificent sights as those of Tadmor, or of Ba'albek, the mind feels over-informed. The blending of beauty and decay flashes upon us the truth of a hundred texts, and no adequate vent is found for the emotions which arise :

“O think who once were blooming there,
The incense vase with odor flowing,
The silver lamp its softness throwing
O'er cheeks as beautiful and bright
As roses bathed in summer light;”

—all gone !—all a dream !—all a mirage, a mockery of man, if earth were all !

Of the great colonnade of Palmyra we can only say that it consisted of four rows of columns, forming a central and two side avenues, about 4000 feet in length : and who can tell the more than magical effect of one thousand five hundred columns all gleaming in the brilliance of an eastern sun ? Only about a hundred and fifty columns, each 57 feet high, now remain ; but even these daguerreotype themselves, by their imposing loveliness, in the minds of all who resort to the scene.

Yet the Temple of the Sun, already mentioned, outrivals even this colonnade. It occupies a square of 740 feet on each side, and the height of the edifice is about 70 feet. A double colonnade lined the interior on three sides, and the shrine, the cell, and other parts of the temple, were all decorated with an art and a beauty such as prompt the thought, How much men have done to honor their false gods, how little to glorify the true ! The Ionic and Corinthian decorations which are there—the pillars and pilasters—the sculptured eagles, flowers, festoons, and endless ornaments—all proclaim what Palmyra once was ; and though its ruin was no doubt a stage in the world's development, one marvels here at the sad law to which fallen man is subject—to work out all good by suffering, sorrow, and decay.

Such is a mere glimpse at Tadmor. We have shunned all reference to technical names, and made our narrative popular ; and in closing our attempted description we can only say, Go and see. Then only can the past glory and the present magnificent dilapidation of Palmyra be understood.

THE RUINS OF BABYLON.

THE eye can nearly take in at one glance all that now remains of this proud capital—this boastful Queen of Cities. The accounts which have reached us of its magnificence and its extent, its walls, its riches, and its decorations, appear the creations of Oriental fancy rather than the sober facts of history ; and yet these accounts are so circumstantial and so well authenticated, that at least in their great leading features they may be received as true. Its walls are variously estimated at from 300 to 75 feet in height, at different periods ; and from 75 to 32 feet broad. The circuit of the city, which was a square, is by some alleged to have been 34 miles, by others about 60. The Temple of Belus, or Baal, was half a mile in circumference, and the eighth of a mile in height. The hanging gardens, constructed by one of the monarchs to gratify a queen whom he had married from a mountain land, rivaled the bulwarks of nature. In tier above tier, resting upon arch above arch, they rose as high as the walls, and bore the floral beauties of many lands. The hundred brazen gates, which defended the city from an attack on the side of the Euphrates which washed it, gave both beauty and strength to the place. An artificial lake in the neighborhood, 40 miles square, and resembling an inland sea, rendered the proud capital prouder still. Its bridges and its palaces, all enhanced its beauty—in a word, we are safe in pronouncing the colossal city a marvel. Constantinople, Naples, Venice, or other sea-side cities of modern times, would have been but a suburb to Babylon.

“Her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations ; and the exhaustless East
Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
In purple was she robed ; and of her feasts
Monarchs partook, and deemed their dignity increas'd.”

One main source of all this wealth and grandeur was the Euphrates. Its waters, distributed by art and science—by canals and hydraulic machines—over the vast plains, occasioned a fertility such as few lands can boast ; while its pro-

ductions—vegetable and live—rendered the territory of Babylon the store-house of the nations. And its power abroad was in proportion to its abundance at home. Again and again did its Nebuchadnezzars and other potentates penetrate to distant lands. More than once they pillaged Jerusalem, and made its people captives ; and though that victory proved the ruin of Babylon, when Belshazzar used the sacred vessels of the temple to pander to his pride or his passion, it *was* a trophy, to have laid a heaven-defended city in the dust. In short, Babylon was the hammer of the whole earth. It demolished cities : it changed dynasties : it made and unmade : it arrogated the prerogatives of a Supreme.

But all this glory was to perish in a night. It did not wane like the moon—it fell like lightning from heaven ; but we need not detail the circumstances. It is well known that Cyrus laid siege to Babylon, and led many confederated chiefs against it ; but it long baffled and laughed to scorn the power of all assailants. Secure behind its impregnable walls, and doubly guarded, it was thought, by the river, the city lived in wantonness though beleaguered by the foe. Revelry and wild luxury reigned. The prodigious granaries, the stores that seemed exhaustless, men's high hopes, and their spirit of jubilant defiance—all taught Babylon to set its besiegers at nought. But it was the purpose of God that it should fall, and who then shall hold it up ? Cyrus turned the Euphrates into other channels above the city ; he marched his forces into the heart of it along the bed of the river ; his detachments met in the center ; and a large portion of the place was in the hands of the enemy while the last king of Babylon was deep in his carouse, perpetrating sacrilege, and making the God of Israel “serve with his sins.”

After the times of Cyrus the place was conquered again and again, by Darius, by Alexander the Great, by Antigonus, by Demetrius, by Antiochus the Great, and by the Parthians. Xerxes, when ingloriously retreating from Greece, rifled Babylon and the temple of Belus, when the golden statue, forty feet in height, and other treasures, are said to have yielded to him £20,000,000 sterling. Some of her conquerors attempted to restore the proud city : among the rest, Alexander, who

would have made it the capital of an universal empire. But, according to the prophecy, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed;" and the building of Seleucia completed the ruin of the place. Her buildings became quarries for other cities, like Ctesiphon, Kufa, Korbella, Hillah, Baghdad—themselves nearly all ruins now. Her idols were carried off, and they are said to have weighed 400,000 pounds in gold. The Forum and fairest parts of the city were fired; the people were deported to Seleucia, at the distance of about forty miles; and the power which had shattered kingdoms, which had beaten down Jerusalem, slain its princes, and both bound and blinded its kings, was itself at last laid in the dust. The slaughter of the rulers of Israel was avenged when Darius impaled 3000 of the nobility of Babylon. "The golden city" thus became a heap; and heaps it still remains.

Birs Nimroud is nearly all that is now found of Babylon the great. A full description of that mound would suffice to show how completely the proud city has been demolished—how its mighty men "could not find their hands," and how "an end has come upon it;" but a mere enumeration of the phrases employed by the prophets to describe it will show how utter is the ruin—how thoroughly "the besom of destruction" has done its work. Babylon, then, is fallen. It has become heaps. It is brought down to the grave. Wild beasts of the desert lie there. It is a possession for the bittern, and a dwelling-place for dragons. Pools of water are there. In a word, Babylon at this moment is the reality of which Isaiah 2500 years ago presented the word-picture. The whole face of the country is covered with lines of ruin, with green mounds of rubbish and traces of once extensive buildings. The temple of Belus and two royal palaces are *supposed* to be known; and one pile covers a space of 700 yards square. But lions, hyenas, jackals, and other noxious animals, now prowl where the proudest of princes once abode and the loudest of revelers abounded.

But, as we have said, the Birs Nimroud, on the western bank of the Euphrates, represented in our engraving, is the chief ruin of the scene. It is supposed by some to be the remains of the Temple of Belus or Baal. It is 2082 feet in cir-

cuit, and now resembles a hill with a castle on the summit. From top to base, it is a huge and formless mass of ruins ; and though originally constructed of seven or eight successive towers, rising from each other to the height of about a furlong, it is now a confused heap of about the third of that height. The bricks of which that pile was constructed are cemented into a conglomerate, which renders the whole well nigh like stone ; and yet the mass is dislocated, chaotic, and utterly ruinous—as perfect a monument of desolation as Sodom and Gomorrah themselves could beafter the fire and brimstone fell. The Mujelibe, 140 feet high, and Kasr, two ruins on the eastern bank, are huge, but they become petty mounds beside the Birs Nimroud ; and occupying, as it is supposed by some to do, the site of the Tower of Babel, it tells in many ways of Jehovah's indignation against the pride of man. The Turks digging for hidden treasures, the Arabs for building materials, and the curious for antiquities, have so completely defaced the whole, that confusion now reigns where vice, luxury, and gross ungodliness long held their polluted court and highest carnival.

With all these tokens of decay, these dilapidated trophies of Jehovah's truth and power before them—with the Birs Nimroud on the western bank, the Mujelibe and the Kasr on the east, in view—traveler after traveler confesses “the overpowering sensation of reverential awe that possesses the mind when contemplating the extent and the magnitude of these ruins.” The gray osiers, still growing on the banks of the river, descendants of those on which the Hebrew captives hung their harps of old, deepen the dreariness of the scene, like flags of distress on a sinking vessel ; while the majestic reed-lined stream, wandering solitary amid the maze, seems to murmur something about the time when these mounds were palaces, these lines of rubbish streets, and this dreary solitude the abode of gay and thoughtless and idolatrous crowds.

But we may pause. Read Isaiah—read Jeremiah—and find there a very hand-book to the ruins of Babylon. There are two modes of learning how complete is its overthrow ; first, by visiting the place ; secondly, by studying the prophecies which predict its long and utter desolation.

In digging among the debris of Babylon, some inscriptions, in cuneiform characters, have been discovered. In one of the palatial ruins a lion of colossal form and of rude workmanship was found ; and cylinders stamped with groups of figures, some of them obviously worshiping, have also been dug up. But these only help to render the traces of ruin more complete ; and the meditative mind, amid such mouldered and mouldering piles, reads more plainly than ever a sentiment which is true alike of individuals, of cities, and of empires—"Be sure your sins will find you out."

We have referred to the commonly received opinion regarding the Birs Nimroud ; but it were wrong not to observe that more recent and more accurate investigations have led to other conclusions. In the year 1854, some excavations, conducted under the directions of Sir Henry Rawlinson, have to a considerable extent modified previous opinions. He ascertained, as had been conjectured, that the structure consisted of several different stages, or terraces, and found that there were six. Each terrace was about twenty feet high, and forty-two feet narrower than the one immediately below it. They were so constructed as to form together an oblique pyramid ; and upon the sixth story, according to Rawlinson, stands a vitrefied mass, which has given rise to much discussion, but which is now supposed to have been the sanctum of a temple. Built into some of the corners were stamped cylinders of Nebuchadnezzar's times, giving to the fabric the name of "The Stages of the Seven Spheres of Borsippa." Each story was dedicated to a planet, and stained with the color peculiarly attributed to it by Sabeian astronomers, and handed down from the Chaldeans. The lowest tier was black, for Saturn ; the second orange, for Jupiter ; the third red, for Mars ; the fourth yellow, for the Sun ; the fifth green, for Venus ; the sixth blue, for Mercury ; and the temple on the summit is conjectured by some to have been white, for the Moon. This structure, though not the temple of Belus, if these statements be correct, is understood to have been built upon the same plan as that celebrated erection, insomuch that "when we look upon the existing edifice, we regard a fac-simile of the one that is now destroyed."

But whether the former or the more recent solution of the questions connected with this pile be preferred, the following translation of the inscribed cylinders of Nebuchadnezzar, which has been discovered there is full of interest, and proves him to have been as zealous a builder as the Bible describes. The translation says :

“I am Nabu-kuduri-uzur, king of Babylon, the established governor ; he who pays homage to Merodach, adorer of the gods, glorifier of Nabu, the supreme chief ; he who cultivates worship in honor of the great gods ; the subduer of the disobedient man, repairer of the temples of Bit-Shaggeth and Bit-Tyida, the eldest son of Nabupaluzur, king of Babylon. Behold now, Merodach, my great lord, has established men of strength, and has urged me to repair his buildings. Nabu, the guardian over the heavens and the earth, has committed to my hands the scepter of royalty ; therefore, Bit-Shaggeth, the palace of the heavens and the earth, for Merodach, the supreme chief of the gods, and Bit-Kua, the shrine of his divinity, and adorned with shining gold, I have appointed them. Bit-Tyida, also, I have firmly built with silver and gold, and a facing of stone ; with wood of fir, and plane, and pine I have completed it. The building named the Planisphere, which was the wonder of Babylon, I have made and finished ; with bricks enriched with lapis lazuli I have exalted its head. Behold now the building named the Stages of the Seven Spheres, which was the wonder of Borsippa, had been built by a former king. He had completed forty-two cubits [of height] ; but he did not finish its head. From the lapse of time it had become ruined. They had not taken care of the exits of the waters, so the rain and wet had penetrated into the brickwork. The casing of burnt brick had bulged out, and the terraces of crude brick lay scattered in heaps. Then Merodach, my great lord, inclined my heart to repair the building. I did not change its site, nor did I destroy its foundation platform ; but in a fortunate month, and upon an auspicious day, I undertook the building of the crude brick terraces, and the burnt brick casing of the temple. I strengthened its foundation, and I placed a titular record on the part I had rebuilt. I set my hand to build it up, and

to exalt its summit. As it had been in ancient times, so I built up its structure: as it had been in former days, thus I exalted its head. Nabu, the strengthener of his children, he who ministers to the gods, and Merodach, the supporter of sovereignty, may they cause this my work to be established for ever; may it last through the seven ages; and may the stability of my throne, and the antiquity of my empire, secure against strangers, and triumphant over many foes, continue to the end of time. Under the guardianship of the regent, who presides over the spheres of heaven and the earth, may the length of my days pass on in due course. I invoke Merodach, the king of the heavens and the earth, that this my work may be preserved for me, under thy care, in honor and respect. May Nabu-kuduri-uzur, the royal architect, remain under thy protection." Such a document, transmitted to our day from such a source, is surely a marvel.

While adverting to the ruins in Babylon, or its environs, we should not omit to notice the Tomb of Ezekiel, so called, which stands due south from Birs Nimroud. A road runs along the raised bank of a marsh in the vicinity of Babylon, and at the distance of about twelve miles stands the little town of Keffil, surrounded by a high wall, and, except at the time of the annual pilgrim festival, a dreary and sad abode. Among the buildings which overtop the city wall, the Tomb of Ezekiel is one. It has the appearance of an elongated cone, tapering to the top by a succession of divisions or steps, cut and embellished in a peculiar manner. Mr. Loftus is rather of opinion that the tradition which assigns that tomb to the Prophet is not unworthy of belief. It is honored, and has for centuries been so, alike by Moslems and Jews. Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveler in the twelfth century, tells us that it was erected by Jeconiah, king of Judah; and though this information may be deemed apocryphal, this much is certain: the spot and the scene are lonely and deserted enough to be the last resting-place of a prophet in exile, and such a prophet as Ezekiel. The interior of the pile is tawdry, or worse, but is said to contain an ancient Hebrew copy of the Pentateuch, built into the wall. An ever-burning lamp sheds the dimmest possible light upon the chamber where the

tomb of the prophet is shown ; but with all this show of honor, it appears as if the place were hastening to decay, and many of the abominations of the East are found in and around the pile.

Nor would it be out of place to refer to the ruins of Kufa, at no great distance, a place signalized at least by Moslem traditions. The city is said to have extended in former times over a space of forty-five miles, although all that remains is now the fragment of a wall with some mounds, which tell of entombed buildings. There, it is believed, the angel Gabriel once alighted upon earth and prayed ; there the waters of the deluge first broke forth from the ground ; there Noah embarked in his ark ; nay, thither the serpent, after the temptation, was banished ! but, like a thousand other scenes all around, Kufa, once a vast, if not a magnificent place, is now dreary, “without form, and void.” There may be scenes in that region, as travelers tell, to which not fewer than 80,000 Moslem pilgrims annually resort ; or places of interment consecrated by the blood of the martyred Khalif Ali, to which from 5,000 to 8,000 corpses are annually conveyed from a distance to be entombed ; but all that only makes these dreary scenes more dreary still : they are morally, as well as physically, a waste ; and if it be true that the Holy Land, like the book which John beheld in Patmos, is written within and without with the doings of God, not less signal, or not less speaking, are the ruins, the decay, and the desolation of Babylonia.

THE RUINS OF NINEVEH.

WHAT Babylon was to the Euphrates, that was Nineveh to the Tigris. Its origin dates from the remotest antiquity ; and though antiquarians have argued and speculated deeply on the subject, they have fixed nothing more than was told us thousands of years ago—namely, “that out of that land” (Shinar, where Babel was built) “went Asshur, and builded

Nineveh" (Genesis, x. 11). The name means "the town or dwelling of Ninus," Nin-Navah ; and the original city stood on the eastern bank of the Tigris, opposite to the present town of Mosul. It is believed by some that what is now called Neby Younas, or the Tomb of Jonah, occupies the site of about the center of the city. After the first reference to Nineveh, its name does not occur again for many centuries ; but in the days of Jeroboam, or 825 years before Christ, it appears again ; and Jonah, it is well known, refused for a time to preach repentance to "that great city." So great, indeed, had it become, that in the height of its walls and the extent of its area, it was more than a match for Babylon itself. One ancient author says that Nineveh was 480 stadia in circumference ; while its lofty walls, together with the river, rendered the place impregnable. We need not wonder, therefore, though Jonah, as long as he consulted with flesh and blood, shrank from the thought of delivering an unwelcome message to such a place. Its population was such that there were 120,000 children among them ; and its inhabitants are consequently reckoned by millions. The mounds and other remains at Nimroud, Konyunjek, Khorsabad, and elsewhere, if they be what some suppose, so many portions of the original city, would indicate a circumference of about sixty miles ; so that the prophet's dread had a natural cause. But the habits of the people were more formidable than even the magnitude of the place. Prodigious wealth had led to abounding immorality ; luxury and corruption reigned paramount ; cruelty of the most atrocious kind characterized its rulers ; and the disinterred remains of Nineveh attest all that the Scriptures tell of the fierceness and the crime of that metropolis.

Soon after Jonah, another prophet, Nahum, arose ; and he lets us see further and further into the state of Nineveh. Her inhabitants, nay, her very princes, were numerous as the locusts ; her wealth was endless ("there is none end of it") ; her idolatry made her "vile ;" she was by preëminence "the bloody city"—and her sculptures prove the truth of the title. At length, however, the cup of her iniquity was full. The king, Sennacherib, invaded Judea—

"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;"

but soon thereafter "Nineveh was made a desolation, and dry like a wilderness." Jehovah "dug her grave, for she was vile." Ezekiel described its glory, its opulence, and wide commercial influence; but all was godless, and it faded away—about 625 years before Christ "that great city" became a ruin. There was a fort there in the time of the Roman conquests in the East; but, till very recent times, huge mounds and dim traditions were all that remained of Nineveh. The town of Mosul, its modern substitute, though on the opposite bank of the Tigris, is a commercial city of some importance as an entrepôt between the East and the West. It is, however, a humble representative of Ninus, of Semiramis and Sardanapalus.

But in recent times the excavations by Botta and Layard at Nineveh have invested the place with an extraordinary interest. We can not describe these operations here at length, and give only some hints as to their results. The British Museum and other depositories in England now contain many Ninevite remains, and thousands in this land are as familiar with the progress in art, the wars, the customs, and even some of the domestic habits of the ancient city, as with those of Greece or of Rome. The cylinders and inscriptions found in a disinterred palace, and deciphered by Sir Henry Rawlinson with such admirable skill, singularly confirm the Scriptures, and supply some historical blanks heretofore perplexing, silencing the skeptic, and establishing the truth. The deities of Assyria, the architectural decorations, the sphinxes, the winged bulls and lions, and a hundred other things—all tell that that land and its capital were precisely what the Bible describes. The lists of its kings; its obelisk inscriptions, detailing its divinities and wars; its personal ornaments, in the form of ear-drops, bracelets and armlets; its crowns, shields, swords, bowls and caldrons; its ornaments in ivory and mother-of-pearl, beautifully and elaborately embossed—all tend at once to excite and to gratify curiosity. The hunting scenes sculptured on the walls, personal encounters with lions, warriors engaged in battle or in assaulting cities, and

other views—all help to carry us back over a mighty gulf of three thousand years, and enable us not merely to study the public and official life of the ancient Assyrians, but in some degree their home habits and their personal deportment.

But we can only glance at these things, and proceed to a brief account of

THE EXCAVATION OF THE GREAT WINGED BULL.

In the course of their labors, Mr. Layard's Arab workmen discovered this colossal figure in one of the trenches during his absence. On hastening to the spot, he beheld a human head of prodigious magnitude and great beauty, sculptured in the alabaster of the country. The body was still buried in the earth, but the part which appeared was in admirable preservation. The expression was calm, yet majestic; and the features displayed such a freedom and knowledge of art as few expected to witness in the production of a period so remote. The Arabs, from their sheik to the humblest laborer, ascribed it to the "infidel giants," to whom they had been taught to ascribe whatever could not otherwise be explained.

After the discovery, the mind of Mr. Layard was naturally turned to the best mode of transporting such a prize to Britain; and after great exertions and many devices, he succeeded in conveying it on board a raft on the Tigris. To bring the bull down from the spot where it was discovered to the level of the plain below, a trench nearly 200 feet long and 15 wide was cut, and in some places 20 deep. About fifty Arabs and Nestorians were employed in the work. Ropes, hawsers, and every available means were employed in lowering the colossus. The steamers on the Euphrates expedition furnished some of their apparatus. The sculptures were wrapped in mats and felt, to preserve them from being chipped. As soon as the operations allowed, rollers were placed under the mass, and by coiling one end of some ropes round some parts of the mound cut for that purpose, and the other end round the bull, and slipping these ropes as the huge bulk slowly descended, it gradually reach the desired level in safety. The sheik was present, attended by a body of horsemen. The different

classes of workmen were skillfully distributed, so as to prevent all accidents ; and Mr. Layard, on the top of a high bank, directed the whole. During the operation the ropes broke ; but by that time the bull was so low that no injury was inflicted ; and the whole undertaking, accompanied as it was by the drums and shrill pipes of the Kurdish musicians, the war-cry of the Arabs, and their savage aspect, as they toiled nearly naked at their exciting task, was one of a trying, yet, in the end, most triumphant nature. When the discovery was made that the bull was not injured by the fall, the Arabs “darted out of the trenches, and seizing the women who were looking on, formed a large circle, and yelling their war-cry, with redoubled energy commenced a most mad dance. The musicians exerted themselves to the utmost, but their music was drowned by the cries of the dancers. Even the sheik shared in the excitement, and throwing his cloak to one of his attendants, insisted upon leading off the debkhé. . . . Night fell on these operations ; and, in retiring to their homes, the Arabs, with the musicians at their head, marched towards the village singing their war songs, and occasionally raising a wild yell, throwing their lances into the air, and flourishing their swords and shields over their heads.” The whole operations, by night and day, were accompanied with scenes of true Oriental excitement and rejoicing, sometimes threatening to end in bloodshed ; and it is not difficult to sympathize with the enterprising explorer when, after a hundred impediments surmounted, and three hundred men employed to drag the car, the trophy of his indefatigable zeal was fairly embarked on the Tigris (along with the figure of a lion), on its way to Baghdad and Great Britain.

Here again, then, the present and the past are seen to touch in a wondrous way, and on a marvelous arena. The taste of these remains is often exquisite. Progress in art was mature, and men who were paragons of ferocity, or whose pastime was bloodshed, were æsthetically accomplished ; they rivaled in some respects the progress of modern time. How great man may become without the knowledge of the true God—and yet how puny, or how perishing amid it all !

It is not a little remarkable that whatever country we

visit, this earth is strewed with ruins. Central America contains some marvelous and mysterious piles. The shores of the Pacific are studded with the tombs of cities. The Euphrates and the Tigris—in Babylon, Nineveh, and Susiana—see the graves of whole peoples, and the Crimea, we know, is a land of ruins. Greece and Italy are the same. Further, the London of to-day stands over the London of 2000 years ago. Even some provincial towns are founded on the debris of their predecessors as much as the modern Jerusalem, or the huts of Samaria; and a hundred other places are formed of the remains of former grandeur. Even the apparently inaccessible recesses of Mount Lebanon are full of ruins. The flanks and very summit of Mount Hermon are the same—everywhere ruins, decay, and death. Now, have not these things tongues, if we had ears to hear? Is it not true that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain? Surely

“There is a tongue in every leaf
A voice in every rill;
A voice that speaketh everywhere,
In flood and fire, through earth and air,
A tongue that ne’er is still.”

Yet while we marvel at these ruins or these works, so stupendous when measured by man’s power, what are they when compared with God’s? Placed side by side with his Alps, his Andes, or Himalayas, what are even the palaces of Persepolis, or the piles of Babylon, or the mounds of Warka, or the excavations of Petra? The small dust in the balance! nameless, puny things! Here, as ever, it is ours to place in the first rank the work of God’s hands; and thus it is that we may be helped to glorify him when we understand his ways, or when we can not scan, to be silent and adore.

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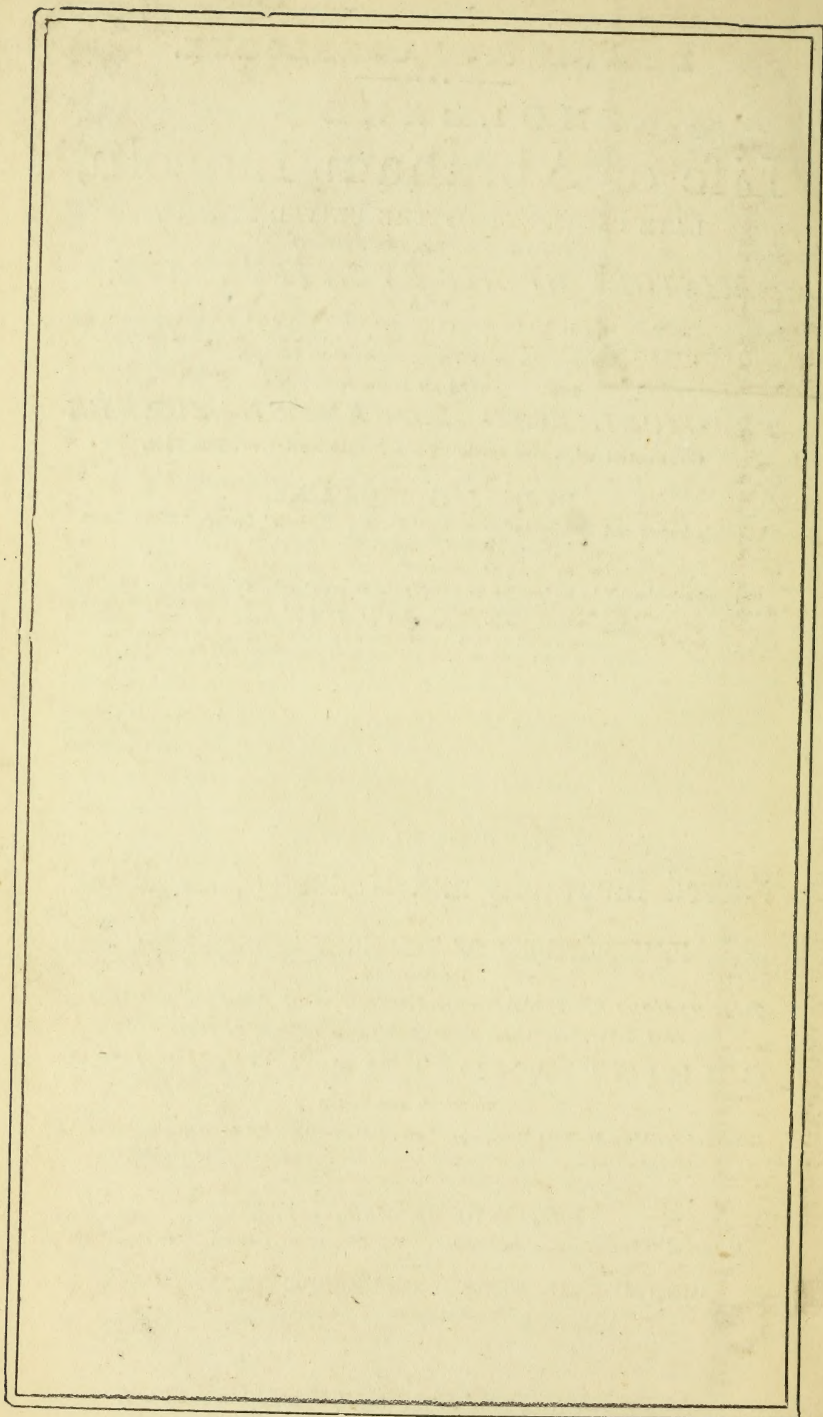
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