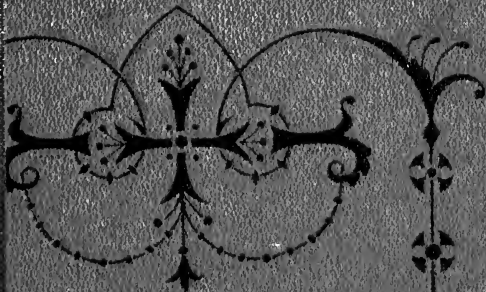


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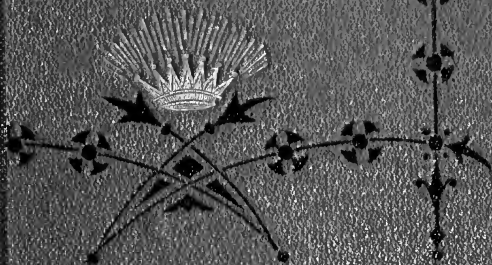


THE
APOSTOLIC PAGER

ITS LIFE AND LETTERS

BY

Rev. S. G. Gordon, D.D.

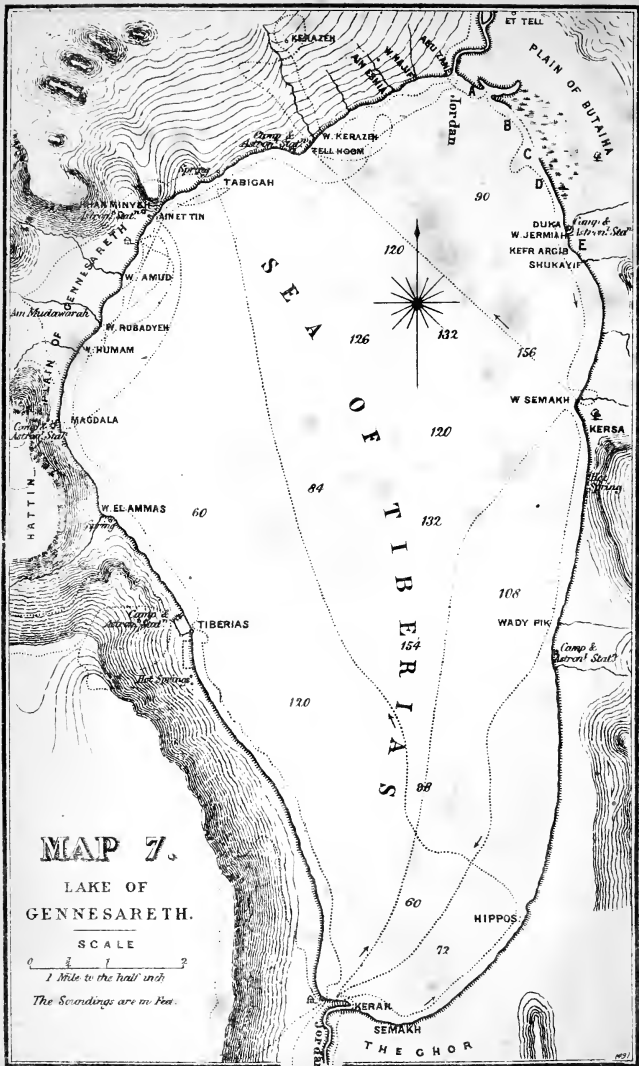


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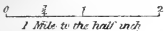




MAP 7.

LAKE OF
GENNESARETH.

SCALE



The Soundings are in Feet.

CAMALLA

THE APOSTLE PETER :

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS.

BY

SAMUEL G. GREEN, D.D.,

President of Rawdon College, Yorkshire.

WITH MAPS.

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CONTENTS.



CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING.

	PAGE
1. The country of Peter : its population... ..	1
2. Bethsaida. Family of Jonas	2
3. Training of the future apostles... ..	3
4. The name <i>Simon</i>	4
5. Question as to tribe	4

CHAPTER II.

DISCIPLESHIP ; FROM JOHN TO JESUS.

6. John the Baptist leads Andrew to Jesus ; and Andrew Simon	6
7. The new name : Cephas	7
8. Early discipleship and travels with Jesus	8

CHAPTER III.

CALL TO APOSTOLIC WORK.

9. Comparison of the evangelists ; a second call ...	11
--	----

• CHAPTER III.—*continued.*

	PAGE
10. The two accounts compared : their harmony ...	11
11. Effect of the miracle on Simon	12
12. The call accepted	14

CHAPTER IV.

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

13. The home in Capernaum : Peter's wife	15
14. Circuit in Galilee : growing success	15
15. A visit to Jerusalem : Sabbath miracles	16
16. Ordination of the Twelve Apostles	17
17. Discourses of Christ. Signal miracles	19
18. The apostles sent forth two and two : the charge ...	20
19. Return of the apostles : call to rest a while	20
20. Peter's walking on the sea : a warning lesson	22

CHAPTER V.

THE CONFESSION OF PETER AT CÆSAREA-PHILIPPI.

21. Extension of Christ's labours : He reaches Cæsarea-Philippi	25
22. Peter declares his faith	26
23. "The First Apostles' Creed"	27
24. The Lord's Promise : the "Rock"	28
25. Peter's foundation-work	29
26. The church built upon a truth	30
27. The "gates of Hades"	31
28. The "power of the keys"	31
29. The Lord enjoins reserve : its reasons	32
30. Peter becomes a "stumbling-block"	33

CONTENTS.

v

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRANSFIGURATION, AND JOURNEY TOWARD JERUSALEM.

	PAGE
31. Meaning of the Transfiguration	35
32. Locality of the event	36
33. Disputes as to precedence among the disciples ...	37
34. Ordination of the Seventy: events in the Lord's journey	37
35. Onward to Jerusalem	38

CHAPTER VII.

THE WEEK OF OUR LORD'S PASSION.

36. Beginning of the week. Glimpses of Peter and An- drew	40
37. Fourth day of the week. Supper in Simon's house .	41
38. Fifth day of the week. The Paschal supper ...	41
39. Our Lord washes His disciples' feet	42
40. Forewarning to Peter of his fall	44
41. The Eucharist: Christ's farewell discourses ...	46
42. Gethsemane	47
43. Arrival of the soldier-band, led by Judas: Peter's attempted defence	48
44. Flight of the disciples	49
45. The night council in the high priest's palace ...	49
46. Peter's three denials of Christ	50
47. The narratives harmonised	52
48. The look of Jesus—Peter's tears	53

CHAPTER VIII.

PETER AND HIS RISEN LORD.

49. Peter with John	54
----------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII.—*continued.*

	PAGE
50. Mary Magdalene's tidings	55
51. The angels' message	55
52. Jesus and Peter meet alone	56
53. Christ appears to the Eleven	57
54. The morning by the lake	57
55. The renewed commission	58
56. "Lovest thou Me? Feed My flock"	59
57. Prophecy of Peter's martyrdom	60
58. "Lord, and what shall this man do?"	61

CHAPTER IX.

WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.

59. The "Acts of the Apostles," a <i>continuance</i> of the Gospel history	63
60. A week of expectancy : fellowship in prayer	63
61. Who were present?	64
62. Election of a twelfth apostle	64
63. Peter's address	65
64. The apostolic function	66

CHAPTER X.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

65. The outpouring of the Spirit	68
66. Peter's address	68
67. Effect of the discourse	71
68. Continued exhortations. First-fruits of the church... ..	71

CHAPTER XI.

BEGINNINGS OF PERSECUTION.

69. The lame man healed. Peter's second great discourse	73
---	----

CHAPTER XI.—*continued.*

	PAGE
70. Sadducean animosity aroused	75
71. Special meeting of the Sanhedrim. Peter's bold words	75
72. Impotence of the council	75
73. The apostles' release and prayer	76

CHAPTER XII.

TROUBLES WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

74. Early Christian "communism" : its conditions ...	79
75. Ananias and Sapphira : the "sin unto death" ...	79
76. A restraining influence upon all	80
77. Second attempt of the Sadducean faction	81
78. Peter's words to the council and their effect	81
79. Counsels of Gamaliel	82
80. Peter's work in Jerusalem accomplished	83

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM JERUSALEM TO SAMARIA AND JOPPA.

81. Our Lord's dealings with the Samaritans	84
82. Philip's labours in Samaria : arrival of Peter and John	86
83. Simon the magician professes discipleship : his guilt and exposure	87
84. Conditions of apostolic binding and loosing	88
85. Insufficiency of Simon's repentance	89
86. Return of Peter and John to Jerusalem	89
87. Visit of Saul of Tarsus to Peter	89
88. Rest and prosperity of the churches	91
89. Lydda and Joppa. Dorcas raised	92

CHAPTER XIV.

TRANSITION TO THE GENTILES.

	PAGE
90. Tardiness of the apostles to obey their Lord's commission	94
91. Pioneers : foundation of the church at Antioch ...	94
92. Visions to Cornelius and Peter	96
93. Character of Cornelius : significance of Peter's vision : Peter's address	96
94. Questions raised in Jerusalem. Peter's defence ...	99

CHAPTER XV.

PETER'S IMPRISONMENT AND DELIVERANCE.

95. A threefold work now closed	101
96. Herod Agrippa : martyrdom of James	101
97. Peter imprisoned and guarded	102
98. Rescue by an angel	102
99. Retirement of Peter	103
100. Death of Herod	104
101. Paul revisits Jerusalem, with Barnabas	104

CHAPTER XVI.

THE APOSTOLIC COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM.

102. The earliest theological controversy. The question stated	105
103. The church at Antioch disquieted	106
104. A council convened : Peter's address	106
105. Summing up by James and decision : its wisdom ...	107
106. Division of labour between Peter and Paul ...	109
107. The Gentile churches to contribute to the poor ...	109
108. "It seemed good unto the Holy Spirit and to us" .	110

CONTENTS.

ix

CHAPTER XVII.

PETER WITH PAUL AT ANTIOCH.

	PAGE
109. Friendly visit of Peter	111
110. A sudden test : Peter's failure	111
111. Evasive explanations	112
112. Paul's strong rebuke : but no severance of friendship	113

CHAPTER XVIII.

PLACE AND INFLUENCE OF PETER IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

113. Probable missionary journeys of Peter	114
114. Corinthian parties : their modern parallels ...	115
115. <i>Disciples</i> rather than <i>teachers</i> are sectarian ...	116
116. The Petrine party. Sacramentarians and Ritualists	116

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PAPAL TRADITION EXAMINED.

117. Peter's <i>unrecorded</i> ministry : two portions... ..	118
118. The papal tradition : its improbability	118
119. Historical support of the papal tradition criticised .	119
120. Growth of the tradition (Justin's mistake about Simon Magus)	121
121. Testimony of Irenæus	123
122. Peter's residence in Babylon	123
123. The Jews in Babylonia	125
124. Memorials of Peter's residence	125

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

125. The Jewish Dispersion : the captivity	127
126. Successive colonizations	128

CHAPTER XX.—*continued.*

	PAGE
127. Effect of the Dispersion on the spread of Christianity	129
128. Three letters to the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion	129
129. Genuineness and authenticity of Peter's first epistle	130
130. Its date : warnings of persecution	130
131. Influence of Paul's epistles : the <i>Galatians</i> ...	131
132. Influence of Paul's epistles : the <i>Ephesians</i> ...	132
133. Conclusion respecting the date of Peter's epistle ...	132
134. Outline of the epistle	133
135. The epistle and the Lord's prayer	134
136. The epistle and Peter's biography	134
THE EPISTLE	135

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GOSPEL BY MARK ; TRACES OF PETER'S INFLUENCE.

137. Peter and Mark	146
138. Ancient testimonies to Peter's share in Mark's Gospel	146
139. Internal indications	148
140. Conclusion	150

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

141. Address of the epistle	152
142. Evidence for its reception	152
143. Doubts to its genuineness	153
144. The chief objections of an internal character ...	153
145. Neander's objections examined	154
146. Neander's conclusion, why inadmissible	157

CHAPTER XXII.—*continued.*

	PAGE
147. Place and time of the epistle	158
148. Coincidences between the letters of Jude and of Peter	158
149. Jude and Peter fellow-labourers in Mesopotamia	159
THE EPISTLE	160
150. Apocryphal Petrine literature	166

CHAPTER XXIII.

PETER'S LAST DAYS.

151. Peter's martyrdom at Rome : how supported ...	168
152. The apostle's destination to martyrdom : words of Jesus	168
153. Ancient witnesses	169
154. Legend : "Domine, quo vadis?"	170
155. Manner of Peter's death	171
156. Associations of Peter and Paul	172
157. Legend of Peter's wife	172
158. Peter's true monument	173

APPENDICES.

I. CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE	175
II. EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS QUOTED	177

MAPS.

MAP illustrating the Life of the Apostle Peter.

LAKE OF GENNESARETH, by permission, from "Rob Roy
on the Jordan."

THE discourses and epistles of Peter inserted in the following pages are given in a revised version. Important deviations from the received text are noted in the margin.

It has not been thought necessary to append Scripture references in the ordinary course of the narrative. These, however, are inserted in all cases of doubt or difficulty.

THE APOSTLE PETER: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS.



CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING.

I. THE north-western shores of the Sea of Galilee were, in the time of our Lord, the abode of a numerous and busy population. Including Tiberias, nine cities are said to have bordered the now solitary lake; while the fertile plain of Gennesaret, and the uplands beyond, were crowded with towns and villages. Josephus, the Jewish historian, in a description probably somewhat overcharged, declares that even the smaller towns of the region contained fifteen thousand inhabitants each;¹ and modern writers have found the nearest parallel to this part of Palestine in the manufacturing districts of England.² The fisheries of the lake, equally with the tillage of the valleys, gave profitable employment to thousands; and fleets of vessels, large and small, lay moored in the bays, or sped over the waters. The Gospel history itself gives incidental attestation to the populousness of the district. "Great multitudes" are repeatedly mentioned, "from cities, and villages, and towns." Once, a company of "five thousand

¹ *Wars*, III. iii. 2.

² Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 376.

men," and again, "four thousand, beside women and children," were gathered, from one corner of the region, to a "desert place" on the north-eastern shore. Capernaum, lying upon the great highway from Damascus to the south, possessed a considerable Roman garrison,¹ as well as an important station for collecting customs.² But many of these towns have not even left a name; of scarcely any can the site be satisfactorily identified. So complete is the desolation into which those cities have fallen, in which "most of the Redeemer's mighty works were done," and which "repented not."

2. One of the most important of these Galilean lakeside towns was BETHSAIDA. Situated, as its name implies, upon the edge of a great "fishing field," extending to the opposite shore, it naturally became the home of a community of fishermen.³ Here dwelt Jonah or Jonas, a man of whom we know nothing, save as the father of ANDREW

¹ See Luke vii. 2, 8. ² See Matt. ix. 9; also 10, "many publicans."

³ "The place soon asserted its right to the name Bethsaida by the exceeding abundance of the fish we saw tumbling in the waters. The hot springs flowing in here over these rocks, and a little farther on in larger volume over a clean brown sand, warm all the ambient shallows for a hundred feet from shore, and as much vegetable matter is brought down by the springs, and probably also insects which have fallen in, all these dainties are half cooked when they enter the lake. Evidently the fish agree to dine on these hot joints, and therefore in a large semicircle they crowd the water by myriads round the warm river mouth. Their backs are above the surface as they bask or tumble, and jostle, crowded in the water. They gambol and splash, and the calm sea, fringed by a reeking cloud of vapour, has beyond this belt of living fish a long row of cormorants feeding on the half-boiled fish, as the fish have fed on insects under-done. White gulls poise in flocks behind the grebes or cormorants, and beyond these again ducks bustle about on the water or whirl in the air. The whole is a most curious scene, and probably it has been thus from day to day for many thousand years. I paddled along the curved line of fishes' backs and flashing tails. Some leaped into the air, others struck my boat or my paddle. Dense shoals moved in brigades as if by concert or command. But the hubbub around in the water, and the feathered mob in the sky, were all unheeded now, for we had come in full view of the land of Gennesareth."—MCGREGOR. *Rob Roy on the Jordan*, pp. 344, 5.

and his more illustrious brother SIMON PETER. - When the two are first introduced to us upon the sacred page, they have removed to the neighbouring upland town of Capernaum, dwelling in a house of their own.¹ That they were in comparatively easy circumstances, may be gathered not only from their possession of this property, but from Simon's ownership of a fishing vessel.² They were not then of the very poorest: so that the declaration afterwards made by the apostle, "We have left all and followed Thee," was not a mere empty boast.

3. The early training of the youthful fishermen can but be conjectured from the nature of their employment and the habits of the time. Every brave and hardy quality would be nurtured by an avocation requiring strength, endurance, skill, and often exposing to sudden perils. Of book learning they had apparently but little. In the estimation of the Jewish magnates they were "unlearned and ignorant men."³ Their pronunciation, hard and harsh, betrayed them as Galileans.⁴ Yet the instruction common to the better class of youths in all Jewish cities would not be withheld from them. Capernaum had its synagogue,⁵ with staff of scribes; and the sons of Jonas were undoubtedly indoctrinated with the elements of Hebrew learning and tradition. That Simon could use his pen in after days, with a precision and elegance not greatly inferior to that of Paul himself, must in part be attributed to his early culture. At the same time he would be rigidly imbued with Jewish modes of thought. That he was of the sect of the Pharisees, we are nowhere informed: it is indeed improbable; but it is sufficiently apparent that, from the first, he shared the beliefs, the traditional

¹ "Peter's house," Matt. viii. 14. "The house of *Simon and Andrew*," Mark i. 29. See Luke iv. 38.

² Luke v. 3.

³ Acts iv. 13.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 73. "The Galileans could not properly pronounce the gutturals, and used *th* for *sh*."

⁵ Luke viii. 41.

hopes, and the narrow principles of his countrymen. It may be observed, that the immediate neighbourhood of the heathen, in "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," bordering upon "the land of Zabulon and Naphtali," did not tend to make the Jewish inhabitants of the latter more tolerant or lax. Rather did these cling the more earnestly to their ancestral faith, as their proud distinction from their Syrian fellow-subjects. For at this time the Roman yoke embraced all; though every Jew burned with the secret hope that by the sudden advent of a deliverer, a king, the hateful tyranny would be dispossessed, and the land become once more the heritage of JEHOVAH. These hopes and dreams give a tone not only to much of the Apostle's words and acts during the earthly life of Christ, but to his epistles also; when he was able to estimate these anticipations, and understand their deep meaning, in the light of the Christian faith.

4. Simon was most probably the elder brother. His name, a Greek form of the Hebrew Simeon, was a common one among the Jews; as many as ten, perhaps eleven, Simons or Simeons appearing in the New Testament.¹ It was undoubtedly the meaning of the name, rather than any honourable remembrance of the son of Jacob so called, which caused it to be so frequently bestowed. For SIMEON is *Hearing*.² "God hath heard me" was the word of grateful parents—akin to SAMUEL, and correlative with SAUL, or *asked* of God.

5. To what tribe the family of Jonas belonged, we have no means of knowing. Bethsaida itself was in the territory of Naphtali; but this decides nothing, as the scattered fragments of the Ten Tribes which had returned to the land of their fathers, had by no means re-settled in their

¹ See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* for the enumeration.

² Not *hearer*, as frequently stated.

early tribal homes. The Galileans, in fact, were a mixed race, and it is remarkable that two of Christ's disciples from Bethsaida had *Greek* names—Philip, and Andrew himself. This fact may betoken a Gentile admixture in the respective families: it is at least remarkable that the old tribal distinctions are so little recognised in the New Testament history, all being absorbed in the general appellation of *Jews*; while still the existence of the "twelve tribes" is distinctly recognised.¹ The record of our Lord's descent from the tribe of Judah stands alone, no other genealogy appears: the probability being that the old lines of demarcation had become effaced, and the twelve tribes commingled into one nation.

¹ Acts xxvi. 7. So Anna was of Asher, Luke ii. 36; Paul of Benjamin, Phil. iii. 5; Barnabas of Levi, Acts iv. 36. The priesthood would keep the Levite tribe distinct.

CHAPTER II.

DISCIPLESHIP: FROM JOHN TO JESUS.

6. THE preaching of JOHN THE BAPTIST in the wilderness of Judæa naturally exerted its chief effect in the immediately surrounding district. "Judæa and Jerusalem and the region round about Jordan,"¹ sent their multitudes as hearers of his appeals, and candidates for his baptism. Galilee is nowhere mentioned in the same connection; and yet the report of the Baptist's preaching must have reached that part of the land also, and awakened the attention of at least some prepared minds. Accordingly, we find from John the Evangelist that some had travelled southwards from the shores of the Galilean lake, as far as to Bethabara or Bethany,² and had enrolled themselves among John's disciples. The fact is not mentioned in the first three Gospels; the Galilean group would be insignificant amid the great Judæan concourse; and the fourth Evangelist was in all probability an actor in the scene that he describes. Two of John's disciples heard the Baptist say, for the second time, in an access of prophetic inspiration, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Thus were they directed to JESUS, who had several weeks before been baptised in Jordan, who had then been borne into the wilderness and tempted of the devil; and who now, fresh from His great victory, walked by the Jordan banks, to gather the first trophies of

¹ Matt. iii. 5.

² John i. 28. The approved reading is *Bethany*; to be distinguished, of course, from the Bethany near Jerusalem.

His saving love. Of the two disciples who thus listened to the first and greatest appeal by which the world was bidden to behold its Redeemer, we cannot doubt that one was John, who, according to his wont, suppresses his own name. The other was Andrew. Together, "they followed Jesus" and "abode with Him." After a night spent in communion so hallowed, the son of Zebedee and the son of Jonas went forth in quest of their brethren. Andrew was first successful.¹ Simon also had evidently been a disciple of John; otherwise he would scarcely have been at such a distance from his home as to be immediately accessible by his brother at Bethany. The words which Andrew addressed to Simon are as memorable as those which the Baptist had uttered. To the *Behold the Lamb of God*, the heart of the disciple responds: *We have found the Messiah*. "Such a 'Eureka!' never before was uttered by man. HE was found for whom the world had waited forty centuries."² Thus Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. It was Andrew's great work in life. We are told nothing of his eloquence, his intellect, his knowledge; nothing of his exploits, his travels, or his martyrdom. Only on two other occasions, when his ready helpfulness shows itself characteristically,³ do we even read his name, save in apostolic lists. So far as we know, Andrew lived but to utter that one sentence, *We have found the Christ*; to perform that one act, to direct his brother to the Saviour.

7. Jesus, by virtue of His Omniscience, discerned the greatness destined for His new disciple, and greeted him at once by his old name and his new. There is no evidence

¹ That both thus went forth to seek their brethren may be gathered from the form of the statement in John i. 41. See Dr. Tholuck's *Commentary on St. John*, p. 91. (Clark.)

² Bengel, *in loc.*

³ One was when Andrew suggested the five loaves and the two fishes; the other when Andrew and Philip brought the Greeks to Jesus. (John vi. 8, 9; xii. 20, 22.)

that Simon had been introduced by name to Christ. The salutation, therefore, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas," was in itself startling. We may suppose the Galilean ready to exclaim, like Nathanael afterwards, "Whence knowest Thou me?" But the words that follow would only deepen the surprise: "Thou shalt be called Cephas." The explanation which follows in the Scripture text is the Evangelist's: "Which is by interpretation Peter: a stone." The import of this appellation will be discussed hereafter. Suffice it now to say that Cephas (strictly *Kēpha*, the *s* being added according to the analogy of Greek forms) is a Syro-Chaldaic word, belonging to the more ancient language spoken in Palestine. This language and the Greek were intermingled much as the Welsh and English now are in Wales. Considerable difference of opinion exists respecting the actual proportion of the two elements;¹ but it seems on the whole probable that our Lord, in His ordinary converse, as well as in His set discourses, spoke in Greek, while on special occasions He resorted to the older vernacular. It must be remembered that the most familiar form of the ancient Scriptures was that of the Septuagint version, this being the source whence Christ and His apostles derived most of their quotations. It is remarkable that the Apostle Paul most frequently employs the form *Cephas*, using *Peter*, if at all, only in a single passage.²

8. With characteristic ardour, Simon attached himself to the Saviour, and for a while attended Him; "beholding His glory" in the marriage at Cana; accompanying Him, with Mary and His brethren, to Capernaum, where Jesus remained for a few days, probably in the home of Simon and

¹ See on this question Dr. Roberts' *Discussions on the Gospels*, p. 15. *sq.*

² Gal. ii. 11, 14; where the oldest MSS. also read *Cephas*, which is the indisputable reading in verse 9; also in 1 Cor. i. 12; ix. 5.

Andrew; then following Him to Jerusalem. This part of our Lord's history is recorded only by John, who repeatedly notes the effect of our Lord's words and acts upon the disciples. Thus, when He drove the buyers and sellers from the Temple, "His disciples remembered that it was written, 'The zeal of Thine house hath consumed me.'" The words in which He spake of "the temple of His body" were laid up in their remembrance, to become hereafter a support of their faith. So strong was the confidence in Him inspired by those days of converse, that when Christ and His disciples were returning to Galilee, and He sat conversing by the well of Sychar with a Samaritan woman, though they " marvelled," they forbore to ask of Him any questions.

One great purpose served by this earlier ministry of our Lord was to confirm the faith of these first-called disciples, that they might be ready in mind, heart, and soul for their full and final call to apostolic work. Meanwhile they assisted their Master in His labours. Before the journey through Samaria into Galilee, they had turned aside, probably to the valley of the Jordan, preaching and baptising. The multitudes who resorted to Christ were already greater than those who followed John the Baptist. Jesus Himself "proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom." His disciples performed the initiatory rite.¹ But it was not the Saviour's purpose to concentrate His ministry in Judæa. The number of His apostles was not yet complete. His return to Galilee is therefore stated by the inspired historian to have been partly in consequence of His growing success. To remain in Judæa would precipitate the accomplishment of His plans. The foundation of His future work must be broadly and deeply laid. Galilee, therefore, is His chosen field of toil; and on His return thither, the disciples betake

¹ Compare John iii. 22; iv. 1, 2.

themselves again to their usual avocations. The glimpses of the Saviour's glory which have been vouchsafed to them have not unfitted them for the work of life. They are His disciples ; and the first lesson that He has taught them is to continue in the discharge of lowly duties until the call to higher things. Their visit with Him to the metropolis must indeed have awakened high longings and hopes within their souls : more ardent still must have been the anticipations and desires aroused as they accompanied Him in His ministry and baptised men into His name ; but they were content again to step to the level of ordinary life : James and John rejoined their father Zebedee ; the sons of Jonas resumed the command of their fishing boats ; and when we next meet them they are busily occupied upon the waters of Gennesaret, as if they had already laid aside the thought of a higher career.

CHAPTER III.

CALL TO APOSTOLIC WORK.

9. HITHERTO we have followed the narrative solely of the Apostle John, the other three Evangelists not having introduced the name of Peter until after the return of our Lord and His disciples into Galilee. Here, when all was prepared, He met them by the shore of the lake, while engaged in their ordinary toils, and solemnly designated them to the apostleship. This was *after* John the Baptist "was cast into prison."

10. Two accounts of the scene are given by the Evangelists; the one by Matthew and Mark, the other, in greater detail, by Luke.¹ From a comparison of the two, we collect the following particulars. Our Lord, having been driven from Nazareth by the ingratitude and unbelief of His fellow-townsmen,² had taken up His abode in Capernaum, and was, no doubt, in constant communication with the sons of Jonas, who dwelt in the same town. For a while Christ pursued His work alone. In His presence and labours was brought to pass the ancient prophecy, that in "the land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtali" should appear a heavenly "light."³ As in Judæa, increasing multitudes "pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God." His walks by the Galilean sea were now accompanied by eager crowds; and on one occasion, in the early morning, He

¹ Matt. iv. 18-22; Mark i. 16-20; Luke v. 1-11. On the Harmony, see below.

² Luke iv. 16-30.

³ Isa. ix. 1, quoted with variations, Matt. iv. 14-16.

passed by the spot where Simon and Andrew, after spending the night in fruitless toil, were washing their nets, while their boats lay moored upon the beach. Entering into Simon's vessel, He asked him to put off a little way from the shore, that He might have free opportunity of speech to the gathered multitude. Simon and Andrew both entered the boat with their Lord; and, with the auditors on the shore, listened for a while to His teachings. But Jesus had now another purpose in view. He closed His discourse, turned to the brethren, and suddenly said, "Push out into deep water, and let down your nets for a draught." The manner and matter of the address excited Simon's surprise. He expressed more than a suspicion that the effort would be useless, but declared his readiness to obey the Master, in fishing, as in all things else. He who had already established His title to *entire* love and obedience, was not to be disregarded even in matters which the fishermen might suppose that they understood best. *At Thy word I will let down the net.* It was done; and so vast a shoal of fish rewarded their endeavours that their net "was breaking." The boat of Zebedee was put off quickly at their summons; both vessels were soon filled, and were almost overborne by the abundant cargo.

11. Simon owned the miracle, and, as in an instant's flash, the supernatural majesty of the Son of God was revealed. The effect was to humble him to the dust. His words, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!* were the spontaneous cry of a soul that felt its insufficiency and worthlessness in the presence of infinite perfection. Thus the prophet Isaiah had felt when summoned to his work by the vision of One "high and lifted up, whose train filled the temple." "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips—for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!"¹

¹ Isa. vi. 5.

But in this prostrate humility there was a true spiritual preparation for the work he was to do. For that work the deepest reverence and faith were above all things requisite; and in this cry of conscious sinfulness at the feet of the All-holy One was the germ of the great subsequent confession: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* The reply of Jesus reassured His trembling disciple, and disclosed the meaning of the scene. Not to overawe, but to inspire, had that revelation of Himself been made;—to arouse new purposes, and to summon to a new career. “Fear not;”—words which had again and again been uttered to reassure our frail humanity in moments of intercourse between heaven and earth:¹—“from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” Here the word is specifically to Simon; the other Evangelists record an extension of the command to his companions—“Follow ye Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” The miracle thus became a symbol—an acted parable; and the emblem has ever since been the most customary, as it is the most expressive emblem of the apostolic calling.²

¹ Gen. xv. 1; xxvi. 24; Deut. i. 21; Josh. i. 9; Isa. xli. 10; Dan. x. 12, 19; Hag. ii. 5; Zech. viii. 13, 15. Comp. Rev. i. 17.

² It has always been a question with Gospel Harmonists whether the call of the disciples detailed by Luke was the same with that recorded by Matthew and Mark. There is undoubtedly some difficulty in combining the details, but there is a far greater difficulty in supposing *two* distinct occasions on which Christ promised to make the disciples “fishers of men,” and in which “they left all and followed Him.” Had the call been repeated, it would follow that the disciples immediately *resumed* what they had just abandoned, and awaited a second summons before they obeyed the first. Archbishop Trench well remarks (*Miracles*, p. 129): “Surely, the taking refuge” (from difficulties in harmonising the narratives), “in the assumption that events almost similar to one another, with only slight and immaterial variations, happened to the same people two or three times over, is a very questionable way of escape from embarrassments of this kind; will hardly satisfy one who honestly asks himself whether he would be content in any other case with such a method of bringing together the records, in slight matters apparently conflicting, of any other events. In the extreme unlikelihood

12. Once again, amid circumstances yet more solemnly impressive, was the sign to be renewed and the charge repeated.¹ This will be considered by us in its proper place. This earlier miracle, like the later, was the expressive accompaniment of a call to the apostleship. Peter and his comrades had hitherto been disciples, helpers; they were henceforth to be apostles, at the Master's disposal, wholly consecrated witnesses for Him, His messengers to mankind. As yet indeed the responsibility and grandeur of the work were undisclosed. The thoughts and hopes of these Galileans, it is probable, were limited to their own land and race, without a glance at the world beyond. Or else the words of Jesus may have been to them as a sublime enigma, propounded but unsolved. However this might be, they accepted the call, with all that it might imply. They "forsook their nets," they "left the ship," they "forsook all, and followed Him."

that events should thus repeat themselves, a far more real difficulty is created than any which it is sought to evade. If we only consider the various aspects, various yet all true, in which the same incident will present itself from different points of view to different witnesses, keep in mind how very few points in a complex circumstance any narrative whatever can seize, least of all a written one, which in its very nature is limited; it will cause little wonder that two or three relators have in part seized diversely the culminating points of a story, have brought out different moments of an event. Rather we shall be grateful to that providence of God which thus often sets us not merely in the position of one bystander, but many; which allows us to regard the acts of Christ, every side of which is significant, from many sides; to hear of His discourses not merely so much as one disciple took in and carried away, but also that which sunk especially deep into the heart and memory of another."

Of modern critics, Newcome, Townsend, Robinson, Wieseler, Tischendorf, Ebrard, Meyer, Wordsworth, Lange, and many others, identify the two narratives; Greswell, Stier, Alford, Stroud, regard the occurrence as distinct. Stier unwarrantably says: "They who would regard Luke v. 1-11 as merely a more specific account of the same circumstance which St. Matthew has more generally narrated, do it at the peril of dealing with the Scripture as if it were not the holy word of God!"—*Words of the Lord Jesus*, vol. i. p. 88. (Clark.)

¹ John xxi.

CHAPTER IV.

GALILEAN MINISTRY.

13. THE events hitherto narrated belong to the former part of the second year of our Lord's ministry. During the remainder of that year, the newly-called apostles no doubt accompanied Him in His missionary tours through Galilee, although as yet neither Peter nor any other comes into prominence. The residence of Jesus was still in Capernaum, where one of the very earliest of His miracles had been wrought on Peter's wife's mother,¹ who evidently herself also was a disciple. Of Peter's wife not even the name has descended to us. She, too, it is plain, became a follower of Jesus;² nor did our Lord's command to leave all for Him, require the sundering of so dear a relationship. In Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, Cephas is expressly mentioned as one of those missionaries who was accompanied by "a sister, a wife"—*i.e.*, a wife who was also a sister in Christ;³ and thus plainly is the doctrine of compulsory ministerial and missionary celibacy condemned by the apostle's own authority; so that those who "forbid to marry," should at least forbear to boast themselves of Peter's name.

14. On the next day after this miracle of healing, Peter's impetuous zeal betrays itself. In the service to which he is dedicated, not an hour is to be lost. "A great while before day," our Lord had retired to "a solitary place" for prayer. But His calm devotions are broken in upon

¹ This miracle appears to have been wrought on the Sabbath following the call of the apostles. See Mark, who, rather than Luke, follows the order of time.

² See ch. xxiii. for a tradition respecting her martyrdom. ³ 1 Cor. ix. 5.

by "Simon and they that were with him"—doubtless Andrew and the sons of Zebedee—with a request, almost in the tone of a summons, to the Master to renewed labours. Nor is the request refused. Only, the Lord will not limit His ministrations to Capernaum. "Let us go," He says, "into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth." It was a period of the most joyous activity. "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people; and His fame went throughout all Syria." From the day of His rejection at Nazareth, scarcely a jarring note had been struck. The multitude who listened and beheld, "were amazed and glorified God." Only after His return to Capernaum are the scribes and Pharisees introduced as uttering their cavils; and then only "in their hearts." The elation which often characterises the first successful stages of a great enterprise must have swelled the hearts of the apostles; to the number of whom at the close of the year was added Levi, better known as Matthew, the publican.

15. The time had now come to complete the apostolic band; but before this, our Lord, accompanied by His followers already chosen, went again to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover. This visit is recorded only by John,¹ and lasted but a short time, for we can scarcely doubt that "the second-first Sabbath"² found Jesus and His disciples on their return through the yellowing corn-fields towards Galilee. On three Sabbaths in succession, His conduct,

¹ It is here taken for granted, for reasons too long to specify, that the "feast of the Jews," John v. 1, was the paschal festival.

² This phrase (Luke vi. 1) is probably to be explained as denoting "the first Sabbath in the second of a Sabbatical series of seven years."—See Wieseler: *Chronological Synopsis of the Gospels*, pp. 203, 215 (Eng. trans). It would be the Sabbath after the passover, probably the next to that recorded in John v. 9. See Lightfoot, *in loc.*

with that of His disciples, deeply exasperated the ritualistic Jews. First, in Jerusalem at Bethesda he had healed the paralytic; now in the cornfields he defended the liberty of His followers to pluck the ears; and on the third Sabbath, when once more in Capernaum, His cure of the man with a withered hand brought the animosity of His enemies to a climax. The Pharisees were "filled with madness," they "held a council against Him," they even "took counsel with the Herodians[†] how they might destroy Him."

16. Christ's separation from the world was thus complete: that deadly antagonism had now fully displayed itself, which would hereafter work out its full purpose by the cross. This is the time which He selected for the solemn, and as we may say, official appointment of the Twelve Apostles. First He spent the night, alone upon "the mountain," in communion with God; and at daybreak revealed to His followers what had been the burden of that prayer. "He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons." The lists of the Apostles are given by the different sacred writers in a varying order. One thing is noticeable: the enumeration, in every case, is into groups of four, each group being headed by the same name. Thus:

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	ACTS.
1 <i>Simon Peter</i>	<i>Simon Peter</i>	<i>Simon Peter</i>	<i>Peter</i> .
2 Andrew	James }	Andrew	James.
3 James	John } Boanerges	James	John.
4 John	Andrew	John	Andrew.
5 <i>Philip</i>	<i>Philip</i>	<i>Philip</i>	<i>Philip</i> .
6 Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas.
7 Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew.
8 Matthew the Publican ..	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew.
9 <i>James of Alphaeus</i>	<i>James of Alphaeus</i>	<i>James of Alphaeus</i>	<i>James of Alphaeus</i>
10 Lebbæus, surn. Thaddæus	Thaddæus	Simon Zelotes ..	Simon Zelotes.
11 Simon the Cananite	Simon the Cananite ..	Judas of James ..	Judas of James.
12 Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot ..	Judas Iscariot.

[†] The remarkable point here is that the Pharisees, staunch upholders of the law, entered into an alliance, for the time being, with the worldly court party of the Herodians.

It will be seen that the sons of Jonas and the sons of Zebedee throughout constitute the first four, and that the list is, in every case, headed with the name of PETER, who in Matthew is expressly termed "the first." This cannot be accidental; and it is beyond a doubt that Simon, now and henceforth, held a foremost place. Precedence, however, is one thing, supremacy another. In no part of the history is there any indication that Peter was invested with authority over the rest. The very dispute at the last, "which of them should be greatest," shows very clearly that the question had not been decided in Peter's favour; since had it been so, what room for controversy could have existed? All were brethren, Christ alone was Lord; and if any took the lead, it was only as the hardest worker, the most zealous adherent, the most energetic apostle. In these characteristics, Peter was confessedly first. He may have been the oldest also of the Twelve, and thus would naturally hold an elder brother's place. Henceforth, accordingly, it is he who appears as the most frequent spokesman of the apostles. Thus, when our Lord had uttered a parable, with a solemn call to watchfulness, it is Peter who asks for an application of the discourse; "Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" At a later period, when Christ is speaking of forgiveness, it is Peter who propounds the moral problem, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him—until seven times?" In reply to the enforcement of self-renunciation, Peter again speaks for the rest, "Lord, we have left all and followed Thee." Even by the outside world he is tacitly accepted as the representative of the little company. In Capernaum, it was to Peter that the collectors of the Temple didrachma came: "Doth not your Master pay the tax?"

17. To this period of our Lord's ministry belong those discourses in which He more fully than heretofore set forth to His disciples the nature and laws of His kingdom. First, the sermon on the Mount¹ declared the principles of all morality; and then the series of parables, commencing with that of the Sower, shadowed forth, in various forms, the history of the Gospel from age to age, with the future and final destiny of the world. Thus were the disciples instructed; while, to strengthen their faith in the Teacher, a series of wondrous miracles immediately followed. The waters of Gennesaret were stilled with a word; the Gadarene demoniac was dispossessed of the "legion" of demons; and as the crown of all, the daughter of Jairus was raised from the sleep of death. These discourses and miracles were the appropriate preface to the commission about to be given to the apostles to go forth, for the first time, without the personal presence of their Master, to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom. Only in connection with one of these events is the name of Peter mentioned; but it is so introduced as to suggest the prominent place which he must have held throughout. To the chamber of death in the house of Jairus, Peter, James, and John alone of the Lord's disciples were admitted; three, that the miracle might be fully witnessed, only three, that the sacred calm of the scene might be inviolate. Twice hereafter the same selection was made—at the Transfiguration and in Gethsemane—and probably for the same reasons. It was not only that these three were among our Lord's earliest disciples and best beloved friends; their place in the Church and their

¹ With regard to the two versions of this discourse (Matt. v.-vii. and Luke vi. 17-49), Andrews sums up the best supported opinions by the conclusion that "Matthew gives this discourse substantially, if not literally, as it was spoken, and that Luke gives *the same*, but modified to meet the wants of that class of readers for whom he specially wrote."—*Life of our Lord upon the Earth*, p 224.

future career supply a still deeper reason. Peter was to be the first preacher of the risen Christ, both to Jews and to Gentiles; James was to be the first martyr of the apostolic band; John was to be the latest survivor. Thus it was the beholding of the Saviour's glory, in the sublimest hours of His life, which alike would prepare one for special responsibilities, another for his early grave, and the third for the long days hereafter, when he would be left on earth alone of the generation that had seen the Lord.

18. The result of these discourses and miracles was at last made manifest, when our Lord "called unto Him the twelve," and sent them from His presence to the preliminary work of evangelisation. "Two and two" they went forth, we know not in what order or to what places, save that at present they were to restrict their labours to Judæa and Galilee—the Samaritans and Gentiles being left for the world-wide mission of a future day. A solemn charge was delivered to them, applicable not only to the few weeks or months of that brief missionary tour, but to the entire work of their lifetime. Weighty teaching and prophetic warning are the staple of this great discourse. The period of this their first mission, the Saviour tells them, will be brief. "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." Thus they left Him for awhile, while He departed "to teach and to preach" alone. "And they went out and preached that men should repent;" "healing," also, "everywhere," now for the first time partakers in that miraculous power which they had witnessed in their Lord.

19. In the early spring of our Lord's last year of ministry the apostles were once more with Him, returning from their several journeys, no doubt at an appointed time, and according to His command. They gave their report of toils, successes, and persecutions. His answer to them was,

Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." Greater discoveries yet were to be made to them of His truth and power; and, in particular, Simon Peter was to learn those deep lessons of heavenly truth and of his own heart which were to fit him for his special work. The miraculous feeding of the five thousand in the desert of the Eastern Bethsaida,¹ but led the way to our Lord's discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, in which He unveiled the deepest secrets of the spiritual life, and so tested the faith of His hearers, that many of His disciples from that time went back and walked no more with Him. Then to the Twelve the Lord addressed the heart-searching question, "Do ye also wish to go away?"² The utterance of the question was Peter's opportunity. Not in vain had he listened and observed all through the memorable preceding year. His recent labours had no doubt quickened his insight and deepened his experiences. It may be he was flushed with the joy of success, like the seventy disciples afterward returning from a similar errand. Perhaps, too, the very absence from the Master, while testing with success the constancy of the disciples, had shown to them the need of deeper teaching. There is no accent of doubt or hesitancy in the tone with which Peter speaks in reply, for himself and for his brethren—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life: and we have believed, and we know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹ The existence of two Bethsidas, though questioned by some modern critics, seems to be satisfactorily made out. The Eastern Bethsaida was distinguished in the time of the Gospel History as Bethsaida *Julias*, having been rebuilt by Philip the Tetrarch, and named in honour of Julia, the daughter of the Emperor Augustus.

² John vi. 67. In the original the "ye" is emphatic, while the form of the question implies that a negative answer was sought. "You do not—do you?" Some have identified this scene with that at Cæsarea Philippi, and the supposition is worthy of consideration, although not adopted above.

20. In the mean time, however, the apostle who here speaks so confidently has learned a solemn lesson of his own insufficiency. Hitherto his prominence has appeared simply as a matter of fact, without any indication of special features of disposition which would naturally place him in the front. The night, however, that followed the miraculous meal at Bethsaida was signalized by a revelation of his character, new very possibly to others; new most likely to himself. The whole occurrence, in fact, was an apt and perfect illustration at once of the apostle's strength and of his weakness; and, had its full meaning been perceived, might have saved him from his subsequent fall. Tossed upon the angry billows, after vainly toiling in rowing all the night,¹ dispirited and weary, it was little wonder that when the form of Jesus was discerned by the apostles in the glimmering dawn, advancing to them over the waters, they cried out for fear. But His words instantly reassured some amongst them,—“It is I, be not afraid.” Not for the first time did He now show Himself to them, on the self-same lake, as Lord of the elements. Peter was inspired with a sudden confidence, which instantly took the form of self-confidence. Had he not but lately returned from a work in which his deeds of power were even like those of the Master? Here, too, was there not an opportunity for miracle? “Lord, if it be Thou, let me come to Thee upon the waters.” The Saviour's reply, in one word, “Come,” was more than a simple encouragement; it was meant as an unveiling of the disciple's heart. Fearlessly the apostle stepped over the side of the vessel, and the

¹ The width of the lake opposite to the plain of Gennesaret is about six miles, and the disciples, who had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs when Jesus met them, were thus something more than half the way over. As this was “about the fourth watch of the night” (Mark vi. 48), or from 3-6 a.m., the disciples must have been struggling against the wind and waves some eight or ten hours.—*Andrews*, p. 268.

waves were firm beneath his tread. But in the very crisis his courage collapsed. "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid." His fears were as impulsive as his courage had been. Might he not have reasoned that the greater wonder had already been wrought? The first step, taken with safety upon the raging deep, was proof that he need no more fear. After finding the waves solid to his feet, what was there so terrible in the most tempestuous blast? But Peter stayed not to reason: he took counsel only of his fears, and as he trembled he "began to sink." Faith was his only hold upon the power that could support him there, and when that failed, the miracle ceased for him. He has sufficient faith to cry to Jesus even then; but he needs the actual contact of the Saviour's hand, lifting him out of peril, before his courage returns. Hence the Master's rebuke, "O thou of little faith."¹ Surely such a character was one that Peter least expected to deserve. In his own estimation he had been but now a hero. Who so brave as he, who, while the other disciples awaited in their boat their Lord's advance, could go forth over the waters to meet Him? The courage and faith were certain; but they were uncalculating, and could not bear the strain of an unexpected peril. Peter had dared the yielding waters, but had not taken account of the howling wind. So, hereafter, he had braced himself for the frown of Caiaphas, but was thrown off his guard by the contempt of a servant girl. His character was great and true, but it was as yet unbalanced. Such men will do and dare more than colder spirits, but are apt to break down at the critical point; and their noble impulses end in a more ignominious failure than falls to the lot of others not half so great as they.

But one lesson was not to suffice for Peter. Humiliated as he must have been while aided by the Saviour's helping

¹ This incident is recorded only by Matthew.

hand to climb over the vessel's side to his fellow disciples, he united no doubt in their "amazed" and lowly worship : "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God ;" and, as we have seen, gave emphatic utterance to that truth not long afterwards, in the confession which anticipated that which he was soon to utter in memorable words at Cæsarea Philippi.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONFESSION OF PETER AT CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

21. EVENTS were hurrying on to the crisis of our Lord's ministry. He had entered upon His final year of teaching and working. The passover He forbore to celebrate in Jerusalem, not because He slighted the sacred feast, but because "the rulers sought to kill Him," and "His time was not yet come." It is possible too that His abstention was a sign that the external rite, however significant and precious, must be held as secondary to the spiritual reality. He extends His labours to the borders of the Gentiles, as though to give at least one glimpse of that lovingkindness which was destined to embrace all mankind. He traverses the "Ten Cities" to the east of the Lake of Galilee, and there again feeds the thousands by His omnipotence. Departing thence, He pays a passing visit to the city of the Magdalene, and to other towns; then (healing the blind man of Bethsaida by the way) proceeds to the district of Cæsarea Philippi, or the "Cæsarea of Philip," Tetrarch of Trachonitis, who had rebuilt the town formerly called Panium, and given to it his own name in conjunction with that of the Roman emperor.¹ "The situation is unique, combining in an unusual degree the elements of grandeur and beauty.

¹ The Cæsarea so often mentioned in the Acts of Apostles must of course be distinguished from Cæsarea Philippi. The full name of the former was *Cæsarea Augusta*, *Cæsarea Palestina*, or *Cæsarea on the Sea*. It was built by Herod the Great, and named in honour of the Emperor Augustus.

It nestles in its recess at the southern base of the mighty Hermon, which towers in majesty to an elevation of 7000 or 8000 feet above. The abundant waters of the glorious fountain spread over the terrace luxuriant fertility, and the graceful interchange of copse, lawn, and waving fields."¹ Here, in peaceful retirement, away from the crowds of Galilee, our Lord led His disciples, that He might disclose to them the truth for which He had been long preparing their minds, and which now must at last be fully told, that His work was to be wrought by suffering and death.

For the ministry of Jesus is plainly divisible into two portions. In the former, He was pre-eminently the Teacher, the Prophet; gathering His disciples around Him, instructing them by degrees in the mysteries of His truth, the laws of His kingdom, and establishing their faith by successive manifestations of His "glory." Thus prepared, they could now be led into a deeper mystery. "*From that time* Jesus began to speak of His sufferings." The calm and sacred retreat of that week at Cæsarea Philippi was in order that He might declare to His followers the great purpose of His advent, to die and to rise again.

22. But before the great declaration was made to them, He asked for a distinct avowal of their faith in Him. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Christ here, according to His wont, appeals to His humanity. Are His disciples able now, as the result of all that they have seen and heard, to arise to the true conception of His greatness and His work? The world is unable to do this. "Some men say that Thou art John the Baptist"—slain by Herod in the preceding year, and now supposed, not only by many of the people, but by the conscience-smitten tyrant

¹ Dr. Robinson. See also Dean Stanley: *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 397-400; and McGregor: *Rob Roy on the Jordan*, pp. 224-232.

himself, to have risen from the dead. "Some, Elijah," who, Malachi had declared,¹ should be sent by God to warn a guilty generation, and who was still expected by those who took the prediction literally, not recognizing the "spirit and power" of the Old Testament prophet in John the Baptist. "Others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets;" Jeremiah, the patriot prophet of Judah, the prophet of the Captivity, being ever dear to the popular memory: while in the Man of Sorrows there may have been traced many features of likeness to him who in the past had mourned for the daughter of Zion. So unspiritual and traditional were the people, that even those who recognised some heavenly greatness in Christ could scarcely conceive of Him as a *new* prophet. Were Jesus from God, they thought, He must be in some way a reproduction of the past. The testing question for the apostles was, whether they had risen even above this, not only owning in Jesus *a* prophet, a teacher, but *the* great Prophet, the divine Teacher. "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter replies on his own behalf and on that of all the rest, "THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD."²

23. This confession, it has been said, is "the first Apostles' Creed"—the earliest and the best. Jesus is *the Christ*, the Anointed, Priest and King, the object of prophecy, the world's Redeemer; *the Son of the Living God*, a response to our Lord's words, *the Son of Man*. Together the two titles express the whole glory of His nature and work. God in man; to redeem by sacrifice, to intercede and to rule—this is the central truth of Christianity. Peter declares that he holds this great verity; although as yet he cannot grasp all the mighty import of his own confession.

¹ Mal. iv. 5, 6.

² Matthew's account is here followed throughout. The Evangelists Mark and Luke report the words of Peter more briefly. "Thou art the Christ" (Mark viii. 29); "The Christ of God" (Luke ix. 20).

Our Lord approves. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona;¹ for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." "Flesh and blood" stand for human nature generally. Thus the Apostle Paul hereafter declares that when he was called to his sacred mission he "conferred not with flesh and blood"²—took no human counsel. Our Lord shows Peter to be truly *inspired*; he has attained a conviction of the highest truth, not by the simple exercise of his own faculties, although these too were actively employed, but by a Divine revelation to his spirit.

24. Then Jesus adds, in words that have been the occasion of much controversy, "And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter (*Petros*), and upon this rock (*petran*) I will build my church; and the gates of Hades 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." The several phrases of this declaration demand careful attention.

The "Rock," what is it? Three opinions have been held; (1) that our Lord refers to *Himself*; (2) to *Peter*; (3) to *Peter's confession*, or rather to the Truth confessed. For the first, it is argued that Christ is the one and only foundation of the Church, the true corner-stone, other than which "no man can lay;" thus set forth by prophecy, declared to be so by the apostles, and by none more emphatically than by *Peter himself*, in his former epistle.³ This is true, but is it the truth which Jesus here enunciates—pointing to Himself, as some have thought, as though to say, "Thou art a rock, but the true Rock am I"? The interpretation seems to do violence to the simplicity of our

¹ *Son* of Jonas, "Bar" meaning "Son."

² Gal. i. 16.

³ See 1 Pet. ii. 6-8.

Lord's address ; the enigma is forced, harsh, unlikely. The second view is far more obvious, and has received the adhesion of the greater number of expositors. It is no objection that the name *Peter* is masculine, while the word *rock* is feminine, as it would be needful to give a masculine shape to the word in order to adapt it to be a man's name.¹ Nor, be it observed, is there anything in this explanation (the "Catholic" interpretation, as it has been called) to countenance the claims of the Papacy. As Bengel pithily asks, *Quid hæc ad Romam ?* "What has all this to do with Rome?" The question of Peter's alleged connection with the Roman Church will be discussed in another chapter. Suffice it here to say, that even if Peter himself be intended, there is no mention of Peter's successors; and history quite fails to identify these successors with the Roman bishops. The step from Peter to Rome is pure assumption, with no warrant whatever, either in authentic history or in the Word of God.

25. The question then returns, is Peter intended? If so, it can only be—first, in connection with Christ the True Foundation ; and, secondly, in fellowship with the rest of the apostles. The first point is made good by Peter's own words, already cited from his first epistle ; and the words of Jesus are fulfilled by Peter's having been, after the descent of the Spirit, the instrument of the Church's beginning—first preaching the gospel to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and first to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. And secondly, the position is assigned to him not exclusively. The Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" collectively ; and on the foundation-walls of the New Jerusalem are inscribed "the names of

¹ In Syriac the word (*Kepha, Cephas*) has no such variation in form. The distinction in meaning alleged by some between *Petros* "stone" and *Petra* "rock" is quite inadmissible. The difference in form is a mere accident of the Greek language, and does not exist in any other.

the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”¹ Thus far the interpretation is coherent and Scriptural.

26. Yet there remain difficulties. If Peter personally were intended, why was the address not direct? In the succeeding sentence all is clear. I will give *unto thee*. How is it that the Lord does not say *upon thee, the rock*? He seems in a measure to look away from His disciple even while employing and interpreting his name. Moreover, if the figure is that of a house, a temple, does it not confuse the representation to speak of the same person as the foundation, and as the holder of the keys? Regard Christ as the great Architect, Peter as the appointed official—the janitor, the steward—then surely something else is the foundation. And what but the Truth which Peter had confessed, “Jesus is the anointed Saviour, the Son of God”? Such is the third view of the passage as above given, once called “the Protestant interpretation,” now often rejected, upon, as it would seem, insufficient grounds.² The Church of all time, the community of Christians, like a living temple, rests upon a TRUTH, the truth which the apostle now declares, by the acceptance of which—its incorporation into his very being—he becomes Peter, the Rock-man, in his life and work an impersonation of the great unchangeable verity. In fact, this interpretation seems to combine the essentials of the other two. The truth is Christ revealed; the truth is the life of His servants; the Church therefore, based upon this truth, is founded upon Christ, is built up upon the lives of those who are one with Him. It is in holding fast by this truth that all their honour lies. The moment Simon lets it

¹ Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14.

² Alford argues against this interpretation on the ground of contrariety to Scripture usage; *persons* everywhere, and not *truths*, being described as the basis of the Church. But in metaphors some variation may be permitted; and it is quite as allowable to speak of a *doctrine* as of a *man* as a foundation, though in a somewhat different sense.

go, as we shall immediately see, he becomes *Satan*—"a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." Not therefore in himself personally, but in the faith which he is set to maintain, is the security and support of the living temple.

27. The "gates of Hades"¹ denote the powers of the unseen world, whose work it is to destroy. For *gate* is a symbol of power, as when in modern phrase we speak of the Turkish monarchy as the "Ottoman *Porte*." In the gates of the city lay its strength—closed, they defied the foe; opened, they gave egress to armies bent on conquest; while in peaceful times the municipal assemblies were held beneath their ample shade. The emblem thus stands both for counsel and for might. No crafty schemes, no bold attacks emanating from the realms of darkness will avail against the Church. Through all the changes of time it abides, indestructible, imperishable for evermore.

28. To Peter, moreover, is delivered the power of "the keys." That is, to take the simplest interpretation, he would unlock and throw open the gates of salvation both to Jew and to Gentile. But more than this is implied. The key was the steward's badge, and is here employed as the emblem of authority in the Church.² The power to open carries with it also the power to shut; as when the apostle declared to Simon the magician, "Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter;" or as when, more terribly still, he pronounced the doom of God against Ananias and Sapphira. To such functions also the "binding" and the "loosing" refer; our Lord committing to Peter such power of ad-

¹ This word *Hades*, "the unseen world," must be carefully distinguished from *Gehenna*, the place of punishment. It is unfortunate that in English the one word *hell* should stand for both. The attentive student may compare the following texts. *Hell* stands for *Gehenna* in Matt. v. 22, 29, 30; x. 28; xviii. 9; xxiii. 15, 33; Mark ix. 43, 45; Luke xii. 5; James iii. 6. For *Hades*, in Matt. xi. 23; xvi. 18 (the passage under consideration); Luke xvi. 23; Acts ii. 27, 31; Rev. i. 18; vi. 8; xx. 13, 14.

² See Trench, "*Seven Churches*" (p. 173), on the "key of David."

ministration in His earthly kingdom, that the apostle's decisions would carry with them the authority of heaven. It is implied in this that these decisions would be *divinely directed*; as when the apostolic council in Jerusalem wrote hereafter, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."¹ For it is evident from our Lord's words afterwards, that Peter, though specifically, is not exclusively intended. It was to all the apostles that He said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them, whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." The insight and the power were a part of apostolic inspiration, and here also they have no successors.

29. The great confession having been made, the promise given, the hearts of the apostles lifted to new heights of assurance and of hope, our Lord closed the interview with a command mysterious, but of deep significance. He "charged His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ." Wherefore this prohibition? Had not the very intention of His work in its successive stages been to lead His followers to own His Messiahship? Was it not the recognition and confession of this truth that made "Simon Bar-jona" so "blessed?" Was it not a doctrine for the world to learn? Wherefore, then, conceal the declaration even for an hour? The reason, we cannot doubt, was that mankind might apprehend the truth as the result of Christ's finished work. A little company might be gathered to own Him their Messiah in the spirit of faith and hope, only half understanding the greatness of their own confession. But for the multitudes to be taught that Jesus was the Christ, before He had fully revealed Himself as Saviour, in His cross and resurrection, would be to lead them to an inadequate and erroneous conception of Him. When they only hoped, dreamed that He was the Messiah, their one purpose

¹ Acts xv. 22.

was to take Him by force and make Him a King : the very disciples, as we know, were not exempt from the error. What would have been the enthusiasm, had he been openly proclaimed as Messiah, on His own authority and that of His apostles ! The very prevalence of the true conviction would have plunged the people into a deeper, deadlier error. So the broad and explicit announcement of Jesus as the Messiah was purposely withheld until the world could be fully taught what Messiahship meant, until the Christ could be set forth as crucified, risen, and ascended, and the royalty of the Lord be proclaimed as the result of His atoning sorrows.¹

30. Of these sorrows He began now to speak at large to His disciples ; and thus, no doubt, spent the successive days of that peaceful week in Cæsarea Philippi—the last period of repose which He was to enjoy upon earth. How unprepared even yet the apostles were for the announcement of the cross, Peter himself was the first to show. He who had made the great confession, and in that had shown himself the Rock, now changes his tone, forgetting the foregone lesson of perfect trust, in the blindness of his very love. “ Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord : this shall not be unto Thee.” “ This *shall not be.*” The apostle takes upon himself to say that he will prevent it, and shows the same spirit as when he afterwards drew the sword in Gethsemane. We are reminded of the Frankish chief who, when told of our Lord’s sorrows, exclaimed, “ Would that I had been there, with my legions !” Thus there is more than protest, more than dissuasion. The bold disciple will cast himself in the very path of the Master’s purposes, and with his own right hand will save Him from the cross. Thus, though he knows it not, he becomes a “ Satan,” an adversary ; “ an offence,”

¹ See Alford on Matt. viii. 4.

or stumbling-block—for such is the exact meaning of the word—in the Redeemer's way. No doubt the figure of the rock is still in the mind of our Lord. "Thou who wert just now, by thy faith in confessing Me, a *lively* stone, art now, by thy carnal weakness, a *stumbling-stone* to Christ."¹ The Evangelist Mark, in recording this scene, is careful to note, probably at Peter's own direction, that our Lord uttered these words after having "turned about and looked on His disciples," thus showing that the rebuke was before them all. This is the more noticeable, as the preceding words of honour are not given by Mark. The silences of the sacred historians are often as expressive as their words.

¹ Bishop Wordsworth, *New Testament, in loc.*

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRANSFIGURATION, AND JOURNEY TOWARD JERUSALEM.

31. THE lessons of Cæsarea Philippi were completed by the Transfiguration. Step by step the revelation of Christ was made ; and the symbolic glories of the "holy mount" were the appropriate sequel at once to the utterance of the apostle's faith, and to the Redeemer's prophecy of the coming sorrow.

Peter, James, and John are once more associated in closest companionship with their Lord. On the reasons of this special selection we have already spoken. It may be added now that they were evidently called to see "this great sight" as representatives, not only of the apostolic band, but of the whole gospel ministry through all time. Moses represents the Law, Elijah the Prophets ; both together comprising the whole extent of bygone Divine revelations. The law and the prophets point to Christ : the ministry of the gospel was to point to Christ. The past and the present meet upon that mountain, to show that Jesus is the central figure of all time. Moreover, the eternal Father proclaims, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him ;" and, as we are expressly informed, "when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone : " or, in the words of another evangelist, "When they had lifted up

their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only:" or more vividly still, doubtlessly from Peter's own reminiscence of the scene, "Suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only, with themselves." Moses and Elijah have vanished, Jesus alone remains. The emancipation of the disciples from the past is expressively symbolized. Law in Christ receives its fulfilment, prophecy its consummation. "Hear Him" — the Lawgiver of the Church, the Prophet of mankind. Not Moses, but Christ; not Elijah, but Christ. From Sinai and Carmel let mankind now turn to Calvary.

32. That such was the great lesson of the Transfiguration, is plain from the connection in which all the evangelists record it. It immediately followed that week at Cæsarea Philippi; "after six days," according to Matthew and Mark; "about an eight days," in Luke. This fact helps us to fix the locality of the scene; not on Tabor, familiar and dear as tradition has made the name, for Tabor was sixty miles away; and, moreover, there was at that time a tower and Roman fortress on the summit, so that it was by no means "a high mountain apart." Some solitary height of snow-crowned Hermon was no doubt the place where the disciples beheld "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," and Peter said, "Master, it is good for us to be here." The close connection also of the scene with the conversations at Cæsarea Philippi, is shown by the words of the Evangelist Luke: "They (Moses and Elijah) spake of the decease[†] which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem." The theme that brought them from heaven was the cross. In connection with the death of Christ, it was that the Father said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Trans-

[†] Literally, *Exodus*, departure, the same word that Peter employs in his Second Epistle, i. 15.

figuration was the ordination, so to speak, of Jesus for His priestly work. Henceforward, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

33. One of the earliest incidents recorded after the Transfiguration no doubt arose from the prominence apparently accorded to Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, and manifested again in his selection to accompany Jesus to the holy mount. This was the dispute which of the apostles should be greatest—a dispute, it may again be remarked, which could not have arisen had our Lord definitely conferred the primacy upon Simon Peter. James and John, who also were on the mount with Jesus, seem to have supposed that this honour was intended as a pledge to them of a specially exalted position. Their mother Salome, naturally enough, fostered the desire. The Evangelist Matthew represents the petition for chief places in the coming kingdom as made by the mother, Mark as by the sons; no doubt they all three joined in the request. The answer which Jesus gave to them was intended for the rest of the apostles likewise. He called them all to him, Peter with the others, and said, "Whosoever wishes to be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever wishes to be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

34. Of such incidents and teachings as these that last journey to Jerusalem was full. To this period belong the mission and return of the Seventy, who were distinct from the Twelve apostles, similar as were the instructions given to both. It appears also from John's Gospel that our Lord and His disciples reached the metropolis for the Feast of Tabernacles; remaining in Judæa and in Peræa during the six months that elapsed between that festival and Christ's last Passover; with occasional visits to the city, as at the

Feast of Dedication, and when He raised Lazarus from the dead. The other evangelists omit these visits, recording, for the most part without any chronological notes, the words and works of the Redeemer in Peræa, "beyond the Jordan," whither He retired from His enemies, after the raising of Lazarus. Through all this time the references to Peter specifically are brief and incidental. The most significant is the question which he asked in connection with our Lord's interview with the young man who "went away sorrowful"—"Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee: *what shall we have therefore?*" It was apparently a burst of mercenary feeling, unlike the usual impulsive but not ungenerous utterances of the apostle. Or perhaps the ground of the question may be sought in our Lord's words to the young ruler, "Thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Peter inquires, "Is this treasure also for us?"—The Saviour replies, not reprovably, but kindly and gently, addressing not Peter only but all the apostles—"I say unto you, that ye who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Then to repress the spirit that works for reward, whether in earth or heaven, our Lord utters the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, in which He corrects all worldly ambitions by the thought that the privileges of His kingdom are the equal heritage of all the called. "The last shall be first, and the first last." The sons of Zebedee, among the earliest of the disciples, shall be no greater than Saul of Tarsus, who was "as one born out of due time."

35. This conversation, with the ambitious request of James and John, occurred as our Lord was leaving Peræa for the last time, on His way to the Passover in Jerusalem. In that journey, Bartimæus cured of blindness, and Zacchæus, to whose house salvation came, were trophies of

His might and love. Then with the Twelve, the Redeemer climbed the rocky way from Jericho to Jerusalem;—Himself in the calm and earnest purpose of His love in front of the company; silent mostly, as they followed in amazement and fear, only dimly conjecturing what awaited them in the Holy City, and unknowing of the deep lessons they had yet to learn before they could fully enter upon the task of their lives. The deepest lessons were reserved for Peter, the great crisis of whose spiritual history was now at hand.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WEEK OF OUR LORD'S PASSION.

36. THE last week of our Lord's life on earth began with triumph. It is probable that Peter was one of the "two disciples" sent to Bethphage to procure the colt for Christ's entry to Jerusalem; more than probable that his voice led the hosannas which attended the Redeemer's way.

But it is not until the morning of the *third* day of the week that he is specifically mentioned, as calling attention to the withering of the fig-tree; and as receiving with his brother-disciples the lesson from the lips of Jesus, "Have faith in God." It seems to have been in the course of the same day¹ that some Gentiles, who had come to worship at the feast, uttered to Philip the memorable desire, "Sir, we would see Jesus." This is told by Philip to *Andrew*, Simon Peter's brother, as to one to whom the happy task of introducing others to Christ were especially congenial. Thus do we gain an interesting glimpse of the same Andrew who in bygone days first found his own brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. In the evening of the day Andrew again appears, with Peter, James, and John, in private converse with their Master, while He speaks to them of the catastrophe of Jerusalem and the coming of the Son of Man. Whether the other disciples were present at this interview does not appear; the probability seems to be that they

¹ See Robinson's *Harmony*.

entered toward the close of the prophetic discourse, and before the Parable of the Ten Virgins ;—at the point marked by the Saviour's words, "What I say unto you," *i.e.*, to you four, "I say unto all, Watch."

37. The *fourth* day of the week seems to have been spent in comparative quiet. The rulers and chief priests were plotting against the Saviour. He remained in Bethany, where, in the evening with His disciples, He sat at supper in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and received the homage of Mary, who anointed Him with the ointment "exceeding precious." Here for once Judas appears as the exponent of the thoughts of the disciples, or rather, as Mark has it, "*some* of the disciples," when he asks, "To what purpose is this waste?" The *motive* of Judas indeed was all his own, but others may have participated in his uneasiness, though in a different spirit; and from the language of Mark, where as usual we may discern the hand of Peter, we may gather with much probability that in the murmuring this warm-hearted and zealous disciple had no share.

38. "Then came the day of unleavened bread," the *fifth* day of the week. The disciples, still at Bethany, make inquiries as to the place of the Paschal Supper; but Jesus has already, with perfect foreknowledge, prepared all. Now again Peter appears, sent with John to the city "to make ready the Passover." Whether in the case of Christ and His disciples this meal was antedated by a day, that He might accomplish His intense desire¹ to partake with them of the sacred feast before He suffered, is a question that has tasked the keenest powers of criticism. On the whole, it appears to us that He did eat this Paschal meal one day earlier than usual; that this fifth day of the week was the thirteenth, not the fourteenth of Nisan; and that on the very day, and about the very hour, when the Passover lamb

¹ Luke xxii. 15.

was customarily slain, He Himself, the true Passover, was sacrificed for us.¹ But whatever conclusion may be adopted on this point, there is no reasonable doubt that the meal recorded by John as having taken place "before the feast of the Passover," was the very Paschal meal which, according to the other three evangelists, our Lord partook with His disciples, and at which He instituted the Eucharist.

39. By a comparison, then, of the several accounts, we are enabled to arrange the incidents, especially as they concerned the Apostle Peter, as follows.

On arriving in the upper room, after the hot and dusty afternoon walk from Bethany, the first refreshment needed by the weary disciples was the loosening of their sandals and the bathing of their feet. To perform this kindly office was usually the duty of the host; but on occasion of the Passover, when rooms were lent gratuitously to parties of visitors to Jerusalem, it was expected that the guests would provide for their own comfort in this, as in other respects. Nor could the household servants be spared at so busy a time to wait upon the visitors. Only the laver was ready, with the cool water and the linen towels. Yet no one of the disciples would stoop to perform the service to the rest. The condescension seemed too great, the old strife broke out as to "which of them should be the greatest." In the end, it seemed as if they would have to take their places at the table weary and unrefreshed, and with mutual rancour in their hearts; when Jesus Himself solves the difficulty, inculcating at the same time great lessons of purity

¹ See the Harmonists for discussion of this point. Andrews gives a very careful summing up of the whole argument (*Life of our Lord upon the Earth*, pp. 369-397), but arrives at an opposite conclusion from that above stated; which latter, it may be added, is the conclusion of the Greek Fathers and of the Primitive Church generally. See Ellicott, *Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord*, p. 322, who takes the same view, with Greswell and others.

and humility upon them all. "He riseth from supper," *i. e.*, from the supper table, before the meal had begun, "and laid aside His (upper) garments and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into the laver, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." When He came to Simon Peter (not, probably, first in His round) a characteristic colloquy took place. First, the disciple who had not shown grace enough to assume the task at the outset which the Master is now performing, expressed his astonishment: "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" In reply our Lord declared that the reason of His conduct would be known "hereafter"—thus pointing to the explanation which He would immediately give, as well as to the deeper significance of the action to be eventually revealed. But this was not enough for the ardent disciple, who now boldly protested, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Our Lord replied, in language of direct spiritual application: "If I wash thee not thou hast no part in Me." Peter, though he scarcely grasped the great truth intended, is so impressed by the solemnity of the Master's declaration, that his refusal is succeeded by the opposite extreme of eagerness: "Lord, not my feet only, but also hands and head!" The answer of the Lord is of profound spiritual application: "He that is bathed¹ already, needs only to wash his feet," soiled by contact with the world's dusty paths, "and then is clean every whit;" plainly meaning that one already regenerated still needs daily cleansing. At the outset of the pilgrimage he has been "bathed"—cleansed from sin, made partaker of justifying grace. But in his daily walk he contracts ever fresh pollution, and must have continual recourse in penitence and prayer to the cleansing fountain. Then in continuance our Lord hints, as once he had done before, at the

¹ A different word from *washed* in the rest of the passage.

presence of his betrayer, to whom the thirty pieces of silver had already been promised by the priests. "Ye are clean, but not all." The practical lesson of humility follows: "I am among you as one that serveth."¹ "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Not to the actual office, so much as to the spirit of service and of mutual help, does the Redeemer point. Nothing should be beneath you, by which the welfare and comfort of another can be served.

40. As the meal proceeded every word and act in which Peter was concerned became of deep significance. A deep, almost passionate excitement appears in his words, especially in connection with Christ's declaration, "One of you shall betray Me." While the rest of the disciples "inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing,"² then in their sorrow appeal to their silent Master, saying, every one,³ and one by one,⁴ "Is it I?" Peter proposes the direct inquiry through John, who reclined in the place of honour next to Jesus at the feast, who it could be. Then Jesus speaks and indicates the traitor, on which Judas immediately retires;⁵ and our Lord, conscious of His immediately approaching departure, and repeating His enforcement of brotherly love, says to His disciples, "Whither I go ye cannot come." Peter exclaims, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" "Why cannot I follow Thee now?—I will lay down my life for Thy sake." And when a little afterwards Jesus predicts the scattering of His followers, the enthusiastic disciple adds, "Though all shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be

¹ Luke xxii. 27. This evangelist does not refer to the washing of the disciples' feet, but the words seem evidently suggested by the action.

² Luke.

³ Matthew.

⁴ Mark.

⁵ See John xiii. 30. Judas was not therefore present at the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the account of Luke does not preserve the exact order of events.

offended." In reply our Lord first expressively shows that the deadliest powers of evil are aiming at the faith and patience of His followers, but with a special aim at Peter. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired[†] you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The *you* here is plural, it is an address to all: the *thee* is singular, and is specially intended for Peter. The tempter would "sift" every one of the disciples, but his chief assault would be upon this most ardent and zealous of the band. This the Lord foresaw, and therefore specially prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail. Was the prayer unanswered? No: for a fall is not destruction, and the faith of Peter, though for one bitter hour it left him, returned in all its strength never to fail again. Our Lord distinctly anticipates this seeming denial of His prayer. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." "Converted!" Simon seems to say. "What need of change, seeing that I am already so firm?" "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and to death." On this declaration our Lord in explicit terms foretells the coming fall of Peter, in words differently recorded by the four evangelists, which we place in parallel quotation, in order to compare hereafter the event with the prediction.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.	And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.	And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.	Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.

A threefold denial is here evidently predicted, and that before the *second* cock-crowing. On apparent discrepancies, and on the view of Archbishop Whately, something will be

[†] The word in the original denotes that Satan's desire had been granted. He was permitted to "sift" all the disciples.

said hereafter. One point of seeming difference is, that Matthew and Mark place the closing part of this conversation after the departure of our Lord and the eleven on the way to Gethsemane, while according to Luke and John it took place in the upper room. The caution may very probably have been repeated more than once.

41. The institution of the Lord's Supper is placed by Dr. Robinson after this conversation with Peter, although this order is reversed by the three Evangelists who have recorded both. The succession of time, we know, is not very strictly observed in the Sacred Narrative. The mention of the bread and the wine is naturally suggested by the details of the feast, and both Luke and Paul plainly state that the cup was given to the disciples "after supper."¹ Were this the true order, it is easy to understand how, from the closing words of the institution, Jesus passed at once to that divine discourse recorded only by the disciple who leaned on His bosom as he eagerly drank in the wondrous words—"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."² At the close of the discourse thus commenced, and of the sublime intercession that followed,³ the parting hymn was sung—doubtless the Hallelujah (Ps. cxv.-cxviii.), with which it was customary to end the Paschal celebration; and the Redeemer, with His still faithful followers, crossed the turbid

¹ Luke xxii. 20; 1 Cor. xi. 25.

² Matt. xxvi. 29; John xiv. 1-3. The connection of the latter passage with the former seems more obvious and natural than with John xiii. 38.

³ The words, "Arise, let us go hence" (John xiv. 31), were plainly not followed by *immediate* departure.

winter torrent¹ which ran between the city and the opposite slope of the Mount of Olives.

42. At the foot of the hill there was, and still is, an olive grove,² into which He led His disciples, bidding them to remain together while He went apart to pray; adding, "Pray ye that ye enter not into temptation." Then calling the three apostles who had already beheld His glory upon the Mount of Transfiguration, He entered the scene of His mysterious sorrow. A weight of grief—sore amazement—sorrow even unto death, came upon Him; even the three disciples permitted to be with Him might not follow Him all the way. The mysterious agony was borne alone: the "strong crying and tears" with which He "made supplication" were unnoted by His dearest friends. Peter, James, and John slept in Gethsemane, as they had slept upon the holy mount. Then they were overborne by the exceeding glory; now, as it is added in tender charity, they slept "for sorrow." "Their eyes were heavy;" "the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak." Yet some words of that sublime and awful prayer fell upon their ears, and we owe, no doubt, to Peter's recollection, the one phrase, *Abba*, recorded by Mark only;—the very tones of trusting, heartbroken entreaty in which Jesus cried to the Father lingering upon the apostle's ears. Once and again aroused by their Master in the intervals of His supplications, and falling asleep again as often, they were effectually awakened by His last appeal, "Sleep ye now? and take ye your rest?³ Rise up: let us go; lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand."

¹ "Kidron" (Cedron) means *turbid*; and the word "brook" employed (John xviii. 1) denotes *winter-torrent*.

² "Gethsemane," literally *oil-press*, evidently from the abundance of olive-trees there. The present enclosure is but a small part of the "garden."

³ With many of the best interpreters we take this phrase as a question. To read it as a command is absolutely irreconcilable with what follows. Nor can we regard the words, at such a time, as spoken in irony.

43. In an instant all is tumult and confusion. Jesus with His three companions had probably regained the resting-place of the other disciples, when the high priest's band, led by Judas, is upon them. One proof of supernatural majesty is given, in striking the company of assailants, including Judas, to the ground; and then Jesus surrenders Himself meekly to His enemies. But Peter's rage, as they bound the Master, is ungovernable. "Two swords" had been taken by the disciples to the garden. One is in the possession of Peter; he draws it and smites wildly, forgetting that He who possesses, but will not wield supernatural power for His own deliverance, cannot need the earthly weapons of His followers. The blow falls on Malchus, "one of the high priest's servants." But Jesus, as if He will prove not only His majesty but His mercy in that supreme hour, puts forth His hand and heals the wound, saying to His zealous and abashed disciple, "Put up thy sword into the sheath; the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" adding further, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to the Father, and He shall instantly give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" No words could more plainly declare that the kingdom of the Redeemer is not to be supported by the weapons of earthly warfare. Where the celestial powers which are ever at His command are not summoned for the maintenance of His cause, it is not for His followers to supply their lack by unsheathing the sword. All "crusades," "holy wars," persecutions in the name of Christ, are contrary to the spirit of His religion. Well would it have been for mankind if the church that makes its boast of Peter's name had laid to heart the warning thus addressed to him in the garden of Gethsemane!

44. The terror of the disciples had now become ungovernable. "They all forsook Him and fled," save Peter, who could not so readily abandon his Lord, and "another disciple," probably John.¹ There was also a third, not, it would appear, of the number of the apostles, who seems to have been aroused from his bed by the nocturnal commotion, and when he discovered the cause, to have bravely followed Jesus. It is more than likely that this was Mark himself, who alone records the occurrence. So near did he press to the soldier band, while Peter and John "followed afar off," that "the young men laid hold on him, and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked."

45. Thus the sad procession passed on to the high priest's house, which, though it was night, was lighted up for the trial; a kind of irregular assembly, preparatory to an early meeting of the Sanhedrim, being convened at that unusual hour, perhaps to make sure of their fatal work, perhaps from fear of popular tumult, perhaps to save appearances, and to procure the condemnation and death of Jesus before the Passover festivities. John, who was known to Caiaphas, went boldly in to the place of assembly; Peter remaining at the doorway, until John used his interest with the portress and brought Peter in to the court,—the great quadrangular hall, shut off from the street by a high wall, in which were folding gates, with a wicket at their side for passing in and out on foot. Here, no doubt, stood "the damsel who kept the door," after the mass of people had been admitted through the large gates, now closed. The rooms of the palace were entered from the three sides of the square: in one of these the council was assembled, with Jesus before them: the soldiers remained in the quadrangle,

¹ John xviii. 15. This disciple is strangely supposed by Alford to have been Judas, who followed to see what would happen to the Lord whom he had betrayed. See also Archbishop Whately, *Lectures on the Apostles*, p. 47, who takes the same view.

the entrance from which to the council hall remained open. It is necessary to bear all this in mind fully to understand the melancholy scene that followed.

As the examination of our Lord was proceeding, through what ought to have been the still hours of the night, Peter remained with the soldiers in the court, who were grouped around a charcoal fire. Here his courage was put to the proof, and as before on the Lake of Gennesaret, it suddenly failed. He had over-estimated his strength. When the other disciples had shown themselves cowardly he had remained firm : with some complacency he may have thought of his avowal, now seemingly justified, "Though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I." Happier would it have been for him had he shared the panic of his brethren ! He had risen to a greater height than they, only to be bruised by more terrible a fall.

46. There is some difficulty in harmonising the accounts of Peter's three denials ; a difficulty which Archbishop Whately has so strongly felt as to maintain that no fewer than *six* are recorded.¹ Closely examined, however, the

¹ "Of the twelve records of denials by Peter which are above given, several, no doubt, may fairly be regarded as coinciding, that is, as being merely different statements of the same occurrence. But it will be impossible in this way to reduce them to three, without imputing gross inaccuracy to the writers as to a matter on which they seem to have written with the most circumstantial exactness. For, in the first place, three of the evangelists distinctly declare the prophecy to have been uttered and fulfilled of three denials before the first cock-crowing ; and Mark as distinctly records one as taking place after the first cock-crowing. This alone would imply at least four. But the number recorded appears to have been greater ; namely, (1) to a maid-servant, who charged Peter to his face ; (2) to another damsel, who addressed the bystanders ; (3) to a man-servant ; (4) to another man-servant, kinsman to the man wounded by Peter ; (5) to the bystanders generally. But, as I have said, there is no reason to suppose that even all the evangelists together have recorded every denial that occurred. It was essential to mention three, and superfluous to mention more ; since three amounted to a literal fulfilment of the prophecy, and a greater number could neither confirm nor falsify it." — ARCHBISHOP WHATELY, *Lectures on the Apostles*, pp. 57, 58.

different narratives may be so combined as to render this somewhat violent supposition unnecessary. Certainly it is difficult to believe that the prediction and the fulfilment, as recorded by all the evangelists, did not correspond. Jesus had said, "Thou shalt deny Me thrice." Each account accordingly gives three denials; it is unnatural to believe that they were not in each case *the same three*. Both the seeming discrepancy and the real accordance will be seen by placing the four narratives together.

MATTHEW xxvi.

⁵⁹ Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. ⁶⁰ But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. ⁶¹ And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. ⁶² And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. ⁶³ And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. ⁶⁴ Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. ⁶⁵ And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

MARK xiv.

⁶⁶ And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: ⁶⁷ And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. ⁶⁸ But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. ⁶⁹ And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. ⁷⁰ And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. ⁷¹ But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. ⁷² And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crew twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

LUKE xxii.

⁶⁶ And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. ⁶⁷ But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. ⁶⁸ And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. ⁶⁹ And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. ⁷⁰ And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean. ⁷¹ And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. ⁷² And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. ⁷³ And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

JOHN xviii.

¹⁶ But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. ¹⁷ Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. ¹⁸ And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they warmed themselves; and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

* * * * *
²⁶ And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. ²⁷ 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? ²⁸ Peter then denied again; and immediately the cock crew.

47. From a careful comparison of the accounts the following results appear.

PETER'S FIRST DENIAL.—“Without” the hall of audience (Matt.); “in the palace” (Matt., Mark); at the “fire in the midst of the hall” (Luke); immediately on his entrance (John); the portress questioning him as he took his place by the fire. Thus far all is plain. At this point “a¹ cock crew”—the first time—but it was not “*the* cock-crowing” which takes place at dawn.

SECOND DENIAL.—“In the porch” (Matt., Mark); “after a little while” (Luke). John does not note the place or time; if his account stood alone, it would have seemed that Peter was still at the fire, but there is nothing contradictory to the statement of the other evangelists that he had gone out into the porch. The person to whom Peter addressed this denial is differently represented in all the Gospels. In Matthew it is “another maid;” in Mark, “the maid” (not *a* maid, as English version, but the one previously mentioned); in Luke, “another person” (masculine); but in John, whose phrase clears up the difficulty, “*they* said.” The portress, with one of her female fellow-servants, a man standing by, and others, had by this time collected in the porch, and together taxed him with being one of Christ's disciples. To all of these he uttered his denial, perhaps with repeated assertion, and certainly with one oath (Matt.); “I am not” (John); “Man, I am not” (Luke); “I do not know the man” (Matt.).

THIRD DENIAL.—This was “after a while” (Matt.); “a little after” (Mark); *i.e.*, “about the space of one hour after” (Luke). The speakers were “they that stood by” (Matt., Mark); one being especially mentioned (Luke); “kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off” (John). The remark this time was “thy speech bewrayeth thee” (Matt.); “thou art a Galilæan” (Mark, Luke)²; to which Malchus'

¹ Observe, the article is *indefinite*.

kinsman adds, "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" To all this Peter again opposes his vehement denial, "Man, I know not what thou sayest" (Luke); confirmed by angry oaths (Matt., Mark). Now again "the cock crew." It is evident that Peter had by this time returned to the court, where he could see and be seen by Jesus in the hall of audience.

48. For now "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter—surely with a gaze of unutterable tender mournfulness, a look in which the sadness was even deeper than the reproach—bringing back in one swift flood upon the disciple's mind the eager protestations, the self-confident boastings, with the warning words of Jesus—how surely and sadly fulfilled! Not a word was needed—the apostle's heart was broken. "He went out and wept bitterly." These tears John alone does not mention. Mark mentions them but lightly: "When he thought thereon he wept;" as though the apostle in dictating the account would not make too much of his own repentance, although he will have his "son Mark" describe the denials in all their dark enormity, without the omission of a single shade.

One of Mrs. Barrett Browning's three sonnets on the scene may here be appropriately cited.

THE MEANING OF THE LOOK.

"I think that look of Christ might seem to say—
 'Thou, Peter! art thou then a common stone
 Which I at last must break my heart upon,
 For all God's charge, to His high angels, may
 Guard my foot better? Did I yesterday
 Wash *thy* feet, my beloved, that they should run
 Quick to deny Me 'neath the morning sun,—
 And do thy kisses, like the rest, betray?—
 The cock crows coldly.—Go, and manifest
 A late contrition, but no bootless fear!
 For when thy deathly need is bitterest,
 Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here:—
 My voice, to God and angels, shall attest,—
Because I KNOW this man, let him be clear.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

PETER AND HIS RISEN LORD.

49. WE read no more of Peter until after the resurrection of our Lord. The sad hours were no doubt passed by him in lonely, bitter grief. John, the beloved disciple, had at least a right to stand before the Cross, but shame must have kept Peter far away from Calvary. The Saviour's enemies would deride the fallen disciple all the more bitterly because his faith had yielded to their taunts, and would make small account of his repentance. Nor could Peter's brethren have welcomed him very heartily. In all probability they had recovered from their panic so far as to reassemble, but Peter was not with them. The latent jealousies aroused by the distinctions conferred upon him would now appear to be justified; and his traitorous denial would be resented all the more for his having at the outset been bolder than the rest. His following Christ when they had forsaken Him and fled was so much of a reproof to them, that it would have been impossible for them not to reprobate his failure with double severity. They could not read the language of his tears; it must have been a question with them whether he could ever again be received into the apostolic circle. If these points are but conjectural, there seems authority for them, not only in the likelihood of the case, but in the fact that Peter was with John alone when the resurrection morning came.¹ The disciple who had leaned on Jesus'

¹ See John xx. 2.

bosom, and had most deeply imbibed the spirit of his loving Lord, would not cast off his erring brother. Others might turn away in scorn, but John would seek him out, and by tender words of counsel and encouragement would anticipate the full forgiveness with which the Great Shepherd would hereafter welcome the wanderer from the fold.

50. Hence it was that these two disciples first received the intelligence from Mary Magdalene. "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." Hastily rising at the words, the two disciples ran to the place. It is characteristic of the two that while John, as the younger man, outran Peter, then stood gazing into the tomb, the latter with enthusiastic eagerness rushed past him into the depths of the cave, to explore all its secrets. Nothing, however, was then seen by them but "the linen clothes lying" folded in the sepulchre. The angel visit was for the women who remained and wept: the Saviour's own appearance was at a later hour of the day. "Then those disciples went away again unto their own home." Yet "they believed"—plainly something more than the mere absence of the Lord. It was clear, from the presence of the grave-clothes, their orderly disposition, as well as from the stone rolled away, that Jesus had arisen. This conviction came home upon the disciples' mind because they *saw*: "for," it is added, "they knew not the *Scripture*, that He must rise again from the dead." The evidence of their senses came first, the testimony of *Scripture* afterwards. It was not the prophetic word which prompted their belief, but their belief that led them to understand the prophetic word.

51. The words addressed by the angels to the women are variously reported by the evangelists. One variation especially must be noted. "Go quickly and tell His disciples," we read in Matthew; "Tell His disciples, *and*

Peter," in Mark. The apostle's memory preserved the words, disregarded or forgotten by others, in which there was the mention of his own name. For to him that message must have told not of precedence, but of forgiveness. No longer could Peter consider himself the first; rather must he have confessed that he was not worthy to be called an apostle; and the special mention of his name was to still his anxious fears by declaring his penitence already accepted, and assuring him, in the presence of his brethren, of a gracious welcome by their common Lord.

52. By a careful comparison of passages, moreover, it appears that in the course of that first day of the week the risen Saviour sought a meeting with Peter, *alone*. We know not where or how. Only we have the Apostle Paul's explicit declaration that Jesus was "seen of Cephas—then of the Twelve."¹ Moreover, when the two who had seen Him on the way to Emmaus, returned to Jerusalem breathless with the joyful news, they were met, before they could unfold their tale, by the other disciples with the intelligence, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." Then, but not before, did He come into the midst of His assembled apostles with His benediction of "Peace!" to all.

The secrets of that solitary interview with Peter none can tell: they were treasured for ever in the apostle's own soul. May we not discern in the occurrence a sublime commentary on Christ's own word, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Yet in this instance it was not only to bring to mind a fault—the remembrance and the sorrow were already sufficiently vivid in Peter's soul: it was rather to speak those words of peace which should reassure the penitent mourner, and enable him, in all subsequent inter-

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 5.

views on earth between our Lord and His disciples, to meet Him without shame.

53. Peter, then, was present that same day at even, when with closed doors the disciples were assembled, and "Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said unto them, 'Peace be unto you.'" Again he was there when, "eight days after," Christ revealed Himself with the self-same greeting, and Thomas exclaimed in the rapture of his faith, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus said, as a word to all, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," an echo of which saying we have years after in the first letter of Peter to the Churches: "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

54. One other revelation of Christ to His disciples, before His ascension, had evident and especial reference to Peter. The apostles who, in the first angelic message from the open tomb, had been bidden to await their Lord in Galilee, but who had been detained in Jerusalem until after that second Lord's day evening, had now obeyed the injunction. Nor only so: they did not tarry in vague longing or excited expectancy, but, as of old, set manfully about the task of earning their daily bread. The only evangelist who records the incident is the son of Zebedee, who, with his brother, formed part of the group, including also Nathanael, or Bartholomew,¹ Thomas Didymus, Peter himself, and two others, Andrew probably being one, that embarked in the old fashion for a night's toil upon the lake. "That night they caught nothing." Very strikingly, though with important differences, the incidents of Peter's early call were reproduced. Only it is from the shore that Jesus now commands them to cast the net into the sea. As yet the

¹ The identity of Nathanael with Bartholomew (son of Tolmai) seems sufficiently made out.

disciples know Him not: perhaps the morning was yet dim: perhaps "their eyes were holden:" but they obey. The miraculous draught reveals the Lord. One hundred and fifty-three fishes are counted in the now unbroken net. But meantime the ardent disciple, who once in presence of the Saviour's majesty had cried, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" had with a holier boldness leaped into the shallow sea, eager to press to the feet of Jesus.¹ Soon the little company of fishers, taught anew that they were to be "fishers of men," are gathered around the risen Christ. There seems a parable in every circumstance. On the former occasion the net, distended with innumerable fishes, had begun to break, many, no doubt, escaping: now the number is definite, the net is unbroken: not one is lost. A fire, kindled by no mortal hands, is on the shore; a meal ready prepared. But, in addition, the disciples are bidden to "bring of the fish which" they "have now caught." So one day shall the heavenly banquet await the blessed on the eternal shore, while still "their works" shall "follow them"—a store gathered by God's help from amid the waves of this troublesome world.

55. Symbols so appropriate could hardly have been accidental; and with Christian students of all ages, we may throughout recognise our Lord's intention to renew, though in a yet more encouraging form, His old lesson, drawn from the fisher's craft, concerning the work which His servants were to do for Him.

This teaching, however, was but introductory to that part of the interview in which Peter was especially concerned, and of which the groundwork was the yet tenderer and more ancient emblem of the Shepherd and the flock.

¹ "He was naked;" *i.e.*, had thrown off his upper garment for hauling in the net. This he now put on before wading through the shallow water to the shore (not surely walking *on* the water, as Archbishop Whately thinks).—See *Lectures on Apostles*, p. 87.

The evident purpose of the Lord was to restore Peter, formally and in the presence of his brethren, to the apostleship. They knew, like him, that he had been forgiven; but was he also to resume his office and his place? Was he any longer PETER? It was inevitable that the question should be anxiously asked: now it is to be answered once for all. The first words of our Lord, startling and abrupt, seem to confirm the worst misgivings: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" The disciple is addressed by his old name, for who can call him Cephas, the Rock? Evidently too there is an allusion to former boasting—"Though all men should deny Thee, yet will not I!" Is it so? *More than these?*¹ Nor is this closeness of inquiry sufficient to search the apostle's heart. Three times is the inquiry repeated, as if to equal the number of denials. "Thrice thou saidst 'I know Him not;' thrice I ask whether now thy love be true." The replies of Peter contain no vaunting: "more than others" has no place now in his profession. He is confident still, but his confidence is based on an appeal to the Searcher of hearts. "Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest." Thus is the condition fulfilled; and in the words, "Feed My sheep," the apostleship is fully restored.

56. But even this view does not fathom all the depth of the wonderful narrative. It has often been observed that there are two words for *love*, two for *feeding* the flock, and *two* for the flock itself, both in every case occurring in the interview. Thus first there is the love of honour and respect. There is also the love of personal and tender affection. In the first and second questions our Lord employs the word denoting the former. Peter throughout

¹ The absurd interpretation, "Lovest thou Me more than *thou lovest* these boats, fishing-nets, &c.," needs only to be mentioned to repudiate it. Our Lord's plain meaning is, "Lovest thou Me more than these, thy fellow disciples, *love Me?*"

claims the latter, and in the last question our Lord also grants it, as if overcome by His disciple's importunity.

"Lovest thou Me more than these?"

"Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that Thou art dear to me."

"Lovest thou Me?"

"Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that Thou art dear to me."

"Am I dear to thee?"

"Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that Thou art dear to me."

Again, the Shepherd's care is twofold—the tending and the feeding of the flock—emblems severally of the faithful pastor's watchful rule and of his teaching. And further, the flock has lambs as well as sheep, the weaklings of the fold; while again there is a way of expressing endearment by the employment of a diminutive for the word sheep. All these varieties are found in the Saviour's charge—

"Feed My lambs."

"Tend My sheep."

"Feed My dear flock." (Tregelles' reading.)

Thus comprehensive are the avowals of the disciple's affection; thus complete is the renewed commission of the Lord. We are reminded again of Peter's own words: "Ye were as sheep going astray, but now are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls;" and again: "The elders which are among you I exhort. Feed the flock of God which is among you; . . . and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away."

57. A very distinct prophecy of Peter's martyrdom now follows, the fulfilment of which will be noted in a subsequent chapter. Then, in a somewhat mysterious phrase,

Jesus adds, "Follow Me." "These words," says Archbishop Trench, "do more than merely signify in a general way, 'Be thou an imitator of me.' Such an explanation would show that we had altogether failed in realising to ourselves this solemn scene, as it was on this day enacted on the shores of Gennesaret. That scene was quite as much in deed as in word; and here, at the very moment that the Lord spake the words, it would seem that He took some paces along the rough and rocky shore, bidding Peter to follow; thus setting forth to him in a figure his future life, which should be a following of his Divine Master in the rude and rugged path of Christian action."¹ As Peter obeys, he perceives that John also is following; and, perhaps with a motive not altogether of the highest, he inquires respecting the fate of this his friend. "What will become of him?" Perhaps Peter is anxious as to the future of one whom he loves, and who had shown such disinterested love to him; perhaps he is a little jealous—overborne by the burden of his own destiny, and solicitous to know whether he must share it alone; or perhaps the question betokens only the curiosity of an eager mind. In any case it is rebuked by a reply which at the same time foreshadows the future: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee: follow thou Me." In one sense John did tarry until long after Christ's coming in the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) and the passing away of the Jewish state. The current opinion "among the disciples, that he should not die," was indeed a delusion; yet he outlived them all, was the latest survivor of the generation that had seen the Lord, and passed peacefully away about the close of the first century.

58. Mr. Keble's beautiful lines on the reply of Jesus to

¹ *Miracles*, p. 471. Tholuck's explanation is simpler: "Jesus beckons Peter aside to speak with him privately."

Peter are well known. Some of the stanzas may appropriately close this chapter.

“ ‘ Lord, and what shall this man do?
 Ask'st thou, Christian, for thy friend?
 If his love for Christ be true,
 Christ has told thee of his end :
 This is he whom God approves,
 This is he whom Jesus loves.

Ask not of him more than this ;
 Leave it in his Saviour's breast,
 Whether, early called to bliss,
 He in youth shall find his rest,
 Or armèd in his station wait
 Till his Lord be at the gate.

Sick or healthful, slave or free,
 Wealthy, or despised and poor—
 What is that to him or thee,
 So his love to Christ endure?
 When the shore is won at last,
 Who will count the billows past?

Only, since our souls will shrink
 At the touch of natural grief,
 When our earthly loved ones sink,
 Lend us, Lord, Thy sure relief ;
 Patient hearts, their pain to see,
 And Thy grace, to follow Thee.”

CHAPTER IX.

WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.

59. FOLLOW ME. These words, which close the history of the earthly intercourse between Peter and his Lord, may be taken as the motto of the disciple's subsequent career. The "Acts of the Apostles," it has been well remarked, might be called the Acts of Christ Jesus through His Apostles. "The former treatise have I written," says the evangelist, "of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach;"—suggesting that in apostolic labours we have the *continuance* of the Saviour's work, conducted no longer upon earth, but from His invisible throne in the heavens.¹ It was but a week from the Ascension to the Pentecost, and the descent of the Holy Spirit was the spiritual advent of Christ; fulfilling in a measure His own words, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also."

60. The week of expectancy was spent in fellowship and prayer. Of this Luke gives two separate but harmonious accounts: "They were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God;" and "They went up into the upper room, and all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication."² In other words, the whole company of disciples made that upper room—doubtless the same in

¹ See Baumgarten, *Apostolic History*, vol. i. p. 11 (Clark).

² Luke xxiv. 53 compared with Acts i. 13. Observe in the latter passage that the article should be supplied—"the upper room."

which they had partaken with their Lord of the Last Supper—their habitual place of meeting, resorting to the Temple at the stated hours of prayer; seeking food and rest, as we may suppose, at their various homes, but spending the intermediate hours in hallowed communion with one another and with “the Father,” whose “promise” they were awaiting. Thus was held the first of Christian prayer-meetings, and the sublimest; for the Church can never have a second gift equal in greatness to that which then was sought “with one accord.”

61. The meeting was large and various. The eleven apostles, whose names are now given for the last time, all were there, with the women who had accompanied Jesus in His ministry, had ministered to Him of their substance, had welcomed Him in their homes, or washed His feet with tears. Mary the mother of Jesus appears among them, mentioned also for the last time in the Scripture narrative; and with them are Christ’s brethren, distinct from the apostles—brethren who had not believed in Him only a few months before,¹ but who now had been brought to own their Brother according to the flesh as their Lord and King.² “The number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty”—comprising probably all the disciples now remaining in Jerusalem, the five hundred brethren mentioned by the Apostle Paul having been mostly Galilæans.

62. In one of the intervals of prayer, the assembly proceeded, at the instance of Simon Peter, to fill the vacancy in

¹ John vii. 5. This was at the Feast of Tabernacles, in the autumn preceding the spring of our Lord’s last Passover.

² It is a beautiful conjecture of Dr. J. B. Lightfoot that they had been convinced by His appearing to them after His resurrection; and that the words of the Apostle Paul, *He was seen of James*, refer to this manifestation. “James the Lord’s brother” is held by many of the most competent critics, on what seems to be sufficient grounds, to have been a different person from James the son of Alphæus.—See Lightfoot’s Dissertation appended to his *Commentary on Galatians*, p. 252.

the apostolic twelve, caused by the apostacy and suicide of Judas. Whether in this proposition we have another instance of Peter's characteristic impetuosity, or whether he was divinely directed, has been much discussed. On the one hand it is argued that no command of Christ on the subject is recorded, or was pleaded by Peter; that the Holy Spirit, who would direct the apostolic councils with infallible wisdom, was not yet given; that the apostle destined for the vacancy was, as the history plainly shows, not Matthias but St. Paul; and that the eagerness to act in the matter without a warrant would be only in accordance with Peter's unreflecting enthusiasm. On the other hand it is urged that the injunction to elect a twelfth apostle may have been among the many unrecorded commands given by Christ during the forty days between His Resurrection and Ascension; that Peter would scarcely have made so important a proposal, much less have secured its acceptance, without manifest authority; that the "lot" which fell upon Matthias was evidently something more than a vote, being recorded in the phrase which usually signifies Divine direction; and that the statement, "he was numbered with the eleven apostles," is made by the inspired narrator without hinting any irregularity or the absence of sufficient warrant. On the whole, the arguments in support of the latter conclusion appear the stronger; and we are to regard Paul, not as introduced among the apostles in place of Judas, but as an addition to the band, in fact a thirteenth;² while the old association with the number twelve, and the parallel with the number of the tribes of Israel, is so strong, that the foundations of the New Jerusalem are still said to bear the names of "the *twelve* apostles of the Lamb."

63. The address which Peter delivered to the assembled hundred and twenty is reported as follows. The habit of

² Barnabas is called an apostle. Acts xiv. 4, 14.

citation from the Old Testament, which forms so striking a feature of his discourses and letters, is here first apparent.

“BRETHREN, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, who became guide to them that took Jesus. For he had been numbered with us, and obtained his lot in this ministry. This man, then, purchased a field¹ with the wages of his unrighteousness; and falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.² And it became known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that that field was called in their own dialect, Aceldama,³ that is, ‘Field of blood.’ For it is written in the book of Psalms, *“Let his habitation become desolate, and let no man dwell therein:”*⁴ and *“his office let another take.”*⁵ Wherefore of the men which have associated with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one become with us a witness of His resurrection.”

64. The nature of the apostolic office is defined in

¹ “That which was bought *with his money* (Matt. xxvii. 6, 7) is said to have been bought *by him*.”—*Meyer*.

² Matthew says (xxvii. 5) “He went and hanged himself.” The present is evidently a supplemental account: in our ignorance of all the circumstances, we may accept the tradition that the halter broke, and that, falling, he was crushed in the manner described.

³ Chaldee.—Matthew does not say that the “Potter’s field” purchased with the thirty pieces of silver was the place of Judas’ suicide, but the present account makes that fact plain. It is quite unnecessary, with some, to suppose two Aceldamas.

⁴ “No portion of the Old Testament Scripture is more frequently quoted in the New than the sixty-ninth Psalm, with the exception of the twenty-second.”—*Perowne*.

⁵ The principle of interpretation is that the biography of Old Testament saints was *typical*, not only in the great features of their lives, but in many minute accordances.

Peter's closing words, "a witness of His resurrection."¹ Hence Paul, in claiming to be an apostle, is careful to assert his own competency in this respect. "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" "Last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."²

¹ Compare Acts iv. 2, 33.

² 1 Cor. ix. 1 ; xv. 8.

CHAPTER X.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

65. THE early morning of the day of Pentecost found the hundred and twenty disciples again assembled in their upper room, occupied long before the hour of the Temple worship in acts of social devotion. Suddenly, while thus engaged, there came upon every one a new and overwhelming power. The outward signs—a rushing wind, with “tongues” of flame flashing and dividing¹ overhead—were but symbols of the mighty energy which possessed their souls, and found vent in ecstatic utterances of praise.² As a further symbol—a sign that the new power was imparted for the sake, not of one race or people only, but of the whole world—these outbursts were in many languages, not understood in many cases by the speakers themselves. So wonderful a phenomenon could not be hidden. A very short time served to circulate the intelligence among the crowds that were gathering for the first public service of the Pentecost; and the upper chamber was soon thronged with eager witnesses, who, as they listened, formed their own conclusions, and, departing, spread the intelligence of the wonder, intermixed with expressions of astonishment, attempts at explanation, or scornful criticisms.

66. In due time the utterances ceased. The disciples, according to their wont, passed from their place of meeting to the Temple; and there, in one of the courts, in the midst of a thronging multitude, Peter stood up, strong in the

¹ Observe—not *cloven*, but “dividing themselves,” and then resting, one on the head of each.

² This is the meaning of “speaking the wonderful works of God.” ver. 11.

inspiration which in that hour had descended upon him, and delivered to the people the following address:—

“YE MEN OF JUDÆA, and all that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.¹ But this is that which is spoken by the pro-

phet Joel:^a “And it shall come to pass in the last days,² saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream

dreams. Moreover, on my servants and on my hand-
maidens^b I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.³ And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into

blood, before that great and illustrious day of the Lord come.⁴ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel,⁵ hear these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man from God accredited to you by miracles^c and wonders and signs,⁶ which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye

¹ The hour of the morning sacrifice, until which the Jews always fasted. During the festivals they fasted until the sixth hour, or noon.

² “The last days,” in the New Testament, always denote the days of the Messiah, the world’s great moral epoch. See Heb. i. 2. The prophet writes *afterward*: the apostle gives the word a more specific sense.

³ To prophesy is not simply to *fore-tell* but to *forth-tell*, to communicate religious truth under divine inspiration.

⁴ The prophet here turns from God’s mercies to His judgments, and refers primarily to “the day” of the passing away of the Jewish state in the destruction of Jerusalem, a forewarning and a type of final judgment.

⁵ *Israelites* in the New Testament is used as a term of special honour, having respect to the promises. See Trench’s *New Testament Synonyms*.

⁶ Miracles are called *powers* as wrought by Omnipotence; *wonders*, because inexplicable to men; *signs*, because attesting the character and claims of those who perform them. Trench *On the Miracles*, Introduction.

yourselves know : Him, being delivered in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of heathen^a men have crucified and slain : whom
a Lit. lawless. God raised up, having loosed the bonds of death : because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning Him,^b *I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be mobed. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue^c exulted ; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope ; because thou wilt not abandon my soul to the unseen world,^d neither wilt thou give thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou madest known to me the ways of life ; thou wilt fill me with joy with thy counterance. Brethren, I may freely speak unto you of the patriarch^e David, that he both died and was buried, and his sepulchre is among us unto this day.^f Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins He would set one^g upon his throne ; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that He^h was not abandoned to the unseen world, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whose witnesses we all are. Having therefore been exalted by^h the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He shed forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens :² but he saith him-*

¹ Josephus refers to this tomb, as rifled both by Hyrcanus and Herod, for its supposed treasures. A mosque on the southern brow of Zion marks its supposed site.

² That is in the sense declared in the Psalm, to be invested with power and glory at the right hand of God.

self,^a Jehobah said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore
^a Ps. cx. 1. let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made HIM both Lord and Christ, even this Jesus, whom ye crucified.”¹

67. The effect of the discourse was overwhelming. The people, not unprepared, it may be, by the recent marvels of which they could not have been unaware, were ready to hear that He who had died a malefactor's death had been exalted to the heavens. In compunction and terror they cry out, “Brethren, what must we do?” In the name of the apostles, Peter replies:—

“REPENT, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For unto you is the promise, and unto your children, and unto all that are afar off,² even as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.”

68. These recorded words, however, are but a small part of the “testimony and exhortation” delivered by Peter upon that memorable day. The sum of the whole is given in the words, “Be ye saved from this crooked generation.”

¹ The arrangement of the clauses here seems purposely adapted to awaken the keenest compunction in the minds of the people.

² This was an expression for the *heathen*. Zech. vi. 15; Isa. xlix. 1; lvii. 19; Eph. ii. 13, 17. “It has been objected,” remarks Dr. Hackett (*Commentary on Acts, in loc.*) that this explanation supposes Peter to have been already aware that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, whereas, it is said, he afterwards hesitated on the subject, and needed a special revelation to point out to him his duty. But the objection misstates the ground of the hesitation, which related to the *terms* on which the Gentiles were to be acknowledged as Christians, not to the *fact* itself. On this point how is it possible that he should have doubted?” The question was not whether the Gentiles should be gathered into the family, but whether they should be gathered *as Gentiles*, without conforming to Judaic rites. See further, in chap. xiv.

It is probable, as Stier suggests, that the mockers had renewed their interruption. Hence the apostle, like the Baptist of old, intermingles a tone of severity with his fervent appeals, calls upon those on whose minds conviction is dawning to come out and be separate from a scoffing world, and no doubt takes full opportunity to unfold the deep meaning that lay in his word, "Be ye saved." Thus the door of faith is thrown open to the Jews, and he to whom the keys had been given rejoices with all his brethren as an eager multitude press in. The day was the Feast of First-fruits; there was therefore a beautiful appropriateness in this ingathering of souls. Three thousand were added at once to the company of believers, nor did the hallowed influence soon die away. Day after day witnessed new accessions of those "who were being saved." The ordinances of Christ were observed in the temple and at home, before any church system had been or could be organised; and the spontaneous adoption of a community of worldly goods attested the all-subduing power of the new affection which filled the hearts of the disciples. Miracles, wrought by all the apostles, confirmed their ministrations, and secured at least the popular respect. Those who believed not were as yet silent, and had no power to prevent the occupancy of the very temple courts by the adherents of the Nazarene.

CHAPTER XI.

BEGINNINGS OF PERSECUTION.

69. ONE signal miracle, wrought by Peter and John, with the discourse that followed, proved beyond a doubt to the enemies of Christ that they could no longer afford to be inactive. And as the persecution of the church, properly speaking, dates from this point, the miracle is recorded at large. The "lame man," who "sat daily at the Beautiful Gate,"¹ was well known to the multitudes who had daily passed him, and often given him alms. When therefore he was seen "walking and leaping and praising God," then "clinging to Peter and John" as the instruments of his cure, there was no room for cavil or denial. On the terrace overhanging the Kedron, where Solomon's massive masonry flanked the craggy edge of Moriah, a great concourse soon surrounded the apostles; and Peter delivered his second recorded discourse, in which he speaks more fully than before of the moral and spiritual aspects of the Redeemer's work, and declares the certainty of His second coming.

"YE MEN OF ISRAEL, why marvel ye at this
^a Or as E.V., man? ^a or why look ye earnestly on us, as though
it this thing. by our power or godliness we had made him to
walk? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the

¹ Probably the magnificent gate of Corinthian brass described by Josephus (*Wars*, V. v. 3; *Antiq.* XV. v. 3), on the east side, towards Olivet: an inner gate, leading from the Court of the Gentiles to the Court of the Israelites. Solomon's Porch was in the Court of the Gentiles, on the same side of the Temple, and therefore outside the Beautiful Gate.

God of our fathers, glorified His Servant ^a Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired

^a Not *Son*.
See note, p. 77.

a murderer to be granted unto you ; and killed the Author ^b of life, whom God raised from the dead ; whose witnesses ^c we are. And His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know : yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this

^b The same word as in Heb. ii. 10 (*Captain*) and xii. 2 (*Author*).

^c Or as E.V., *whereof we are witnesses*.

perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those

things which God before announced by the mouth of all the prophets,¹ that His ^d Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Repent therefore, and

^d Omitted in rec.

turn ye, that your sins may be blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord ; ² and that He may send forth Jesus, the Christ pre-

^e Rec., *preached before*.

destined ^e for you ; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, of which times God spake by the mouth

of His holy prophets since the world began. Moses indeed

^f Rec. adds *unto the fathers*. (Deut. xviii. 8.)

said, *A Prophet will Jehovah your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me ; Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul*

¹ That is, *the prophets as a whole*. Many Old Testament writers distinctly foretell the sufferings and death of the Messiah. (Luke xxiv. 27.) The entire history of the Jews, however, may be regarded as typical, and thus all the ancient prophets may be said to have spoken of Christ.

² Observe : not "*when seasons shall come*," as E.V. The direct result of believing would be that the kingdom of the Messiah, with its refreshment to weary souls and the joys of His presence, would be established upon earth. See 2 Pet. iii. 12 and note. The "*restoration of all things*" to primeval order, purity, and happiness, will take place at the same era.

which shall not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.¹ Yea, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as spake, foretold likewise of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham,^a And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first,² God having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

70. The appeal to the people aroused the bitter anger of the dominant faction, the Sadducees, or rationalists;—who, as they denied the reality of a spiritual world, were naturally exasperated at the preaching of Christ's resurrection. Caiaphas was himself a Sadducee; the inferior priests would very probably follow his lead; and the captain of the temple (a civil, Jewish office, not Roman or military) doubtless belonged to the now prevailing sect. It is worth while to observe that the first active opposition to the Christian church came from this quarter. The opposition of the Pharisees was to appear later; and if we may judge by the speech of Gamaliel, recorded in the fifth chapter of the Acts, the tendency at present among this sect was at least to toleration, if not to approval.

71. Five thousand disciples, it is added incidentally, now constituted the male portion of the church.³ How many women had been added to the believing sisterhood we are not told. Such a community, so rapidly upspringing, so firmly united, and wielding such supernatural powers, could not but be formidable, especially to a religious system

¹ Peter here uses the accredited interpretation of this prophecy, as applicable to the Messiah. So Stephen (Acts vii. 37); the woman of Samaria (John iv. 25).

² In order of time. Peter here distinctly recognises the fact that the gospel was to be preached to the heathen.

³ The word *men* in Acts iv. 4, is specific—not including women.

administered by sceptical politicians. Accordingly a special meeting of the Sanhedrim was called, and the apostles, who had overnight been placed in custody, were brought up for their defence. The president of the assembly asks, "In what power, or in what name, did ye this?" Peter's reply is remarkable, not only for its boldness, but for its adoption of the figure of a rock, and the implied disclaimer of the personal honour in the church which his name might seem to convey. He says:—

"YE RULERS OF THE PEOPLE, and elders of Israel, if we to-day are examined concerning a good deed wrought on an impotent man,^a by what means he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in Him^b doth this man stand before you whole. This is^c the stone which was set at nought by you, the builders, which is become the head of the corner. And salvation is in no other, for there is not another name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must¹ be saved."

72. The boldness of "unlearned and ignorant men," in the presence of so august a body as the great national council, is altogether perplexing to these Sadducees. There is but one explanation for it. The spirit of the Nazarene is in His followers! The priest and his allies, in fact, "recognised" Peter and John "that they had been with Jesus." Both had been in the court of the palace that night when He stood before Caiaphas. Had the priest heard Peter's denial then? If so, how must his astonishment have been increased! But what could be done? The apostles would not retract. There was their witness, "the man who had been healed, standing with them,"

¹ Observe, not *may* but *must*; as God has appointed no other method of salvation.

eager to bring his testimony, whether or not he had shared their imprisonment. The miracle then was undeniable. Nothing at present could be attempted but threatening; and the impotent council are fain to resort to this poor expedient—of course without success. Peter and John answered and said, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we, on our part, cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard.”

73. Further ineffectual threats are followed by the release of Peter and John, who, on their discharge, immediately seek the assembly of the faithful, and reporting the scene before the council, discerning in it, with sure prescience, but the beginnings of persecution, unite in the following sublime prayer. We seem to recognise Peter’s voice as the leader of the supplication.

“LORD, thou art He ^a who made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of our father, thy servant David, didst say ^b by the Holy Spirit, ^c Why did heathens rage and people ^d imagine vain things? The kings of the earth were confederated, and the rulers were gathered together against Jehovah and against His Anointed. For of a truth against Thy holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with heathens and people of Israel, were gathered together in this city, ^e to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants ^f that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, whilst Thou stretchest forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy Servant Jesus.”

^f *Servants* here is a different word from that which is applied in the remainder of the passage to David and to Christ.

The place where the disciples were assembled, whether Solomon's Porch, or the upper room, sought once more for greater privacy, trembled as with the shock of an earthquake as this prayer ascended to heaven. A new and even mightier influence came upon the brotherhood of believers. The apostles gave their testimony of the resurrection with irresistible power. So entire was the self-devotion of the disciples that, for the needs of the poorer among them, the possessors of property resolved upon a general sale,¹ and as one after another estate was disposed of, the price was placed instantly and gladly at the disposal of the apostles. We cannot here but recognise the Divine wisdom, in leading the Christians to change their possessions from real estate to movable property, easily available when scattered by persecution from their homes. One landed proprietor who thus acted is especially mentioned, perhaps from his great wealth, perhaps from the eminence which he afterwards attained in the church, Barnabas, of the tribe of Levi,² a Cypriote Hellenist, and from his faculty as a teacher denominated the Son of Exhortation.

But it was from these arrangements in respect to property that the first internal troubles of the church arose, and that the terrors of apostolic discipline had to be first invoked. He who held the keys was called to exclude from Christ's earthly kingdom, as he had opened wide the door of entrance gladly until now.

¹ "The conduct of the disciples showed that they were not looking for the temporal reign of Christ and their establishment in the earthly Canaan. . . The command given to Jeremiah to *purchase* land is in striking contrast to this."—Jer. xxxii. 6-15. (*Webster and Wilkinson.*)

² The Levites, as a tribe, had no part in the general division of Canaan (Num. xxiii. 20), but might hold property in the forty-eight cities and adjacent territory assigned to the Levites. (Compare Num. xxv. 1-8, Lev. xxv. 32, Jer. xxii. 8.) The possession of Barnabas may, however, have been in Cyprus.

CHAPTER XII.

TROUBLES WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

74. Two facts in connection with the primitive Christian "communism" must be carefully marked. In the first place, it was in no way intended to provide for the apostles. They were distributors of the fund, but were not benefited by it. Hence the words of Peter to the cripple at the Beautiful Gate, "Silver and gold have I none." Secondly, it was not a compulsory law. Though the sale of possessions was universal, or nearly so, it arose entirely from the voluntary impulse of Christian affection. Thus Peter can say to Ananias, "While thy property remained, was it not thine? and after it was sold, was it not (*i.e.*, the money derived from the sale) in thy power?"

75. Ananias and Sapphira, however, would have all the credit of generosity, with the comfort of a reserve for themselves. It was their plan to come upon the common fund, as if actuated by the simple faith of the rest, while they made themselves secure by a secret hoard. Here, then, was the crime. It was in professing to surrender all while a part was retained; and this profession, made to the apostles in the face of the entire church, was an attempt to deceive the indwelling Holy Spirit. It was needful to show that "God is not mocked," and to vindicate the insight and authority of Christ's ambassadors. Hence the terrible severity of the doom inflicted—a punishment which none ventured to arraign or resent. At the word of Peter, first Ananias fell,

then Sapphira, when she had repeated the falsehood : and "great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." The apostolic Epistles place it beyond reasonable doubt, that in the early age the power of inflicting temporal punishments for spiritual offences was committed to the rulers of the church. These punishments, at the same time, being miraculous, evidently from the hand of God Himself, as invoked by His servants, could subserve no end of self-seeking, of tyranny, or of revenge. To such a prerogative the Apostle John probably refers in his First Epistle, ch. v. 16, "There is a sin unto death ; I do not say that he shall pray for it." St. Paul again, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, makes several references to the same awful power of discipline. Speaking of the profanation of the Lord's Supper among them, he says : "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (ch. xi. 30), *i.e.*, sleep in death : and more explicitly still, in ch. v. 4, 5, he commands that the church assembled, in virtue of his own apostolic authority, should deliver a grievous offender "unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." In these last words there is a glimpse of hope even for those who had grossly sinned and been fearfully punished. It may be that the punishment was in mercy, and that some, at least, severed by the stroke of death from Christ's kingdom on earth, on account of their sin, were permitted still a place in the Book of Life.

76. The death of this guilty couple was followed by the growth of the church, though under a *restraining* influence now for the first time mentioned. "Of *the rest* durst no man join himself to them." In other words, all but those who real'y believed were prevented by salutary fear from entering the community in which such awful powers were wielded. It was no time for hypocrites to enter the

church. Yet the number of disciples increased—"multitudes both of men and women." Signal miraculous powers were exercised. The very "shadow of Peter as he passed by" was supposed to possess a healing virtue. If miracles were really thus wrought, it was of course not to the apostle's shadow, but to the suppliants' faith, that the boon was given. The region round about Jerusalem was stirred by these wondrous deeds. "The multitudes were flocking together, bringing sick folk and those who were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were all being healed."

77. Another attempt of the Sadducean faction was as impotent as the former. The deliverance of the apostles by night from prison by angel hands, was but a new proof of the Divine protection. Even this portent, however, did not check the enemies of the Truth. Probably they did not understand what had happened. The doors, now "shut with all safety," had been opened in the night by some daring followers of the apostles:—the keepers, now "standing before the doors," had been bribed! It was not the heavenly interference, but the presumed earthly craft and influence, of which the chief priests "doubted whereunto this would grow." Thus it was that the council, on hearing that "the apostles were standing and teaching in the Temple," "sent and brought them, though without violence." They did not fear the angels; but they did fear the people, so fully had the apostles by this time won their way to the popular heart.

78. Once again, then, Peter stands before the council, not, as before, with John only, but with all the apostles: and in answer to the high priest's challenge, he declares, in the name and with the assent of all:

"It is right to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew by hanging on a

tree. Him did God exalt with His right hand as Prince ¹ and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, which God gave to them that obey Him."

On the former occasion, the council had wondered at the boldness of the apostles: now they are "cut to the heart." A testimony so persistent, a charge so direct, a doctrine so new, could not but exasperate. That the Jesus whom they had slain was a Prince upon His throne by the right hand of God, that *Israel* needed "repentance and remission of sins," were doctrines that struck at the root of national self-exaltation and spiritual pride. What but death could the teachers of such doctrines merit?

79. But the wiser counsels of Gamaliel the Pharisee prevailed. This Gamaliel, there is no reason to doubt, was the son of that Simeon who had held in his arms the infant Jesus in the Temple. The father and the son were accounted great rabbis, and Gamaliel's teachings were attended by many of the ablest among the youth in Israel. Saul of Tarsus was now or had recently been his pupil.² But the great Doctor of the Law appears now to greater advantage as a philosophic politician than as a lover of the truth. "Refrain from these men!" Nothing could be wiser, were the object to judge, simply as a matter of speculation, whether their doctrine were or were not Divine. Most sound and truthful was the declaration that any new movement, however popular, must come to nought like the schemes of Theudas³ and of the Galilean Judas,

¹ *Captain*; as ch. iii. 15; Heb. ii. 10; xii. 2.

² Acts xxii. 3.

³ The Theudas mentioned by Josephus, *Antiq.* XX. v. 1, arose in the reign of Claudius, some ten years after Gamaliel's speech. The land was overrun with insurgents, Josephus relates, after the death of Herod the Great. (*Antiq.* xvii. 10.) The historian mentions three by name: Theudas was no doubt another. Judas of Galilee is mentioned by Josephus (*Antiq.*

unless it were "of God;" and equally true the converse, that what was Divine must remain unshaken. But this was only one step for so thoughtful a man to take. What if the doctrine just enunciated were not of men but of heaven? Then it had a message for Gamaliel too. He also would need "repentance" and "remission of sins:" it would be his duty and joy, no less than of the meanest in Israel, to welcome that "Saviour" and submit to that "Prince." Were not such considerations properly sufficient to impel the wise rabbi to an honest examination of the evidences for this new faith? Of this he does not seem to think; and herein he is but a type of philosophic unbelievers generally, who neglect or misinterpret the evidences attainable, and regard it as the crowning proof of candour in religious matters to hold their judgment in suspense. Gamaliel the politician, counselling state action, we must admire; Gamaliel the man, forbearing to inquire and believe, we must condemn. The great rabbi carried his point; but the apostles, before dismissal, are called to suffer the ignominy and pain of scourging. They endure, not only without complaining, but with joy, that they are counted worthy to suffer for "the Name," while they cease not in their labours both "in the Temple and at home."

80. Peter's special work in Jerusalem is now accomplished. He has thrown open the door, and no man now can shut it: he has laid the foundation; others now may build thereon. No doubt he was very directly and deeply interested in the questions of internal regulation that arose, and especially in the appointment of "the Seven" for ministration in secular matters. Nor could he have been otherwise than an intensely sympathetic witness of Stephen's

XVIII. i. 1) as "Judas the Gaulonite." The "taxing" was that which was *carried out*, A.D. 6 or 7, under Cyrenius or Quirinius (Luke ii. 2), not that which was ordered, but not executed, at the time of Christ's birth.

martyrdom. After this outbreak of persecution the disciples were scattered, but the apostles remained at their post in Jerusalem. Not yet had the time come to go and disciple all nations. The great enterprise awaited Peter himself as pioneer, and as yet no voice had summoned him to advance. His first call is to SAMARIA.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM JERUSALEM TO SAMARIA AND JOPPA.

81. OUR Lord, in His parting words to the apostles, as reported in the first chapter of the Acts, had indicated a threefold direction of their labours. "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Samaria was the point of transition between the Jewish and the heathen world, belonging properly to neither. The people worshipped they knew not what.¹ On Mount Gerizim the Temple still stood, dedicated to the name of the One Jehovah. The Law, though without the Prophets, was held in a reverence that rivalled the punctilious regard paid to it by Jewish Pharisees. Yet the Samaritan religion was narrow, fanatical, mixed with abject superstitions; and the hatred between Samaria and Judæa was proverbial. A visit, fraught with results of immeasurable blessing, had been paid by our Lord to Sychar, but the effect seems to have been confined to that one locality. On the last journey of Jesus with His disciples they were rudely spurned from a Samaritan village, because their faces were set towards Jerusalem,² a repulse which drew from James and John, glowing with the excitement of Elijah's presence on the Holy Mount, the inquiry, "Wilt Thou that we command fire to come down

¹ John iv. 22.

² Luke ix. 51-56.

from heaven to consume them, even as Elijah did?" met by Jesus with rebuke, and the memorable words, "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."¹ These incidents constitute the whole connection, so far as recorded, between our Lord and the Samaritan people during His life on earth. To the Twelve, when sent forth two and two, He expressly commanded: "Into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not;" but the injunction was not repeated to the Seventy. But now, as the first step to the regions beyond, the gospel was to be fully preached in Samaria.

82. The first agent in the work was PHILIP, one of the Seven, who, like many others of the disciples, had been driven from Jerusalem by the persecution that followed Stephen's death. These scattered believers, as we are told, "went everywhere preaching the word." Thus did "laymen," and not apostles, become the first evangelists outside Jerusalem. Philip found his way to "a city of Samaria,"—not improbably the metropolis, then called Sebaste, though Samaria also was its ancient name,—and preached with great effect. Only the apostles, however, as yet were enabled to bestow, through laying on of hands, the gift of the Holy Spirit; and consequently the newly-gathered disciples in Samaria were without this heavenly gift. In order that they might receive it, it was judged expedient by the council of apostles in Jerusalem to send Peter and John to the Samaritan city. They came, beheld the fruit of Philip's labour, and laid their hands upon the converts, who thereupon received the Holy Spirit. "John," says Stier, "may perhaps have looked back to the days when he desired to call down on the Samaritans another kind

¹ Doubt has been thrown on the genuineness of these words, but the preponderance of evidence seems in their favour, and they are deeply true to the spirit of our Lord's ministry.

of heavenly fire! *Now*, at least, he knew 'what manner of spirit he was of.'

83. One of the professed converts was SIMON, who had been of great note in the city as a magician. The Samaritans were led by their superstitious habit of mind to pay great regard to the pretensions of necromancers, diviners, and of all who pretended to unauthorised intercourse with the world of spirits. Simon¹ in this way, by "giving out that he was some great one," had gained great ascendancy over all classes, "from the least to the greatest"—from the poorest and least cultured to those who were highest in education and standing; and the bewitched multitude had conferred on him the title of "the Great Power of God." The teachings of Philip had delivered many from Simon's fascinations. They owned a greater power in the spiritual truths of the gospel, and turned to adore the name of Jesus. The sorcerer was constrained to acknowledge a Mightier than himself, and declared himself, accordingly, a convert. "He believed," says the sacred historian, and "was baptised, and continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the signs and great miracles which were done." The arrival of the apostles opened new marvels before his mind. The reception of the Holy Spirit, the exaltation of the entire being, manifest in wonderful gifts bestowed upon the converts—what new magic was this? To possess the power of imparting, awakening faculties like these, would indeed be worthy of a sorcerer's highest ambition! For he evidently made light of the apostolic claim to have received this power as a special gift from heaven. There was a secret in it, as in other wonderful feats of divination

¹ Often called "Simon of Gitton," from his traditional birthplace in the country of Samaria. Josephus mentions a Simon Magus, a dependant of Felix and minister of his vices; and many critics believe the two to have been identical. (Josephus, *Antiq.* XX. vii. 2.) But Josephus says that the Simon of whom he speaks was a native of Cyprus.

that Simon had performed—a secret that could be transferred, that could be *sold*. He offered to purchase it, in a way that aroused all Peter's sternness. "Thy money perish with thee, because thou thoughtest to purchase with money the gift of God! Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter (or, *word*), for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." Then with no less vehemence and decision, yet with a kind of pitying earnestness, the apostle adds, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee: for I perceive that thou art for the gall of bitterness and the bond of unrighteousness." The last words are difficult. To be for a thing, in Scripture language, is sometimes to be the instrument or cause of it, as when Simeon says, "This Child is set *for* the fall and rising again of many in Israel." There seems thus a prediction of the bitter gall and the unholy fellowship which Simon would introduce into the church—a foreboding afterwards strikingly fulfilled.

84. It is worth while here to notice, in passing, the doubtfulness of the apostle's tone in promising forgiveness on repentance and prayer. He could not have intended that pardon would be denied to true repentance, but he does as plainly intimate that whether the sin would actually be forgiven was doubtful, on account of the enormity of the wickedness and the consequent difficulty of repentance thereof.¹ "The Apostle Peter could bind and loose, *i.e.*, reveal and declare the existing state of the heart, and, as was only fit, could regulate matters in the church; but the forgiveness of sins belongs to God alone." As Alford well remarks, the apostle's words are "important, taken in connection with John xx. 23, as showing how completely the apostles themselves referred the forgiveness of sins to, and

¹ *Stier*, who quotes as parallels Amos v. 18; Joel ii. 13, 14.

left it in, the sovereign power of God, and not to their own delegated power of absolution."

85. "Simon's answer," adds Stier, "in verse 24, sounds very doubtfully. 'Pray ye to the Lord for me.' He thus refers back to the apostles their summons to him to *individual* prayer, and does it so that we might well doubt whether he spoke in derision or in truth, if it were not that he adds, 'That none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.' Simon speaks here in a very similar way to the stubborn Pharaoh, in Exodus viii. 28; ix. 28; x. 17. He is afraid of the 'perishing,' but has no heart for repentance; and for the second time places man between him and his view of God, which course of action would probably seem peculiarly natural to him, and would spring from the old fallacies of his precious system of deceit. He only half-defiantly enunciates something which sounds like repentance, but is *not* repentance. And here Luke puts an end to the history." The traditions respecting the further connection between Simon Peter and Simon the magician will be found noted in chap. xix.

86. Nothing further is known of the Samaritan church which was the scene of these incidents. The Apostles Peter and John, having finished their testimony, and "spoken the word of the Lord," returned to Jerusalem, evangelising many villages of the Samaritans on their way. John now disappears from the narrative. Peter seems to have remained in Jerusalem in a long, unostentatious course of usefulness, until the persecution ceased.¹

87. During this time, probably near its close, he received a guest whose known antecedents must have given much interest to his visit, but whose coming greatness even then the apostle could hardly have foreseen. SAUL OF TARSUS, who more than three years before had left Jerusalem on an

¹ See Chronological Appendix.

errand of persecution against the scattered flock of Christ, and who had been wondrously converted by the appearance of Jesus in the way, had zealously begun to preach Jesus Christ in Damascus, but had soon suspended his labours; retiring to Arabia, in all probability for meditation and study, that he might be fully prepared for the work to which in the very hour of conversion his Lord had called him. After about three years thus spent, he had returned to Damascus, and being driven thence by the malignity of his former comrades, had made his way to Jerusalem, where his miraculous conversion could not have been unknown. But his sincerity was still disbelieved. No one would have anything to do with him until Barnabas befriended him, introduced him to two of the apostles, Peter, and James the Lord's brother, and thus secured for the future ambassador of Christ to the Gentiles a favourable footing in Jerusalem. Saul, however, only remained for a fortnight in the city. His great object had been "to visit Cephas."¹ This was now accomplished. "The first meeting of the fisherman of Galilee and the tentmaker of Tarsus, the chosen companion of Jesus on earth and the chosen Pharisee who saw Jesus in the heavens, the apostle of the circumcision and the apostle of the Gentiles, is passed over in Scripture in few words. The Divine record does not linger in dramatic description on those passages which a mere human writing would labour to embellish. What took place in the intercourse of these two saints—what was said of Jesus of Nazareth, who suffered, died, and was buried, and of Jesus, the glorified Lord, who had risen and ascended and become Head over all things to the church—what was felt of Christian love

¹ The word that Paul employs (Gal. i. 18) is emphatic, "employed," says Chrysostom, "by those who go to see great and famous cities."—See Prof. Lightfoot, *in loc.*

and devotion—what was learned, under the Spirit's teaching, of Christian truth, has not been revealed and cannot be known. The intercourse was full of present comfort, and full of great consequences."¹ But the beginning of a public ministry essayed by Saul in Jerusalem only showed, by the bitter hatred evoked on the part of the Hellenists, that to continue would be unsafe. A vision from heaven concurred with the friendly care of the disciples to hasten his departure. He was hurried away by night and sent to Cæsarea, whence he embarked for Tarsus before he had time to become "known by face to the churches in Judæa." In Tarsus the future champion of the truth still awaited for long years his call to work.²

88. The causes which led to the cessation of active hostility to the church are not stated. It is only declared that after the bitter conflict there came an interval of holy peace, in which the churches "were built up, walking in the fear of the Lord, and were multiplied by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit."³ New topics of interest now agitated the minds of the Jews. The Roman Emperor, Caius Caligula, had ordered that a statue of himself should be set up in the Temple; and the Jews were too deeply engrossed by their successful opposition to this impiety to have leisure for persecuting the Christians. It is difficult also not to connect the statement, as the historian seems to do, with the miracle by which a notorious persecutor like Saul had been converted. The very foes of the church acknowledged the hand of God, were awed before the might of Jesus. The time of rest at home was Peter's opportunity for work abroad. He must be at his post

¹ Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chap. iii.

² For the particulars combined in the foregoing paragraph, compare Acts ix. 19-30; xxii. 17-21; xxvi. 15-18; Gal. i. 17-24.

³ Acts ix. 31.

during the season of peril, though others were scattered; but now that the church was safe, he was at leisure to enter upon a wider field. He went forth therefore upon a course of apostolic visitation, and took up his residence for a while at Joppa.

89. On his way to this seaport he visited Lydda, then a considerable town in the fertile plain of Sharon, and already the seat of a Christian church. Here a signal miracle which he performed in the name of Christ upon Æneas,[†] who had been bedridden with paralysis for eight years, produced a most profound impression through the city and the whole valley. Joppa was nine miles from the town of Sharon, and Peter was first sent for thither in consequence of the death of a Christian woman who had borne the Eastern name of *Gazelle* or *Hind*; in Hebrew, Tabitha; in Greek, Dorcas. Hitherto we have no record among the apostolic miracles of the raising of the dead, but the faith of the disciples in Joppa extended even to this. The greatness of the loss to the whole church, in the death of so benevolent a member, no doubt assisted to make this faith the more intense; and it was rewarded by the issue. As Peter entered the chamber of death, he must have been reminded of that room into which he had accompanied his Master in the house of Jairus. Here, as there, the place was filled with sounds of mourning; but there it was the hired wailers' cry, here the weeping of unaffected sorrow, "the widows showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." But the sacred calm in which the Divine wonder was to be wrought must not be broken in upon by the sounds of earthly sorrow. Like the Master at Capernaum, "Peter put them all forth;" but unlike the Master, he may not raise the dead by his own word. "He kneeled down and

[†] Pronounce not Enēas (as Virgil's hero), but Enēas.

prayed;" then in the strength of Jesus, the Lord of life, pronounces the reviving word. The miracle was known through all Joppa ; the result was a large ingathering to the Christian community, and Peter remained among them, no doubt to tend the flock, while unconsciously preparing for another call and a larger work.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRANSITION TO THE GENTILES.

90. THE apostles were strangely slow in obeying the commission of their Lord to "disciple all nations." It is possible that they did not even understand the true scope of His command. In Jewish speech, "the uttermost ends of the earth" might denote but the boundaries of their own *land*, and national exclusiveness was too ready to rest in this interpretation. True, the Gentiles were to be gathered into the fold of Christ; but were they not to *come* to the sacred soil, "bending at the feet" of the favoured Jews? Must the apostles "go forth" to *them*? Yet the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost was, as we have seen, the expressive emblem of a world-wide commission. And now another as significant was to be set before the apostle in the form of a vision, that he might arise to the performance of the final part of the task for which "the keys of the kingdom" had been entrusted to him, and "open the door of the faith" also "to the Gentiles."

91. There were other pioneers in this great task. Among the members of the church dispersed from Jerusalem, some extended their labours to Gentile lands and cities. But still they preached only to the Jews.¹ When such was the principle and practice of the apostles, it is no wonder that the rest of the disciples adhered without

¹ See Acts viii. 4, and the continuance of the narrative in xi. 19.

questioning to the restriction. Accordingly, even in heathen communities, as Cyrene, Cyprus, Antioch, these preachers of the gospel found out the Jewish synagogues, beginning and ending their labours among their brethren. But it so happened that at length certain of these disciples—Hellenists of Cyprus and Cyrene,¹—reached Antioch, then the proud metropolis of Syria, and “wholly given to idolatry.” The synagogue, in such a city, would be comparatively unimportant; the message to the Jews would soon be told; and there was the great city outside, with its thousand houses and altars and temples! It was impossible to withstand the impulse. Right or wrong, whether in accordance with tradition or not, these good men *must speak*. Accordingly they addressed themselves to the Greeks²—the Gentiles—the heathen population. “And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number, believing, turned to the Lord.” The significance of this fact chiefly lies in the circumstance that it appears to have occurred quite independently of Peter’s vision at Joppa, belonging to an altogether different line of narrative. Which of the two events was first in actual occurrence, we cannot say. This at Antioch evidently excited much attention and inquiry, if not misgiving, in Jerusalem, as is shown by the mission of Barnabas to inquire into the facts. He may have gone prepared to reprove an unauthorised proceeding; but if so, his fears were soon dispelled. Being “a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith,” he was only “glad” when he had seen the grace of God among them, and had nothing but encouragement, by word and deed, for the infant church. Thus commenced the series of *St. Paul’s* evangelistic labours

¹ See chap. xx., on “the Dispersion.”

² Acts xi. 20. There can be no reasonable doubt that the right reading is not “Grecians,” *i.e.*, Hellenists, to preach to whom would be nothing wonderful, but “Greeks,” *i.e.*, Gentiles.

among the Gentiles, differently originating, and mostly lying far apart, as will be hereafter seen, from those of Peter.

92. To this apostle we now return. He was "at Joppa, in the house of one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side." Thus detailed is the description, in every point, of one of those events which mark a new epoch in the history of mankind. Two visions herald the Divine communication; the one to Cornelius, by his name a Roman nobleman, a devout centurion in the seaport garrison of Cæsarea,¹ "about the ninth hour of the day," *i.e.*, the third hour before sunset; the other to Peter himself, at noon of the day following. The former vision directs a messenger to be sent to Peter, that he may bring to the centurion's house a message of salvation. When the latter vision is seen, the messengers are already at Peter's door. Thus are the instrument and the recipient of the heavenly gift prepared for each other. Cornelius cannot doubt the mission of Peter, nor can Peter question the right of Cornelius.

93. The centurion was "a devout man," a believer in the one God, yet it would seem not an observer of the law, excepting so far as it contained the great principles of all morality and religion. His outward practices of piety were "prayers" and "alms;" he is not described even as a proselyte of the gate. The view of truth adapted to him, then, was that which should unveil the true though hitherto unknown ground of his religious life, should com-

¹ The cohort (about 600 men) in which Cornelius held a command, was called "the Italian band," as consisting of native Italians, whereas the other cohorts in Palestine were for the most part levied from the country itself. As Cæsarea was the residence of the Roman procurator, it was necessary that he should have there a body of troops on whose fidelity he could rely. See *Hackett, in loc.* For an account of Cæsarea in its former splendour and present desolation, see Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chap. xxii.

bine the principles of faith and piety already manifest in his character into one harmonious whole, and by revealing Christ, lead him into the light. To the Jews, such a man, notwithstanding his excellence, was religiously an inferior. They might hold him in good report, but looked down upon him still. They would not worship with him, they dared not eat with him. He was a man "common and unclean." Hence the significance of the vision, appropriate to the hunger experienced by Peter before falling into the trance. The opportunity seemed given him to satisfy that hunger. "All the quadrupeds and reptiles of the earth, all the birds of the air," appeared before him in that "great sheet;" and when the fastidious apostle shrank from obeying the summons to "slay and eat," the words were "spoken thrice," as befitted the solemnity of the announcement which was to form the motto of a world-wide evangelisation. *What God cleansed, that call not thou common.* The Spirit which inspired also interpreted the vision, and Peter obediently started, the next morning, for Cæsarea.

"Certain brethren from Joppa accompanied Peter"—a missionary band, in happy fellowship, setting out to do more than evangelise the household of Cornelius; being on the direct way, though they can hardly have known it, to break down for ever the barrier between Jew and Gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised, and to reveal the oneness of all men in Christ. The thirty miles of the sea-coast route, northward from Joppa to Cæsarea, along the sandy ridge of the bright plain of Sharon, were safely accomplished. The reception of the messengers of Christ was worthy of the occasion. Cornelius "had gathered a large company to meet them," and though his mistaken homage to Peter at the outset was checked, his welcome was as cordially accepted as it was frankly given. Peter

enters the company with a half apology to himself and his Jewish prejudices; but then, in the succinct account given by Cornelius of the angelic vision, followed by an appeal to unfold his message, he freely speaks in a discourse which effected for Gentiles what that delivered on the day of Pentecost had wrought for the Jews, and of which the inspired narrator has preserved at least the outline, as follows :

“OF A TRUTH I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, publishing glad tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), ye yourselves know;¹ even the word which went throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, concerning Jesus of Nazareth; how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power. Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. Whom also they slew by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and granted that He should appear, not to all the people,² but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him, after that He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He who has been appointed by God the Judge of living and dead. To Him

¹ Philip, one of the seven, had taken up his abode at Cæsarea (Acts viii. 40) as a preacher of the Gospel (xxi. 8). The great facts of the evangelic history must therefore have become known.

² The statement of this restriction, agreeing with the account given in the Gospels, argues the perfect candour of the speaker, as Paley has well shown. It is just one of those circumstances which an impostor would have concealed. At the same time there were evident and important reasons for the appearance of the risen Christ only to His disciples.

give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."

As before, a divine influence accompanied Peter's words. We are not told indeed that Cornelius and his household were pricked in their hearts; they were already prepared to receive the word of God, and had never openly rejected Jesus the Christ. The Spirit came upon them at once. They "spake with tongues and magnified God;" and the baptism with water was in their case but the outward sign of a spiritual baptism already received by these rejoicing disciples. Thus was a church of the uncircumcised formed at Joppa, in the midst of which Peter tarried for a while for the continuance of his apostolic ministry and pastoral care.

94. Returning at length to Jerusalem, he was taxed, as might have been expected, with the breach of precedent. The accusation turned upon a point of ceremonial. It is not "Thou didst *preach the Gospel* to the uncircumcised;" but, "Thou wentest in, and *didst eat* with them." It seems to have been ordained in the history of the early church that the society in Jerusalem, with its ramifications through Judæa, should remain as the head-quarters of the apostles, the centre, so to speak, of Jewish conservatism in the church, until every point connected with the reception of the Gentiles and the evangelisation of the world should be adequately settled. The mother church could pronounce authoritatively on these subjects so long as apostles were at its head; and by virtue of its decisions could settle questions which otherwise might cause bewilderment and difficulty through all future time. Hence, at a meeting of the church, convened, as we may suppose, for the purpose, Peter relates the substance of the history, as follows:

"I WAS in the city of Joppa, praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it had been

a great sheet, let down from heaven by four ends ; and it came even to me : upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered and saw the four-footed beasts of the earth, and the wild beasts, and the creeping things, and the birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter ; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord : for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God cleansed, that call thou not common. And this was done three times ; and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with

^a Rec. adds *making no scruple.* them.^a Moreover these six brethren accompanied me ; and we entered into the man's house : and he related to us how he had seen

the angel in his house, who stood and said unto him, ^b Rec. adds *men.* Send^b to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter ; who shall speak unto thee words whereby thou shalt be saved and all thy house. And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as also upon us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Who then was I ? Was I able to withstand God ?" (*Acts xi. 5-17.*)

The appeal was irresistible ; and although, as will appear hereafter, further controversies would be raised and further counsels needed before the final settlement of the question, the church for the present was more than satisfied : " they held their peace " from further objection, " and glorified God, saying, Then did God grant to the Gentiles also repentance unto life."

CHAPTER XV.

PETER'S IMPRISONMENT AND DELIVERANCE.

95. PETER had now closed his great preparatory work. Among Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles, he had witnessed Christ, and had laid the foundation of the church. Again his home was in Jerusalem; it might have been a question with himself whether his time had not come to lay down the burden of life and take the martyr's crown. Events for a while appeared to render this more than probable.

96. Herod Agrippa, son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great, was now invested with the vassal sovereignty of Judæa and Samaria, in addition to the tetrarchies formerly held by Philip, by Lysanias, and by Antipas, so that he now ruled over all his grandfather's dominions.¹ Agrippa was naturally anxious to ingratiate himself with his new subjects, and discovered very early that one of the surest methods to win their favour was the persecution of the church. After several of the disciples had suffered in various ways, James the son of Zebedee was "slain with the sword"—the first martyr of the apostolic band, and the only one of whose death we have any certain record. This daring procedure against one of the apostles, who from

¹ See *Chronological Table* in APPENDIX. "The accuracy of the sacred writer," says Paley, "in the expression which he uses here, is remarkable. There was no portion of time for thirty years before, or ever afterwards, in which there was a king at Jerusalem, a person exercising that authority in Judæa, or to whom that title could be applied, except the last three years of Herod Agrippa's life." (The kingdom of Agrippa II., mentioned in Acts xxv. 13, &c., did not include Judæa.)

their miraculous powers, and the enthusiasm of their adherents, may have seemed hitherto to bear charmed lives, greatly increased the popularity of the king among the unbelieving populace. Agrippa, above most of his line, was noted for the skill with which he could adapt himself to all parties, and promote his own interests by taking advantage of every popular impression. Thus he provided games and shows for the pleasure-loving, after the manner of the heathen, while he gratified the fanatical and bigoted by his strict observance of the Mosaic ritual. The approbation of these last emboldened him to strike another blow at Christ's church by the apprehension of Peter also, about the Passover of the year A.D. 43 or 44.

97. The importance attached to this arrest, as well as the fears of the persecutors, are sufficiently attested by the precautions taken for the safe custody of the prisoner. The advisers of Herod may have remembered the deliverance of Peter and John from prison some years before; and to guard against possible rescue, sixteen soldiers (four to be on guard at a time) are appointed to keep watch and ward. As John Foster well remarks, "They were either *too many* or *too few*;"¹ too many to be needed to prevent a rescue by the disciples, too few to withstand the might of Heaven! The church in its turn had recourse to "fervent and unceasing prayer," being thus engaged while the apostle calmly slept.

98. The night before his intended execution had arrived, Peter, for double security, was chained, even during his slumbers, to two soldiers—one on each side,² while the sentries stood before the barred portals of the prison. Sud-

¹ Lecture on "Peter's Deliverance from Prison," in *Lectures*, 2nd series, xviii. The whole lecture is admirable.

² The Romans in general were accustomed to chain their prisoners only to *one* sentinel. Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 6, 7.

denly, in the words of the sacred narrator, "an angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shone in the cell, and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell from off his hands." Peter thought himself in a dream, but rose and dressed himself, passed through the sentries posted at intervals in the prison avenues, through the iron gate leading into the city, and then the angel, having discharged his commission, vanished, leaving the freed apostle standing in the silent street. Restored to consciousness, he soon apprehended the nature of his deliverance, and made his way to the house of Mary, Mark's mother, where many were gathered together praying for him. The incident of his applying at first in vain to gain admission is inimitably natural. The eager surprise of Rhoda, and her omission to open the door—the incredulity of the disciples, who would not believe that their own prayers were answered—and the argument on the subject held in the apartment while "Peter continued knocking," are all true to the life. The disciples would believe anything rather than that God had granted their own petitions. Rhoda was "mad." Or at best it was Peter's guardian angel, come to warn them of his approaching doom. How many a speculation may be laid to rest by simply "opening the door!" At length all were enabled to hear from the apostle's own lips the assurance of his safety; and it is observable that he added, in concluding his narrative, "Go show these things *unto James*, and to the brethren." From these words it would appear that "the brother of the Lord" was already in the recognised position of chief pastor in the church at Jerusalem.

99. Having finished his tale of deliverance, Peter retired into concealment for a while. The words, "He departed and went into another place," have by some strangely been interpreted of a departure *to Rome*. There is not even

any traditional authority worthy of the name for such an exposition; and it is certain that, not many years afterwards, Peter was found again at Jerusalem.¹ The probability is that he spent the interval in labouring among the Jews, as "an apostle of the circumcision," being speedily freed from apprehension of danger by the terrible death of Herod Agrippa at Cæsarea.

100. The narrative of this last event, as given by Josephus,² agrees in many remarkable points with that of Luke. The latter only is more historically consistent throughout, in assigning a sufficient reason for the popular enthusiasm which greeted the king, in the pacification and submission of the Phœnician cities. The true cause of the infliction, in Herod's impious self-exaltation, is declared by the inspired narrator alone, who also exhibits very strikingly the ministry of angels in two different aspects. It is an angel that delivers Peter, an angel that smites Herod. "The word of God," says Lange, "gives an insight into the concealed machinery of the Divine government, whereof we see nothing with our eyes."

101. An interesting point in the history, which can but be mentioned here, was a second visit of Paul, with Barnabas, to Jerusalem, with alms from Antioch for the relief of disciples suffering from famine. The visit was, probably, very brief, and as Peter had already quitted the city, the two great apostles did not meet.

¹ See chap. xix.

² *Antiquities*, xix. 8, 2.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE APOSTOLIC COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM.

102. THE earliest doctrinal controversy that agitated the church was respecting the manner of admitting Gentile converts to the privileges of Christianity. That they were *admissible* none now could doubt. Had the point been uncertain at the first, Antioch and Cæsarea had set it at rest for ever, but the conditions of their reception still admitted of question. As Judaism had been the appointed means of preparing the *world* for the gospel, must it not in like manner be the initiation of the *individual*? The preaching of the gospel was to begin at Jerusalem; must not the recipient of the gospel begin by becoming a Jew? To us the question appears absurd; but we must remember that to the primitive age there seemed no such opposition between law and gospel as is now self-evident. Rather was the former the preface to the latter, the introduction to its mysteries. The earliest converts had learned concerning Jesus through prophecies of the Messiah, which seemed to predict at once a world-wide salvation and the continued supremacy of God's Israel. The royalty had departed from Judah, the dream of worldly conquest had passed; but the religion remained, the deepest source of Israel's greatness. That religion had now received its highest development in the doctrine of Jesus, but had not He Himself said, "I am come not to abrogate, but to fulfil?" The only Bible as yet in the possession of the churches was the Old

Testament. The Epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians, and to the Hebrews were as yet unwritten; and it was not wonderful that many thought and said that the way into the church still lay through obedience to the law of Moses. "Except ye be circumcised ye cannot be saved."

103. This heresy was first broached by emissaries from Judæa in the Gentile church at Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas, having finished their earliest missionary journey, were now labouring.

Luke briefly records the fact. "Certain men had come down from Judæa and were teaching the brethren, Except ye have been circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, goes more into detail, as of incidents which were not only most momentous in their issues, but in which he had a large personal share. From him we learn that the entrance of these Jewish "false brethren" was surreptitious, that they came as spies, with the intent of bringing the church at Antioch under the old ritual, that one specific demand of theirs was the circumcision of Titus, that the apostle resisted this with all his might, and successfully. As the church in Antioch, however, continued much divided on the question, and as the point was one that was sure to recur, it was judged best to gain an authoritative decision; both parties accordingly resolved to lay their case before the apostles and church in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas, with other representatives of the Antioch church, being deputed for the purpose, and Titus, who had in part been the occasion of the dispute, accompanying them.

104. The council was not in any sense œcumenical, that is, universal, comprising the churches of the whole world by their representatives. It was, on the contrary, simply a meeting of the church of Jerusalem, with the apostles as guides and assessors, to consider a question submitted to

them by the church of Antioch. Private conferences had previously been held between Paul and the three leading apostles,¹ when no doubt the plan of the more public assembly was carefully arranged. That assembly consisted of "the apostles and elders:" of "the apostles, elders, with the whole church." James, the Lord's brother, acted as moderator. "The apostles and elders" conducted the discussion, and "the whole church" concurred in the final vote. The debate was long; there was a strong party of Pharisees in the church, maintaining that the Gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic law; but the speech of Peter, the narratives of Paul and Barnabas, closed by a wise argument from James, decided the question for the time, and the vote was unanimous. Peter's address is reported as follows:—

"BRETHREN, ye well know that from ancient days God made choice from among you, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by the faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? Nay, we believe that it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that we shall be saved, even as they."

105. It is worth noting how James, in his final speech, speaks of his brother apostle under the Hebrew form of his name as Symeon, as if to suggest to the Jewish multitude that the great apostle was truly one of themselves. The prophecy which James quotes as confirmed by Peter's labours, is from Amos, the ninth chapter.

¹ Gal. ii. 2.

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by My name; saith Jehovah, that doeth this.

The quotation is from the Septuagint, but not with verbal precision. Thus the reference to Edom is made more general—"the Gentiles." The argument plainly is that the restoration of the glory of David's kingdom was to be by the ingathering of the Gentiles, and that in predicting that the heathen should be called by Jehovah's name, no mention was made of their being circumcised, which He who knows all things from the beginning would have done had that rite been essential to a place among His people. The decision in which James declares the result of the whole debate contains two main points. First, not to "trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles" by any requirement of Jewish rites; and secondly, to require from the Gentile converts not only a renunciation of grosser forms of vice, but a compliance with those regulations concerning diet which would make social intercourse possible between themselves and their Jewish brethren. Those who still heard Moses read in their synagogues every Sabbath day could not eat with their Gentile fellow-Christians unless on the condition of refraining "from things offered to idols, and from things strangled, and from blood."

No decision could have been more wise or suitable. Liberty and charity are its principles; it formed an epoch in the history of the Church. Christianity was now emancipated from Judaism, set free to convert the world. No longer could the Church be degraded into a sect; it became universal, catholic. At the same time circumcision was not formally abolished. Jewish Christians, no doubt,

still practised the rite, and it was after the date of the council that Paul himself "took and circumcised Timothy,"¹ the son of a Gentile father and Jewish mother. The principle once settled, details would be wrought out by degrees.

106. Other matters, unnoticed by the historian, were settled at the time of this great assembly. The distinct apportionment of work between the two leaders, which already practically existed, was formally confirmed; Peter being recognized as "the apostle of the circumcision," Paul "of the uncircumcision."² The restriction was not indeed exclusive in either case. Peter did not fail, as opportunity might offer, to continue among Gentiles of different lands the work he had begun at Cæsarea; but his specific mission was to the Jews, a fact which, as we shall see, regulated the course of his future labours. Paul, on the other hand, still addressed himself, wherever it was possible, first to the Jews; only seeking the Forum or the School of Tyrannus when his message had been delivered in the synagogue. In Philippi he first sought the Jewish *Proseucha* by the river-side; and in Rome itself he convened the chief of the Jews to his lodging, to reason with them before appealing to the general population. Yet it was to work among the heathen that Paul was especially called, and this gave a character to his whole career. The field of work was thus harmoniously divided between these two great men; their followers might henceforth engage in many a bitter conflict, but the harmony between the leaders was for the most part undisturbed.

107. Another stipulation made at this same meeting was that the Gentile churches should contribute to the necessities

¹ Acts xvi. 3. The difference between this case and that of Titus seems to have been, (1) that Titus was wholly of Gentile descent, while Timothy's mother was a Jewess; and (2) that the circumcision of Titus was demanded, that of Timothy was voluntary. It is often wise to yield a point, which if made a matter of demand by others, it would be our duty to resist.

² See Gal. ii. 7-10.

of their poorer Jewish brethren. It is probable that the common fund of the church in Jerusalem had become exhausted; the community of goods had accomplished its purpose in maintaining the disciples and their families during the first days of trial, persecution, and banishment; the appeal for support must now be made to a wider circle. A recent famine in Judæa had made the need especially urgent; and in fact, as the Apostle Paul declares, the Gentile Christians were ready to meet the need, to some extent had met it even before requested. How liberally they responded now, was seen in the collections made in Macedonia and Achaia, as described in the apostle's letters to Corinth and to Rome.

108. The proceedings of the assembly were closed not only by the adoption of a brief circular letter incorporating the main conclusions, with the significant prefix, *It seemed good unto the Holy Spirit and to us*, but by a solemn act of recognition, or ordination, in which Paul and Barnabas were set apart for their further work. James, Peter, and John, as the leaders of the church in Jerusalem, gave to these brethren "the right hands of fellowship," signifying fraternal confidence, attesting a mutual pledge. As representatives of the church in Jerusalem, Judas, of whom we know nothing more, and Silas, afterwards a trusted companion of both Paul and Peter, accompanied the brethren back to Antioch; and the joy with which the Gentile believers there received the decisions of the assembly was not so much an expression of triumph over defeated adversaries, as a solemn thanksgiving to Him who had called them and the believers of all time into "the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

CHAPTER XVII.

PETER WITH PAUL AT ANTIOCH.

109. NOT long after the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch,¹ Peter also visited them in that city. The visit had very probably been agreed upon when the two great apostles met in Jerusalem, and, in its friendliness, was a ratification of the brotherly compact into which they had there entered. Peter came fully prepared to carry out the decisions of the assembly in letter and in spirit. With frank, characteristic heartiness, he not only worshipped with his Gentile fellow-Christians, but "did eat with them;" the apostle of the circumcision rejoicing with the apostle of the uncircumcision in their common freedom.

110. The strength and consistency of Peter's character were, however, to be put to a perhaps unexpected test. "Certain came from James;" members of the church in Jerusalem, not necessarily *sent by* James, but evidently, from what followed, of the Pharisaic party, visiting Antioch with the sinister purpose of criticising Peter's conduct. When they arrived, the courage of the apostle collapsed. We see the same Peter who bravely trode the waves for a while, then suddenly sank in faithlessness and fear; who drew the sword in Gethsemane for the defence of the Saviour

¹ Gal. ii. 12. This visit of Peter was plainly after the council in Jerusalem, as St. Paul is narrating events in chronological order: it was as plainly before Paul's missionary journey with Silas, as Barnabas was still with him. See ver. 13.

whom he denied in the hall of Caiaphas. The impulse of courage yields to coward weakness just where the disciple had appeared strongest. He who had welcomed Cornelius to the fold of Christ, who had nobly vindicated the cause of Christian liberty before thousands in Jerusalem, now shrinks from carrying out his own professed convictions in the face of inconsiderable foes. Who were the "certain men" who "came from James," that Peter should quail before them now?

III. Pressed by these difficulties, failing to understand the apostle's character, and anxious not to peril his reputation, several of the fathers of the church wrested the meaning of the passage from its obvious sense.¹ Thus Clement of Alexandria maintained that another Cephas, one of the seventy disciples, was intended by St. Paul. Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome, with many others, held that the dispute was simulated—a dramatic scene contrived between the two apostles in order to bring out more effectively the truth which they held in common. The correspondence between Jerome and Augustine, in which the latter combated this unworthy view with equal logic and indignation, was famous among the controversies of the early church. All such explanations, it is unnecessary to add, have long been exploded, and the history remains, a mournful, but not a solitary illustration of moral cowardice in even the good and great. For Paul terms the conduct of Peter *dissimulation*, "hypocrisy." It was a violation of avowed convictions and solemn pledges, inconsistent with Peter's previous conduct at Antioch, a public repudiation of what in his heart he knew to be true. One of its results, moreover, was that Barnabas, the old companion of St. Paul in the evangelisation of Gentile cities, his fellow-delegate from Antioch to Jerusalem, commissioned for the very purpose of asserting

¹ See details in Dr. Lightfoot's *Commentary on Galatians*, p. 123.

Christian liberty, was carried away by Peter's example. "It is not impossible," Dr. Lightfoot well remarks, "that this incident, by producing a temporary feeling of distrust, may have prepared the way for the dissension between Paul and Barnabas, which shortly afterwards led to their separation."

112. The occasion was one that called for strong rebuke, and Paul did not flinch from the task. Withstanding Peter to the face, he rebuked him before all the church, both Jew and Gentile; resting his protest, as was his wont, upon the broadest foundations of evangelical principle, and enforcing his appeal by the immortal words:¹ "I have been crucified with Christ: and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me: yea, the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

What was the influence of this faithful reproof the apostle who uttered it does not record. The truth must surely have gone straight to the sensitive apostle's heart, and we may well suppose that, as of old, he went out and wept bitterly. One thing is certain, there was no lasting estrangement between the friends. Paul mentions Cephas with honour more than once in his epistles,² and Peter in return speaks of our "beloved brother Paul." Nor was the estrangement between Paul and Barnabas perpetual. The apostle refers to his old comrade, when writing to the Corinthians, in cordial terms; and in addressing the Colossians, directs that Mark, nephew of Barnabas and companion of Peter, may be welcomed with kindness.³ Thus between the great leaders of the early church there was controversy but no animosity, separation but no schism; their paths lay for a while apart, only to meet at last and to be one for ever.

¹ These words, to the end of chap. ii., seem plainly to belong to Paul's address to Peter.

² 1 Cor. ix. 5; xv. 5.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 6; Col. iv. 10. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 11.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PLACE AND INFLUENCE OF PETER IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

113. FROM the date of the interview with Paul at Antioch, the name of Peter appears no more in the sacred narrative ; and we are left to gather from scanty and somewhat uncertain indications the course of his subsequent evangelistic labours. Putting aside for a time all mere tradition, we may judge, from the affectionate tone of his letter to the Christians in "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," that he was personally no stranger to them. Yet it is certain that in some of these districts at least the gospel had been introduced by the Apostle Paul. He had been the evangelist of Galatia, and in proconsular Asia he laboured long in Ephesus, after the date of Peter's visit to Antioch. In the missionary journey which Paul and Silas undertook soon after that event, we are told that they were forbidden to preach the Word in Asia, that they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not ;¹—a providential hindrance, interposed in order to the evangelisation of Europe. It may be permitted to suppose that the fields of usefulness closed against Paul were thrown open to his brother apostle ; that the Cephas of whom so much is said in the Epistle to the Galatians had followed the apostle of the Gentiles in that province, and that some of the seven churches of Asia may have been the result of Peter's labours. These points, however,

¹ This is in all probability the correct reading of Acts xvi. 7.

are conjectural. We shall see reason for placing the composition of St. Peter's first epistle about the year A.D. 64, his visit to Antioch having been in A.D. 52.¹ There would then be a space of twelve years for these unrecorded labours.

During this period it has been supposed that Peter visited CORINTH. The repeated mention of Cephas in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, and especially the conjunction of his name with those of Paul and Apollos, at least suggest some period of *personal* labour. Yet it is observable that when Paul speaks of actual work in the city he drops all mention of Cephas. "I have planted, Apollos watered." The point must therefore remain doubtful. The adoption of Peter's name as a rallying-cry by one of the Corinthian parties is, in any case, significant, and deserves a little further examination.

114. There are, and seem always to have been, in the churches, three main tendencies of thought and feeling. To one class of believers—thoughtful, logical, as well as spiritually devout, doctrine is everything. They delight in system, aspire to know the whole counsel of God, while the harmonies and manifold relationships of truth arouse their admiration and win their hearts. Others, again, look at truth chiefly on its speculative, sentimental side; rebel against fixed dogma; cannot fetter their thoughts by system; striving rather to catch glimpses of the infinite truth and beauty. A third class of worshippers delight in ritual forms and solemnities. Their minds, impatient of what is abstract, seize eagerly upon the symbols and ceremonies which represent religious truth to the senses. The spirit of religion seems to reveal itself most nearly to their souls when clothed in becoming, stately forms. Now the excess of any one of

¹ See Wieseler's Dissertation on the Apostle Peter's Residence in Rome. *Journal of Sacred Literature*. April, 1850, p. 302.

these tendencies is a fruitful parent of sectarianism. In a true and catholic Christianity all three elements are found—the doctrine, the sentiment, and the form: it is exclusiveness of view that makes the doctrinal bigot, the mystic sentimentalist, the formal ritualist; or, in other words, the men who, if the old party watchwords could be transferred to modern days, would cry severally, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas.” The self-styled follower of Paul makes his boast of doctrine, and reduces everything to the rigid and formal definitions of a creed; the eloquent Apollos, fresh from the schools of Alexandria, is admired and imitated by the lovers of speculation and so-called philosophy; while the sanction of Peter is claimed by those who delight in ordinances, who can worship best amid elaborate æsthetic accompaniments, and who believe in sacramental efficacy.

115. It need scarcely be added that these venerable names are mistakenly claimed by all three. Disciples generally outrun their teachers in enthusiasm, and that which in the master is but a tendency in his followers becomes exclusiveness. Paul indignantly rebukes those who boasted, “I am of Paul;” Apollos and Cephas would as heartily have repudiated their respective partisans. The great names of the Christian Church were never given to become the property of sects. But there was in the church of Corinth yet another class, who saw the evils of sectarianism so strongly, that they unwittingly constituted themselves a fourth sect, in laying exclusive claim to the name of Christ. When the words, *I am of Christ*, became a party boast, they are as decisively rebuked as the cry, *I am of Paul*, or *I am of Cephas*. For Christ is not divided; and in His universal church “Christians” can never be rightfully a “denomination.”

116. The party of Peter were, as we have said above,

mainly ritualists. They would delight to place their master above Paul, from his priority of call, his personal earthly fellowship with Jesus, the significance of his name. As the elder brother in the Christian family, the claims of Peter would be jealously maintained as against those of the younger champion of the faith. The apostle of the circumcision, — of God's ancient family, would be regarded as having a higher function, a more venerable calling, than one whose mission it was to gather into the household of faith those who had been without God and without hope in the world. Peter would appear as the servant who uttered the Divine call in the streets of the city, Paul as one of those who went out into the highways and hedges. Peter belonged to the company of labourers sent into the vineyard early in the morning, Paul to those who were called at a later hour—"and dost thou make them equal with us who have borne the burden and heat of the day?" To all this would be added by the Petrine party a fondness for rites and ceremonies, especially those of Jewish origin. Circumcision indeed could never be enforced on Gentile converts after that assembly in Jerusalem, but it would be more than hinted that the circumcised man stood highest in God's regard. The sacraments would be regarded as of intrinsic power — not the signs, but the instruments of spiritual gifts. Nor would the spirit of him who drew the sword in Gethsemane be wanting. It would be adjudged a right and worthy thing, when the power was once possessed, to employ earthly weapons of coercion and offence in support of the faith; and—to crowd the work of ages into a single sentence—the PAPACY, in its doctrine and its rule, became the crowning manifestation and last result of that spirit which, falsely claiming the great apostle's name, had said in early days, *I am of Cephas*.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PAPAL TRADITION EXAMINED.

117. THE council in Jerusalem divides the unrecorded portion of St. Peter's ministry into two unequal parts; the former, of about six years, from his imprisonment by Herod and miraculous release, to the council; the latter, from the council to the apostle's martyrdom, which may have comprehended at most seventeen years.[†]

118. Both these periods are combined in the papal tradition, to the effect that St. Peter, having introduced the gospel into the imperial city on his departure from Jerusalem, presided over the Roman church as bishop for five and twenty years. The time in any case is too long by at least two years, but this is a matter comparatively trivial; far graver improbabilities beset the whole story.

(1.) If the tradition be correct, it follows that Peter attended the meeting in Jerusalem in the capacity of Roman bishop, while there is no word or hint of this in the narrative.

(2.) Not only so, but while, according to the hypothesis, chief pastor in the great Gentile metropolis, he was recognised as an apostle of the circumcision, his work in this respect being contrasted with that of St. Paul.

(3.) Instead of returning to his Roman see, he is found at Antioch, where the Apostle Paul addresses to him the memorable reproof on account of his Jewish compliances.

(4.) When Paul writes a letter to the Roman church (Peter according to the tradition being its chief pastor), he makes no mention of him or of his labours, sends

[†] See Chronological Table in APPENDIX.

no greeting to him among the many whom he mentions by name, and speaks of his own desire to visit Rome, and of the church's need of apostolic privileges,¹ in words that must have been offensive to any resident apostle, much more to one so prominent and renowned as Peter.

(5.) When Paul afterwards arrived in Rome,² "the chief of the Jews" met with him at his lodging, to converse with him on the subject of Christianity. It was a topic on which they were comparatively uninformed. "We desire to hear of thee," they said, "what thou thinkest: for, as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against." And this, according to the supposition, was after Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, had spent at least sixteen years in Rome.

(6.) The Apostle Paul wrote several letters from Rome, in which he sends many salutations, but none from the alleged chief pastor of the church. In the last of these letters³ he speaks most touchingly of his loneliness. "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." Where then was Peter?

(7.) On the other hand, Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, speaks of Peter as a missionary. "Have we not liberty to take about with us a sister, a wife, as well as the other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas."⁴

(8.) Against this mass of improbability there is actually nothing in Scripture to be set, excepting only an utterly improbable interpretation of the word *Babylon*, which if it were admitted, would only prove Peter to have been in Rome at a late period of his life, the passage having no bearing whatever upon an earlier ministry or a prolonged pastorate.

119. These arguments would be sufficient to set aside any tradition, however well attested, based upon aught but abso-

¹ Rom. i. 11. ² Acts xxviii. 17-29. ³ 2 Tim. iv. 11. ⁴ 1 Cor. ix. 5.

lute proof. In fact, however, the early historical evidence is as scanty as the opposite considerations are overwhelming.

The earliest promulgator of the tradition is the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea (about A.D. 325), who says in his *Chronicle* that the Apostle Peter, after labouring in the church at Antioch, proceeded to Rome in the second year of Claudius, where he preached the gospel, and remained as bishop of that city for twenty-five years.¹

Again, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius writes :—

“The mental eye of Simon the sorcerer being smitten by a divine and wonderful radiance when in Judæa, he was convicted of his wickedness by the Apostle Peter. He undertook a great journey from the East across the sea, and fled to the West, thinking that this was the only way for him to live according to his mind. Entering the city of Rome, by the co-operation of that malignant spirit which had fixed its seat there, his attempts were soon so far successful as to be honoured as a god, with the erection of a statue by the inhabitants of that city. This, however, did not continue long; for immediately after the accession of Claudius, by the benign and gracious providence of God, Peter, that powerful and great apostle, who by his courage took the lead of all the rest, was conducted to Rome against this pest of mankind. He, like a noble commander of God, fortified with Divine armour, bore the precious merchandise of the revealed light from those in the East to those in the West, announcing the light itself, and salutary doctrine of the soul, the proclamation of the kingdom of God.”²

To the same effect writes Jerome, in his work on Ecclesiastical Writers, A.D. 394 :—

“Simon Peter, chief of the apostles, after holding the episcopate of the Church at Antioch, and preaching to believing Jews of the Dispersion, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, arrived in Rome in the second year of Claudius, to oppose Simon Magus, and there held the sacerdotal chair for five and twenty years, up to the last, that is the fourteenth, year of Nero, by whom he was crowned with martyrdom.”

Now there are glaring errors on the very face of these paragraphs. For example, the death of Herod Agrippa was in the *fourth* year of the Emperor Claudius, to which year, therefore, the imprisonment of Peter at Jerusalem is to be assigned. It was impossible, therefore, that the apostle

¹ *Chronicon*, under CLAUDIUS; fo. 85. Ed. Stephan.

² Eusebius. *Eccl. Hist.*, book ii. chap. xiv. p. 83 (Bagster).

could be in Rome in "the second year of Claudius," as Eusebius says. Again, Jerome represents Peter as having been bishop of the church at Antioch, a plain contradiction of the Scripture history. But passing by points like these, it may be remarked that a statement for which no evidence can be alleged for more than two centuries and a half after the date to which it refers, would be suspicious, were there nothing else to condemn it. We can however trace, with a very high degree of probability, the very origin of the story.

120. It was an early tradition in the church that Peter came into direct collision with Simon the Magician after their meeting in Samaria. The "Clementine Homilies" and the "Recognitions," two separate editions of the same work, — a controversial narrative falsely ascribed to Clement of Rome, and probably dating from the earlier part of the third century, — recount a long and plainly fabulous debate between the two Simons, the scene being laid in *Cæsarea*. Earlier traditions, hereafter to be noted, place the *conclusion* of Peter's life in Rome. Justin Martyr, again (about A.D. 160), had declared that Simon Magus visited Rome and was there worshipped as a god. It was easy, in an uncritical age, for later tradition to combine the three accounts—the visit of St. Peter to the city, the visit of Simon Magus, and the controversy between the two. Then the residence of the apostle is lengthened, to give time for the occurrences recorded, as well as to bring additional honour to the Roman Church; and the result is seen in the narratives of Eusebius and Jerome.

It is clear that Justin's account of the visit of Simon Magus to Rome in no way affects the argument, as he makes no mention of Simon Peter. Still it is worth noting that his very circumstantial statement appears to rest on a mistake. The statue of Simon the Magician, Justin says,¹ "was erected

¹ *First Apology*, ch. xxvi. "Ante-Nicene Series" (Clark) p. 29.

on the river Tiber, between the two bridges, and bore this inscription, in the language of Rome, SIMONI DEO SANCTO (To Simon the Holy god). Now it has been proved that on the island of the Tiber to which Justin refers there was anciently a temple to the Sabine god, Semo Sancus ; and in 1574, under Gregory XIII., an altar was actually excavated from that island with the inscription, SEMONI DEO SANCO, (To the god Semo Sancus). The altar is now in the Vatican.¹ It is scarcely doubtful that the inscription was misunderstood by Justin, and that the whole story arose out of this mistake.

The tradition gathers strength as it proceeds. Justin, as we have seen, in the *second* century brings Simon Magus to Rome, but not Peter ; the writer of the Clementines, in the *third*, brings Simon Magus and Peter together in controversy, but in Cæsarea, not Rome ; Eusebius and Jerome, in the *fourth*, combine these narratives into a detailed story of Peter's bishopric in the city, in the course of which he vanquished the sorcerer by argument and eloquence ; and then we have the alleged authority of Ambrose, the great bishop of Milan, in the *fifth*, for the story that Simon Magus, beaten in logic, challenged Peter to fly through the air from the Capitoline Hill to the Aventine, thus to decide which of the two was the holier and the dearer to God. But while the magician was in his flight in mid-air, Peter prayed to God that He would not allow the people to be deluded by magical arts, whereupon Simon fell, and broke his leg.² The story, however, is

¹ Renan, *Les Apôtres*, p. 275.

² There are many other legends equally foolish relating to the two Simons. The curious may consult "The Acts of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul," a forgery of "the dark ages." The earliest extant MS. dates from the ninth century, published in Clark's Ante-Nicene Library, among *The Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations*. See pp. 263-273. The story of the magician's flight, as there given, is not that he broke his leg, but that he fell and was killed, being "divided into four parts."

not found among the genuine writings of Ambrose ; it is probably a later invention, and shows how fables grow from hand to hand, so that what began in simple invention ends in childish absurdity.

121. There is then absolutely no ground for the papal tradition. Irenæus, it is true, at the end of the second century, speaks of the church at Rome as having been "founded by the two most glorious Apostles Peter and Paul." But a statement so vague, even if we admit the authority of Irenæus, proves nothing as to any *early* visit. A church may be "founded" by the absent. There were "strangers of Rome" who listened to Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost; and if they carried the gospel into the imperial city, the church there may be said to have sprung from the labours of Peter. That such must be the interpretation given to the passage is clear from the association of Paul with Peter as having founded the Roman church. Now we know from the history that Paul did not visit Rome until long after the existence of a Christian community in the city. Whatever then the statement may be worth, it cannot be taken as evidence that St. Peter visited Rome before St. Paul.

122. We may now appeal to the words of Peter himself, in the subscription to his first epistle, as decisive of the whole controversy. "The fellow-elected one," he says, "who is in Babylon saluteth you." If words are to be construed in their plain meaning, then this epistle was written from *Babylon*.

An ancient interpretation, it is true, followed by many modern writers, interprets "Babylon" here as a mystic name for Rome, in accordance with the imagery of the Apocalypse. "It is said," writes Eusebius, "that he composed the epistle at Rome, and that he shows this fact by calling the city by an unusual trope, Babylon." On

this it is sufficient to remark, first, that the historian himself does not seem very confident of the accuracy of the statement. He only declares that the letter *is said* to have been so written, while he criticises the "trope" somewhat dubiously, as "unusual." And secondly, the value of the statement must be measured by the value of the allegation before considered, respecting Peter's Roman residence; and this has already been shown to be worthless.

The supposition that in the subscription of a letter, which had been indited in sober prose, the writer would adopt so mystical a name, appears absurd. There is no analogy between the bold poetry of the Apocalypse and the straightforward style of an apostolical epistle. As has frequently been remarked, Edinburgh is often called the modern Athens, but it would be ridiculous to presume from this fact that a letter dated Athens was therefore written at Edinburgh! The Cardinal Baronius has no better explanation to give of the supposed enigma, than that Peter's reason for not calling Rome by its proper name was his not wishing it to be publicly known whither he went to live after his escape from prison at Jerusalem. Thus the apostle, at the climax of his career, while exhorting others to constancy and bravery, is to be taxed with inglorious cowardice in order to save a theory!

123. The apostle's residence in Babylon on the Euphrates was on every account likely and appropriate. For Mesopotamia was the home of a large Jewish population. "There were tens of thousands," says Josephus, writing of the days of Herod the Great, "of this people that had been carried captive and dwelt about Babylonia."¹ No field could be more inviting to the great Jewish apostle. Moreover, it has often been pointed out that the order² in which St. Peter enumerates the different provinces men-

¹ *Antiquities*, XV. iii. 1.

² See Map.

tioned at the beginning of his letter, is precisely that in which these territories lay, as regarded from Babylonia;—Pontus being the nearest province;—then in a western direction, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia; and finally the most distant of all, Proconular Asia and Bithynia. There is no reason then, but the reverse, to depart from the literal interpretation of the name.

“Foremost,” says Dr. Emmanuel Deutsch, “in the two or three chief groups into which the Jewish Dispersion¹ has been divided, stands the Babylonian, embracing all the Jews of the Persian empire, into every part of which—Babylonia, Media, Persia, Lusiana, Mesopotamia, Assyria, &c.—they penetrated. The Jews of Babylonia proper prided themselves on the exceptional purity of their lineage, a boast uniformly recognised throughout the nation. What Judæa, it was said, was with respect to the Dispersion of other countries—as pure flour to dough—that, Babylonia was to Judæa. Herod pretended to have sprung from Babylonian ancestors, and also bestowed the high-priesthood upon a man from Babylon. In the messages sent by the Sanhedrim to the whole Dispersion, Babylonia received the precedence, although it remained a standing reproach against the Babylonians that they had held aloof from the national cause when their brethren returned to Palestine, and thus had caused the weakness of the Jewish state; as indeed living in Palestine under any circumstances is enumerated among the Jewish ordinances. The very territory of Babylonia was, for certain ritual purposes, considered to be as pure as Palestine itself.”²

124. This interpretation also accounts for the fact that the records of the apostle’s latter days have perished. The memorials of those eastern lands have passed away with the races that inhabited them. No literature survives from those once famous regions. Modern history has almost nothing to tell of them, but that they were made desolate by war; and the cradle of the human race, once fondly chosen as the rallying point for mankind, has for ages been a solitary waste. “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, is as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It is not inhabited, neither hath it been dwelt in from generation to generation,

¹ On this, see the next chapter.

² Kitto’s *Biblical Cyclopædia* (Alexander’s edition). Art. DISPERSION.

neither doth the Arabian pitch tent there, neither do the shepherds make their fold there." [†]

But one memorial of that melancholy land shall survive to all time. For there it was that the Apostle Peter, before he passed away from earth, wrote his first great EPISTLE TO THE SCATTERED CHURCHES.

[†] Isa. xiii. 19, 20.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

125. THE DISPERSION (*diaspora*) was "the collective name given to all those descendants of the Twelve Tribes who lived without the confines of Palestine."¹ The term, besides its use in Peter's first epistle, occurs twice in the New Testament. On one occasion the Jews ask of Christ: "Is He about to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and to teach the Greeks?"² James, the brother of the Lord, addresses his epistle "to the Twelve Tribes who are in the Dispersion."³

Now it appears from Ezra and Nehemiah that the number of Jewish exiles who returned to Palestine after the decree of Cyrus, amounted, excluding slaves, to between forty-two and forty-three thousand.⁴ Many more had settled down in different parts of the Persian empire; some had become wealthy, others were raised to high office in the state;⁵ many causes combined to retain them with their posterity in their new home. Still, through successive generations, they remained faithful to their ancestral religion, submitting everywhere to the decrees of the Sanhedrim; undertaking frequent pilgrimages to Jerusalem; observing the Jewish

¹ Dr. Deutsch, as before quoted. ² John vii. 35. ³ James i. 1.

⁴ Ezra ii. 64, 65; Neh. vii. 66, 67; evidently two copies of the same document.

⁵ Daniel, as chief minister of Cyrus, no doubt influenced him to decree the restoration (B.C. 535), in which, nevertheless, the pious and illustrious Jew had no share. The history of Esther and Mordecai most probably belongs to the reign of Xerxes, 50 years later.

ecclesiastical calendar, beacon fires from the metropolis to distant regions being lighted up with every new moon ; contributing everywhere "the half-shekel," with yet larger gifts, to the support of the Temple worship ; and maintaining in the Jewish metropolis synagogues representative of the several districts of their residence. The Talmud states that of these synagogues there were no fewer than three hundred and eighty, of which the synagogues of the Libertines and Cyrenians mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Acts were examples.

126. The limits of the Dispersion were yet further enlarged by the Greek conquests in Asia. When the Persian empire fell before Alexander the Great, large bodies of Jews were transferred to Egypt, and found a home in Alexandria. On the death of Alexander, Ptolemy, king of Egypt, advanced against Jerusalem, which, as he attacked it on the Sabbath, fell an unresisting prey, and a large body of Jewish colonists was again transplanted to Alexandria and Cyrene. In the anarchy into which the Syrian kingdom fell during the disputes between the generals and successors of Alexander, the native inhabitants were scattered through Asia Minor, Phœnicia, and Cœle-Syria. The persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, who profaned the Temple by heathen rites, and strove to suppress the Jewish faith, still more effectually served to scatter the people throughout Asia Minor, Egypt, and Babylonia. These three countries were, in the time of our Lord and His apostles, the chief seat of the Dispersion. Josephus¹ has given a most interesting collection of decrees issued by the Romans when they had become masters of the East, confirming the Jews in their special privileges ; in which the following places are named as containing Jewish settlements—Tyre and Sidon, Delos, Cos, Ephesus, Sardis, Laodicea, Miletus,

¹ Ant. xiv. 10.

Pergamos, Halicarnassus, with a reference to many more. The Jews of Cappadocia also are casually mentioned in the Talmud.

127. The effect of the Dispersion in facilitating the spread of Christianity was very great. For several generations the Jews had been in free intercourse with the whole of the civilised world, had participated in the intellectual life and received the highest culture of many nations. The Greek language had become universally diffused; lines of communication had been opened in all directions from Jerusalem; and, above all, the Septuagint, the translation of the Old Testament made by the Alexandrine Jews, furnished a ground of common appeal to the Christian teachers of every land who would "reason out of the Scriptures." Thus the way was prepared. The missionaries, the highway, the language, the Book, were all ready. "Out of Zion went forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." "Their voice went out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world."

128. Three New Testament epistles were addressed to the Christian Jews of the Dispersion; that of James, as we have seen, and the two written by St. Peter. James wrote from Jerusalem a circular or encyclical letter to the whole body; Peter, now stationed in the chief district of the Dispersion, in Babylonia, addressed his letters of counsel and exhortation to the district which, it is more than probable, had been the scene of his earlier labours—the widely-extended provinces of Asia Minor.

"The first of these provinces, Pontus, stretched from Colchis and Lesser Armenia to the mouth of the river Halys, and was rich both in soil and in commercial towns. It was the country of the Christian Jew Aquila. Next comes Galatia, to which St. Paul paid two visits, founding and confirming churches. After him, his companion Crescens went on a mission there. Its ecclesiastical metropolis was in after time Ancyra. Next in order comes Cappadocia, south, but returning somewhat to the east, where in after times the towns of Nyssa and Cæsarea gave the church

a Gregory and a Basil, and whence Jews came up to the feasts in Jerusalem, who might well have carried back the knowledge of Christianity and have founded churches. Next, going southward and westward, we have proconsular Asia, including Mysia, Lydia, Caria, Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia—containing the churches of Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas preached; Lystra, the birthplace of Timotheus, where St. Paul was stoned by the Jews; Derbe, the birthplace of Caius, where many were made disciples; Antioch, in Pisidia, where St. Paul converted many Gentiles, but was driven out by the Jews—returned, however, and confirmed the churches; then Miletus, on the Carian coast, where there must have been many Christian brethren; Phrygia, where St. Paul preached on both his journeys to Galatia; then along the banks of the Lycus, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossæ, celebrated Christian churches, to which he wrote his Colossian Epistle, whose leaders, Archippus and Epaphras, whose member, Onesimus, are well known to us—where erroneous doctrines and lukewarmness in the faith soon became prevalent. Then, passing westwards, we find in Lydia, at the foot of the Tmolus, Philadelphia, known to us favourably from Rev. iii. 7, &c., and Sardis, the capital, and Thyatira, blamed in Rev. ii. 18, &c., as too favourably inclined towards false teachers: then on the coast the famous Ephesus, where first St. Paul, then perhaps Aquila and Priscilla, then Apollos, taught, then St. Paul returned, and remained for three years, building up the church with much success—a church well known and loved by every Christian reader of the epistle to the Ephesians, but grieved over when we read that it had deserted its first love. Then northwards we have Smyrna, known favourably to us from Rev. ii. 8, &c; and in Mysia, Pergamos; and, lastly, Alexandria Troas, whence St. Paul was summoned over by a vision to preach in Europe; where afterwards he preached and raised Eutychus to life, and where he was on a subsequent occasion entertained by Carpus. This closes the list of churches known to us, Bithynia containing none whose names are handed down in Scripture." — Steiger, *Einleitung*, § 6, as quoted by Alford, *Prolegomena*. New Test. vol. iv. p. 124.

129. The genuineness and authenticity of the first epistle are undoubted. It has always been received in the churches, is named in the chief ancient catalogues, while an unbroken chain of citation and reference from the earliest times testifies its universal acceptance as containing the very words of the great apostle.

130. The precise date of the letter is uncertain. It was evidently written when times of persecution were at hand. Its language betokens not so much the actual outbreak of hostility to the new faith on the part of the secular autho-

rities as the first mutterings of the tempest, chiefly felt in social persecutions and temporary outbursts of animosity. From this we should be inclined to place it before, but only a short time before, the persecution under Nero ; as late in the apostle's life as will consist with the composition of a subsequent letter addressed to the same communities, and with his journey to Rome (to be hereafter considered), where he received the martyr's crown.

131. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that some at least of the Apostle Paul's letters were known to Peter when he wrote this first epistle. It has been well pointed out by Bishop Wordsworth that the letter was addressed to churches in two districts at least to which St. Paul had himself written epistles, and that there are some remarkable similarities in each case between the words of the two apostles.

Thus Paul, in writing to the Galatians, had said, "Brethren, ye were called to liberty ; only use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh ; but by love serve one another."¹

Peter, in the present epistle, addressing churches in Galatia among the rest, writes, "As free, and not holding your liberty for a cloak of your wickedness, but as servants of God."²

The similarity is striking, and as Bishop Wordsworth adds, "These paragraphs concern that very question of Christian liberty on which the two apostles had been formerly at variance ; and the history of that altercation had been communicated by one of them, St. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, who are also specially addressed by St. Peter in this epistle. St. Peter therefore, we see, did not manifest any resentment towards St. Paul for the rebuke given at Antioch, and for the publication of its history to the world. He frankly comes forward and adopts

¹ Gal. v. 13.

² Chap. ii. 16.

St. Paul's own language on that very question which had been the subject of their dispute. Here is a noble specimen of victory over self and of generous confession of error; here is a beautiful practical application of his own precepts concerning Christian humility, meekness, and gentleness, and of love for the sheep whom Christ purchased with His blood."¹

132. Equally remarkable, in a different way, are the coincidences between this epistle and that of St. Paul termed the Epistle to the Ephesians, but which was probably also a circular or encyclical letter sent to the churches of proconsular Asia. Compare, for instance, Eph. i. 1-7 with 1 Pet. i. 1-3; Eph. ii. 20-22 with 1 Pet. ii. 4; Eph. v. 21 with 1 Pet. v. 5; Eph. v. 22 with 1 Pet. iii. 1; Eph. vi. 5 with 1 Pet. ii. 18. So many of these coincidences in two such short epistles could hardly be accounted for except by supposing that the writer of one was acquainted with the other, and either consciously or unconsciously adopted some of his modes of expression in addressing the same persons on the same subjects. This hypothesis, it may be added, throws some light on the relation between the writings of St. Peter and St. Jude, hereafter to be discussed.

133. If, then, the First Epistle of Peter was written after that to the Galatians (probably A.D. 57), and after that to the "Ephesians" (A.D. 63), but before the outbreak of the Neronian persecution (A.D. 68), we have an interval of three or four years within which it may have been composed, and can hardly be far wrong in assigning it to A.D. 65 or 66. It may be observed that Mark and Silas are both with St. Peter at the date of writing. The former, however, at least, was with St. Paul in his first imprisonment in Rome,²

¹ Wordsworth's *New Testament*. Introduction to the First Epistle of Peter, pp. 42, 43.

² See Col. iv. 10.

but was about to leave him for Asia. What more probable than that Mark came on to Babylonia to join St. Peter, bearing with him a copy of Paul's wonderful letter to the Churches ?¹

134. The outline of St. Peter's letter is not very easy to give, as it flows on in characteristically artless style, one thought growing out of another.

The realisation of every Jewish privilege in Christ is in part the apostle's theme. Still are Christians a chosen race, for their election is in Christ; still have they a country and a home—an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The Temple too remains—a fabric of living stones, and the corner stone is Christ; they have an altar and a sacrifice, the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; and if they ask for the priesthood who henceforth are to minister at that altar, the high assurance is given them that they are priests themselves, the whole Church being now a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices; nay more, a kingly priesthood, or, in the words of the beloved John, “Kings and priests unto God.”

The rest of the epistle is occupied by practical exhortations and the injunction of social and relative duties, warning its readers against temptations to which Christian dwellers in heathen lands would be especially liable; and stimulating their courage and endurance to meet the coming times of persecution.²

¹ The hypothesis of Paul's release and renewed missionary journey, ended by a second imprisonment in Rome, and martyrdom, is not here discussed. There seems no reasonable doubt that this release took place about A.D. 64. Peter's epistle, therefore, would be written while Paul was upon this renewed journey.

² Commentaries on this epistle are numerous. Of Archbishop Leighton's well-known exposition, Coleridge beautifully says that it is to the epistle “as the vibration of the once struck hour remaining on the air.”—*Notes on English Divines*, vol. ii. p. 120.

135. Bengel remarks in his *Gnomon* (on chap. i. 3), that there is throughout the whole epistle a striking congruity with the topics of the Lord's Prayer, adducing the following parallels.

FATHER (ch. i. 3, 14, 17, 23 ; ii. 2).

OUR (ch. i. 3-end).

IN HEAVEN (*ibid.*).

HALLOWED BE THY NAME (ch. i. 15, 16 ; iii. 15).

THY KINGDOM COME (ch. ii. 9).

THY WILL BE DONE (ch. ii. 15 ; iii. 17 ; iv. 2, 19).

GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD (ch. v. 7).

FORGIVE US OUR SINS (ch. iv. 1, 8).

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION (ch. iv. 12).

DELIVER US FROM EVIL (ch. iv. 18).

136. "It is very instructive to observe how deeply the experiences of Peter's fall, and of Christ's mercy then, had impressed themselves on his memory, and how constantly they were present with him all through his after life. His epistles are full of allusions which show this. For instance, to go a step further back in his life, he remembered that the Lord had said to him, 'Thou art Peter,' and that his pride in that name had helped to his rash confidence and so to his sin. Therefore, when he is cured of these, he takes pleasure in sharing his honour with his brethren, and writes: 'Ye also, as living stones, are built up.' He remembered the contempt for others and the trust in himself with which he had said, 'Though all should forsake Thee, yet will not I;' and, taught what must come of that, he writes: 'Be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.' He remembers how hastily he had drawn his sword and struck at Malchus, and he writes: 'If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.' He remembers how he had been surprised into denial by the questions of

a sharp-tongued servant-maid, and he writes: 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness.' He remembers how the pardoning love of his Lord had honoured him unworthily with the charge, 'Feed My sheep,' and he writes, ranking himself as one of the class to whom he speaks: 'The elders I exhort, who am also an elder; . . . feed the flock of God.' He remembers that last command, which sounded ever in his spirit, 'Follow thou Me,' and discerning now, through all the years that lay between, the presumptuous folly and blind inversion of his own work and his Master's which had lain in his earlier question, 'Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake'—he writes to all: 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps.'"¹

THE EPISTLE.

§ I. *Greeting and Introduction. The Wonders of Redemption.*^a
—Chap. I.

^a The divisions of the *Annotated Paraphrase Bible* (R.T.S.) have for the most part been adopted. 1, 2. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to elect sojourners of the Dispersion throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia,² and Bithynia—elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

3-9. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, begat us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,^b who are kept in the power of God through

^b Rec. *us*.

¹ Maclaren, *Sermons preached at Manchester*. Series 2, sermon 4.

² Proconsular Asia; here, apparently, including Phrygia.

faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

In which thing^a ye greatly rejoice,¹ though now
^{a Or, time. See note.} for a season, if need be, ye have sorrowed in
 manifold temptations: that the proof of your
 faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth
 yet is tried by fire, might be found unto praise and glory
 and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Whom
 having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him
 not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and
 a Lit., glorified. triumphant,^d receiving the end of your faith, the
 salvation of souls.

10-12. Concerning which salvation prophets inquired
 and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that
 should come unto you: searching to what, or what manner
 of season the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point
 when it testified beforehand the sufferings appointed for
 Christ, and the glories that should follow them. Unto whom
 it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you they
 did minister those things which have now been reported
 unto you by them that preached the gospel unto you with
 the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven; into which things
 angels desire to search.²

§ 2. *Exhortation to a Course of Life corresponding to the
 Blessings of the Christian State.*—Chap. I.

13-16. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be

¹ Alford and other expositors refer the *rejoicing* to the *time*. "The 'last time' will be joy in contrast with the sorrow that is 'now for a season.'" It appears simpler however to understand it of the present. "Your being 'kept by the power of God' is to you now an occasion of joy."

² Literally "bend," as with eager inquiry—perhaps an allusion to the cherubim bending over the mercy-seat. Observe the twofold argument by which the apostle claims regard for the great salvation—as the theme of *prophetic* search and of *angelic* study.

sober, and hope perfectly for the grace that is being brought unto you in the revelation of Jesus Christ; as children of obedience, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts which were in your ignorance: but according to the Holy One who called you, so be ye holy in all your behaviour, ^a Lev. xi. 44. because it is written, ^a *Ye shall be* ^b *holy, for I* ^b Rec., *be ye.* *am holy.*

17-20. And if ye call on Him as a Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear, knowing that not with corruptible things, silver and gold, ye were redeemed from your vain behaviour received by tradition from your fathers; [†] but with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ, who verily hath been foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest at the end of the times for you, who by Him are believers in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; so that your faith and hope are in God.

22-25. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the ^e Rec. adds, *truth* ^e unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love *by the Spirit.* one another from the ^d heart fervently, having ^d Rec., *a pure* been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of *heart.* incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth. ^e For ^f all flesh is as grass, and all ^e Rec. adds, *for ever.* its glory ^g as the flower of grass. Withered is the ^f Isa. xl. 6-8. grass; yea, the flower thereof is fallen away; but ^g Rec., *the* the word of *g* *Abraham* abideth for ever. Now this *glory of man.* is the word whose glad tidings were brought unto you.

[†] This passage has been quoted to prove at least a Gentile admixture in those whom the apostle addressed. Yet the ancestral traditions of the Jews were in many things corrupt and evil.

Chap. II.—11, 12. Wherefore having laid aside all baseness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envyings, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the pure milk of ^a Rec. omits instruction^r that ye may grow thereby unto *unto salvation*. salvation; ^a if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is good.

4–10. To whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed by men but chosen by God, precious, ye also, as living stones, are being built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because it is contained in Scripture, ^b Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. For you therefore who believe is the preciousness, but unto those who are disobedient, ^c the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner; and ^d a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, to those who stumble, being disobedient to the word, whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are ^e an elect race, a kingly priesthood, an holy nation, a people for [His own] possession; that ye should show forth the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but ^f Hos. ii. 23. are now the people of God; who ^g had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

§ 3. *Relative Duties Enjoined.*—Chap. II.

11, 12. Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and stran-

^r Or, "the pure *spiritual* milk;" including the whole nutriment of the soul, in love and holiness as well as in knowledge. The word denotes all that belongs to the spiritual nature of man, and is employed Rom. xii. 1, "a *reasonable* service," *i.e.*, a service rendered by the reason, or spiritual nature.

gers to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul; having your behaviour honourable among the Gentiles: that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13-16. Submit yourselves therefore to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king^r as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not holding your liberty for a cloak of your wickedness, but as servants of God.

17. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

^a Here follows 18-25.^a SERVANTS; by being subject to your a series of in- masters in all fear; not only to the good and junctions, de- masters in all fear; not only to the good and pendent, in par- considerate, but also to the perverse. For this ticipial form, is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward upon the com- God endure griefs, suffering wrongfully. For mand, *Honour all men.* what glory is it, if when ye do wrong and are buffeted ye shall endure? But if when ye do well and suffer ye shall endure, this is thankworthy with God. For unto this were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you^b an example, that ye should follow His steps:^c who did no sin, neither was ^c quile found in His mouth; who, when reviled, reviled not again; when suffering, threatened not; but com-

^r It would be one of the greatest temptations to these "strangers and sojourners" to disregard the secular authorities of the countries where they dwelt; and it was necessary therefore to enjoin obedience, in civil matters, even to the heathen magistracy.

mitted them^a to Him that judgeth righteously. Who^b His
^a *i. e.*, His per- own self bare our sins in His own body to the
^c secutors. tree, that we being dead to our sins, should
^b See Isa. liii. 4. live¹ unto righteousness; ^c by whose stripes ye
^e Isa. liii. 5. were healed. For ye were ^d going astray as sheep,
^d Isa. liii. 6. but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your
souls.

Chap. III.—1-6. WIVES, likewise; by being in subjec-
tion to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the
word, they shall without speech be won by the behaviour of
their wives; having beheld your chaste behaviour coupled
with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward
adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or
of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of
the heart, in the incorruptible ornament of the meek and
quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.
For after this manner in the old time the holy women also,
who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection
unto their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, call-
^e Gen. xviii. 12. ing him ^e lord: whose children ye have become
if ye do well and are not afraid.

7. HUSBANDS, likewise; by dwelling with the woman
according to knowledge, as with the weaker vessel, giving
honour unto them as being heirs with you of the grace of
life; that your prayers be not hindered.

8-12. ALL, finally; by being of one mind, sympathising,
loving the brethren, compassionate, lowly in mind; not
rendering to others evil for evil, or railing for railing: but

¹ For the sentiment, compare Gal. ii. 20, an instance of coincidence
between the two epistles, additional to those pointed out by Bishop Words-
worth.—See p. 131.

contrariwise, blessing them; because ye were thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For ^a he that desireth to love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayer: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

§ 4. *Exhortation to Patience and Consistency.*—Chap. III.

13-17. And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? But even if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but ^b sanctify Christ in your hearts as Lord. And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, but with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, in the thing in which they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good behaviour in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

18-22. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all—*a* Just One, for unjust men, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh but made alive in Spirit, in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; ¹ which were once disobedient, when the long suf-

¹ Many explanations have been given of this difficult passage. Either it refers (*a*) to some fact otherwise unknown to us, connected with our Lord's entrance, after His crucifixion, into the invisible world; or (*b*) to His "spirit" as manifested in the earthly ministry of His servants; preaching *by them*, to "spirits in prison," *i.e.*, either (1) "to spirits in the bondage of sin"—a description generally of impenitent hearers of the gospel, illustrated specially in the antediluvian hearers of Noah; or (2) to spirits who

fering of God was waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water, which (the antitype, baptism) doth also now save you^a—not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the inquiry of a good conscience after God—by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.

Chap. IV.—1-6. Forasmuch then as Christ suffered^b in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh for the lusts of men but for the will of God. For the time past^c sufficeth^c to have wrought the will of the Gentiles;¹ walking as ye have done in wantonnesses, lusts, excesses of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they (now) think it strange that ye run not with them to the same slough of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the living and the dead. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to dead men, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

7. But the end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8, 9. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for^a charity covereth the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

are now in prison, reserved in Hades unto the judgment of the great day; though in the days of the preaching they were yet on earth, and careless listeners. This last is the interpretation generally accepted by evangelical expositors.

¹ These scattered Jews in many respects had conformed to the sinful habits of the heathen among whom they lived.

10, 11. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

§ 5. *Encouragements under Persecution.*—Chap. IV.

12–19. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the kindling of fire among you, which cometh to try you, as though some strange thing were happening unto you: but in so far as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice, that in the revelation of His glory ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached in the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy body in other men's matters. Yet if (any suffer) as a Christian,¹ let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.^a

^a Rec., on
this behalf.

17–19. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?
^b Prov. xi. 31. And ^b if the righteous man is sared with difficulty,
(LXX.) where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? Wherefore also let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls in well-doing unto ^c a faithful Creator.

¹ That is, "for being a Christian," such being the charge which your heathen persecutors allege against you. The appellation Christian appears in the New Testament as one exclusively used by Gentiles; its employment by believers one of another belongs to a later period.—See Acts xi. 26; xxvi. 28.

§ 6. *Church Duties. Reciprocal Obligations.*—Chap. V.

1-4. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed : tend the flock of God which is among you ; taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords
^a Eng. ver. over (your) portions,^a but becoming examples to
 adds, *God's*. the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5-7. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto your elders. Yea, all of you gird on humility one toward another ; for ^b God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace
 Prov. iii. 34 (LXX.) to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in
^e Rec. omits the time of visitation ;^e casting all your anxiety
 of visitation. upon Him, for He careth for you.

8, 9. Be sober, be vigilant ;^d your adversary the devil as a
^d Rec. adds, roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he
 because. may devour : whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the very same sufferings are being accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10, 11. But the God of all grace, who called you^e unto
^e Rec., *us*. His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye
^f These *promises* are, in you perfect, establish, strengthen, fix you on a
 Rec., *prayers*. sure foundation. To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12. By Silvanus,¹ the faithful brother, as I reckon, I have

¹ Silas, see p. 132. The following sentence refers to *the present letter*.

written unto you in few words, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God, in which stand ye.

13, 14. She in Babylon ¹ that is elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth Mark my son. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.

Peace be with you all that are in Christ.

¹ Probably, *the Church* in Babylon ; but possibly, as some critics think, *Peter's wife*; in which case, it has been suggested, this Mark would most naturally be literally their son. We adhere however to the more usual interpretation, which makes the latter to denote John Mark, of Jerusalem, the Evangelist.—See chap. xxi. of the present work.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GOSPEL BY MARK: TRACES OF PETER'S INFLUENCE.

137. BEFORE proceeding to the Second Epistle, it is right to take some notice of the many and unanimous early traditions which connect the GOSPEL BY MARK with the name and influence of Peter. That the great apostle was closely connected with the "sister's son of Barnabas," may be inferred from the fact that it was to the house of Mary, the mother of John and Mark, that Peter repaired immediately after his liberation from Herod's prison; and from the affectionate words at the close of the first epistle—"Mark, my son."¹ But the widespread tradition has evidently another source than these two passages, and in the absence of any counter-testimony or internal improbability, it may be accepted as authentic.

138. The chief passages which refer to the fellowship between Peter and Mark, and to the share of the former in the composition of the second gospel, have been collected by Dr. Davidson,² as follows:—

"The tradition affirming Mark's close connection with Peter is embodied in the following passages:—

"PAPIAS, or John the presbyter, according to the relation of Papias, says:—'The presbyter (John) said:—Mark being the interpreter of Peter,

¹ See note, p. 145.

² Introduction to the New Testament (Bagster's Edition, 1848), vol. i. 141-145.

³ Eusebius. *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 39 (p. 144, Bagster).

wrote exactly whatever he remembered ; but he did not write in order the things which were spoken or done by Christ. For he was neither a hearer nor a follower of the Lord, but, as I said, afterwards followed Peter, who made his discourses to suit what was required, without the view of giving a connected digest of the discourses of our Lord. Mark, therefore, committed no mistake when he wrote down circumstances as he recollected them. For he was very careful of one thing, to omit nothing of what he heard, and to say nothing false in what he related. Thus Papias writes of Mark.'

"IRENÆUS speaks in this manner :—'Matthew wrote a gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome and founding a church there. And after their decease, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter.'

"CLEMENT of Alexandria, according to Eusebius,² relates :—'In the same books Clement has given a tradition concerning the order of the gospels which he had received from presbyters of old, and which is to this effect. He says that the gospels containing the genealogies were written first ; that the occasion of writing the gospels according to Mark was this : Peter, having publicly preached the Word at Rome, and having spoken the gospel by the Spirit, many present exhorted Mark to write the things which had been spoken, since he had long accompanied Peter, and remembered what he had said ; and that when he had composed the gospel, he delivered it to them who had asked it of him. Which, when Peter knew, he neither forbade nor encouraged it.'

"TERTULLIAN³ writes to this effect :—'Although that gospel likewise, which Mark published, may be said to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was,' &c.

"ORIGEN, as given by Eusebius,⁴ writes :—'The second gospel is that according to Mark, who wrote it as Peter directed him ; who also calls him his son,' &c.

"EUSEBIUS⁵ speaks at length respecting the origin of Mark's Gospel :—'So great an illumination of piety had shone into the minds of Peter's hearers, that, not content with a single hearing, nor with unwritten instruction in the divine doctrine, they importuned, with many entreaties, Mark, the follower of Peter, whose gospel we have, that he would leave them in writing a memorial of the doctrine he had delivered orally, nor

¹ Against Heresies, iii. 1 (vol. i. p. 259, Ante Nicene-Library).

² Eusebius. *Eccl. Hist.* vi. 14 (p. 247, Bagster).

³ Against Marcion, iv. 5 (p. 187, Ante-Nicene Library).

⁴ Eusebius. *Eccl. Hist.* vi. 25 (p. 259, Bagster).

⁵ *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 15 (p. 84, Bagster).

did they desist till they had prevailed upon him ; and thus they were the cause of the gospel which is called according to Mark being written. It is said, that when the apostle knew what had been done, the Spirit having revealed it to him, he was pleased with the eagerness of the men, and authorised that writing to be read in the Churches.'

"The same historian, in his *Evangelical Demonstration*,¹ has the following :—'As for Peter, out of excess of modesty, he did not think himself worthy to write a gospel ; but Mark, who was his friend and disciple, is said to have recorded Peter's relations of the acts of Jesus. . . . And Peter testifies these things of himself, for all things in Mark are said to be memoirs of Peter's discourses.'

"To the same effect JEROME:²—'Mark, disciple and interpreter of Peter, at the desire of the brethren at Rome, wrote a short gospel, according to what he had heard related by Peter ; which, when Peter knew, he approved of it, and authorised it to be read in the Churches, as Clement writes in the sixth book of his *Institutions*. Both Papias of Hierapolis, and Peter in his first epistle, mention this Mark, the latter figuratively calling Rome Babylon,' &c. In another place, the same Father writes :—'Paul had Titus for his interpreter, and Peter, Mark, whose gospel was composed in consequence of the apostle dictating and the evangelist writing.'"

139. There are internal indications which point the same way. The style throughout is that of an eye-witness. See for instance the vivid picture of the "fierce and hopeless wanderer" in the country of the Gadarenes (Mark v. 1-5), peculiar to this evangelist. Minor touches of the same graphic kind abound. In the Temptation, Jesus was "with the wild beasts." On that memorable Sabbath evening which Jesus spent in Capernaum, "all the city was gathered together at the door." The sick of the palsy whom He healed "was borne of four." When the multitude pressed on Jesus by the lake, "He spake to His disciples that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him." And afterwards, it is specially added, "there were also with Him other little ships." In the storm, Christ was "asleep on the pillow;" and when He rebuked the tempest His very words are given,

¹ Book iii. 5.

² *Lives of Illustrious Men*, chap. viii.

“Peace, be still.” At the feeding of the five thousand, He caused the people all “to sit down by companies on the green grass.” On the lake, when a second time endangered by a storm, Christ saw the disciples “toiling in rowing.” When Jesus was in the border of Tyre and Sidon, and would have no man know it, Mark adds, “But He could not be hid.” In the Transfiguration, the Saviour’s garments are described as “exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them;” and the dazzled surprise of the disciples at the close of the vision is vividly set forth by the words, “Suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.” It is to Mark alone that we owe the pathetic dialogue between our Lord and the father of the lunatic child, when the latter “cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.’” In the entry to Jerusalem the colt is found “tied by the door without, at the corner of two roads.” “Mark sometimes adds to the account of the others a notice of our Lord’s look (iii. 34; viii. 33; x. 21, 23); he dwells on human feelings and the tokens of them; on our Lord’s pity for the leper, and His strict charge not to publish the miracle (i. 41, 44). He ‘loved’ the rich young man for his answers (x. 21). He ‘looked round with anger’ when another occasion called it out (iii. 5). He ‘groaned in spirit’ (vii. 34; viii. 12).”¹ Christ was “much displeased,” it might be added, when the disciples forbade the parents to bring their children to Him (x. 14). Again Mark supplies minute particulars. Levi was “the son of Alphæus.” James and John were surnamed “Boanerges.” The father whose daughter Jesus restored from the dead was named “Jairus.” The mother whose daughter Jesus freed from an evil spirit was a “Syro-Phœnician.” The blind man whom He healed

¹ Archbishop Thomson, in *Dictionary of the Bible*.

at the gate of Jericho was called "Bartimæus." Simon, who bore the cross, was "the father of Alexander and Rufus." Words and phrases are preserved in their original Aramaic. "Corban," "Ephphatha," "Talitha cumi," "Abba, Father." These are all peculiar to Mark, and it is impossible to resist the conclusion that one of our Lord's closest and most constant followers had supplied the materials, had often dictated the very words. In the passages relating to Peter himself there is a certain speciality, although less perhaps than might have been anticipated. He is repeatedly mentioned where the other disciples omit his name (i. 36; xi. 21; xiii. 3; especially xvi. 7;—"tell His disciples *and Peter*"). It is remarkable that the sublime promises made to him, as in Matt. xvi. 17-19, are omitted by Mark, who, however, records his protest against the Cross, and the Saviour's stern rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" Peter's walking upon the sea is omitted, but the guilt of his denial is portrayed in all its enormity. Yet his repentance is but lightly touched. Not "he went out and wept *bitterly*," but only "when he thought thereon he wept." These indications also well befit a disciple whose personal share was large in the events which he describes, but who in narrating them is readier to dwell upon his unworthiness than on the honour conferred on him by his Lord.

140. From the probabilities of the case therefore, from the evidence of Christian tradition, and from the tone and character of the narrative itself, we are justified in regarding the Gospel by Mark as virtually THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. PETER. When or where it may have been written is quite uncertain;—whether during Peter's long abode in Jerusalem, or in Babylon, where the apostle once more met with his "son in the faith," or later still, as the tradition asserts, for the special use of Christians in Rome; or

whether written "from memory," as John the Presbyter asserts above, or (as appears likelier) in the apostle's own company. These are points on which it is immaterial to form an opinion. Enough that in the whole narrative, as well as in its opening verse, we have an echo of Peter's own characteristic confession—"The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the SON OF GOD."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

141. THE Second Epistle of Peter is distinguished at the outset by bearing the apostolic superscription in the old Hebrew form—Symeon, not Simon. It has no specific address, but from chap. iii. 1, “This second epistle I write unto you,” is plainly intended for the Christians to whom the first was sent, *i.e.*, to those of Asia Minor, and in the first instance to believing Jews of the Dispersion. Its object is to sustain the faith and courage of the brotherhood in the prospect of rapidly-approaching times of peril. If in the former letter the apostle had spoken of those whose peace was menaced by the fiery trial of persecution, he now has to guard the churches against the deadlier perils of heresy and apostasy. Thus, after a noble assertion of the certainty and glory of revealed truth, he draws a fearful picture of those who would deny the revelation and lead astray the minds of men. This description corresponds in part with the words of another apostle, as will be noticed farther on.

142. The belief in the genuineness of this epistle rests on evidence similar to that on which the other New Testament books are received. It is contained in the early catalogues, save the Muratori Canon;[†] it is referred to, more or less explicitly, by several of the Fathers, although

[†] See Canon Westcott's *Bible in the Church*, p. 112.

the quotations are less numerous and decisive than in the case of the First Epistle. It was received with the rest of the New Testament books at the council of Carthage, A.D. 393; and sufficient reasons can be assigned, from the position of the Asiatic churches, for its having been comparatively unknown to other parts of the Christian community during the earlier centuries.

143. Strong doubts, however, with respect to the genuineness of the epistle, were entertained in the fourth century, and many modern critics have revived the objections then expressed. Eusebius speaks doubtfully. "As to the writings of Peter," he says, "one of his epistles, called the first, is acknowledged as genuine. For this was anciently used by the ancient Fathers in their writings, as an undoubted work of the apostle. But that which is called the second we have not indeed understood to be embodied with the sacred books; yet, as it appeared useful to many, it was studiously read with the other Scriptures."¹ Jerome also, while himself holding the canonicity of the letter, which indeed after his era was never doubted in the church until modern days, says that most of those who in earlier times had denied the epistle to be Peter's, alleged as their reason the dissimilarity of its style to that of the first epistle.

144. The chief objections, however, have been drawn from the contents of the letter, belonging thus to the category of internal evidence. To judge of the value of these demands no extensive acquaintance with critical literature is needed; the grounds of argument are open to all. We select the summary of objections which led the great historian Neander to regard the epistle as spurious, and may be well assured that if these can be shown insufficient to sustain the conclusion, we may, without doubt, retain

¹ *Ecclesiastical History*, iii. 3 (p. 101, Bagster).

our faith in this as a genuine production of St. Peter, and as given by the inspiration of God.

145. "The principal marks of the spuriousness of this epistle," says Neander,¹ "are (1) the difference of the whole character and style compared with the first, and the use here made of the Epistle of Jude, which is partly copied and partly imitated."—It may be replied that the difference of style is exaggerated, as shown especially by Guerike in his learned Introduction. The first chapter has the highest characteristics of the former epistle, and nowhere does the apostle write in a loftier and more tender strain. As to the rest, the difference of subject serves to explain much, and it may be, as Jerome suggests, that the apostle, thinking in his own early language, employs a different amanuensis, or "interpreter." In any case the fact, so far as it exists, is quite insufficient to sustain the conclusion. On the connection between this epistle and that of Jude something will be said hereafter.

(2.) "The apostle assumes," continues Neander, "that he is writing to the same churches as those to whom the First Epistle of Peter is addressed; and yet what he says of his relation to his readers is at variance with that assumption. For, according to the Second Epistle, they must have been persons who had been personally instructed by the Apostle Peter, and with whom he stood in a close personal connection. Yet this was a relation in which the churches to which the First Epistle was addressed could not stand."—This last assertion cannot be sustained. It has been shown above that a "personal relation" between Peter and these Asiatic churches is highly probable in itself. This the First Epistle does not in any way disprove, and the Second Epistle only confirms the probability.

¹ *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 33. (Ryland's translation.)

(3.) "The solicitude with which he endeavours to make himself known as the Apostle Peter betrays an apocryphal writer."—A strange assertion truly! Do not others of the sacred writers assert their authorship in like manner—as St. Paul? Who discerns in this a proof of the "apocryphal," in plain words, of forgery? There was every reason, in the circumstances of the era, that the churches should know it was an apostle who spoke.

(4.) "The allusion to the words of Christ (John xxii. 18), in i. 14, is brought forward in an unsuitable manner."—Again the assertion is amazing! Happily every thoughtful, sympathetic reader, can judge whether the allusion be not in fact most appropriate and touching; so that every devout student of the New Testament would own a very real and distinct loss, if he might no more lay to heart these parting counsels of the great Apostle now about to put off his tabernacle.

(5.) "In order to distinguish himself as a credible witness of the life of Christ he appeals to the phenomena at the Transfiguration. But it certainly is not natural to suppose that one of the apostles should select and bring forward from the whole life of Christ, of which they had been eye-witnesses, this insulated fact, which was less essentially connected with that which was the central point and object of his appearance. The apostles were rather accustomed to claim credit as witnesses of the sufferings and resurrection of Christ. Also the designation of the mountain on which the Transfiguration occurred, as 'the holy mount,' betrays a later origin, since we cannot suppose that the mountain usually so denominated, Mount Zion, was intended."—In reply to this objection we may refer to the account already given of the Transfiguration, its place and significance in the ministry of our Lord. It will there be found abundantly proved that the reference here from Peter, one of the three

eye-witnesses, is most deeply appropriate. John, another of the three, seems to refer to it in the opening of his Gospel.¹ "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." With regard to the appellation, the holy mount, it is enough to remark that Zion is never so termed in the New Testament, and the name is obviously suitable to the scene of the Transfiguration, which must have been hallowed in the memory of those disciples for evermore.

(6.) "Among the circumstances that excite suspicion is the manner in which the same false teachers, who in the Epistle of Jude are described as actually existing, are here represented with prophetic warning as about to appear."—Why is this suspicious? The one apostle declares a coming evil: the other, taking up his inspired words, announces the prophecy fulfilled. The bearing of this point upon the question of the priority of Jude or Peter will be noticed hereafter.

(7.) "The doubts respecting the second coming of Christ, occasioned by the expectation of the occurrence of that event in the first age of the church, and the disappointment of that expectation, lead us to recognise a later period."—This objection rests upon the denial of prophetic inspiration. The epistle declares that in the latter days scoffers should arise and say, *Where is the promise of His coming?* Neander assumes that this could only have been written after the scoffers had already come,—an inference which, believing that God inspired His servants to foretell future things, we cannot admit.

(8.) "What is said of the origin of the world from water, and its destruction by fire, does not correspond to the simplicity and practical spirit of the apostolic doctrine, but rather indicates the spirit of a later age, mingling

¹ John i. 14.

much that was foreign with the religious interest."—Must we then reject a writing that touches upon topics not contained in other inspired books? The argument of the apostle from the origin and destruction of the world seems eminently and perfectly appropriate to the subject which he had in hand, and to the confutation of the scorners whom he opposed.

(9.) "The mode of citing the Pauline epistles confirms also the suspicion against the genuineness of this epistle. A passage from Romans ii. 4 is cited in iii. 15, as if this epistle were addressed to the same church. A collection of all the Pauline epistles is referred to, and it is assumed that Paul in all of them referred to one subject, which yet by no means appears in all. Paul's epistles are quoted as 'Scriptures,' as one apostle would certainly not have expressed himself respecting the epistles of another apostle, for this term in the apostolic epistles is always used only to designate the writings of the Old Testament."—The assertions of this paragraph are many of them unsupported, and others are not to the purpose. We cannot admit the assumption of what an apostle would "certainly not have done:" the question is, Has he done it? The notes below on the passages in question will, it is believed, effectually dispose of all that is of weight in the learned historian's criticisms.

146. Neander's conclusion is that "the epistle was probably forged by those who wished to combat the Gnostic errors, and the opinion broached by the Gnostics of a contrariety between the Apostles Peter and Paul, by the borrowed authority of the former." We can only say that none of the arguments advanced, nor all of them combined, can authorise so painful a conclusion. Not only forgery, but falsehood the most direct and unblushing, must, if we accept the great historian's theory, be attributed to the

writer of some of the most majestic and tender words in the New Testament. He begins with a fraud, the impious assumption of an apostolic name and of inspired authority: he ends by the solemn adjuration, "Ye therefore beloved, beware lest ye fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." He imposes on the universal church. He invents, in a word, a "cunningly-devised fable" to "make known the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ"! The moral phenomenon would be unexampled, for neither in the character nor the acceptance of the apocryphal and supposititious writings of the first two centuries is there any parallel. "The judgment," then, "of the early church is not to be reversed without far stronger arguments than have been adduced, more especially as the epistle inculcates no new doctrine, bears on no controversies of post-apostolical origin, supports no hierarchical innovations, but is simple, earnest, devout, and eminently practical, full of the characteristic graces of the apostle who, as we believe, bequeathed this last proof of faith and hope to the Church."¹

147. The date and place of the epistle will be decided mainly according to the answer given to the interesting questions that have been raised, and will hereafter be discussed respecting the close of the apostle's life. Suffice it now to say that there seems no reason to question the general belief that it was despatched from ROME on the very eve of St. Peter's martyrdom.

148. The similarities between this epistle and that of "Judas, the brother of James" (see the parallel passages from the latter in the notes to the epistle below), have been variously accounted for. Setting aside the theory that the Divine Spirit dictated the self-same predictions, almost in the same words, to the two apostles, which though possible,

¹ Canon Cook, in *Dictionary of the Bible*.

does not seem to be according to the method of the Divine working, it may be supposed either, (1) that Jude followed Peter, or (2) that Peter followed Jude, or (3) that both employed some common document. We may dismiss (3) as unsustained by any evidence, external or internal; and our inquiry is thus narrowed to the question whether of the two is the original. The point is one which it seems impossible to settle conclusively, nor is it very important to do so. *Prophetic* inspiration, it is plain from the comparison of Isa. ii. 1-5 with Micah iv. 1-5, is quite consistent with the employment of material already existent; and if so, why not *apostolic* likewise? It is sometimes urged that Jude, the less, would be more likely to quote from Peter, as the greater; but to this it is replied that the greater might quite as appropriately quote from the less, to give authoritative sanction to his words. Again, it has been argued that Jude's prophecy is in parts the clearer of the two, and was therefore the earlier: might it not be alleged, with equal plausibility, that the later would be the clearer, for the sake of removing obscurities? On the whole, the most satisfactory ground of decision seems to be that already hinted, that Peter predicts and Jude declares the prediction accomplished. Peter utters the warning, and Jude, repeating it in Peter's own language, as a thing already brought to pass, says, "Remember ye the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, walking after their own ungodly lusts." It would appear, then, that Jude follows Peter, reiterating his denunciations, and threatening the self-same doom. Nor is it wonderful that he should quote Peter, having also quoted Enoch in the compass of his brief epistle.

149. An early tradition, which there is no reason to doubt,

represents Jude as having selected *Edessa*, in the north of Mesopotamia, as the chief scene of his apostolic labours. If so, the two apostles occupied adjacent districts. It is natural to suppose that they would sometimes meet; that a frequent topic of their converse would be the degeneracy of the times and the approach of "the last days;" and that this community of thought and feeling would reappear in their written words.

THE EPISTLE.

§ 1. *Address and Greeting. Exhortations to the Culture of the Christian Character.*—Chap. I.

1, 2. Symeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

3-7. Forasmuch as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that called us by glory and might: whereby He hath given unto us the exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust: and for this very reason also, giving all diligence, in your faith supply¹ fortitude; and in your fortitude, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control; and in your self-control, endurance; and in your endurance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness, love.

8-11. For, these things being yours and abounding, make you neither idle nor unfruitful as to the knowledge of our

¹ The idea is not that of one Christian grace *added to* another, so much as of one *enfolding* another, like the rosebud;—with Love at the heart.

Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, short-sighted, having forgotten the cleansing away of his former sins. Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for whilst doing these things ye shall never fall: for so the entrance shall be richly ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

§ 2. *Personal Appeals. Apostles and Prophets the Witnesses of Christ.*—Chap. I.

12-15. Wherefore I will be sure^a to put you always in
^a Rec., *will not* remembrance of these things, though ye know
be negligent. them and are established in the present truth. Yea, I think it right, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up in remembrance: knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ showed unto me. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my departure to have these things on every occasion in remembrance.

16-18. For, not in pursuance of cunningly devised fables, did we make known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but from having been eye-witnesses of His majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice borne from heaven we heard, when we were with Him on the holy mount.

19-21. And we have the prophetic word more sure,[†] whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a lamp

[†] "Sure," as confirmed by the Transfiguration, when the prophets, in the persons of Moses and Elijah, did homage to the Beloved Son.

that shineth in a dark place, until the day shall dawn, and the morning-star shall arise in your hearts : knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of its own solution.¹ For prophecy was never brought by the will of man : but the holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

§ 3. *False Teachers described : their Certain Destruction.*—
Chap. II.

1-3. But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers also among you,² who shall bring in heresies of destruction, even denying the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their wanton ways ; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be blasphemed. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you : for whom the judgment now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.

4-9. For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell, and delivered them into dens of darkness, being reserved unto judgment ; and spared not the old world,³ but saved Noah with seven others,^a a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of ungodly men ; and burning to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah,⁴ con-

¹ This means, "either that prophecy cannot be interpreted by itself, apart from the whole body of prophecy or course of events ; or, more likely, that it could not be explained by the prophet himself, and implying that its full meaning was hid from the prophet's own mind. (See Dan. xii. 8.) So that it must be (ver. 21), not a human discovery or suggestion, but a direct communication from God, and should be received and attended to as such."—*Annotated Paragraph Bible*.

² The evil here foretold, Jude declares to have come to pass (ver. 4) : "There are certain men crept in unawares."

³ See Jude 6 : "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. ⁴ See Jude 7.

demned them to an overthrow, laying down an example of those that afterwards should live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, vexed with the behaviour of the lawless in their wantonness (for the righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, tormented his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds); the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, but to reserve the unrighteous unto the day of judgment under punishment.

10-16. But chiefly these that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous, self-willed, they are not afraid to rail at dignities. Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, bring not railing judgment against them before the Lord.¹ But these, as irrational animals, born for capture and destruction, speaking evil in the things that they understand not, shall utterly perish in their own corruption, receiving the wages of unrighteousness; accounting it pleasure to riot in the daytime: spots and blemishes,² rioting in their own deceit while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls, having a heart exercised with covetous practices, children of a curse, having forsaken the right way and gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor,³ who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but had a rebuke for his own transgression: a dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

¹ See Jude 8, 9, especially the latter verse, which confirms the word of Peter by reference to the Archangel Michael. Jude perhaps here quotes an authentic tradition, perhaps refers to Zech. iii. 2.

² Compare Jude 12. This apostle adds, *in your feasts of charity*, "your love-feasts" (1 Cor. xi. 20, 21).

³ Jude, ver. 11, adds the further parallels of Cain, his brother's murderer (1 John iii. 12), and Korah, the rebel against Divine authority.

17-22. These are wells without water, mists driven by a Rec. adds, tempest; for whom the blackness of darkness ¹ for ever. is reserved.^a For by speaking great swelling words of vanity,² they allure with lusts of the flesh, by wantonnesses, those that were scarcely escaping from them who live in error; promising them liberty while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whatsoever a man is overcome, by that also is he enslaved. For if, after having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are yet overcome by being again entangled therein, the last state with them is worse than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after having known it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

But it has happened to them according to the ^b Prov. xxvi. 11. true proverb,^b A dog turned back to his own vomit; and a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

§ 4. *The Certainty of the Lord's Coming.*—Chap. III.

1-4. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of the Lord and Saviour given by your apostles.^c Knowing this first, that there shall come at the end of the days scoffers, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue thus from the beginning of the creation.

¹ The later apostle gives a yet more terrible emphasis to the description: "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." (Jude 13.)

² Compare Jude 16.

5-7. For of this they are willingly ignorant, that ^a by the
^a Ps. xxxiii. 6. word of God the heavens were from of old, and
 the earth formed out of water and by means of
^b Ps. xxiv. 2. water, ^b whereby the world that then was, being
 flooded with water, perished: but the heavens which are
 now and the earth by His word are kept in store reserved
 unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of un-
 godly men.

8-10. But of this one thing, beloved, be ye not ignorant
 that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and ^c
^c Ps. xc. 4. a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not
 slack concerning His promise as some count slackness;
^d Rec., *us.* but is long-suffering toward you, ^d not willing
 that any should perish, but that all should come to
 repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a
 thief, ^e in which the heavens shall pass away
^e Rec. adds, with a rushing noise, and the elements shall be
in the night. dissolved with fervent heat, the earth also, and
 the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Concluding Exhortations.—Chap. III.

11-13. Seeing then that all these things are dissolving,
 what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy behaviour
 and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the
 day of God; by reason of which the heavens being on
 fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with
 fervent heat? But according to His promise we look
^f Isa. lxxv. 17. for ^f new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwell-
 eth righteousness.

14-16. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such
 things, strive earnestly that ye may be found of Him in

peace without spot and blameless. And the long-suffering of our Lord account salvation, even as also our beloved brother Paul, according unto the wisdom given unto him, wrote unto you ; as also in all his epistles,[†] speaking in them of these things ; in which epistles are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17, 18. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know beforehand, beware lest, being led away with the error of the lawless, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.

150. APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS attributed to the apostle may here be noticed in a single paragraph. "As to that work," writes Eusebius, "which is ascribed to him, called 'The Acts,' and the 'Gospel according to Peter,' and that called 'The Preaching,' and 'The Revelation of

[†] This reference to Paul's epistles shows that they were already among the sacred books of the church. The allusions may be, first to Rom. ii. 4 ; then to such passages as 1 Cor. xv. 24 ; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17 ; v. 2, 3 ; 2 Thess. i. 7-10. The things "hard to be understood" are not necessarily connected with these particular revelations, but may denote the deeper doctrinal matters of Paul's teachings. With regard to the argument sometimes urged from this reference against the antiquity of the Epistle, Dean Alford remarks : "It is an entirely unwarranted assumption to understand by *all his epistles* here, an entire collection of St. Paul's Epistles as we now have them, seeing that the words can only represent as many of them as the writer had seen (this is shown on philological grounds) ; and that it is equally unjustifiable to gather, from what follows, that the sacred canon of the New Testament was at that time settled. Those words cannot imply more than that there were certain writings by Christian teachers which were reckoned as on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures, and called by the same name. And that that was not the case, even in the traditional lifetime of St. Peter, it would be surely unreasonable to affirm."
—*Prolegomena to 2 Peter*, § 24.

Peter,' we know nothing of their being handed down as catholic writings ; since neither among the ancient nor the ecclesiastical writers of our own day has there been one that has appealed to testimony taken from them." None of these works survive in a complete form. Of "the Preaching," Clement of Alexandria (died about A.D. 220) gives some examples in his "Miscellanies," quite unlike the strain of the apostle's recorded discourses, or of his epistles. The "Revelation" had a wider currency, is named with the Apocalypse of St. John in the Muratorian fragment, was commented on by Clement of Alexandria, and according to Sozomen,¹ was read once a year in some churches of Palestine. Lücke, in his introduction to the Revelation of St. John, gives a good account of this curious work, which, in the words of Canon Cook, "appears to have consisted chiefly of denunciations against the Jews, and predictions of the fall of Jerusalem, and to have been of a wild, fanatical character."

¹ *Ecc. Hist.* vii. 19 (p. 355, Bagster).

CHAPTER XXIII.

PETER'S LAST DAYS.

151. FEW, if any, historical traditions of the early church are so variously supported, or have been so widely diffused, as that of St. Peter's martyrdom at Rome. In estimating its likelihood of the fact, we must carefully distinguish between this belief and that before discussed, of the apostle's early visit to the imperial city and his twenty-five years' popedom. That his residence there for so long a time, or for any prolonged period, is absolutely contradicted by Scripture, has already been fully shown. It by no means follows, however, that Peter never was in Rome at all. There is a danger on both sides of confounding the two very different suppositions ; it being, on the one hand, too often assumed that the evidence for the apostle's Roman martyrdom is also evidence for his popedom ; while on the other, the easy and abundant refutation which can be given to the latter leads to the over hasty rejection of the former. That the evidence either way is decisive cannot be asserted. Scripture makes but little of martyrdoms and burials. It was reserved for later ages to expend more curious inquiry on the place and manner of the death of the saints than on the lesson of their lives.

152. That Peter was destined to martyrdom, is intimated very clearly by the words of Christ, as interpreted by John. "Another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what manner

of death he should glorify God." ¹ The consensus of all ancient Christian writers is in accord with this prediction. Peter died a martyr.

153. The earliest witness to the fact is CLEMENT of Rome. "Peter," he says, "underwent not one or two, but a multitude of toils, and having thus borne witness, went to his befitting place of glory." ² Clement does not mention the place, but by immediately speaking of the martyrdom of Paul seems to associate the two. So IGNATIUS (martyred A.D. 115) in his Epistle to the Romans ³ says, "I do not command you as did Peter and Paul," implying the same fellowship between the two apostles in their later career. DIONYSIUS, bishop of Corinth (died A.D. 170), writes to the Romans : ⁴ "Thus likewise you have mingled the flourishing seed that had been planted by Peter and Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both of these having planted us at Corinth, likewise instructed us ; and having in like manner taught in Italy, they suffered martyrdom about the same time." To this testimony may be added that of IRENÆUS, before cited, ⁵ which although it cannot be taken, in opposition to all Scripture testimony, to prove that Peter *founded* the church in Rome, assuredly shows how early and widespread was the impression that part of his career was connected with that city. CAIUS, the Roman Presbyter (died about A.D. 200), speaks of Peter's tomb in the Vatican. ORIGEN (died A.D. 254) says : "Peter appears to have preached in Pontus and Galatia, and Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia, to the Jews in the Dispersion. He also in the end, being at Rome, was crucified." ⁶ TERTULLIAN (died A.D. 240) writes of Rome : "What a happy church is that, on

¹ John xxi. 19.

² Clement's *Epistle to the Corinthians*, v., where see Professor Light-foot's note.

³ Chap. v.

⁴ As quoted by Eusebius. *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 25 (p. 99, Bagster).

⁵ See p. 123. ⁶ Given in Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* iii. 1 (p. 101, Bagster).

which the apostles poured out all their doctrine with their blood! Where Peter had a like passion with the Lord, where Paul hath for his crown the same death with John (the Baptist)!"¹ But further testimony would be needless. From this time the tradition was unanimous. It is no mere tribute to Roman supremacy. The Eastern and Western Churches agree in upholding it. No counterclaim is advanced in any direction. Had there existed any doubt, other cities and churches might have arrogated to themselves the honour of having been the final earthly abode of the apostle, the scene of his martyrdom. But no assertion of the kind is found through all patristic literature; and although certainty, in the absence of Scripture evidence, is impossible, it is difficult to resist the belief that when the close of his life had nearly come, the apostle bent his way from the far east to the Roman metropolis, and that after brief residence and labour there he fell, like his comrade Paul, in the persecution under Nero.²

154. One legend of this time is often quoted for its beauty: it may have had some foundation in fact. When persecution first broke out, it is said, Peter was persuaded by his friends to avail himself of Christ's permission, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another." Accordingly he passed through the gates of Rome, and was proceeding hastily along the Appian Way. There, sud-

¹ *On the Prescription of Heretics*, chap. xxxvii. (p. 470, Oxford Lib. Fathers.)

² Olshausen says, *Commentary on Romans*, Introd. p. 56 (Clark), that there is really "no sufficient ground for doubting" the account of Peter's martyrdom in Rome. Neander inclines to accept the truth of the tradition (*Planting and Training*, vol. ii. pp. 40, 41). Dr. Schaff says, after enumerating the several testimonies: "However these testimonies from various men and countries may differ in particular circumstances, they can only be accounted for by the supposition of some fact at the bottom, for they were previous to any use or abuse of this tradition for hierarchical purposes."—*Hist. Christian Church*, vol. i. p. 64.

denly, he met his risen Lord, and in amazement asked, *Domine, quo vadis?*—"Master, whither goest Thou?" "I go to Rome," was the reply, "again to be crucified." Peter said, "Lord, wast Thou not crucified once for all?" And the Lord answering, said, "I saw thee fleeing from death, and I wish to be crucified instead of thee." Peter replied, "Lord, I go to fulfil Thy command." And the Lord said, "Fear not, for I am with thee."¹

155. The manner of Peter's death has been variously related. A tradition, of no very early date, is that when condemned to crucifixion, he, scrupled from a feeling of humility to be put to death exactly in the same manner as the Saviour, and therefore requested that he might be crucified with his head downwards and his feet upwards.² "Such a story," Neander very justly says, "bears on its front the impress of a later morbid piety rather than simple apostolic humility." Nor only so, but the growth of the legend from age to age can be plainly traced. Clement and Irenæus knew nothing of it. Tertullian, with whose gloomy enthusiasm the story would have been peculiarly congenial, simply says that Peter "had a like passion with his Lord." Origen, as quoted by Eusebius,³ is made to say that the apostle was crucified with his head downwards; but this seems to have arisen from a misconception of Origen's words, which simply mean that Peter was fastened to the cross by the head. From this misunderstanding the account undoubtedly sprung, and Jerome last of all gives the legend in its full form.⁴ A story which required more than three hundred years to get into shape, and which is

¹ "Acts of Peter and Paul," in *Apocryphal Writings* (Ante-Nicene Fathers), p. 275. The tradition is also given by Origen. A little church, with the usual superstitious accompaniments, now marks the legendary site of the interview.

² Neander, *Planting and Training*, vol. ii. p. 34 (Ryland's Trans.).

³ *Eccl. Hist.* iii. 1.

⁴ *De viris illustribus*, 1.

besides intrinsically improbable, can scarcely be otherwise than rejected. The manner of the great apostle's "departure"¹ has wisely been left in uncertainty, and we need not desire to raise the veil.

156. It is an interesting tradition which brings Paul and Peter together in their last hours.² Much had separated them since those "fifteen days" which the apostle who had been so honoured by his Lord, and the convert fresh from his meditative sojourn in Arabia, had spent together in Jerusalem. Their paths had lain far apart, and once at least they had met in bitter controversy. The younger disciple had far outstripped the elder in the race, and the church of all time was to take its theology not from Peter but from Paul. But controversies, we may well imagine, are all forgotten now; jealousies exist no longer. Cephas and his "beloved brother Paul" are for a little while as near in outward fellowship as they had ever really been in heart. The visitor to the Mamertine dungeon, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the records, and the superstitions which impair the simplicity and tenderness of its associations, cannot but feel a new thrill of emotion at the very probability that there the soldiers of Christ, their warfare ended, met at last. Paul, as a Roman citizen, was beheaded; Peter the Jew would meet with no merciful consideration, and in all probability suffered the slave's death of crucifixion.

157. Another touching legend associates the wife of Peter with him in his last hours. It is thus given by Clement of Alexandria. "They say that the blessed Peter, on seeing his wife led to death, rejoiced on account of her call and

¹ See 2 Pet. i. 15.

² It is almost certain, however, that if this were so, the two apostles did not meet until after the date of the second Epistle to Timothy. See 2 Tim. iv. 11. Perhaps Peter accompanied Mark from the East to visit Paul, in answer to his pathetic appeal, and to share his sufferings.

conveyance home, and called very encouragingly and comfortingly, addressing her by name, 'Remember thou the Lord.' Such was the marriage of the blessed, and their perfect disposition towards those dearest to them."¹

158. The traditionary place of Peter's tomb is marked by the magnificent cathedral which bears his name. A statue, believed on good grounds to have been an image of Jupiter, receives the ignorant homage of the credulous as the veritable semblance of the great apostle. Elsewhere must we turn for his true monument,—a Life whose record shall abide when statue and temple alike shall have fallen; a Confession that shall outlast all human creeds; with a personal Assurance of faith and love, which for every true disciple in turn may express all that is deepest and holiest in the soul: "LORD, THOU KNOWEST ALL THINGS: THOU KNOWEST THAT I LOVE THEE."

¹ *Stromata* (Miscellanies), book vii. (Ante-Nicene Library, Clement, vol. ii. pp. 451, 452.)



APPENDIX I.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

[The following dates are in many cases approximate only. The fixed points are furnished chiefly by the contemporaneous events of Roman history, marked in the table by *italics*. Considerable use has also been made of the Apostle Paul's chronological references in Galatians i. ii. ; the "fourteen years after," in ii. 1, being calculated from his *conversion*.]

A.D.

27. Simon brought by his brother Andrew to Jesus. Early spring.
27. Our Lord's first passover in His public ministry.
27. Imprisonment of John the Baptist. Autumn or winter.
28. Call of Simon, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee to the apostleship.
28. Ordination of the Twelve Apostles.
29. Death of John the Baptist.
29. Confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi. The Transfiguration. *Summer*.
30. The Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ.
30. Outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.
30. Citation of the apostles before the council. Speech of Gamaliel.
32. Appointment of "the seven." Martyrdom of Stephen.
36. Conversion of Saul.
36. Peter's visit to the Samaritans.
37. *Tiberius succeeded by Caius Caligula.*
37. *Deposition and banishment of Herod Antipas.*
37. *First year of Herod Agrippa in the Tetrarchy of Galilee.*
38. *Attempt of Caius Caligula to erect his statue in the Temple.*
- 38-44. Peace and prosperity of the churches.
38. Conversion of Cornelius.

A.D.

38. Preaching at Antioch by Hellenists.
39. First visit of Paul to Jerusalem.
41. *Herod Agrippa installed in the government of Judæa.*
41. *Death of Caius Caligula. Accession of Claudius.*
44. Martyrdom of James the son of Zebedee. Imprisonment of Peter in the spring.
44. *Death of Herod Agrippa in the summer.*
45. Second visit of Paul to Jerusalem.
45. Mission of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles.
50. Council at Jerusalem respecting the Gentile converts and the Law.
50. Peter's visit to Antioch, and rebuke.
51. Beginning of Peter's missionary circuit.
52. Paul at Corinth.
54. Apollos at Corinth.
54. *Death of Claudius. Accession of Nero.*
56. Peter at Corinth. (?)
61. Paul sets out on his voyage to Rome.
64. Liberation of Paul and departure from Rome.
65. Peter's First Epistle written from Babylon.
66. Second arrival of Paul at Rome, and audience before Nero.
67. Peter arrives at Rome. (?) Second Epistle written.
68. Martyrdom of Paul and Peter (?) at Rome.
68. *Death of Nero.*

APPENDIX II.

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS QUOTED IN THE FOREGOING PAGES.

[The works mentioned do not include all the writings of the respective authors, but only those quoted or referred to in the preceding pages.]

CLEMENT, bishop of the church in Rome. *Letter to the Corinthians*, edited by Dr. Lightfoot, 1869. Died, A.D. 100.

IGNATIUS, bishop of Antioch. *Epistles*. (Apostolical Fathers.) Martyred, A.D. 115.

PAPIAS, bishop of Hierapolis. *Oracles of the Lord*, lost fragments preserved by Eusebius. "A man of very limited mind." Flourished about A.D. 117.

JUSTIN MARTYR, a Christian philosopher and apologist, Rome and Asia. *First and Second Apologies*. (Ante-Nicene Library.) Martyred, A.D. 165.

DIONYSIUS, bishop of Corinth; "a man of great eloquence and industry." Works on the *Genuineness and Authority of Scripture*. Fragments only, preserved by Eusebius. Flourished about A.D. 175.

IRENÆUS, bishop of Lyons. *Treatise against Heresies*. (Ante-Nicene Library.) Died about A.D. 200.

CLEMENT, presbyter, of Alexandria; head of the Catechetical School; "the most learned of the Fathers." *Stromata*, or "Miscellanies." (Ante-Nicene Library.) Died, A.D. 220.

TERTULLIAN, presbyter, of Carthage, a Montanist, and "the earliest Latin Christian writer of any note." *Apology; On the Prescription of Heretics*, and many other works, (Ante-Nicene Library; Oxford Fathers.) Died about A.D. 220.

- HIPPOLYTUS, bishop of Portus Romanus (Ostia), in Italy. *Concerning all Heresies*, and fragments. (Ante-Nicene Library.) Died about A.D. 230.
- ORIGEN, of Alexandria. Biblical critic, and head (after Clement) of the Catechetical School. Works in Ante-Nicene Library. *Commentaries*, now lost, or preserved in fragments by Eusebius. Died, A.D. 253.
- EUSEBIUS, bishop of Cæsarea, "the father of ecclesiastical history;" of Arian tendencies; friend of Constantine the Great. *Ecclesiastical History*. (Bagster's series of Greek Ecclesiastical Historians.) Died, A.D. 340.
- AMBROSE, bishop of Milan. *Commentaries and Sermons*. (Oxford Library of the Fathers.) Died, A.D. 397.
- JEROME, ascetic, critic, and scholar. Author of the "Vulgate," Latin translation of the Scriptures. *De viris illustribus*, "concerning illustrious men." Died at Bethlehem, A.D. 420.

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