

CONVERSATIONS

ON THE

BIBLE



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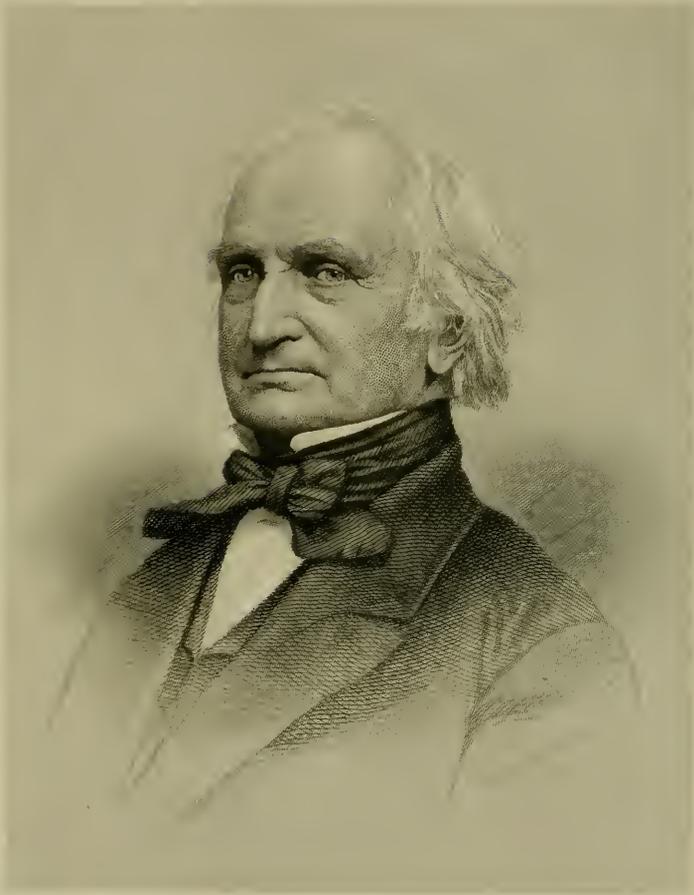
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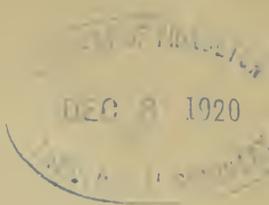
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Enoch Pond.



CONVERSATIONS
ON THE BIBLE.

ITS

STATEMENTS HARMONIZED AND MYSTERIES
EXPLAINED.

DESIGNED FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE, THE STUDY, AND TO MEET THE
INQUIRIES OF THE PRESENT AGE.

BY ENOCH POND, D. D.,
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AUTHOR OF "CHURCH HISTORY," "LECTURES ON THEOLOGY," "MEMOIRS OF
REFORMATION," "WICKLIFFE," "SEALS OPENED,"
ETC., ETC.

"Understanding is a Wellspring of Life unto Him that hath it."

PROV. 16: 22.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS work is the child of my old age. My reasons for preparing it have been partly personal. I needed something to do. I must have some steady congenial employment, or I could not be happy. I felt, too, that if I neglected to employ my faculties, I might soon lose them. The best mode of preserving them unimpaired would be to keep them bright with use. At the same time, I could think of nothing on which, at my period of life, I could more appropriately employ my thoughts, than on the Bible. I firmly believed it to be a revelation from God to the world—a “light shining in a dark place;” I had made it, in one form or another, the study of a long life; my sentiments in regard to it were matured and settled; and what better could I do, than to pass over its sacred contents in the form of question and answer, and set them forth for the instruction and benefit of my fellow men?

The conversational form was adopted, as being the most familiar, and the best adapted, perhaps, to arrest and fix attention. The conversations are between a clerical father and his son,—not a mere child, but a son liberally educated, and about to enter upon studies preparatory to the ministry. This remark will show, that the work is not intended merely for children, and young persons. It is meant to be read in families, by Sabbath school teachers, by persons of all ages and conditions in life. Indeed, the conversations, though between father and son, are supposed to be had in a family, in presence of the different members.

And this remark will help to explain the nature of these conversations. The son does not approach his father always in the

character of a mere inquirer, but often as an interlocutor, engaged in carrying on a conversation, and proposing questions for this very purpose—questions which, in some instances, might seem more appropriate to come from the father, than the son.

In conclusion, I commit this, my latest and perhaps my last publication to God and his people, hoping that it may lead to a more diligent study of the Bible, to a greater love for it and delight in it, to a firmer faith in its holy doctrines, to a more strict conformity to its sacred precepts, and thus to a more perfect preparation for that eternal rest which remains for all the children of God.

ENOCH POND.

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CONVERSATIONS ON THE BIBLE.

FIRST BOOK.

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON.

CONVERSATION I.

DO WE NEED A BIBLE?—Universal desire for further light.—The Bible's inspiration.—Its necessity.—Nature *versus* Revelation.—Nature the only light of the heathen.—Its abuse and perversion.—Nature's insufficiency confirmed.—Original universality of Revelation.—Subsequent loss and reasons for its slow development throughout the world.

Son.—You recommend to me, dear father, a careful study of the Bible, and promise to assist me in my inquiries. I thank you for your kindness, and shall gladly undertake what you propose. But if I study the Bible at all, I wish to do it understandingly; and before directly entering upon it, I shall be glad to confer with you, at some length, on the subject. I know you will be patient with me, and give me all the assistance in your power.

The Bible professes to be a supernatural revelation from God. Is it likely that God has ever made such a revelation? Is a revelation like this necessary for us—so necessary as to call for such a display of power and grace? The book of nature is ever open to us, and some people tell us that this is enough. Its teachings, they say, are clear and ample, and we need no more.

Father.—Your inquiry, my son, is a proper one, and I shall be very happy to discuss it with you. Far be it from me to depreciate the light and the teachings of nature. They are of great importance to us, and should be thankfully received. They are sufficient to teach us the existence and, to some extent, the perfections of God. The Apostle Paul tells that “the invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. i, 20). The light of nature

I deem sufficient, if the best possible use were made of it, to guide a soul—even a sinful soul—to heaven. Without a revelation, we might know that there is a God, and that we are sinners against him. We might feel under obligations to repent of sin, and, through the power of the Spirit, might be led to repentance. I hope some of the heathen have been brought to repentance in this way. And sure I am that a *penitent* heathen will never be lost.

S.—I am happy to hear you speak in this way. Your words are those of kindness and charity. But if the light of nature can do so much for us, what need have we, I ask again, for further light? Is not this sufficient?

F.—I have spoken of what *might* be done in heathen lands, on supposition that the best possible use was made of the light and the teachings of nature. But *is* the best possible use made of these teachings among the heathen? Has it ever been? Is it likely to be? Is not the light of nature everywhere perverted and abused? And to prevent the benighted nations from all perishing together, do they not need a clearer and a stronger light—a light shining down upon them directly from heaven?

S.—Perhaps they do.

F.—If you will give me your attention for a moment, I will set before you, in the fewest words possible, some of the reasons which satisfy me that, in addition to all that reason and nature have done, we do need a direct revelation from God. A revelation is needed, in the first place, to make us acquainted with many important truths concerning which the teachings of nature afford no light at all. Such, for example, is the peculiar mode of the Divine existence—three persons in one God, the appropriate manner of worshipping the Supreme Being; the introduction of sin; the gift of the Savior; the doctrine of atonement by his death; the descent and work of the Holy Spirit; the provisions and ordinances of the gospel; the resurrection of the body; the general judgment; with the endless awards and retributions which are to follow it. Now these are all important truths,—some of them vastly and vitally so. Yet

they are subjects in regard to which nature's voice is dumb. She teaches nothing contrary to them, and nothing about them. They are purely subjects of revelation. And do we not *need* a revelation to enlighten us in regard to topics such as these? On subjects so essential to our spiritual and eternal welfare, to our happiness in this world and forever, how can we afford to live and die in ignorance and darkness?

But this is not all. We need a revelation, not only to make us acquainted with new and important truths, but to *republish* and *confirm* many things which are taught by the light of nature, to give weight and authority to them, and thus make them effectual for the recovery and salvation of men. Dim as the light of nature is, those who have no other light *know*, in the general, much better than they *do*; and they will be condemned hereafter, not for their want of light, but for their abuse of it. They sin against the light they have. They break the law of God inscribed upon the conscience and the heart, and do violence to their own convictions of duty. In short, the motives which the religion of nature presents, though sufficient to leave the heathen without excuse, are found practically to have but little influence. They need the more exciting and weighty motives of the gospel to restrain and subdue the power of sin, and, by the Divine blessing, to become the means of their salvation.

S.—Are the positions you have here taken confirmed in the history of heathen nations?

F.—Yes, and much more than confirmed. Look at the *religions* of these nations—a miserable compound of absurdity, superstition and corruption. Their divinities are, for the most part, monsters of wickedness,—vindictive and sanguinary, jealous, wrathful, cruel and obscene. And the morals of heathen nations are no better than their religions. No people can be expected to be much better than their gods; and certainly, if the heathen are no better than *their* gods, their characters must be miserably defective. In consequence of the labors of missionaries, this subject is much better

understood than it was only a few years ago; and every ray of light which has been shed upon it serves only to reveal the grossness of its enormities. Not a missionary paper or journal is published, touching the religious rites of the heathen nations, which is not a standing testimony to their need of a revelation from heaven.

S.—You have certainly made out a strong case in regard to our need of a revelation. There is no gainsaying it, still, I have one more question to ask. If a revelation from heaven is so necessary for man, why has it been confined to only a small part of the human race? Why has it not been given to all men?

F.—These certainly are fair questions. I shall endeavor to give to them a fair and sufficient answer. You will remember then, that, at the first, God did reveal himself to all men, and to all alike. The revelations which were made to our first parents, and to their immediate descendants, were a common gift. They were imparted and intended for the benefit of the race. And then, at the re-peopling of the world by Noah, God again revealed himself to all alike. He revealed himself not only to the posterity of Shem, but to the immediate descendants of Ham and Japhet. The proper question, therefore, is not, why has not God given his revelations to all men; but, why have his revelations been, to so great an extent, disregarded and lost? They *were* originally made to all; but vast portions of our corrupted family, because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, have lost them, and have sunk into heathenish darkness and ignorance.

And after the knowledge of the true God was lost, except in the family of Abraham, what pains were taken (if I may be allowed such an expression) to extend this important knowledge to the surrounding nations? For this purpose, Abraham was sent into Canaan, and the Israelites into Egypt, and Jonah to Nineveh, and the Jews to Babylon. Prophecies were uttered and fulfilled, miracles were wrought, and Divine judgments were inflicted, that, as the Scriptures express it, “all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, and might fear his name forever” (Josh. iv.

24). And almost two thousand years ago, Christ left it in solemn injunction to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Surely then, whoever else may be to blame that the revelations of God are not more widely diffused, *he* is abundantly clear in this matter. No reasonable objection can be sustained against him.

CONVERSATION II.

WHAT BELONGS TO THE BIBLE?—Apocryphal books of the Old and New Testaments—Their exclusion.—Authority of the received books.—The majority of one a fiction.—Books of the Bible.—Their preservation.—Collected by Ezra.—Later Additions.—Jewish manuscripts and our present Bible.—Do they agree?—Probabilities and proofs.—First acceptance of the Apocryphal books by the Roman Church.—Their incredible absurdity.—Their value.—Canon of the New Testament.—Council of Laodicea.—Revelation of John.—Genuineness of the accepted books.

Son.—Before entering directly upon the study of the Bible, there are some further preliminaries requiring to be settled. Besides what is contained within the covers of our Bibles, there are other books claiming to belong there. There are the apocryphal books of both the Old and the New Testaments. Why are they excluded, and by what authority? We hear of a council called in the early days of the church, to determine what books should go into the Bible, and that the question was decided in favor of the received books by a majority of one. Was such a council ever held? And if so, on what authority was their decision based? In short, I wish to know, before proceeding further, what books belong to the Bible, and what not.

Father.—Your request is reasonable, my son, and I will endeavor to answer it. As to the council of which you have heard, which decided in favor of the received books by a majority of one, suffice it to say that no such council ever existed. The story is a fiction of modern infidelity. There were councils in the third and fourth centuries which recorded the books actually received by the churches, but none which were called together to decide what books *ought* to be received.

S.—Please tell us, first, about the history of the Old Testament.

F.—The Old Testament consists of thirty-nine books, written by different persons and at different times, from Moses to the latest of the Hebrew prophets. These books, or so many of them as had then been written, were carefully preserved in the Sanctuary until the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, when the sacred

autographs were probably destroyed. Copies of them were, however, preserved; and after the return from Babylon, the books were collected, edited, and published in a volume, by Ezra, an inspired priest. Some books, however, were added after the days of Ezra. Such were the prophecy of Malachi, the books of Nehemiah and Esther, and some parts of the books of Chronicles.

S.—But you seem to deal in probabilities. Is there not something more decisive to be advanced?

F.—I have given you the probable history of the books of the Old Testament, as we have received them from the Jews. In view of it, two questions arise, and only two, which, as *Christians*, we are entitled to ask. First, did the Old Testament, as it existed in the days of our Savior, receive his sanction? And, secondly, did the Old Testament, which he sanctioned, contain the same books as ours?

That our Savior received and sanctioned what he usually called *the Scriptures*, regarding them as the word of God, and as of binding authority, there can be no doubt. It was these out of which he reasoned; to these he constantly appealed; it was these which he opened and explained to his followers; it was by these that he silenced and confounded his adversaries. “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life.” “The Scriptures cannot be broken.” “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” Our Savior speaks of the sacred writings under the three-fold division of “the law, the prophets, and the psalms;” and says that all things written in them concerning him must be fulfilled (Luke xxiv. 44). It is a fact, then, that our Savior *did sanction*, in the most explicit terms, a class of writings held sacred among the Jews, speaking of them as “*the word of God*, which must be fulfilled.”

We come then to our second question. Were the Scriptures, which our Savior thus confirmed and sanctioned, the same as our Old Testament? In other words, did his Old Testament and ours agree? Were the books the same? If it can be shown that they were

the same, I insist that, as Christians, we should ask no more questions.

S.—Thus far, the argument seems to me decisive. But I want to hear your answer to the second question.

F.—That the books of the Old Testament are the same now that they were in the days of Christ and the Apostles, will be evident, I think, from the following considerations :

1. The Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, which was made long before the birth of Christ, contains all the present canonical books. Certain apocryphal writings have since been bound up with the Septuagint, but there is no reason to think that they made any part of it in the days of our Savior.

2. Josephus, who lived in the first century, gives an account of the sacred books of the Jews in his time ; and it is evident from his description of them, that they were the same as ours. He speaks, indeed, of but twenty-two books ; but this is to be accounted for from a device of the Rabbins to make the number of books correspond exactly with the number of Hebrew letters. To effect this, they joined together several of the books ; as Judges and Ruth, Ezra and Nehemiah, Jeremiah and the Lamentations, and all the minor prophets. Josephus gives an account of the authors and contents of the several books. “ Five of them proceed from Moses. These include the laws, and an account of the creation of man, extending to the time of Moses’ death—a period of almost three thousand years. From the death of Moses to that of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, the prophets who succeeded Moses committed to writing, in thirteen books, what was done in their day. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and instructions of life for man.”* It will be seen that this division of the books corresponds entirely to that mentioned by our Savior—“ The law, the prophets, and the psalms.” It agrees also with the Old Testament of the present day.

3. Several of the Christian Fathers furnish catalogues of the books of the Old Testament ; and although there are slight varia-

*Against Apion, Book i, sect. 8.

tions in these catalogues, it is certain that the canon was settled in those early times, and has undergone no alteration since.

4. Since the time of Christ, the Jews and Christians have been spies upon each other; so that, if either party was disposed to disturb the canon of the Old Testament, it would be impossible to effect it without instant exposure.

From all these considerations, we may be sure that the Old Testament is the same now that it was in the time of Christ; and since he received and sanctioned it, as it *then was*, we have his sanction for it as it *now is*. And this, as I said, is enough for Christians. We cannot be in fault in receiving and holding the Old Testament Scriptures as they were held by our blessed Lord.

This argument is not only conclusive upon Christians, but it is *comprehensive*. It settles the authority not only of the Old Testament in the general, but of each and every book comprised in it. We have no occasion to prove the authority of any particular book, as, for example, the Canticles, or the book of Esther, any further than to show that it belonged to the canon in the time of Christ, and as such received his Divine approval.

S.—But in connection with our Bibles, we frequently find a class of *apocryphal books*; and the question arises, Why are not these of canonical authority? Why should they not be received by us, as they are by the church of Rome?

E.—In reply to this, I observe, first, that these books are not found in the Hebrew Bible. They were written originally, not in Hebrew, but in Greek,—a language which was not common among the Jews until long after the canon of the Old Testament was closed. Secondly, these books have never been received into the canon of the Jews. They are ancient Jewish writings, but have never been held by that people as inspired, or as a part of their Bible. Then, thirdly, these books are never quoted or referred to in the New Testament, as possessing any Divine authority. Indeed, they are not quoted at all. Fourthly, these books were not received as canonical by the Christian fathers, but were expressly declared to be apocry-

phal. Indeed, until the middle of the sixteenth century, the most learned and judicious popish writers adhere to the opinion of the ancient fathers, and declare against the canonical authority of the apocryphal books.

But if there was no other argument against these books, the internal evidence would be decisive. They contain many things which are fabulous, absurd, and incredible. They inculcate false doctrine, and a false and unchristian morality. In the second of the Maccabees, we read: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (Chap. xii. 43, 45). The writer of the same book justifies and commends suicide (see Chap. xiv. 41, 42). In several places in the Apocrypha, atonement and justification are said to be secured by good works. "Whoso honoreth his father maketh atonement for his sins" (Ecc. iii. 3). "Alms delivereth from death, and shall purge away all sin" (Tobit xii. 9).

S.—But these Apocryphal books are very readable, and some of them contain much valuable information.

F.—In judging of the Apocryphal books, I would award them all the praise to which they can be regarded as entitled. They possess a high value considered as ancient Jewish writings, which not only throw light upon the phraseology of Scripture, and upon the history and manners of the East, but exhibit the state of the Jewish nation at a very interesting and critical period of its history. Still, they have no claim to be admitted into the sacred canon, or to be regarded as of Divine authority. The English liturgy enjoins the reading of certain portions of these books in the churches; and it is on this account, probably, that we so often find them enclosed within the covers of our Bibles.

S.—Will you now inform us, briefly, as to the canon of the New Testament?

F.—Like that of the Old Testament, this seems not to have been settled at once. The Apostle Peter was acquainted with the Epistles of Paul, and places them on a level with "the other Scriptures"

(II Peter iii.16). Eusebius tells us that John was acquainted with the other three Gospels, gave them his approbation, and wrote his own as a supplement to them,—which accords entirely with the contents of John's Gospel. In all probability, John was acquainted with most of the other books of the New Testament, as their authority seems to have been established soon after his death. Their authority was not established however (as infidels have pretended) by any decree of council, or by any formal act of the whole church, but by the testimony of competent witnesses, and by the various evidences presented in behalf of the received books, that they really were the works of inspired men, and carried with them the authority of God. The council of Laodicea, which assembled in the year 364, published a catalogue of received books; but their decree was not so much legislative as *declaratory*, setting forth what was, and had been, the sense of the church in regard to this important matter.

S.—This was an important point to be decided in the early church. Is there evidence that the fathers examined it with care, and settled it truthfully?

F.—In settling the canon of the New Testament, the fathers seem to have proceeded with great care and deliberation. They did not receive everything which was thrown out upon the world under the name of apostolical men. The claims of every book were canvassed, and nothing was admitted but upon the fullest examination. It was owing to this circumstance, that doubts were, for a time, entertained with regard to some of the received books; as, for example, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second Epistle of Peter, the two short Epistles of John, and the Revelation. We know *why* doubts were entertained respecting these books, and *how* they were removed. We have the means of judging in regard to this matter almost as well as the fathers themselves.

S.—Do we know on what principles the early fathers proceeded in deciding upon the several books?

F.—They would admit such books, and such only, as could be proved to have been written by the Apostles themselves, or by

their attendants, and under their inspection. Thus the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles were received into the canon, because, though not written by Apostles, they were written by the attendants of Peter and Paul, and undoubtedly received their sanction. Regard was also had to the *contents* of the books received. Anything occurring in any particular book which was contrary to what the Apostles taught, or to the rules which they established, would be deemed a sufficient reason for rejecting the book. Also, in deciding upon the claims of a book, *authority* and *example* were allowed to have due weight. With those who had not had opportunity of personal knowledge and examination, the judgment and practice of other churches and individuals had,—as it should have had,—much influence.

It was on principles such as these, and after much care and deliberation, that the canon of the New Testament was finally settled. It was settled during the first half of the second century, within fifty years of the death of the Apostle John.

S.—Many books were published during the first four centuries, bearing the names of Apostles, or of Apostolical men, and claiming to possess a Divine authority. Several of these have been published in a volume, under the title of “Apocryphal books of the New Testament.” Can you tell us why these books were rejected?

F.—The reasons for rejecting them were such as these: They are not acknowledged or quoted as of any authority by the early Christian fathers. Indeed, the most of them are not quoted at all, as they had no existence before the third century. They are not quoted by the earliest enemies of Christianity, as they certainly would have been, had they been extant, and been generally received by Christians. These apocryphal books contradict, in many points, the doctrine and practice of the Apostles. Things are often mentioned in them which occurred later than the time when the books purport to have been written. They contain contradictions of authentic history, both sacred and profane. The style and manner of the books is exceedingly diverse from, and inferior to, that

of the Apostolical writings. In short, they contain many things ludicrous, frivolous and absurd, and in not a few instances palpable falsehoods. Thus, in one of the pretended epistles of Seneca to Paul, the Emperor Nero is said to have been surprised and delighted with Paul's Epistles to the churches.

On the whole, we have abundant reason to acquiesce in the decisions of the early fathers and churches, both as to what they received as coming from God, and what they rejected. They had the best means of judging in regard to this important matter; they looked into it considerately and carefully; they proceeded upon the soundest principles; and we may well be satisfied with their decisions.

CONVERSATION III.

BY WHOM AND WHEN WERE THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE WRITTEN?—

Books of the Bible chronologically untrue, and the authors not as represented.—Fallacy of such an assertion.—Proofs of genuineness.—The books of the New Testament.—Investigation concerning them.—Facts and conclusions regarding the books of the Old Testament.—External testimony in proof.—Internal evidence.—Enemies and infidels.—Research of modern times.—Difficulties and objections removed.

Son.—I have other questions to ask in regard to the books of the Bible, before I enter upon the study of them. I mean not to be tedious, but I want to tread on solid ground. It is pretended, you know, that most of these books were written, not at the times commonly supposed, nor by the persons to whom they are respectively attributed. The books ascribed to Moses, it is said, must have been written subsequent to the captivity; and the book of Daniel later than the time of the Syrian kings; and the four gospels as late as the third or fourth century. Now I wish to know, if possible, when these books were written, and by whom. Can you give us any light in regard to this matter?

Father.—Your inquiry relates to what is commonly called the *authenticity* of the sacred writings. On this point I may remark, in general, that we have stronger reasons for believing in the authenticity of our sacred books than we have for holding the same opinion with regard to any other ancient books or writings. Let the evidence be collected in favor of the authenticity of any of the distinguished works of the ancients; for example, the Orations of Cicero, or the Odes of Horace, or the *Æneid* of Virgil, and I will undertake to produce stronger evidence in support of the authenticity of almost any of our sacred books. To begin with the books of the New Testament: We certainly know, from a great variety of historical evidence, that these books were in existence near the time when they purport to have been written. They are not only referred to, but expressly spoken of, and largely quoted by writers of that period. We know, too, that they were then attributed both

by friends and enemies, and have all along been attributed, to the individuals whose names they bear.

The books of the Old Testament were certainly in existence when those of the New were written, and had been for ages previous. They had been collected into a volume, and translated into Greek, more than two centuries before the birth of Christ. At the time of their translation, they were regarded as very ancient writings. The primitive Christians received these books from the Jews, all of whom, both ancient and modern, unite in ascribing them to those holy and venerable men, to whom they are now respectively attributed.

The early Christians, as was remarked in our last conversation, had the best opportunities for testing the authenticity of the books they received. We know, too, that they were exceedingly cautious in this matter, looking well into the evidence of things, sifting it to the bottom, doubting where doubts could be reasonably entertained, and rejecting whatever was found to lack sufficient proof; and it should seem that the grounds on which they satisfied themselves ought to be sufficient to satisfy us.

Let it be further considered, if our sacred books are not the productions of those whose names they bear, then they are *forges*. But forged when, and by whom? Who can give any probable or even plausible answer to either of these questions? And if these books were forged, how are we to account for their original reception? Would the Jews, for example, have received their laws, purporting to have been given by Moses, from any hand but that of Moses? Or would the primitive Christians have received their sacred books from any other hands than those of the Apostles and evangelists? They promptly rejected everything which was attempted to be palmed upon them from other hands; and they would have rejected the books of the New Testament, had they not been fully satisfied as to their genuineness.

S.—Have we any *external* testimony as to the authenticity of our sacred books? More especially, have we any from the early enemies of Christianity?

F.—Yes, testimony in abundance. Among the ancient heathen who wrote against Christianity, and whose writings have, in part, come down to us, were Celsus, a philosopher of the second century, and Porphyry of the third, and the Emperor Julian, once a professed Christian, but afterwards a bitter opposer of the truth. Celsus, who wrote within sixty years of the Apostolic age, so far from denying the authenticity of the Gospels, insists that they *are* authentic,—the works of the personal friends and followers of the Nazarene; and he undertakes to refute the Christians out of their own acknowledged books. He quotes freely from all parts of the Bible, speaking of it as a collection of writings which the Christians of that day regarded as of the highest authority. The same may be said of Porphyry and Julian; though we know less of the character of their writings, as fewer fragments of them remain. The infidels of that age had no thought of denying the authenticity of our sacred books. They rather assumed their authenticity, and argued from it in opposition to their truth.

S.—And what said the early heretics on this subject?

F.—The church was early infested with heretics, who denied the doctrines of the Gospel, and were interested to get rid of those parts of Scripture in which these doctrines were inculcated. Such were Corinthus, the Ebionites, and the Nazarenes. They all denied the Apostleship of Paul, and rejected his Epistles as constituting any part of Scripture. Still, they did not doubt the authenticity of these Epistles. They admitted that Paul wrote them with his own hand. In the same way, and for the same reason, they rejected the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John; receiving only a corrupted copy of the Gospel of Matthew. Still, they did not deny the authenticity of the three rejected Gospels, but discarded them on other grounds. They disliked their contents, and wished to be rid of them.

S.—In proving the authenticity of our sacred books, may any arguments be drawn from the books themselves?

F.—Yes, there are many such. Take, for example, their frequent

and accurate *allusions* to extemporaneous events. The allusions in the books of Moses to various historical events prove that these books must have been written about the time of Moses. The knowledge of a later writer would not have been sufficiently minute and accurate. And the same may be said of the allusions generally in the other books of the Bible. They are numerous, particular, evidently undesigned, and yet (so far as can be gathered from other sources) entirely accurate.

Then the different books of Scripture go to confirm the authenticity one of another. For example; it is claimed that the books of Moses were the first written of any part of the Old Testament; and who that reads attentively the Old Testament Scriptures can doubt the truth of this? The allusions all the way to the Jewish law, and more especially to the ritual parts of it, are so frequent, and so manifestly incidental, as to prove that the law must have been in existence, and in binding force, when the other books were written. It is claimed that a part of the prophets were cotemporary with the kings of Judah and Israel; that others wrote during the captivity; and still others after the captivity. Now let any intelligent, fair-minded person compare the historical and prophetic books, to see whether the allusions, one way and the other, are accurate, and I am sure he can come to but one conclusion. He will say, that Isaiah and Hezekiah, that Jeremiah and Zedekiah, that Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, that Haggai and Zerubbabel, must have lived and flourished together. It is further claimed that the same Paul, whose history is given in the Acts of the Apostles, is the author of the Epistles which bear his name; and that most of these Epistles were written while this history was in progress. We are entitled, therefore, to compare the Acts and the Epistles, and see if this claim is one of truth. This work, I hardly need say, has been done to our hand by Dr. Paley, in his admirable little work entitled *Horæ Paulinæ*, and no candid person can read that book and not be satisfied.

S.—After all the efforts which have been made, in our day, to

disprove the authenticity of our sacred books, do you regard the evidence in support of it as increasing or diminishing? Is it becoming weaker, or is it gaining strength?

F.—I have no doubt that the evidence in favor of the authenticity of our Scriptures is increasing. And this, if it be true, is certainly a very interesting fact. As there is nothing in the Bible to flatter the pride of man, or inflate his vanity, or gratify his sensual indulgence, or give him security in a course of sin, but all its demands are of a directly opposite tendency, it need not surprise us that, with mankind generally, the Bible is a dreaded and a hated book. For almost two thousand years, it has been a prime object with wicked men, by sneers and reproaches, by exciting suspicions and creating doubts, if possible, to get rid of the Bible. And yet, all this while it has been spread fearlessly open before the world, inviting scrutiny, inviting research; and I but speak the sentiment of the best scholars of the age when I say, that the evidences of its authenticity, so far from being invalidated, have been constantly gaining strength. The more the state, the history, the customs, arts, and languages of the ancient world are studied; the more the ancient manuscripts, versions, and quotations are examined; the more the monuments and inscriptions of remote antiquity are brought to light; the more evident it becomes that the several books of Scripture have been ascribed to the right authors, and that they must have been written in the places, and at the remote periods, which have been commonly supposed. Difficulties which once embarrassed the subject have been removed, objections have been obviated, and the force of the argument in support of the authenticity of the Scriptures is continually gaining strength.

CONVERSATION IV.

IS THE BIBLE TRUE?—A vital question.—Historically considered.—Its circulation among cotemporaries.—Veracity unquestioned.—Character of statements made.—Improbability of acceptance if false.—Evidence of profane history.—Propriety of relying on apostolic testimony.—Their motives for truth.—Danger of proclaiming it.—Persecutions.—The witness of the world in the present day.—Customs, rites and ceremonies.—Their origin.—The Christian's faith.—The infidel's argument.—Belief in Scriptural records and authenticity increasing.

Son.—A vital question in regard to the Bible is that relating to its *truth*. Are its statements reliable? Can they be shown to be true? Excuse me if I ask for information on this point.

Father.—We have a strong presumption as to the truth of Scripture growing out of the fact last considered, *viz.* : their authenticity. Authentic histories, written and published under the same circumstances with our Scriptures, may in general be presumed to contain the truth; because, being circulated among cotemporaries who are well acquainted with the facts, if the statements are not true, they can be easily confuted, and certainly will not be received. Moses published among his cotemporaries an account of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and of their journeyings, their rebellions, and corrections in the wilderness. Would he have dared, under these circumstances, to publish statements which were not true, and which, he might be sure, thousands of voices would instantly be raised to contradict? Or if Moses had had the effrontery to publish falsehoods among his cotemporaries, would they have had the stupidity to receive them?

So the writers of the Gospels published, among their cotemporaries, friends and enemies, distinct accounts of the doctrines, the works, the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus. Would they have published, under such circumstances, what they knew was not true; what every reader would say, at once, was not true; and what their enemies, the Jews, would instantly seize upon and turn to the ruin of their cause? Or if they could have been so infatuated as to make such publications, would those around

them have been so infatuated as to receive, read, and believe their books?

Moses often appeals to the *senses* of those for whom he wrote. "Your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did" (Deut. xi. 7). The writers of the New Testament do the same. Now admitting,—what has been proved,—the authenticity of these writings, could they possibly have been received, if they had not been true? Would not those, into whose hands the writings first came, have known whether their eyes had seen the things described? And if they had not seen them, would they have received and believed the books?

There is another difficulty in the way of the reception of these books on any other supposition than that of their containing incontestable truth. I refer to the character of the statements, the representations, which are there made. These are, many of them, so mortifying to human pride, so offensive and humiliating to those to whom they were addressed, that they never would have been propagated or received, if they had not been known to be true. What Israelite would ever have recorded such stories as those of Abraham's equivocation, Jacob's intrigue, Judah's incest, Aaron's calf, and David's adultery, had he not been constrained to it by the known fact that these things were true? Or, if any one had been mad enough to publish untruths of this nature in the presence of cotemporaneous witnesses, would they not have been instantly rejected, and the authors of them been contemned and scorned? How often are the Israelites reproved, reproached, denounced and condemned in different parts of the Old Testament, for their wickedness? Now would these same Israelites have received this Old Testament, and clung to it even unto death, had they not been fully convinced that it was true?

S.—Are any of the facts of the sacred history confirmed by the testimony of Jews and heathens?

F.—Yes, many of them. Josephus, who was a Jew, and a cotemporary with the Apostles, thus speaks of our Savior: "About this

time lived Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he performed marvelous things. He was an instructor of such as received the truth with pleasure. He made many converts both among the Jews and Greeks. He was," by profession, "the Christ. And when Pilate, on the accusation of the principal men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who before entertained a respect for him continued still to do so; for he appeared to them alive again on the third day; the divine prophets having declared these and many other wonderful things concerning him. The sect of Christians, so named from him, subsists to this very time."*

S.—Has not this passage from Josephus been disputed?

F.—It has; though probably without sufficient reason. But in other passages, which have never been disputed, Josephus speaks of the character and labors of John the Baptist; of his being put to death by Herod; of the martyrdom of the Apostle James; and of the miseries which came upon the Jewish nation on this account. "These things happened unto them by the way of revenging the death of James the Just, the brother of Jesus whom they call Christ; for the Jews slew him, though a very just man."†

About the year of our Lord 66, commenced the terrible persecution of the Christians at Rome under Nero. This monster of wickedness, having set fire to Rome just for the sake of seeing it burn, and wishing to avert the indignation of the people on that account, falsely charged the conflagration to the Christians, and commenced putting them to death without measure or mercy. Tacitus, a contemporary historian, and a heathen, thus speaks of the Christians: "Christ, the founder of this sect, was executed in the reign of Tiberius, by the procurator, Pontius Pilate. The pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, burst forth again, not only in Judea, the birth-place of the evil, but at Rome also, where everything atrocious and base centers and is in repute." In this passage, Tacitus bears witness to the fact, that Jesus lived in Judea at the very time

*Antiq., Book 18, chap. 3.

†Antiq., Book 18, chap. 5, and Book 20, chap. 9.

stated by the evangelists ; that he was put to death under Pontius Pilate ; and that, after his death, his followers became exceedingly numerous, not only in Judea, but at Rome. Further on in the same passage, he speaks of “ a vast multitude of Christians ” as having been cruelly tortured and put to death by Nero.

About forty years after this, there was a persecution under the Emperor Trajan. Pliny was at this time governor of Bythnia ; and such multitudes of Christians were brought before him for trial and punishment that he knew not what to do with them, and wrote to the emperor for advice. His letter is too long to be quoted here ; but in it he describes the religion of the Christians, their meetings, their sacraments, their mode of worship, and bears testimony to their holy and blameless lives. He speaks of having put two Christian females to the torture, but “ nothing,” says he, “ could I collect from them, except a depraved and excessive superstition.” Here, you see again, is the Christian religion, flourishing in great strength, and vast multitudes drawn to the profession of it, at the very commencement of the second century, or within seventy years after the death of Christ.

It was only about sixty years after this, that Celsus wrote his work against Christianity—the first that was ever written of which we have any knowledge—in which, as was stated in our last conversation, he admits the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures, and most of the facts which they inculcate, and undertakes to refute the Christians out of their own books.

S.—Is it proper to rely on the testimony of the Apostles and evangelists, as to the truth of the gospel history ?

F.—Why not ? They certainly were competent and reliable witnesses,—men living at the time and on the ground,—eye and ear witnesses of the things which they relate. So far as we can judge, they were men of good moral character ; and so far from having any motive of worldly interest to induce them to fabricate a deception, and pass it off upon the world, every consideration of interest was impelling them the other way. The price of publishing the

gospel message was, to them, the loss of all things; and they had every reason to expect beforehand that it would be so. It should be further considered that the story of these witnesses, if not true, admitted of a ready and easy contradiction. If, for example, Christ did not feed thousands of people with a few loaves and fishes; if he did not heal the sick, and raise the dead; if he was not tried, condemned, crucified, and buried; and if he did not rise again the third day; how easy to have effectually refuted these stories, when they were first published! Yet they were not refuted. They could not be. So far from this, they received confirmation from a thousand sources. And to crown the whole, the original witnesses, in this most important case, lived and acted as though their testimony was true. They certainly knew whether it was true, or not; and they proclaimed aloud, and everywhere,—in their future lives, in their toils and perils, in their sacrifices and sufferings, and under the bloody hand of the executioner,—that it was true. They sealed their testimony, in most cases, with their blood. I affirm, therefore, and I feel authorized to do so with the utmost confidence, that the testimony of the Apostles and evangelists, as to the truth of the gospel history, is a valid testimony. It is such as we confide in, and act upon, in the most important concerns of life. It is sufficient to establish truth, and can never be set aside but by adopting principles which would render it impossible to prove anything by testimony.

S.—In all our inquiries, it is pleasant to be able to appeal to facts. I would ask, therefore, are there any facts in the world around us which involve the truth of parts of the sacred history?

F.—Yes, many such. Take, for example, the early and almost universal division of time into weeks. There are natural reasons why time should be divided into moons or months, and into years. But there are no natural reasons why it should be divided into weeks of seven days; and no rational account can be given of this ancient and almost universal mode of dividing time, if we reject that which is given by Moses.

It is a fact that numerous languages are spoken in the world; and though most of these are cognate dialects, which originated one from another, yet there are some *radically* and *originally* different languages. How came these different languages? How came the human race, which is manifestly one race, to be separated and sundered one from another in this way? Moses explains this matter to us; but reject his explanations and who can give us any other?

A most singular mode of propitiating and worshiping the Deity prevailed all over the ancient world, and still prevails in some parts of the earth; I mean that of *bloody sacrifices*. The mere light of nature and reason would never have led to this mode of worship. What natural connection is there between the killing of an innocent lamb or dove, and the acceptable worship of the Most High? How then are we to account for this early and for long ages universal mode of divine worship? The Scriptures enable us to answer this question; but exclude the light which they shed upon it, and I defy any person to make out even a plausible answer.

A most singular rite prevailed among several ancient nations, and still prevails not only among the Jews, but in some heathen tribes; I mean that of *circumcision*. No one can doubt the existence of such a rite; and yet I think any one would be exceedingly puzzled to account for its origin, after he had set aside the history given of it by Moses.

I might go on to speak in the same way of the institution of the Sabbath, of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, of the existence of the Jews as a distinct people, and of the very existence of the Christian religion. These are all *facts*—plain matters of fact existing before our eyes; and every reflecting, philosophical man should be able to give some rational account of them. How came one day in seven to be regarded as a sacred day, not only by Jews and Christians, but by most of the civilized nations of antiquity? How originated the rites of baptism and the Lord's supper? The Jews still exist, a singular, separate, peculiar people. How, when, where did they originate? And who gave them their peculiar

religious notions and rites? These Christians, too,—which can be proved to have existed, and to have spread themselves over the face of the earth for more than eighteen hundred years,—where did they come from? Who was their founder? Whence did they derive the peculiarities of their religion and worship? These are all of them fair questions—questions arising from known and palpable facts; and what answers shall be given to them? With the Bible in our hands, it is easy to give satisfactory answers. But throw this away, and what answer that shall be so much as plausible can possibly be framed?

S.—Are not several of these Jewish and Christian institutions of a *commemorative* character?

F.—Yes, and this makes the argument the stronger. For instance, the Passover was instituted to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. Now it is certain that no impostor of a later generation could have imposed this institution on the Israelites. Nor would they have received it at the hand of Moses, if the facts which it commemorated had never taken place. The same may be said of the feast of Pentecost, designed to commemorate the giving of the law; of the feast of Tabernacles, commemorative of the Israelites' dwelling in tents; of the feast of Purim, which commemorated their deliverance from Haman; and of the Lord's supper, which now commemorates the death of Christ. How could this ordinance of the supper ever have been instituted, received and observed, if that event had not taken place which it was designed to commemorate,—in other words, if Christ had not suffered and died according to the Scriptures? We have an annual festival on the fourth of July, to commemorate the declaration of American independence. Does any one suppose that this festival would ever have been got up, and brought into general notice and observance, if American independence had never been declared? No more could any of the commemorative institutions of the Bible have been got up and established, if the events commemorated by them had not occurred.

S.—Can any argument be drawn, on the question before us, from the *religious feelings and exercises of Christians?*

F.—Yes; an argument reaching not only to the facts of revelation, but to its *doctrines*—an argument of more weight with sincere, unlettered Christians than any other. Such an one may not have read books on the evidences of Christianity. He may not have acquainted himself with the historical arguments in its favor at all. Still he has no doubts as to the truth of the Bible; and when you inquire as to the grounds of his confidence, he will say: “I know the Bible to be true, because I feel it to be true. I am sure of the truth of it, because it accords so exactly with my own experience.” For example, the Scriptures represent the natural heart of man as corrupt and sinful. The Christian knows from his own experience that this is true. The Scriptures speak of a great moral change as necessary in order to the possession of true religion. The Christian feels and hopes that he has experienced this change. The Scriptures represent the Christian life on earth as one of conflict and warfare,—“the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.” The Christian is conscious of this warfare in his own soul. The Scriptures describe, in various ways, the peculiar views and exercises of those who have been born of God. The Christian perceives that these answer to his own. And thus, as our Savior expresses it, “he has the witness in himself.” He cannot doubt the truth of the Bible. When such an one says, “I know the Bible to be true, because I feel it to be true,” he urges a sound argument. He reasons logically and well.

S.—And yet would such an argument be likely to satisfy the infidel?

F.—Perhaps not. Still, I see not why it should not satisfy him. For what has he to urge against it? He can only say to the Christian, “My feelings are not like yours. I have no such experience.” Alas! my friend, we know you have not. The Bible itself asserts that you have not; so that in what you say you rather verify than contradict the representations of Scripture. But what does your

lack of Christian experience prove? Does it prove that the experience of Christians, and the conscious agreement of their experience with the representations of Scripture, is not a reality? By no means. As well might the blind man deny the existence of light, because he does not see it, or the deaf mute that there is any such thing as sound, because he does not hear it, as you deny the reality of Christian experience because you have never felt it—have never “tasted and seen that the Lord is good.” Your Christian neighbor is an intelligent, moral, credible man. You believe him to be a pious man. He tells you that his own feelings, his experience, accords so entirely with the representations of Scripture, that he knows the latter must be true. Now why will you not believe him? You would take his word on any other subject; why not on this?

S.—In our last conversation, you spoke of the constantly *increasing* evidence in favor of the authenticity of our sacred writings. Can the same fact be urged in support of their truth?

F.—Yes, it may well be said of the arguments for the truth of Scripture, that they are constantly increasing both in numbers and in strength. It has been remarked, that no system ever laid itself more completely open to detection, if it contained errors, than Christianity. “No book ever gave so many clues to discovery, if it tell untruths, as the sacred volume.” And yet its leaves were thrown fearlessly open, from two to three thousand years ago, to the investigation of philosophers and critics, to the scrutiny of friends and foes. Its leaves have lain unfolded from that time to the present, inviting discussion, inviting research, saying virtually, like its great Author, “Testify against me, if you can.” And it has passed the ordeal. It has stood the test. Its evidences, so far from being weakened through the lapse of time, are continually gaining strength. The researches of the antiquary, the investigations of modern science, the accidental discoveries which from time to time are made, the unceasing inquiries of restless, inquisitive man, instead of fulfilling the predictions of the infidel, and refuting

the evidence for the truth of Scripture, all tend, manifestly, to confirm and establish it. Passages of Scripture once dark have been brought into light; former objections have been obviated; seeming discrepancies have been reconciled. What were regarded as difficulties two hundred years ago, are found such no longer. The very efforts of infidels have been made to recoil upon their own heads. They have been over-ruled for the establishment and advancement of the gospel. In proof of these statements, I need only refer to the recent confirmations of Scripture found in the mounds of Assyria, the catacombs of Egypt, and in the discoveries of investigators in the Holy Land. In short, the time has come when, if Christians have had any fears as to the truth of their religion, they should indulge them no longer. They may rest perfectly assured that they are without foundation. Christianity may yet be assailed; but it will come out of every new trial, as it has out of every previous one, strengthened in its evidences, and not weakened; victorious, and not vanquished.

CONVERSATION V.

ARE THE SCRIPTURES FROM GOD?—Bible assertions.—Miracles.—Nature of miracles.—Unknown natural laws.—Special need of miracles.—Their intent and purpose.—Divine authority supported by prophecy.—The value of the authority.—The nature of prophecy.—Conjecture *versus* prophecy.—Bible said to have all been written since the events transpired.—Evidence against such a statement.—Internal proofs of inspiration.—The Bible God's book.

Son.—I am aware, if the Bible is true, that it must be from God; for it directly asserts as much as this. Moses went to Pharaoh, and went to the Israelites, not in his own name, but in the name of God. He prefaced all his messages with a *Thus saith the Lord*. The same did the inspired prophets. The same did the Apostles. The same did our Savior himself. “The words which I speak unto you are not mine, but *his that sent me.*” If the Bible is true, then these and a thousand other like assertions are true. They are as true as any other part of the Bible. Still, I should like to discuss the Divine authority of Scripture with you in a more general way, and to hear from you other arguments.

Father.—Let us proceed then, at once, to the subject of miracles. A miracle is something more than a strange thing, or to us an unaccountable thing. It is not certain that an event is miraculous, because it is not in accordance with any law of nature with which we are acquainted. There may be natural laws of which, at present, we have no knowledge, with some one or more of which the seeming miracle may be at an agreement. But suppose we see some *known* law of nature supervened, and an event taking place in direct contradiction to it. It is not merely above and beyond what we know of nature, but in direct contravention of what we know. Such an event is a proper miracle, *known* to be such; and from the nature of the case, it is, and must be, from God. It involves a direct intervention of that Omnipotence by which the laws of nature were established, and which alone is able to suspend them.

S.—But are we sufficiently acquainted with nature's laws to

know when they are supervened, and thus to decide, in regard to a given event, whether it be a miracle or not?

F.—To this I reply that, with all our short-sightedness and ignorance, we do know something in regard to the powers and laws of nature. We have, or may have, not presumption or conjecture, but *knowledge* here; else all philosophy is delusive, and every attempt at philosophical inquiry must be fruitless. But if we may know, to some extent, what the laws of nature are, then we may know when they are suspended or contravened, and may be able to distinguish a proper miracle from every other kind of event.

Now the Bible contains accounts of many such miracles—*real* miracles—*known* to be such—extending through a long succession of years, from the time of Moses to the end of the Apostolic age. And these accounts are true, if the Bible is true. There can be no doubt about them, unless we reject the truth of the sacred word.

S.—But if the miracles of Scripture actually occurred,—as we must suppose they did, unless we reject the Bible,—then *why* did they occur? What was the leading object or intent to them?

F.—The more immediate ends to be answered by miracles may have been various. Not a few of them were performed out of compassion for the sick, the afflicted, the distressed. Others were inflicted in righteous judgment upon the wicked. Others still were intended for the trial of those more immediately concerned. They were resorted to as a means of forming and developing character. But all these were no more than subordinate purposes; they were not the grand leading object in view. This must have been something vastly higher, and of more general interest to the world.

The great end of miracles, obviously, was *to attest the Divine mission of those who performed them, and the Divine authority of the messages which they were sent to deliver*. In frequent instances, this object is brought out prominently in the record; in others, it evidently lies at the foundation, and constitutes the leading, prompting motive for the exertion of miraculous power. Thus when

Moses went with a message from God to Pharaoh, he demanded, as we might have presumed he would, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." And now God proceeds, by a series of stupendous but crushing miracles, to shew Pharaoh who he is, and to convince him that, in the presence of the God of Israel, he is himself but a worm. By these repeated miracles, God attested the Divine commission of Moses and Aaron, sanctioned their messages as coming from himself, and at length constrained the unwilling monarch to yield to the demands, which, at first, he had so proudly resisted. So when the murmuring Israelites in the desert called in question (as they often did) the Divine commission of their appointed leaders, and the Divine authority of their communications, miracles were instantly wrought to attest and sanction both. The dry rock is smitten, and the water gushes out. Aaron's rod flourisheth, while the others are dried up. The earth opens under the feet of the rebels, and they go down alive into the pit. In the days of Elijah, the people were halting between two opinions, not knowing whom to recognize as true prophets, or whether to worship God or Baal; and to satisfy them, a notable miracle is wrought. Fire comes down visibly from heaven, consumes the sacrifice and the wood, and licks up the very water in the surrounding trenches.

And not to multiply instances from the Old Testament, our Savior continually appealed to his miracles in proof of his Messiahship, and in attestation of the Divine authority of his words. "The *works* which my Father hath given me to do, the same bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, *believe the works*, that ye may know that the Father is in me, and I in him." The grand object of the Apostles' miracles was precisely the same. "They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and *confirming the word by signs following.*" When the apostleship of Paul was called in question, in vindication of it he appealed at once to his miracles, "Truly the signs of

an Apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, *in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*"

In short, there can be no doubt as to the leading design and object of the miracles of the Bible. They were designed, as I said, to attest the Divine mission of the inspired teachers, and the Divine authority of their communications, and thus to establish the faith, not only of those who heard them, but of all who should become acquainted with their words and works.

S.—You regard, then, the argument from miracles as a sound one, in support of the Divine authority of our sacred books?

F.—I do; and so must every consistent follower of Christ. It is certain that he often employed this argument, and urged it home upon the consciences of his hearers. Hence we cannot call in question the soundness of it, without impeaching the character of our Lord.

S.—The argument from *prophecy* is continually urged in support of the Divine authority of our Scriptures. Do you regard this argument also as a sound one?

F.—I do. To look into the remote future, and disclose distant, contingent events,—those depending, not upon the ascertained laws and processes of nature, but upon the free actions of men,—this is the prerogative of God alone. No other being in the universe can do it. In the fifth chapter of the Revelation, a vast map of the future is exhibited, under the symbol of a sealed roll or book; and "No creature in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." We are here taught that, to all created minds, the whole contingent future is a sealed book. And a sealed book it must remain, except so far as God is pleased to unseal and open it. We conclude, therefore, that every proper prediction is a revelation from God. From the nature of the case, it must be so. Creatures may presume, may conjecture, may make calculations; but God alone can with certainty predict. The calculations of creatures often disappoint them; but God's predictions never. They are sure to go into effect,

and in the precise way and manner which he has indicated. The only question then is, does the Bible contain real predictions? And what fair-minded reader of the Bible can entertain a doubt on this point? Here is a continued series of predictions, reaching from Genesis to the Revelation, many of which have been most remarkably fulfilled,—so remarkably, in some instances, as to constrain the unbeliever,—in opposition to all historical evidence,—to affirm that the alleged predictions must have been written subsequent to the events foretold; that is, to be history, and not prophecy. Witness the predictions of Isaiah, as to the capture of Babylon, and the return of the Jews; and Daniel's vision of the four beasts; and our Savior's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem; and the declarations of all the prophets, as to the present scattered and separate condition of the Jewish people. But if the Bible contains real predictions, then certainly it is, thus far, a revelation from God.

S.—What have you to say of the *internal* evidences of the Divine authorship of the Bible—those drawn from the book itself?

F.—These are numerous and highly important,—such as the nature and excellence of its doctrines; the purity and elevation of its moral code; its inexhaustible fullness; the harmony of its several parts; and its exact adaptation to our fallen condition and wants;—all conspiring to set it before us as the book of God. Unaided men could no more have written the Bible than they could have created the world. Its doctrines surpass all human foresight and wisdom. Its aims transcend all human thought. The character of Christ, as exhibited in the Bible, is such as no mere man ever formed or conceived; such as no pen but that of inspiration could have sketched. Then there is a power attending the promulgation of religious truths, and the good effects which they have produced, and are still producing in the world. The Scriptures alone have proved themselves to be “quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword; mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds;” and “able to make man wise unto salvation.”

I urge but another argument in favor of the Divine authority of the Bible,—the same which was urged in support of its truth,—that which the Christian finds in his own soul. “If any man,” saith Christ, “will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, *whether it be of God.*” True Christians have fulfilled the condition here proposed, and they realize the truth of the promise. They do know of the doctrine that *it is of God*. They find such a blessed agreement between the representations of Scripture, and the feelings of their own hearts, that they cannot doubt as to the Divine origin of the Bible. It must have proceeded from that Being, who perfectly knows the hearts of his own children, and has so accurately set them forth in the pages of his word.

If the Bible is God’s book, my children, coming to us in his name and by his authority, then it deserves our most serious and reverent attention. Who would not listen, were God to speak to him in an audible voice from the heavens? Yet God is as really speaking to us in his word, as though he addressed us in a voice of thunder from the skies. The Apostle Peter once heard the Holy One speaking to him from the skies; but he says, “Ye have a more sure word of prophecy” than this. Yes, a *more sure word of prophecy*. Let us then give diligent heed to this sure word of prophecy, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts.

CONVERSATION VI.

THE SCRIPTURES INSPIRED AND INFALLIBLE.—Difference between revelation and inspiration.—An infallible record.—Passages in the Bible not true.—Such explained.—Man's instrumentality.—The work of God.—Proof of the inspiration of the Bible.—The promise of inspiration from God.—Many of them.—Inspiration acknowledged by the writers.—Proclaimed by Christ.—Doctrine of the early fathers.—Objections.—Difference in style and method.—Original manuscript lost.—Indelicacies of the Bible.—Contradictions.—Improper quotations of New Testament writers.—Paul's disclaimer to Revelation.—Doctrine of inspiration of great importance.

Son.—In our last conversation we satisfied ourselves that God has *revealed himself* to us in his word, and, of course, that his word is of Divine authority. Does this include what is commonly called the *inspiration* of the Scriptures; or is that a distinct and separate subject?

Father.—The inspiration of the Scriptures is a separate subject, having respect to the *promulgation of God's revealed truth*, whether by the living voice, or the written word. We have seen that God has made supernatural revelations of his truth and will to mankind, and that these revelations are in the Bible. The Scriptures are a record of them. The question now arises, is this a merely human record, in the main faithful, but, like everything else human, fallible and imperfect? Or is it a *Divinely inspired and infallible record*? Were the sacred writers left to their own unaided wisdom in accomplishing their work; or were they so inspired and assisted as to be secured from all mistakes and errors; being led to write just what the Divine Spirit would have them write, and in just the manner in which he would have them write it?

S.—You make a distinction, then, between revelation and inspiration.

F.—I do; and the subject before us has been embarrassed often, by not marking this distinction. Revelation is the direct impartation of God's truth to the mind of the prophet. Inspiration denotes the assistance afforded in the utterance of God's truth, or in recording what God chose to have committed to the sacred page.

All Scripture is not Divine revelation ; but all Scripture is written under a Divine inspiration, and consequently is an infallible record of what God chose to have written for our “instruction in righteousness.” There are passages in the Bible which are not true, in any sense ; and of course are not revealed truth. Such were the speech of the serpent to our first mother ; and the message of Rab-shekah to the Jews in the days of Hezekiah ; and the spiteful letter of Sanballat to Nehemiah ; and the false reasonings and reproaches of Job’s three friends. Yet all these, and the like Scriptures, may have been written under a Divine inspiration. We have a true and inspired *account* of things said and done, however false they may be in themselves.

S.—It follows from these statements, that the Scriptures are the work both of men, and of God ;—of men in the exercise of their own faculties, who are yet so supervised, assisted and directed of God, as to be able to record infallibly his truth and will. Is such a union of the Divine agency and the human in this work of inspiration possible ?

F.—We have proof of its possibility, and also of its credibility, in that it conforms so entirely to God’s usual method of operating in other things. It is in God that “we live, move, and have our being ;” yet in giving us life, breath, and being, God interrupts not the regular exercise of our own natural powers, but rather sustains them. The conversion and sanctification of the soul, too, is the work of God ; yet, in this work, there is no interference with the normal activities of him who is the subject of it. And so in the matter of inspiration, God supervises, assists, restrains, suggests, and does all that is necessary that the utterance of the record may be in accordance with his will ; and yet the subject of it thinks his own thoughts, exercises his own faculties, and speaks or writes much after his own natural method.

S.—But what proof have we of the inspiration of the Bible, in the sense explained ?

F.—In the first place, this is a *reasonable supposition*. If God

were to be at the expense of making a revelation, he would not be likely to leave it to human imperfection and weakness to make a record of it. We might reasonably anticipate that he would so inspire and assist his servants that they should publish his truth in a manner agreeable to his will.

From the very nature of the case, a considerable part of the Bible must be inspired; else it is palpable imposture. Frequently, in the Old Testament, we have God himself speaking, in the first person. We have what purports to be his own words. And if the Bible is true, they are his own words. And the sacred writers must have been *verbally* inspired in recording them. So in the New Testament, we have, through whole chapters, what purports to be the very words of Christ. Now the writers may have been perfectly honest, but their memories were treacherous; and how could they be sure after a lapse of years, that they were giving the real words of Christ, unless they were assisted from above? Hence the value of that promise which was given to the disciples, "The Comforter, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and *bring all things to your remembrance*, whatsoever I have spoken unto you" (John xiv. 26).

There are also other portions of the Bible which, if they are true, must be inspired. I refer to those parts in which the writer records transactions which took place long ages before he was born. For example; how did Moses know what God said to Adam, and Cain, and Noah, and Abraham, and what these men said in reply, unless he had Divine inspiration? He might have received some general account of things by tradition; but he does not profess to record doubtful traditions, but the very words which were spoken one way and the other.

S.—Had the sacred writers a *promise* of inspiration in giving utterance to God's truth.

F.—Yes, there are many such promises. Here was one to Moses. "Now therefore go, and *I will be with thy mouth*, and *I will teach thee what thou shalt say*" (Ex. iv. 12). The Apostles had such

promises oft repeated. "I will give you *a mouth and wisdom* which no adversary can gainsay or resist." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he shall guide you into all truth.*" "When they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for *it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak*; for it is not ye that speak, but *the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*" There is no mistaking the import of language such as this. We have here promise upon promise, that the servants of Christ, in giving utterance to his truth, should be directed by an influence from on high.

S.—Do the sacred writers ever *assert their own inspiration?*

F.—Yes, and not only so, but the inspiration one of another. David says of himself, "*The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue*" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). "I certify you," says Paul, "that the gospel which was preached of me was not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but *by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" "Which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but *which the Holy Ghost teacheth.*" "The things which I write unto you are *the commandments of the Lord.*"

The sacred writers not only assert, as in these passages, their own inspiration but the inspiration of the Scriptures generally. Paul calls the Scriptures of the Old Testament "*the oracles of God*" (Rom. iii. 2). This is a peculiarly strong expression. Among the heathen, the oracle was the place where the voice of the god was heard—where his responses were sounded forth. Yet the Scriptures are "*the oracles of God.*"

Our Savior constantly speaks of the Scriptures as *the word of God*, and *inspired*. "*The Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David.*" "*Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet.*" "*The word of God cannot be broken.*" "*Making the word of God of none effect by your traditions.*"

Paul testifies on the point before us as follows: "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*" "The prophecy came not, in old

time, by the will of man, but *Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past by the prophets, hath, in these latter days, spoken unto us by his Son." Nothing can be more decisive than this testimony. If language such as this does not prove the inspiration of the Bible, no language can.

S.—How was this doctrine held by the early Fathers—the immediate successors of the Apostles?

F.—Clement of Rome, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, says: "Give diligent heed to the Scriptures, *the true sayings of the Holy Ghost*" (Chap. xlv). Justin Martyr says: "I think not that the words which you hear the prophet speaking are uttered by himself. Being filled with the Spirit, *they are from the Divine Logos which moves him*" (Apology i., p. 336).

"The sacred books," says Origen, "*breathe the fullness of the Spirit.* There is nothing, either in the law, in the gospels, or in the Apostles, which did not descend from *the fullness of the Divine Majesty*" (Works, vol. iii., p. 282).

"It is needless to inquire," says Gregory the Great, "who wrote the book of Job, since we may surely believe that *the Holy Ghost was its author*" (Works, vol. i., p. 7).

"What avails it," says Theodoret, "to inquire whether all the Psalms were written by David; it being plain that *all were composed under the influence of the Holy Spirit*" (Works, vol. i., p. 395).

It is needless to quote further from the early Christian fathers. They were unanimous on the subject of inspiration, and took high ground in regard to it. They commonly speak of the Scriptures as "the law of God," "the word of God," "the voice of God," "the oracles of heaven," "the oracles of the Holy Ghost." Indeed, the full inspiration of the Scriptures has been the doctrine of the church, in all periods of its history. In the Jewish church, before the coming of Christ, and in the Christian church, from the beginning to the present time, the full inspiration of our sacred books has been received and held as a doctrine of essential importance.

S.—I am glad to be instructed in regard to this important doctrine, and to hear such convincing proofs of it. You are aware that it is much disputed in our times, and that many objections are urged against it. Will you allow me to call your attention to some of these objections? It is objected, you know, to the idea of inspiration, that there are great differences of *style* in the books of the Bible, each individual seeming to write and speak in his own peculiar, natural way.

F.—And so, on the theory of inspiration which we adopt, we might expect it would be. If, as some have supposed, the sacred writers, while under the Spirit's influence, had been deprived of the regular exercise of their own powers, so as to be mere passive instruments in the hands of God, there would be some reason for connecting the idea of inspiration with great uniformity in regard to style; but if, as we hold, they were left to the natural exercise of their own powers, while they were instructed, guided, superintended by the Spirit, and led by him to write that, and only that, which was agreeable to his will, then the differences of style which appear in their writings are no objection to the idea of their inspiration. They are just what might reasonably be expected.

That these differences of style are consistent with even a verbal inspiration is evident from the Scriptures themselves. In many parts of Scripture, as before remarked, we find God speaking in his own person. Whole chapters of this nature occur not unfrequently in the prophets. Yet in these chapters we find the same differences of style as in other parts of the Bible. God, speaking in his own person by the mouth of Hosea or Amos, adopts the style of these men; but when speaking by the mouth of Isaiah or Joel, he adopts the higher and more poetical diction of these prophets.

S.—It is said by some, that this whole question of inspiration amounts to nothing, since we have naught in our hands, at present, but transcripts and translations; the original copies, which alone were inspired, having long been lost.

F.—But we do think it of great importance to have had an

inspired and infallible *original*. From such an original, all the existing copies and versions came; and though we have not the autographs with which to compare them, still we can compare them one with another; we can judge of differences where they exist; we can judge wherein they differ, if at all, from the original copies; and can thus approximate, at least, to the true standard. The original copies of the ancient classics have all passed away; yet we like to know that there *were* such copies, and by careful revision, comparison, and criticism, we can measurably restore them. A copy of the Scriptures, or a version, is a proper subject of criticism. We may properly inquire, not whether the original writers made mistakes, but whether mistakes have not occurred since; whether the copy or the version conforms to the original. Thus far may human criticism lawfully go in this direction; but no farther. If it may transcend this limit; if it may go to the original itself, or to what is decided, on sufficient grounds, to have been the original; then we have no standard left. The criticism of prophets and apostles, the sitting in judgment upon those who preached and wrote by inspiration, is a new science, "upon which," as one has well said, "we do not care to venture, and the results of which we should distrust and dread."

S.—It is said that there are *indelicacies* in the Bible, which forbid the idea that it is all inspired.

F.—But are we fully competent to judge in a matter like this? Shall we set ourselves up as the standard of delicacy for all ages, and all people? In regard to this matter, like most others, the notions of people vary in different places, and at different times. What would be sufficiently delicate to an Oriental now, and would have been so regarded by our own fathers and mothers two hundred years ago, may strike us differently. Besides, words and phrases often become indelicate as they become common, and there is a necessity for changing them for others in less common use. But here is a book in which the words and phrases, as they stand in the original, must not be changed. They must stand the same

everywhere, and in all periods of time. This, doubtless, is a principal reason why some few of the words of Scripture, to a modern ear, may seem indelicate.

S.—It is still further objected that there are *contradictions* in the Bible. What will you say in regard to these?

F.—That there are a few seeming inconsistencies,—passages which, with our means of knowledge, we may not be able fully to harmonize,—need not be denied. But that there were any real contradictions in the original Scriptures, as they came from God, is what no believer in Divine inspiration can admit, and no denier of it can prove. I speak advisedly on this subject, having had occasion to examine critically most, if not all, the cases which have been alleged. Some are the result, obviously, of mistakes in transcribing, translating, or interpreting; while others arise from our ignorance of attendant circumstances, and might at once be harmonized, if these were fully known.

S.—It has been objected to the inspiration of the New Testament, that its writers sometimes quote from the Old Testament incorrectly, and apply their quotations improperly.

F.—The Apostles and evangelists do not always quote with strict verbal accuracy, nor do they pretend to; but we see not how this can be urged against either their inspiration or their truth. How often do we thus quote from the Scriptures, and from other books, without any impeachment of our veracity? Nor is it certain that the writers of the New Testament always apply the language quoted from the Old according to its original intent and acceptance. In a few instances, they seem to *adopt* this language, as a phraseology familiar to them, in which to express their own thoughts; just as the classical scholar sometimes incorporates a passage from a favorite author, without stopping to inquire whether his application of it is precisely according to its original intent. It is to his purpose, he takes it, and passes on. To the Apostles and evangelists, the Old Testament was almost their only classic. Its language was dear and familiar to them. They were literally men

of one book. And from this loved book, they, in a few instances, take a passage or a clause, because it is apposite or illustrative, without pretending to apply it just as it was applied by the original writer; and we see nothing in this which is at all inconsistent with their good character or their inspiration.

S.—It is objected finally, that Paul, in some instances, expressly disclaims a Divine inspiration. “To the rest speak I, *not the Lord*; if any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.” “Concerning virgins, *I have no commandment of the Lord*; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy” (1 Cor. vii. 12, 25).

F.—In these passages, Paul obviously disclaims something. But what is it? Not, as it seems to me, Divine inspiration, but *his having any express Divine command to be enjoined*. He was not inspired to lay positive injunctions upon the Corinthians in these matters, but rather to give his *judgment*, his *advice*. “Herein I give my *advice*,” etc. He also tells us that he “thinks he has the Spirit” (1 Cor. vii. 40). And if Paul thought that he had the Spirit, who shall say or think that he had it not?

S.—This doctrine of inspiration, which you have been so careful to explain and vindicate, is clearly a doctrine of great importance.

F.—It is so indeed. If the Bible is not inspired, in the sense explained, then it is not an infallible standard of truth and duty, and nothing can be certainly known or established by it. The Bible has been well denominated “a code of *laws*.” But in all authoritative communications or laws, it is important that we have the precise words of the law giver. So it is with human laws. The judge on the bench must have before him the precise words of the law, or he cannot interpret them. The people, too, must have the law correctly before them, or they cannot tell what it requires. Suppose one of our legislatures should undertake to frame a code of laws, but instead of writing them down themselves, or causing them to be written under their own inspection, should leave it to the reporters in different parts of the house, to take down the sub-

stance, or so much of them as they could recollect, and publish them in the newspapers. The reporters might be honest and capable men; and yet who could regard their notes as laws? In matters such as these, I repeat, we want the *matured words* of the law-giver. And just so in respect to the Bible. The Bible purports to be a code of laws, coming down to us from the great Law-giver of the universe, and binding directly on our consciences and hearts. But in order that it may be duly authenticated—may be a rule of life to us here, and of judgment hereafter, we must have *the very words of God*. A merely human record of his truth and will cannot bind us. We must have a Bible, the whole of which is given by the inspiration of God, or we have no standard by which to walk, or on which to rely.

CONVERSATION VII.

THE CREATION.—A veritable history or a myth.—Self-evident testimony.—Other evidence.—Creation of the world explained.—Swedenborg and Pantheism.—Time.—Geology and the Bible narrative.—In the beginning.—Formation of mountains.—Terrible revolutions.—Cause of the darkness.—First chapter of Genesis explained.—The sun, moon and stars.—Institution of the Sabbath.—Length of days.—Prehistoric man.—The Mosaic narrative descriptive of the earth before the flood.

Son.—We have had several conversations on topics directly pertaining to the Bible; we come now to its *contents*. The first fact which meets us on the pages of the Bible is *the creation of the world*. This, with the connected events, occupies some of the first chapters of Genesis. And I wish to inquire, first of all, whether you regard this as veritable history; or is it (as some insist) no more than an instructive parable?

Father.—I regard it as veritable history, and a most important item in the world's history. The account in Genesis has all the marks of veritable history, and would be sufficient to establish the fact of the creation even if it stood alone—if it was not sustained by other evidence. But it *is* sustained by a vast amount of other evidence, both in the Bible and out of it. It is sustained by the genealogies of Scripture, in both the Old Testament and the New. There is a long genealogy in the first book of Chronicles, commencing with Adam, and running down, in various channels, to the time of the captivity. Then there is the genealogy of our Savior, in the third chapter of Luke, running back from Jesus, the reputed son of Joseph, to Adam, "who was the son of God."

Nor is this all. We find frequent notices of Adam, as the progenitor of our race, in other parts of the Bible; and on this fact are grounded some of the essential doctrines of the gospel. "As by the offense of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one (Christ) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall

many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 18, 19). "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22). You see from these passages, that the history of Adam and of the creation stands connected with much Bible truth, and must stand as long as the Gospel.

S.—Please explain to me now what you understand by the creation of the world.

F.—By the creation of the world I understand something more than the making of one thing from another. With the appropriate materials, *we* can make many things. And, by most of the ancient heathen philosophers, creation was supposed to be nothing more, *in kind*, than this. But it is obvious that a world thus made would not be a proper creation. It would be rather a *fabrication*.

S.—What will you say of the doctrine of Swedenborg, and of Pantheists generally, that the world is from the very *substance of God*.

F.—I say that such a doctrine has no foundation either in reason or Scripture, but is refuted by both. If the world and all things it contains are from the substance of God, then they are *independent* and *indestructible* like God,—which we have no reason to suppose is true. They are also *parts* of God; and this involves the absurdity that the infinite God is divisible into parts. It involves also the *mutability*, the *changeableness* of God. For certainly there are continual changes going on in the world around us; and if the world and all its contents are of the substance of God, then there are continual changes in his substance. In short, the doctrine before us is but saying that everything is God, and God everything, which is *Pantheism*, *Atheism*. It is denying the existence of a personal God, who made the world and governs it; and this is to deny that there is, properly speaking, any God at all.

S.—Both these negative statements as to creation I admit; but you have not yet told us positively what creation is—what you understand by it.

F.—Let me say then, in a word, that by creation I understand the making of all created things *from nothing*. God made them all, not out of himself, or from eternal, elemental, chaotic matter, but from nothing. He brought them *into being*. He gave them *existence*, when before they had none. This is what we understand by the work of creation. This is the proper signification of the original word translated *create*, in the first verse of the Bible. The Apostle Paul gives us the same idea, in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear,” or of things *already existing*, which is the same as to say they were made from nothing. The Jews seem to have held this idea of creation in all periods of their history. Thus it is said in the Maccabees, “Look upon the heaven, and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that God made them of things which *are not*” (2 Macc. vii, 28). Philo also says, “The things that were not, God called *into being*.”

S.—But if this world was created from nothing, it was created in time; and it is insisted that the date of its creation, as fixed in the first chapters of the Bible,—less than six thousand years ago,—can never be made to harmonize with the facts of geological science.

F.—It is assumed by those who urge this objection, that the Scriptures make the age of the world to be something less than six thousand years; that, at the time of placing our first parents upon it, the world itself was created from nothing. But have they any right to such an assumption? Where is it said in Scripture that the world we inhabit was made from nothing at the time of the creation of our first parents? I answer confidently, *nowhere*.

S.—How then do you interpret the first verse of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth?”

F.—This sentence I regard as a paragraph by itself. It is an independent, a most important, and, I will add,—considering the circumstances under which it was written,—a most remarkable declaration; announcing that, at some time, at some remote period

of antiquity, in the beginning of his works, God did create the heavens and the earth. There is not a verse in the Bible which bears the impress of Divine revelation more strongly than this. At what period, in the lapse of eternal ages, this great event took place, we are not informed ; what was the appearance or consistence of the earth at its first creation we are not informed ; nor have we the slightest information as to the changes and revolutions of the world, nor as to the forms of animal and vegetable life which it bore upon its surface, during the remoter ages of its history. This was emphatically the geological period of the world ; and the geologist has space enough here for his deepest, widest researches. He has scope enough for any conclusions to which he may reasonably come, without the remotest danger of trenching on any of the annunciations of revealed truth.

That a vastly long period intervened between the proper creation of the world, spoken of in the first verse of the Bible, and the commencement of the six days' work, recorded in the following verses, there can be no reasonable doubt. It was during this period that the earth assumed a solid form. Its heated masses were cooled and conglomerated ; the primary rocks were crystallized ; the transition, the secondary, and the deeper portion of the tertiary rocks were deposited and petrified ; the lower forms of animal and vegetable existence appeared and perished ; multitudes of marine and amphibious animals,—some of them of huge and terrific forms,—lived and died, and their remains lie embedded in the solid rocks. Vast quantities of vegetable matter also accumulated on the earth, and was treasured up beneath its surface for the future use and benefit of man.

S.—Is it likely that the earth was at rest and quiet, during this long primitive period ?

F.—No ; geology teaches that it was not at rest. It underwent frequent and terrible revolutions. Its internal fires were raging in their prison house, and often bursting through the crust which confined them. The mountains were upheaved from their deeper than

ocean beds; trap-dykes were formed; and the stratified rocks were tilted from their original, horizontal positions in every direction.

S.—When do we next hear of the state of the earth in the Bible? And what do we hear?

F.—It was subsequent, as I think, to one of these terrible revolutions of which I have spoken—a revolution which had torn the earth to its center, merged the greater part of it beneath the ocean, and destroyed almost every trace of animal and vegetable existence, that mention is made of it in the second verse of our Bible. It was then “without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”

S.—Why was the earth dark at this period?

F.—Not because there was no sun, but because murky, caliginous gases and vapors had utterly obscured the light of the sun, and shut it out from the desolate world. It was like the darkness of Egypt, in one of the plagues of that smitten country.

But God had not abandoned the work of his own hands. He had nobler purposes to answer by this seemingly ruined world than any which it had hitherto accomplished. It was no longer to be the abode of saurians, and mastodons, and other huge and terrific monsters, but was to be fitted up and adorned for a new and nobler race of beings. Accordingly, the Spirit of God began to move upon the turbid waters, and order and peace were gradually restored.

S.—The thought you have here suggested is one of great interest. Please go on and interpret the first chapter of Genesis, in accordance with this theory.

F.—Upon the first day, God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” The dense clouds and vapors, which had enveloped the earth, and shut out entirely the light of heaven, were so far dissipated, that it was easy to distinguish between day and night.

On the second day, God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God called the firmament heaven.” The work here denoted was the elevation of the clouds, and the separation of the aerial

waters by a visible firmament—the seeming canopy of heaven—from those which rested on the earth.

“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land *earth*, and the gathering together of the waters called he *seas*. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind; and it was so. And the evening and the morning were the third day.” In the course of this day, vast portions of the earth’s surface were elevated; others were depressed; continents and islands were raised up; and the seas and oceans were made to know their bounds. As soon as the dry land appeared, it began to be clothed with vegetation. The forming hand of the Creator covered it (without doubt, by miracles) with new species of trees and vegetables, in place of those which had been destroyed.

“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night. And God made two *great* lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”

S.—Were the sun, moon, and stars literally made on this fourth day?

F.—I think not; but they were now made to *shine out* upon the renovated earth. They now first became *visible lights* to the forming world. The dark clouds and vapors had before been so far dissipated, that it was easy to distinguish between day and night. But now they were *entirely* dissipated, and the lights of heaven shone down upon the earth in full-orbed splendor.

The representation throughout this chapter, it should be remarked, is rather *phenomenal*, than philosophical and literal. It accords with what would have been the *appearance* of things, had there been any spectator on the earth, at the time, to observe them. Thus when it is said that God made a *firmament*, we are not to understand that the seeming canopy above us is a literal *thing*, a shin-

ing *substance*; but only that such is the *appearance* to a spectator on the earth. And when it is said that God made two great lights, and set them in the firmament, we are not to suppose that the sun and moon were now first created, and fixed in the blue expanse, but that such would have been the appearance to man, had he been alive on the fourth day, when the sun and moon commenced their shining.

On the fifth day, God peopled the waters with fishes, and the air with birds and flying fowls.

On the sixth day, he brought forth the beast of the earth, the cattle, and every creeping thing, after his kind. He also created man in his own image. Male and female created he them, and gave them dominion over all the creatures that he had made.

On the seventh day, God ended his work—the great work of reorganizing and renewing a desolate world, preparing it for the residence of man, and placing man and the other creatures upon it. “And he blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work.”

S.—Have we here the institution of the weekly Sabbath?

F.—Undoubtedly; it came down to us from the garden of Eden. Next to marriage, it was the first institution given to man. In the fourth commandment, there is an express reference to the Sabbath as having been instituted at the creation.

S.—I perceive that, in harmonizing the Scripture account of the creation with the facts of science, you do not take the ground of some commentators, that the days spoken of in the first chapter of Genesis are not literal days, but indefinitely long periods of time.

F.—I cannot take this ground, and that for two reasons: It seems to me inconsistent with the facts of the case, and also with the language of Scripture. If there was no sun in existence before the fourth long period or day,—as the advocates of the cycle period generally admit,—then how could the earth, without a sun, be covered with trees and vegetables through all the third period? And how could the earth, without a sun, be held in its orbit? And how were the evening and the morning produced?

But my principal objection to the cycle theory grows out of the language of the Bible. The seventh day was a season of holy and blessed rest. Was this also an indefinitely long period? And if so, what becomes of the primeval institution of the Sabbath, and the antediluvian division of time into weeks of seven days? And what shall be said of the language of the fourth commandment, and the reason there assigned for its observance? "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. xx. 11). This alone is sufficient to prove that the six working days of the creation were no more than literal days, as the seventh was a literal day of rest.

S.—But is not your interpretation of the six days' work equally inconsistent with the fourth commandment, which says that "in six days the Lord *made* the heavens, and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is;" whereas you have said that the six days' work was only the renewing, reorganizing, and re peopling of a previously created but then desolate world.

F.—The original word translated *made* in the fourth commandment does not import, like that in the first verse of the Bible, a literal *creation*, but rather a *transformation*, a *fabrication*, the shaping and making of one thing from another. In this sense, the world was literally *made* in six days: not created, but *made over*—made what it now is. It was fitted up for the residence of man, and the present species of animals and vegetables, and they were placed upon it.

S.—Were six literal days sufficient,—unless we suppose many things to have been done by miracle,—for renewing and re peopling the earth?

F.—We do suppose many things to have been done by miracle; and all who hold to a proper creation or reorganization of the world must admit the same. The whole work was an almost continual succession of miracles. The formation of every new species of animal or vegetable was a miracle. There is a natural law by which

a species, once created, may propagate itself, but no law by which it may bring itself into being, or by which one species may generate another, or may grow, develop into another. Hence, the commencement of every new species involves a miracle, in whatever time or manner the work may have been performed. It is as much a miracle to form an acorn, and let it grow into an oak, as it would be to form the oak itself. It is as much a miracle to form an infant, and let him grow up to a man, as it would be to form a man. There is no avoiding the supposition of miracles in the forming and peopling of the world, in whatever manner the work may have been done; and if we allow the intervention of miracles, then six days,—or even a less time, if such had been the pleasure of the Almighty,—would have been amply sufficient for the work performed.

S.—It is objected, you know, to the creation of man at the time supposed in the Scriptures, that his existence may be traced to a much earlier period.

F.—This is a recent objection of geologists;* and I have examined all the facts which have been adduced in support of it—the flint implements, the jaw-bones and skeletons, the brick and pottery of the Nile, the lake buildings, etc. I might remark upon them all at length; but really they do not deserve so much attention. The things discovered may be the relics,—or some of them may,—of antediluvian men, but not of pre-Adamite men. They fail entirely to prove the point for which they are adduced, as has been often shown by scientific men.

I adduce two facts for the consideration of those who claim that this earth has long been inhabited by human beings,—some say for a hundred thousand years. The first relates to the present population of the earth. There is no law of nature more certain than that of the increase of population, in a geometrical progression, doubling its numbers at ascertainable periods. These periods are not the

*Only a few years ago, Mr. Lyell, the great advocate of pre-Adamite men, was opposed to the progressive development theory, and advocated the comparatively recent origin of man on the earth. See memoirs of Prof Silliman, vol. ii., p. 63.

same in different circumstances and countries, varying from twenty-five to a hundred years. But supposing the earth's population to double only once in a hundred years, the whole number in a hundred thousand years would be incalculable. It would not leave a square foot of surface to each individual.

The other fact which we wish to present is this: On supposition that men have been living, growing, improving on the earth for a hundred thousand years, or for half that time, why is it that the *historical* period of the race is of so recent a date? Why have we no authentic records of some of these long ages? Why do our standard histories commence so near to us, and so near together? We have no history of Persia other than that of Herodotus, or of Egypt than that of Manetho, or of Greece than that of Thucydides, or of China than that of Confucius, or of India than the time of Alexander the Great. Previous to these times, we have myths and fables, but no authentic secular history. And why have we not? Why did not those old sages, who lived from fifty to a hundred thousand years ago, leave something more intelligible than a jaw-bone, a skull, a splint of rock, or a piece of broken pottery? Let those answer, who insist upon an indefinitely long period for the existence of man upon the earth, beyond that assigned to him in the Bible.

I trust it will appear from what has been said, that there is nothing in the scriptural account of the creation which conflicts at all with any of the revelations of modern science. Be not afraid of any genuine deductions of true science. The world and the Bible are from the same author. The inscriptions on the imbedded rocks, and on the sacred page, are from the same hand. They cannot contradict each other; they never did, and, properly interpreted, they never will. Let science be faithfully and thoroughly pursued,—the more thoroughly the better,—and its conclusions will always serve, not to confute, but to confirm, the declarations of revealed truth.

CONVERSATION VIII.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.—Location of the Garden.—What it contained.—The Great Rivers.—The Tree of Good and Evil.—Its fruit.—The nature of it.—Why called the Tree of Knowledge.—The Tree of Life.—Its object and use.—The result had Adam and Eve ate of its fruit.—Moral reflections.

Son.—It is said (Gen. ii. 8), that “the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man which he had made.” Can you tell us aught about this primeval garden? Where was it situated? And what did it contain?

Father.—Eden was the name of a country, or section of country. The garden was some delightful locality in that country, which God had prepared for our first parents, and in which he placed them immediately after their creation. Moses gives us some description of the place, from which, I think, we may determine its situation, or very nearly.

S.—Is it likely that the description of Moses applies to the country as it was in his day, or as it was originally, before the flood.

F.—Two considerations go to assure us that the description of Moses applies to the rivers and countries spoken of as they were *after* the flood, and as they were known to be in his age. 1. On the other supposition, his description would be perfectly useless. It could convey no knowledge or idea of the locality whatever. 2. The names of the countries described are such as must have been given to them after the flood. How came any country to be called Havilah? It was named for Havilah, who was a son of Cush, a grandson of Ham, and a great-grandson of Noah (Gen. x. 7). And why was any country called Cush, improperly rendered by our translators, *Ethiopia*? It was named for Cush, the father of Havilah, and the son of Ham. We thus see that both the countries referred to in the description of Eden were named for individuals who lived *after* the flood. We infer, assuredly, that the description applies to these countries as they were subsequent to the deluge, and probably in the days of Moses.

S.—Admitting the truth of this, can we determine, from the description of Moses, where Eden, or the Garden of Eden, was situated?

F.—It is certain from the account in Genesis, that Eden must have been contiguous to the rivers, Hiddekel and Euphrates. The Hiddekel is undoubtedly the Tigris. It was so considered by the ancients generally, and is so translated in the Septuagint. It agrees to the Tigris, in that it goes before Assyria. Moses calls the Euphrates the *Phrat*; and so it has been called from the most ancient times. The little word *Eu*, signifying water, has been prefixed to it; so that Euphrates is literally the waters of the Phrat.

S.—From the description thus far, it is clear that Eden must have been somewhere on the rivers Euphrates and Tigris; but where?

F.—As these rivers rise near each other in the mountains of Armenia, some writers have been inclined to place the garden of Eden there. But there are two objections to this supposition. 1. The garden of Eden was *eastward* from the place where Moses was when he wrote the account: “The Lord planted a garden *eastward* in Eden.” Now if Moses wrote the Pentateuch during the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness, the mountains of Armenia would have been, not eastward from him, but far to the north. 2. We shall look in vain for the lands of Havilah and Cush (translated Ethiopia) in the mountains of Armenia.

S.—In the narrative, Moses speaks not only of the rivers Euphrates and Hiddekel or Tigris, but of two others, the Pison and Gihon. The Pison, he says, “compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.” Where now is the land of Havilah? Or where did Havilah, the great grandson of Noah, settle?

F.—Havilah was in the north-eastern part of Arabia, near the Persian Gulf, opposite to Shur on the north-western part, which bordered on the Red Sea. Thus it is said of the Ishmaelites that “they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt” (Gen. xxv. 18). We have a parallel expression in 1 Sam. xv. 7. “And

Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt." Shur, then, was in the north-western part of Arabia, touching upon the Red Sea, and opposite to it, in the north-eastern part, was Havilah, which was compassed by the ancient Pison.

S.—May I next inquire, where was the land of Cush, or Ethiopia, which the Gihon compassed? In other words, where did Cush, the grandson of Noah, originally settle?

F.—The Cushites or Ethiopians seem to have been a migratory people. At a later period, we find them in the south-eastern part of Arabia; and still later in Africa, in the country now called Ethiopia. But their first settlement after the flood seems to have been on the eastern mouth-branch of the Euphrates, where it enters the Persian Gulf.* The Euphrates, you will remember, after it receives the Tigris, flows on in one channel about two hundred miles, when it divides into two rivers, forming a delta, like the Nile. The westernmost of these delta streams, called the Pison, compassed the ancient Havilah; and the easternmost, called the Gihon, compassed the ancient Cush, both running into the Persian Gulf. That the Cushites originally dwelt on this mouth-branch of the Euphrates is evident, because they have left their name there. The country is expressly called *Cuth* or *Cush*, and the inhabitants *Cuthai* or *Cushites* (2 Kings xvii. 24, 36).

We have now found the four rivers spoken of by Moses,—the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Gihon and the Pison; and it cannot be difficult to fix pretty nearly the situation of the primitive Eden. It must have been on the Euphrates between its junction with the Tigris and its separation into the Pison and Gihon. And somewhere in this land of Eden was the garden—the *paradise* of Adam and Eve. The great river Euphrates ran through the land of Eden, and “went out of it to water the garden; and from thence,” *i. e.*, from the land of Eden, “it was parted into four heads” or streams; two coming down from above, and dividing itself into two below.

*See Rawlinson's Evidences, p. 274.

Other hypotheses have been urged as to the locality of Eden; but upon a careful review of what has been said, I am sure that the one here suggested is the best established. I know no other spot on the face of the earth which agrees at all with the description that Moses has left us.

S.—Having now fixed the locality of Eden, let us pause and consider what kind of place it was, and what it contained.

F.—Its very name imports that it was a delightful place. The imagination of a Milton could not have exceeded it. In it was “every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food. The tree of life, also, was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge between good and evil.” Both of these were fruit trees; but as to the kind of fruit which either of them bore we have no knowledge. Without doubt, the fruit of the tree of knowledge was tempting and beautiful. It was placed in the garden for the *trial* of our innocent first parents. They needed a trial. They must have a trial. God tries all his intelligent creatures before he fixes them in their eternal state. As our first parents were unlearned and inexperienced, it was proper that their trial should be of the plainest, simplest kind. The prohibition enjoined upon them was one which they could not misunderstand, and which they could not ignorantly or excusably violate.

S.—Why was the tree of which you speak called “the tree of the knowledge between good and evil?”

F.—It was so called, I presume, because by means of it our first parents came to know, *experimentally*, the difference between good and evil. But for this tempting, seductive tree, they never had known, in their own experience, what sin, or pain, or evil was, and consequently had not known the difference between evil and good.

S.—But there was another tree in the midst of the garden, called *the tree of life*. What are we to suppose was the import, the object, and use of this remarkable tree?

F.—Before directly answering this question, let it be observed that *temporal death*—the dissolution of the connection between soul

and body—is to be regarded as one of the bitter consequences of the fall. So it is represented in the Scriptures. “By man came death.” “In Adam all die.” “By one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin.*” It is not at all likely that man would ever have been called to suffer the pains of temporal death, if he had not sinned. He might not indeed have lived in this world always; but some easier exit out of it would have been provided for him than through the iron gate of death. He might have been translated, as were Enoch and Elijah. At any rate, he would not have been called to suffer the pains of temporal dissolution.

But if man, in his innocence, was not subject to death, then some provision must have been made for counteracting and removing the sources of disease and dissolution within him—the ordinary causes of death. As he was not to lead a life of indolence, but one of cheerful, healthful industry, dressing the garden of Eden and keeping it, he was subject, as man now is, to casualties and injuries. He was subject inherently and necessarily to hunger, thirst, lassitude, weariness, disease, decay; and these must ultimately have worn him out, and resulted in death, had not some method been devised to counteract their influence, and repair those wastes in the physical constitution, which they were sure to make. And here, I think, we may discover the precise object and use of the tree of life. This was placed in the midst of the garden, in a situation easy of access, that it might be a perfect and universal *restorative*; that it might heal all maladies, overcome all the causes of disease and decay, and preserve, innocent and happy, man in a state of perpetual health, strength and maturity, until his trial was ended, and he should be removed to his final and glorified state in heaven.

S.—Your explanation of this matter is certainly reasonable, and is confirmed by the *name* which was given to the tree. It was the *tree of life*, importing that life was to be perpetuated, and death averted, by means of it.

F.—The same is further evident from what was said of the tree subsequent to the apostasy. Of the curse pronounced upon fallen

man, temporal death constituted an important part. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and *unto dust shalt thou return.*" Of the infliction here denounced, there *was to be*, there *has been*, no remission.* The dread decree has been rigidly executed, and will be to the end of time. But the tree of life is in the garden, and how is fallen man ever to die, if he may have free access to it? If he may pluck and apply its healing leaves, and partake of its life-giving, health-restoring fruit, how is the inexorable decree of temporal dissolution ever to be executed? It cannot be. Hence, man must be shut out from the tree of life, or he will never return to the dust. He must be rigidly excluded from it, or he will live forever. Accordingly, we find him instantly driven out from the garden of Eden, and debarred from entering it; and all for the specific reason: "Lest he put forth his hand, and *take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.*"

S.—A striking confirmation of the explanation which you have given! I wonder it had not occurred to me before.

F.—The garden of Eden has long been desolated, and the literal tree of life has ceased from the earth. It could not long flourish in this infected, doomed, accursed world; and while it remained there was no approach to it for fallen man. But let us be thankful that there is another tree of life, the approaches to which are guarded by no flaming sword; whose leaf does not wither; whose fruit does not fail; which lives, and flourishes, and blooms forever. It is planted, not in the literal Eden, but in the Paradise of God above; and the way to it is open to all his obedient children: "Blessed are they that *do his commandments*, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

*With the exception of Enoch and Elijah.

CONVERSATION IX.

THE ORIGINAL SIN.—Adam and Eve made in the image of God.—What we are to understand by that.—Their free moral agency.—Duties in the garden.—The death implied for disobedience.—The serpent.—What it was.—Power to speak.—Why the devil did not tempt Adam.—The immediate consequences of transgression.—The sentence delayed.—The curse on the serpent.—The curse on the woman.—The significance of the curse on Adam.—Entailed sin a law of nature.

Father.—Our last conversation was on the garden of Eden. I am now to speak of an event which early occurred in the garden—an event in which we all have a melancholy interest—the *fall of our first parents*.

Son.—Our first parents are said to have been made in *the image of God*. What are we to understand by this expression?

F.—That they were, in their measure and faculties, *like* God. They bore, in the first place, his *natural* image. God is a spirit; and so were they. God has intelligence, reason, conscience, and will; and so had they. God is a free moral agent; and so were they. Our first parents bore also the *moral* image of God. They were holy, like God. Their holiness was the same,—not in degree, but in kind,—as that of their Maker.

S.—What resulted to our first parents from the fact of their free, moral, responsible agency?

F.—They came at once under the law and the government of God. They were subject to the great law of love, and to all those outward exemplifications of it which are discoverable by the light of reason and nature. They were subject also to a few plain, positive precepts. They were to dress the garden of Eden and to keep it. They were to observe the Sabbath, and from one of the trees of the garden—the tree of the knowledge between good and evil—they were to abstain entirely, under penalty of death. “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” This injunction seems to have been laid upon our first parents more especially for their *trial*. They were on trial to see if they would keep all God’s

commandments, but more especially this. This was a plain, positive command, the import of which they could not misunderstand, and the reasons of which, probably, they did not fully comprehend; so that obedience to it would be a suitable trial of their *faith*, as well as of their moral strength.

S.—And what was the death threatened in case of disobedience?

F.—As our first parents were, at this time, under a dispensation of *pure law*, the death threatened was, I suppose, the proper penalty of the law—the same which was inflicted on the apostate angels when they sinned; in other words, it was *spiritual and eternal death*.

S.—But did not temporal death constitute a part of the threatening?

F.—That temporal death, though a sad consequence of sin, constitutes no part of the proper penalty of the Divine law, is evident from two considerations; 1. Christ does not redeem his people from temporal death. He came to redeem them from the curse of the law, and he does redeem them from it. He redeems them from spiritual and eternal death. But from temporal dissolution Christ does not redeem his people. They die, in this sense, as well as others,—a fact showing conclusively that temporal dissolution constitutes no part of the curse and penalty of the law. 2. If the proper penalty of the law, involving the destruction of soul and body in hell, had been immediately executed upon our first parents, there had been no room for temporal death. It had been entirely precluded. Soul and body,—a *changed* body, of course,—must have gone to destruction together, and could not have been separated.

You see now how our first parents were situated in the garden of Eden,—intelligent beings, free moral agents, under a dispensation of law which they had never transgressed, and on trial to see whether they would persevere in holiness, and thus secure everlasting life, or whether they would transgress the law, and incur the penalty which hung suspended over them. The result of their probation we too well know. The serpent persuaded the woman, and

she persuaded her husband, to “eat of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe.”

S.—What are we to understand by the serpent, who performed so base a part in this transaction?

F.—That he was an animal of the serpent kind, and not (as some have thought) a baboon or monkey, I have no doubt. He is expressly called a serpent by the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. xi. 3). He probably had other means of locomotion besides what serpents now have,—feet, or wings, or something of the kind, of which he was divested, in consequence of his assault upon our unsuspecting mother. Still, he was a species of serpent.

S.—And was he no more than a mere serpent?

F.—Yes, something more. He displayed an artifice, a cunning, a subtlety, a malice, of which no mere brute animal was ever capable. His body and faculties were possessed, for the time, by that *old Serpent, the Devil, the Wicked One*. Devils sometimes possess the bodies of animals, as well as of men. In the time of our Savior, a legion of them once entered into a herd of swine, which, in consequence, ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were drowned. That the devil was the real agent in deceiving our first mother, and drawing her into sin, is evident from the nature of the case; and is implied in many Scriptures. Accordingly, the curse pronounced upon the serpent extended farther than to the literal animal. It reached to that old Serpent, the devil, and portended the victory which our Savior was to achieve over him upon the cross.

S.—Do you suppose that the serpent did really speak to Eve? And if he did, was not his speaking a miracle, and a miracle performed for a bad purpose—for the purpose of drawing our first parents into sin?

F.—I think the serpent did literally speak to the woman. He held a conversation with her. We must suppose this, unless we regard the whole narrative as an allegory—a supposition which the connection, and many other Scriptures, forbid. Nor is it certain

that the speaking of Satan through the organs of the serpent was a miracle, involving, as all miracles do, a direct interposition of the power of God. The probability is that Satan was able, by his own natural power, to speak audibly and intelligibly through the organs of the serpent. He often spoke, through the human organs, in the time of Christ. In repeated instances, he spoke through the organs of the poor frantic demoniacs, and enabled them to utter truths concerning which, of themselves, they had no knowledge. But if Satan could speak, through the human organs, why might he not through the organs of the serpent?

S.—My next inquiry relates to the *possibility* that our first parents, situated as they were, should fall into sin. They were perfectly holy. Their propensities, feelings and habits were all holy. How then could temptation reach such minds? How could it overcome them?

F.—Certainly, no *good reason* can be given for the fall of our first parents. Their act of transgression was altogether unreasonable, and without excuse. Still, I have never supposed that there was anything inexplicably mysterious or unaccountable in the matter. Their fall, I think, may be explained as well as many other wicked things which have been transacted in the world. Being free moral agents, our first parents must have had the *susceptibilities* appropriate to such agents. They must have been susceptible to motive influences, both to good and evil, the right and the wrong. Such susceptibilities imply nothing wrong in the person possessing them, but only that, as a moral agent, he is *capable* of wrong. Our Savior must have had them, or he could not have been tempted any way. Our first parents must have had them, else they could have had no trial at all.

But our first parents were not only moral agents, and had the susceptibilities of moral agents, they were also on *probation* or *trial*. Hence it was necessary that they should have something to try them; because a state of trial, in which there was nothing to try them, would be no trial at all. Being susceptible to motive influ-

ences both to good and to evil, it was involved in their very probation that such motives should be actually presented. In order that they might be, the tempter was permitted to enter the garden. Embodied in the wily serpent, he approaches the woman, whom he finds alone, somewhere near the forbidden tree, and enters into conversation with her; "Yea, hath God said that ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Is God dealing thus hardly with you? Is he thus arbitrarily interdicting your freedom?" And the woman said, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of this one tree, which stands here in the midst of the garden, God hath said that ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." But the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die. No such evil is to be apprehended. I have often eaten of it, and I am not dead. God, it seems, is jealous of you. He is arbitrarily restricting you to your hurt; for he well knows that, in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, as mine are, and ye shall become as gods, knowing good and evil."

In this artful address, we see how the serpent appeals to the moral susceptibilities of the woman, and plies his motive influence upon her. First, he undertakes to shake her confidence in God, and weaken her sense of obligation to him, so that the motives to disobedience may find little or no resistance. Then he flatly lies to her; he blinds and deceives her as to the dreaded consequences of transgression. Next, he appeals to her senses. "See how beautiful this fruit is, and how delicious to the taste." He appeals also to her natural curiosity, to her desire of knowledge, and desire of happiness;—all of them powerful principles of action; and by all, he urges her to make the experiment; assuring her that it can do no harm, but good; that it will make her instantly wise and happy. And the confiding, inexperienced creature believes him. He so presents the motives to transgression, that they do predominate over all opposing good influences, and she yields. She puts forth her hand; she takes; she eats. The deed is done; the serpent's malice is satiated; and he retires from the scene.

S.—Why does he not stay, and ply his influences upon Adam?

F.—He thinks it quite unnecessary. He leaves Adam in the hands of a more powerful tempter than himself. Eve soon finds her husband; tells him what she has done; tells him how delicious the fruit is, and how desirable to make one wise; assures him, from her own experience, that there is no fear of death; and urges him, by all the regard which he ought to have for his own good, and by all the love which he bears to her, to take and eat likewise. Nor is it so very strange or unaccountable, that her persuasions prevailed with him. For, in addition to all the motives which had overcome her, there was the additional one of conjugal affection. Adam could not be separated from his beloved Eve. He preferred to be united with her, though it were in transgression. If Eve must die, he chose to die with her. He took the forbidden fruit from her hands, and did as she required.

That our first parents acted unreasonably and wickedly in all this, there can be no doubt. They committed a great and dreadful sin; but I see not that there was anything inexplicable about it. I think it may be accounted for, on philosophical principles, as easily as most of the wickedness which is perpetrated among men.

S.—What were the immediate consequences of the transgression to our first parents themselves?

F.—Their eyes were opened; but in a way which they did not expect. They were opened to their own sin, and shame, and guilt. They had come to a knowledge of good and evil such as they never had before. They stood guilty and condemned, without refuge or hope, expecting the wrath and curse of their Creator. They were afraid to meet him, and so they fled and hid themselves among the trees of the garden. But vain is their attempt to hide themselves from God. He soon finds them, summons them forth, and calls them to a strict account. They can offer no sufficient excuse; and instead of taking blame to themselves, they endeavor to shuffle it off upon each other. The man blames the woman, and the woman the serpent.

S.—And why was not the threatened penalty immediately executed upon them?

E.—Not because the sentence of eternal death was remitted; for it was not remitted. But the execution of it was for a time *suspended*, in order to make room for *the dispensation of grace*. Of this dispensation, I shall have more to say hereafter.

S.—The several curses are now pronounced. Please explain to us the curse upon the serpent.

E.—The curse upon the serpent is as follows: “Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life.” Thus far, the curse seems to rest upon the literal serpent. If he had legs or wings before, they were now taken from him, and he was doomed, henceforth, to creep upon his belly, and to lick the dust. The remainder of the curse upon the serpent had respect more particularly to that old serpent, the Devil, whose agency was chiefly concerned in the temptation. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” We have here the first dawn of hope for the fallen human pair. The language carries with it an assurance that they were not to be destroyed immediately; that they should live to have a seed; and that a descendant of Eve should utterly vanquish the old serpent, and put an end to his usurped dominion over man. All this, I hardly need say, was fulfilled in the great seed of the woman—the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan bruised his heel, when he brought him to the cross; but he, by dying on the cross, vanquished Satan, and defeated all his diabolical designs. “Through death, he destroyed him which had the power of death, that is, the Devil.”

S.—What have you to say as to the curse upon the woman?

E.—The curse of the woman has rested heavily upon the daughters of Eve, from that time to the present. In sorrow and pain has she brought forth her children. Her desire has been unto her hus-

band, and he has ruled over her. The degradation of woman, and her sufferings from the other sex, more especially in those parts of the world not blessed with the light of revealed truth, have been dreadful. She has not been punished *for* the sin of her first mother, but her sufferings in *consequence of it* have been long and terrible.

S.—The curse upon Adam is still more significant. Please give us an explanation of that.

F.—The curse upon the man includes two things: 1. A curse upon the *ground*, involving the necessity of hard and wasting labor on his part, in order to procure a subsistence from it. 2. Temporal dissolution or death. “And unto Adam God said, Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken. For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” The curse upon the ground involved some change in regard to its natural productions. What this was, and how it was produced, we cannot tell. As much as this, however, may be said, that whereas the spontaneous productions of the earth before the fall were nutritious and useful, so that a sustenance was easily procured, the case was very different afterwards. Then the ground brought forth spontaneously the thorn and the thistle, the noxious weed and herb; while those productions most necessary for the sustenance and use of man could be procured only by toil and labor. Certainly, we find this to be true now; and all the generations of men from Adam downward have found the same. Such an order of things we have reason to know was entailed upon us in consequence of sin.

I have said that a part of the curse upon man was *temporal dissolution*. In the verses above read, we have the first mention of temporal death which occurs in the Bible. The death threatened to Adam in case he transgressed, I have shown, was not temporal death. It was the proper sentence of the law, which is eternal death. The

execution of this penalty, I have said, was for a time suspended, in order to make room for the dispensation of grace. This dispensation had now been revealed and entered upon. A seed of the woman had been promised, who should bruise the serpent's head. Fallen man may be saved, if he will believe and trust in the promised Savior. If he accedes to the kind offer of life in time, the incurred penalty of the law is not only suspended, but *remitted*. The transgressor is forgiven, and received back into the favor and the love of God. But if the gracious offer is not accepted in time, if it is neglected and rejected; then the suspended penalty comes down upon the head of the transgressor with new aggravations. He has now not only broken the law, but he has trodden under foot the Son of God.

Upon such a probation as this were Adam and Eve placed, immediately upon the promise of a Savior. Upon just such a probation are we all placed, during the continuance of the present life. Of this new probation of grace temporal death is the proper termination. When God has waited to be gracious long enough, and can consistently wait no longer, he breaks the brittle thread of life, and turns the body back to the dust from which it was taken. This, then, is the proper significance of temporal death—to terminate the probation of fallen man, and settle the question, whether he is to rise or sink, be happy or miserable forever. Though not the proper penalty of the law, it is a fruit and consequence of sin; but such a consequence as can be realized only under a dispensation of grace. Hence, it was not until the dispensation of grace had been opened, and a Savior had been promised, that we first hear of temporal death in the Bible.

S.—It seems that the curses upon our first parents were not limited to them personally, but descend, consequentially, to their posterity.

F.—Yes; the ground brought forth the thorn and thistle to Adam; and so it has done to all his descendants. He ate his bread in the sweat of his face; and so have they. He was doomed to end

his probation in the dust, and so are they. The curse of Eve, too, has descended to all her daughters. Like their first mother, they have brought forth their offspring in sorrow and pain.

S.—Are we not sinners also in consequence of Adam's sin?

F.—I suppose we are. That there is a consequential connection between our sin and that of our first parents is clearly set forth in the Scriptures, and is admitted by all evangelical Christians. Respecting the nature of this connection, and the manner of it, there have been various opinions; but the *fact* is universally admitted. Adam was, in a higher sense than any other individual that ever lived, a *representative man*. He represented the human race. In fact, he and his wife, at that time, *constituted* the human race. They constituted it all. There were no others. In many respects, they acted, not only for themselves, but for the race. What was said to them was said, through them, to the race. What was done for them was done, in like manner, for the race. When Adam sinned, he fell at once into a state of spiritual depravity, corruption and death. His heart, his affections and actions were all sinful. In this state, he begat children in his own image and likeness. They were like him in nature, and as soon as they began to act, they were like him in character. They were actual transgressors, sinners against God, and must be saved by the promised seed of the woman, or be lost forever.

S.—Is there not an important *natural law*—a law of *nature*, according to which all this comes to pass?

F.—I think there is. The great law of *likeness* runs through all the works of God. Every seed in the vegetable world produces its like. Every animal which is capable of propagation produces its like. And this law of universal likeness is a good law. What unspeakable confusion and misery would ensue, should it be abrogated?

In accordance with this general law, Adam begat a son in his own sinful likeness; and that son begat others; and these others; and so on to the present time. This order of things could not have

been changed without a miracle, and such a miracle God has never been pleased to perform.

You see, then, that we are all sinners in consequence of the sin of our first progenitors. You see, too, how this has come to pass. It has come by the operation of a great, a general, and a most benevolent law—a law which could not be set aside but by miracle, and a kind of miracle which God was not pleased to perform. And now, instead of murmuring and complaining that “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” let us rather repent of our sins, and forsake them, and put our trust in that Divine seed of the woman, who has come and crushed the serpent’s head.

CONVERSATION X.

CAIN AND ABEL.—Their birth.—Were they savages.—Religion.—Institution of the bloody sacrifice.—Ordned by God.—God's reason for not accepting the offering of Cain.—Cain's anger.—Murder of Abel.—The result.—Wives of Cain and Abel.—People to whom Cain fled.—Cain's posterity.—Abel's descendants.—The family of Adam and Eve.—Progress of population.—Object of Enoch's translation.—Extended lives of the antediluvians.

Father.—Shortly after the expulsion of our first parents from the garden of Eden, we are told that “Adam knew his wife, and she conceived, and bare Cain.” In the joy of deliverance, she said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord;” or more literally rendered, “I have gotten a man, *the Lord* ;” thinking him, perhaps, to be the promised Seed, which was to bruise the serpent's head. “And she conceived again, and bare his brother Abel.”

Son.—How early were these sons born to our first parents ?

F.—The birth of Cain is supposed to have occurred in the first year after the apostasy; the birth of Abel took place, perhaps, in the following year. The brothers grew up together; but their occupations were different. “Abel was a keeper of sheep; but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”

S.—Does not this statement contradict the suppositions of naturalists and infidels, that human beings were, at the first, savages ?

F.—It certainly does. Savages are not farmers or shepherds. They follow the chase, and subsist chiefly on the spontaneous productions of the earth. These infidel notions are also refuted by late discoveries in philology. Professor Wilson is engaged in tracing back words to their remotest origin; and he finds, from these, that in their first use of names and words, men were not savages, but were in a partially civilized state. The words they used, the names they employed, prove this conclusively.*

S.—What do we learn, from the brief notices given in Genesis, as to the religion of Cain and Abel ?

*See Wilson's Lectures on Language, p. 207.

F.—They had a knowledge of the true God, and were his professed worshipers. God had revealed himself to them, and instructed them as to the manner of his worship; and at stated seasons, they brought their offerings unto the Lord. And we are told what they brought. “Cain brought the fruit of the ground; but Abel brought the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof.” In other words, he brought a bloody sacrifice. This early institution of bloody sacrifices shows that the first inhabitants of the world had other and clearer intimations of God’s plan of mercy than is commonly supposed. They had not only the original promise in regard to the seed of the woman, but bloody sacrifices were immediately instituted, pointing typically to the blood of the cross, and inviting the worshiper to make that blood his trust.

S.—Is it certain that bloody sacrifices are not of human invention?

F.—How could they be? How should man ever have thought of propitiating the Deity, by slaying and burning an innocent lamb, and sprinkling the altar with its blood, unless he had been so taught by God himself? And why should God have prescribed such a form of worship, except on the ground of its typical significance—except as it shadowed forth, and was designed to shadow forth—the bloody sacrifice of the cross? We have therefore, as I said, in the primeval institution of bloody sacrifices, a clear intimation that the way of salvation by Christ was early opened to our first parents and their descendants, and that they were invited to put their trust in him, and live forever.

S.—When, at the time appointed, Cain and Abel brought their offerings unto the Lord, why did he not accept the offering of Cain, as well as that of Abel?

F.—Two reasons may be assigned why God did not accept the offering of Cain. The first is, that it was not presented *in faith*. “By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more acceptable offering than Cain” (Heb. xi. 4). The language here implies that the offering of Cain was not presented in faith; and “without faith, it is impossi-

ble to please God," or to be accepted of him. Then, secondly, Cain's offering was not presented in *the appointed way*; God had instituted a *bloody sacrifice*—the slaying of the victim, and the sprinkling of the altar with its blood. But Cain, either from pride, self-will, or some other cause, refused to offer such a sacrifice. Perhaps he had no lamb of his own, and did not like to procure one of his brother Abel. He could not see why an offering of corn, or fine flour, or fruits, would not do as well. At any rate, he would make the experiment. Cain was a *rationalist* in religion, and a fitting type of others of the same class. Abel presented his offering in *faith*, and in *the appointed way*, and it was accepted. Cain presented his without faith, in his own way, and it was rejected.

S.—How was Cain affected by the rejection of his offering?

F. He was angry with God, and angry with his innocent brother. Therefore, God condescended to reason with him. "Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin"—a sin offering—"lieth at the door." Still Cain was not satisfied. His envy and anger burned against his brother; and as they walked together in the field, he violently assaulted him, and slew him.

S.—At what time did the murder of Abel take place?

F.—Probably in about the 130th year of the world. We infer this from the fact that Seth, who is said to have been given in place of Abel, and was given, probably, soon after Abel's death, was born when Adam was one hundred and thirty years old.

S.—What notice was taken of this tragical event,—the first human blood that had ever been shed, and, so far as we know, the first instance of mortality which had occurred among men?

F.—God soon arraigned the murderer, and pronounced upon him a terrible doom. "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood. When thou tillest thy ground, it shall not hence-

forth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.”

S.—What further do we hear of Cain?

F.—Trembling and afraid, with a murderer’s mark and curse upon him, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt on the east of Eden, in the land of Nod. How long he lived after this we are not informed. We know that he builded a city, and called it after the name of one of his sons. Moses gives us the names of Cain’s descendants to the seventh generation, reaching down almost to the time of the flood.

S.—What was the character of the Cainites?

F.—They seem to have been distinguished for their ungodliness. They lived much by themselves for a long time; and when they came, at length, to have intercourse with the other descendants of Adam, they were a means of corrupting them. “When the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, they took them wives of all that they chose.” These daughters of men are supposed to have been Cainites. At any rate, they were wicked women, as vile as they were beautiful, with whom the professed sons of God should have had nothing to do. The result of the union was, giants in stature, and giants in wickedness, who filled the earth with violence, and provoked the Almighty to come out in wrath against it and destroy it.

S.—What more can be said of “righteous Abel?”

F.—Having lived more than a hundred years—long enough to have a numerous posterity, though we hear nothing of them,—he was smitten down by a brother’s hand, in the dreadful manner above related. He was taken from the earth, and received up to heaven,—the first that ever went there through a Redeemer’s blood. And I often reflect on the peculiarity of Abel’s condition when he first appeared in heaven, and of the wonder and joy which his presence must have awakened. Up to this time, heaven had been inhabited only by angelic beings,—those who had kept their first estate, and had never forfeited their Maker’s love. Their founda-

tion was that of a perfectly observed and honored law ; and their praises were only those of creative wisdom, goodness, and power. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." But now there is a wonder in heaven. The first of a new race of beings has made his appearance there ; once of the earth, earthy, but now a pure and glorified spirit ; once a transgressor, under the curse of a broken law, but now recovered, redeemed, sanctified, and received into the holy family of God ; once a rebel, odious and defiled, but he has washed his polluted robe, and made it white in the blood of the Lamb.

S.—Was this the first, do you think, that the angels knew of redeeming mercy ?

F.—They must have heard something before of the plan of redemption ; for it had been unfolded in heaven, as well as on earth. But now they are permitted to *see* the first fruits of it—the incipient travail of the Savior’s soul. The new-comer, they perceive, is altogether a being by himself. He has views and feelings, he occupies a position and sings a song, of which angels neither have, nor can have, experimental knowledge. He knows what it is to sorrow for sin, and to offer up the sacrifice of a penitent and broken heart. He knows what it is to renounce entirely his own righteousness, and put all his trust in the sacrifice of Christ. He knows what it is to be regenerated by the Spirit, to be freely pardoned for Jesus’ sake, and to be justified through his blood. And being thus justified, righteous Abel can sing a song in heaven, which had never been heard there before—a song which angels and archangels can never learn. It is the song of redeeming mercy. “Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be all the glory of our salvation.”

Being thus situated in heaven, it mattered little to righteous Abel that his mangled body was rotting in the earth, and that his blood was crying to God from the ground for vengeance. He had risen above all that, had triumphed over his last enemy, had gone to his

eternal rest. And there we leave him, till we meet him above, and hear him tell, better than we can now conceive or describe, what were his feelings when he first waked up in heaven, and found himself the only member there of Christ's redeemed family—the only trophy of a Savior's blood.

S.—Before dismissing the subject of Cain and Abel, I have a few more questions to ask. Were they married before the murder; and if so, whom did they marry? And did they have families?

F.—Whether Abel was married and had children, we are not informed. He lived long enough to have a somewhat numerous posterity, and the probability is that he had one. Persons who live to the age of a hundred years in our day, sometimes leave as many as five hundred descendants. Old Thomas Fuller tells us of a woman in England, Lady Hester Temple of Buckinghamshire, who left seven hundred descendants at her death.* Supposing Abel to have lived to the age of one hundred and thirty, or nearly, he may have left more than this, by a whole generation.

That Cain had a wife and children, we do know, and if the question be asked, Whom did he marry? I answer, a sister, a niece, or some near relative, undoubtedly. That Adam and Eve had sons and daughters besides those whose names are mentioned in the Bible, is certain. How many they had, we are not informed, though the probability is that they were pretty numerous. At the age of twenty-five, Cain may have married a sister; at the age of fifty, he may have married a niece. At any rate, there is no difficulty in finding him a wife, without resorting to the unscriptural supposition of another race of human beings on the earth, distinct from the family of Adam.

S.—A kindred question to those you have answered relates to the sayings and doings of Cain subsequent to the murder. “I shall be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth, and every one that findeth me shall slay me. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the east of Eden, in the land of Nod. And he

*Worthies of England, vol. i., p. 210.

buildded a city, and called the name of it after the name of his son, Enoch." This language implies that the people were somewhat numerous in the vicinity of Cain's residence; else he would not have feared that every one finding him should seek to kill him. And then his building a city implies that his own posterity was somewhat numerous. He surely would not have buildded a city only for himself and wife, and his son Enoch.

F.—The whole difficulty here, if there be any, arises from the supposition that the entire posterity of Adam, at the time of Abel's death, amounted to only a few persons; whereas, in all probability, it amounted to thousands. Adam and Eve were created, not infants, but in the maturity of their powers, and became parents, it is thought, within a year of their creation. Abel was born, perhaps, the next year. We hear nothing more of their children for the next hundred years, only that they begat sons and daughters. They may have had fifty children older than Seth. Meanwhile, by the twenty-fifth year from the creation, they may have had grandchildren; and by the fiftieth year, great-grandchildren; and before the hundred and thirtieth year, when Abel is supposed to have been killed, they may have had many of the sixth or seventh generation. Any one can make estimate as to the probable number of their descendants. In my own opinion, they could hardly have been less than a hundred thousand souls,—enough, surely, to impress Cain with some fear, as to his own personal safety; especially, if it be considered that some hundreds of these may have been the descendants of Abel, who would not forget the fate of their ancestor, and would be inclined to avenge it. The whole account is natural and probable, on the supposition that Adam and Eve were the parents of all the living.

S.—The most prominent recorded event between Seth and Noah is the translation of Enoch, the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth. What have you to say of Enoch?

F.—Although he lived in a corrupt and degenerate age, Enoch was an eminently holy man. He walked with God. He loved God

and served him ; he confided in him, and had habitual and intimate communion with him ; and in consequence of this, he “ was translated that he should not see death ” (Heb. xi. 5).

S.—What was the probable object of Enoch’s translation ?

F.—The great ends to be answered by it, I think, were two. 1. It was a visible token of the Divine approbation—a public reward of the patriarch’s fidelity. 2. It was designed and calculated to impress upon a thoughtless world the doctrine of immortality—a glorious immortality for the righteous. Where did those wicked antediluvians think that Enoch was gone ? What had become of him ? He did not die like other men ; nor did he live any longer on the earth. Where then was he ? To what other conclusion could the men of that age come, than that he had passed into another world—had been taken directly from earth to heaven ? The event was calculated to teach them, and impress upon them, that there *is* another world—a world of joy and glory to the righteous.

S.—Do we hear anything of Enoch, after his translation ?

F.—The Apostle Jude has preserved a memorable prediction which he is said to have uttered : “ Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have uttered against him.”

S.—How did Jude come in possession of this fragment of antediluvian prophecy ?

F.—It matters not how. He may have received it by tradition, or direct revelation, or he may have quoted it from some apocryphal book. In any case, his inspiration is a sufficient guaranty of its genuineness and truth. I regard the passage as a prediction, primarily, of the deluge, which may have been delivered to Enoch even sooner than it was to Noah. Living in those times of violence and wickedness, and having his righteous soul vexed with the horrible deeds and blasphemies which he witnessed around him, it was revealed to this holy man that the Lord was about to come and

avenge himself of his adversaries. He was about to come with a retinue of holy ones, "to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that were ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds." *Primarily*, I think we have here a prediction of the approaching deluge, when the earth was to be destroyed by water; but *ultimately*, we have a prediction of the final judgment, when the world is to be destroyed by fire.

S.—I have but another question. What do you think of the prolonged lives of the antediluvians? Is it credible that they lived, or that some of them did, almost a thousand years?

F.—I think it is perfectly credible. The record is unimpeachable, and is the same now that it was in ancient times. The Septuagint translation was made some two or three hundred years before Christ. There are some differences between this and the Hebrew, but in both, the ages of the patriarchs are the same. God was able to preserve the lives of the first inhabitants of the earth to any extent he pleased. Perhaps the human constitution was more vigorous at that early period, ere it had been corrupted by coming through long and sinful generations. Or God may have intended to show, by actual experiment, that no length of probation would ever recover the soul from sin. The experiment then made actually proves as much as this, and it is an important lesson to be pondered by all men.

CONVERSATION XI.

THE DELUGE.—When it occurred.—Bible predictions.—Preparations.—Local or Universal in extent.—Evidences of its universality.—Traditions of ancient nations.—Science confuting old theories.—No positive traces of the Noachian deluge known.—Previous deluges.—Their universality.—Where did the water come from.—Population of the Earth.—More numerous than since.—Evidences of this theory.—State of Art.—Capacity of the Ark.—What was preserved.—The resting place of the Ark.—Antiquity of Chinese, Egyptians, etc.—Moral teachings.

Father.—We come now to speak of the most remarkable event in the natural history of our world: I mean the deluge, in the time of Noah. This occurred, according to the received chronology, in the year of the world, 1656. We have a prediction of it in the sixth chapter of Genesis: “Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven, and everything that is in the earth shall die.” We have an account of the fulfillment of this terrible prediction, in the following chapter: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the seventh month, and seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. And the waters increased, and bear up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. And the waters prevailed and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters; and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beasts, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. And Noah alone remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.”

S.—Have we references to this great event in other parts of the Bible.”

F.—Yes, frequently. There is a clear reference to it in Job—a book belonging to the patriarchal age, and perhaps the oldest writing now in the world. “Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden, which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood?” (Job xxii. 15, 16.)

Our Savior refers to the destruction of the ungodly in the days of Noah, and by it illustrates the more terrible destruction which shall come upon the wicked in the last great day: “As were the days of Noah, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as, in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so also shall the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. xxiv. 38). This event is also referred to by the Apostle Peter, in predicting the final and general conflagration: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Pet. iii. 5-7). The Scriptures here quoted show, that the *fact* of the deluge does not rest merely on the account in Genesis. It appears in other parts of the Bible,—in the teachings of our Savior and his Apostles. It is an integral part of the sacred history, and can never be set aside so long as the Bible is retained.

S.—Please give us more particulars as to the coming on of the flood, and the preparation that was made for it.

F.—It was in the five hundredth year of Noah that he was first informed of the coming flood, and warned to prepare an ark for the saving of his house. A hundred years were now granted him for the building of the ark,—all which time he was preaching, denouncing the approaching judgment, and calling in vain upon a thoughtless world to flee from the wrath to come. Meanwhile, all the venerable patriarchs, whose names occur in the fifth chapter of

Genesis had passed away. Methuselah, the grandfather of Noah, was the last. He died in the first month of the patriarchal year, agreeing to our September, aged 969. Early in the next month, Noah and his family, and all the creatures that had been collected round him, entered into the ark; and on the seventeenth day the flood came. For the next forty days, until near the first of our December, the rain continued, and the waters were steadily increasing upon the earth. They had now reached their highest elevation, overtopping, by fifteen cubits, the loftiest mountains. At this point they continued for several months, until every living creature on the face of the earth had perished. Early in the following March, the waters began to abate; and on the seventeenth day the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. Noah continued in the ark, however, through the entire summer,—unto the 27th of October; making his confinement, in all, a little more than a year.

S.—Do you think the deluge strictly universal? Or was it a mere local inundation, covering some parts of western Asia and Greece?

F.—The Scriptures speak of it as *universal*. “All the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered,” and “all flesh died that moved upon the earth.”

S.—But the universal language of Scripture is sometimes used with limitations; and why may it not be limited here?

F.—The universals of Scripture are sometimes limited by the connections in which they stand, or by the nature of the subjects to which they are applied. Thus it is said of the famine in Egypt in the time of Joseph, that “it was *over all the face of the earth*.” And in Luke it is said that “a decree went out from Cæsar Augustus, that *all the world* should be taxed.” The connection shows that this decree was limited to the Roman world; and the famine spoken of reached only to Egypt and some of the surrounding countries. But where there is nothing in the connection or in the nature of the subject spoken of to limit the universal language of Scripture, let no man presume to limit it. Let it stand as God has written it,

in full force and import, whatever hypotheses of our own may fall before it.

Now there is nothing in the connection, or in the subject treated of, which should lead us to limit the plain language of Scripture, in regard to the universality of the deluge. Such an idea may conflict with some of the theories and inventions of men, but I know not that it is inconsistent with any of the ascertained facts of science, or with any other of the revelations of God. Hence I must regard the narrative in Genesis as establishing the fact of a universal deluge.

S.—Is the universality of the deluge confirmed by any collateral considerations?

F.—It is by many. On the supposition that the deluge was only a local inundation, extending over south-western Asia, we see not why any ark was needed. The beasts and birds, and especially birds of passage, might easily have fled before the invading scourge to some place of safety. Even Noah and his family, and as many others as were so disposed, might have passed rapidly over the Caucasian mountains, and escaped. The space allowed between the denunciation of the deluge and its infliction would have been amply sufficient for such a purpose.

There is another consideration requiring to be noticed in this connection. On supposition that the waters in south-western Asia rose high enough to cover to the depth of fifteen cubits all the mountains in that mountainous region,—the ancient Imans, the lofty Taurus, the Caucasian range, and Ararat itself, towering to the height of eighteen thousand feet, what should hinder them from spreading over all the earth? A deluge such as this could not have been shut up in a corner. By its flux and reflux, it must necessarily have reached to every portion of the globe.

There is yet another consideration which is conclusive on this point. It is the promise to Noah when he left the ark, that there should no more be a deluge of waters to destroy the earth (Gen. ix. 15). This promise imports that there should never again be such a deluge as had just occurred. But there have been *local, partial* in-

undations in every age ; and if Noah's flood was but a partial inundation, the promise of God has been often broken. We infer, therefore, from this solemn promise, thrice repeated, and attested by the bow in the cloud, that the deluge from which Noah had just escaped was universal.

S.—But if the flood was universal, destroying every living thing, and subjecting the human race to the necessity of beginning the world anew, springing, as at the first, from a single pair, we might expect some traditions of it would remain, especially among the ancient nations. Do we find any such traditions?

F.—We certainly do. We find them in all parts of the habitable earth. In Chaldea, where probably the ark was built ; in Assyria, an adjoining country ; among the ancient Persians, Greeks and Romans ; in India and China ; and even among the natives of North and South America,—everywhere we find traditions of this great catastrophe. They all speak,—often grotesquely, but yet plainly,—of a universal deluge of waters, brought on by the wickedness of man, in which a few only are saved in a vessel or ark. They send out birds to see whether the ground is dry, and when they leave their vessel, the same things occur as those which are described by Moses. The story too, in every instance, is thrown back into the earliest times,—the very beginning of the nation's history. Admit all these traditions to grow out of the deluge of Noah, and the whole is plain ; but if we reject this account of their origin, we need a greater miracle than that of the deluge in order to explain them.

S.—What opinions have prevailed in past ages as to the effect of the deluge upon the earth ?

F.—Until the last sixty or seventy years, it was common for theologians and biblical antiquaries to refer nearly all the otherwise unaccountable phenomena in the bowels of the earth, or on its surface, to the action of the deluge. Fossil remains imbedded far down in the rocks, the relics of animals and vegetables no longer in existence, widely extended coal fields, sea shells on the tops of mountains, and all such appearances, were supposed to have a com-

mon cause in the deluge of Noah; but the more recent geological discoveries have refuted all such theories. They have proved, as conclusively as facts can prove anything, that this world has existed from a very remote period; that it was the home of various species of animals and vegetables, now extinct, long ages before the creation of man; and that organic remains are continually exhumed, which could never have been deposited by the deluge of Noah.

S.—How has that portion of the earth's surface commonly known as *the drift* been regarded?

F.—Until a recent period, it was supposed by the most respectable geologists that this portion of the earth's surface,—evidently occasioned by the washing of water,—might reasonably be ascribed to the deluge as its cause; but later discoveries have led many to doubt on this point. In many places, the *diluvium* or drift seems to have been the result of causes more ancient, and of longer continuance, than the deluge of Noah. Besides, the drift contains few or no remains of the bones or the works of men,—a fact hard to be accounted for on the supposition that it was deposited by the deluge of which we speak.

S.—Is there evidence that the earth has been washed by more than one deluge?

F.—Yes; it has undoubtedly been visited by several deluges, the most of which were of much higher antiquity than that of Noah. The Scriptures speak expressly of one deluge almost two thousand years anterior to Noah,—I mean that which enveloped the earth at the commencement of the six days' work of the creation. The earth was at that period “without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of *the deep*, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of *the waters* ;” importing that the earth was, at that time, generally, if not entirely, covered with water. But there had been deluges more ancient than this. It was water, or perhaps ice formed from water, which first abraded the primary rocks, producing the dust of the earth, and the materials out of which the stratified rocks were formed. And these stratified rocks generally, if not univer-

sally, show, in their formation, the action of water. They were, at the first, mud, lying at the bottom of seas or lakes, which was afterwards petrified and became rock. It was water which smoothed and rounded the countless myriads of bowlders, which are either imbedded in rocks, or scattered through the crust of the earth, or spread abroad upon its surface. It was water which deposited the successive layers of sand and gravel, loam and clay, which meet us everywhere in the earth, when we have occasion to dig beneath the surface. The drift or *diluvium* of which I have spoken is all of it a deposit of water. We encounter it in every sand and gravel hill of our country. In short, this American continent seems to have been subjected, at some period, to a tremendous rush of waters, pouring down from the north, and passing off to the south, abrading the mountains, scooping out the valleys, removing and scattering the rocks and bowlders, opening beds for the rivers, and smoothing down the fertile plains. It is for this reason that most of our great mountain ranges, in this country, run in a northerly and southerly direction; almost none of them running from east to west. In short, it cannot be doubted that this earth has been washed by repeated deluges, the most of which are of a vastly higher antiquity than that of Noah.

S.—Is it likely that there are any sure marks of the Noachian deluge now visible on the earth's surface?

F.—Whether there be any such, which the geologist may be able to *trace* and *identify*, is uncertain. Only a few years ago, it was thought by such men as Buckland, Silliman, Hitchcock and others, that such traces were distinctly visible; but more recent inquiries have rendered the matter doubtful. No one can pretend to say that it *may not be so*; while no one can say positively that *it is so*. In other words, no one can point to any particular geological phenomena, and say positively, *These were produced by Noah's flood*. But whether any definable traces of this flood now remain on the earth or not, the analogy of the world's history clearly shows that such an event is neither impossible nor improbable. If repeated

deluges have swept over the earth in the remoter periods of its history, why should it be thought a thing incredible that such an event should occur in the time of Noah? If the geologist can furnish no certain proof of such an occurrence, he surely can furnish none against it; and when the Bible declares it in the most explicit terms, and the traditions of all nations bear witness to it, and the analogy of the world's history is rather in its favor than otherwise, who shall presume to stand up and say, *it is not so?*

S.—But where could water, in sufficient quantities, have come from, to deluge the whole earth, and overtop the highest mountains?

F.—I do not know where. God could bring to pass such an event in a thousand ways. Having made one ocean, he can make two, or ten, if he is so disposed. He has all the materials at hand for composing water; and he can compose it, or decompose it, to any extent he pleases.

If this answer does not satisfy you, I would ask, Where did the waters of the previous deluges come from? Where came those dark waters on which the Spirit of God moved, at the creation? Whence came those mighty waters which once rolled over this continent from north to south, scattering its drift and *diluvium* everywhere? When these questions have been satisfactorily answered, you will have little occasion to trouble yourself further respecting the cause and origin of the waters of Noah.

S.—But it is said, as the deluge was sent in judgment for the wickedness of men, it need not have extended further than the habitations of men; and these seem to have been confined to southern and south-western Asia.

F.—But how does the objector know that human habitations were confined, at that period, to so small a space? How can he render such a supposition probable? A long time has passed since the creation of man—as long, into two centuries, as has intervened since the death of Christ. The command was given to the race at first, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth;” and whatsoever other injunctions may have been broken, we have rea-

son to know that this was observed. Now let any one sit down and compute, if he can, the probable increase of the race during the long period of 1,656 years, when families lived and had sons and daughters for hundreds of years together; and he will probably be surprised at the result. If the household of Jacob, who went down into Egypt, increased there, in two hundred and fifteen years, to nearly two millions; if the first settlers of New England, a small company, have increased here, in two hundred and fifty years, till the land is full of them; what must have been the increase of the posterity of Adam in the long period of 1,656 years? My own opinion is, that the earth was never so full of inhabitants, as it was on the day when Noah entered into the ark. We are expressly told that it was filled with violence, and with violence as the result of human wickedness. It follows that it must have been filled with wicked men, and that a deluge, which should destroy them all, must have been universal.

S.—What was the state of the arts among this multitude of people?

F.—My own impression is, that the arts, or some of them, were never carried to a higher degree of perfection, than at that period; else such a structure as the ark could never have been built. Nor did a knowledge of the arts perish in the flood. It survived, and showed itself in the family of Noah. Hence we find men, soon after the flood, engaged in cultivating the earth, in building towers and cities, in practicing the arts both of war and peace, just as their pride and ingenuity prompted.

S.—Do you think the ark was capable of holding pairs of all the different species of fowls and animals, of insects and of creeping things, at that time on the earth? Could they have been brought together from all parts of the earth to go into it? Or if they could be crowded in, must they not soon have perished, for the want of food, light and air?

F.—I do not think that pairs of literally *all* the different species of fowls and animals, of insects and creeping things on the face of

the earth were crowded together into the ark. I think this one of the cases in which the universals of Scripture are limited by the subjects to which they are applied. To believe the contrary involves not a miracle only, but an utter impossibility. Without doubt, a great multitude of living creatures were taken into the ark; perhaps all that Noah knew, or had access to, or that he felt any interest in preserving,—all that God intended he should preserve.

As to a sufficiency of food, light and air within the ark, only a few words need be said. If Noah knew enough to build such an ark, the presumption is that he knew enough to make provision for necessities such as these. Or if Noah did not understand the matter, most certainly God did; and in his directions for building the ark, items so important as these would not have been overlooked. We are not told, indeed, how this was done; but that it was done, and done effectually, there can be no doubt. The preservation of the creatures alive within the ark is full proof of this.

S.—It is objected to the scriptural account of the deluge, that the top of Ararat is no place for the resting of the ark; it is up in a region of perpetual ice and snow; and the mountain is so steep and rugged, that Noah, with his family and animals, could never have made the descent.

F.—The Scriptures do not state that the ark rested on the *top* of Ararat; nor is it certain that it rested on *any part* of what is now called Ararat. Jerome informs us that the name Ararat was anciently given to the whole chain of Armenian mountains. Dr. Shuckford is of the opinion that the ark rested on some mountain farther east. Hence it is said that the descendants of Noah “journeyed from *the east*” to come into the land of Shinar. In the Syrian version it is said that the ark rested on the top of mount Cardon. This is in the eastern part of the great range of the Taurus; whereas Ararat proper is in the western part.

S.—It is urged, finally, that the histories of some ancient nations—the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Chaldeans, and Egyptians—run back to a period long anterior to the time of the deluge.

F.—The chronology of most ancient nations may be divided into three parts—the *fabulous*, the *traditionary*, and the *historic*; the two first of which may be passed over as of little account in history. The Chinese are an ancient nation,—more ancient, probably, than any other now existing; but that their empire dates back to a period beyond the flood, says Mr. Gutzlaff, “is as extravagant as any of the mythological stories of the Greeks or Hindoos. They have no reliable authentic history before the time of Confucius, which was only five hundred and fifty years before Christ.”

Of the Hindoos, the late Dr. Allen says: “We have no means of determining the date of any event, previous to the invasion of Alexander the Great, about three hundred and twenty-five years before Christ;” though, previous to this, it is well known that India was a partially civilized and populous country.

The Bible lays the foundation of the Chaldean empire in the times of Asshur and Nimrod, from one to two hundred years after the flood. No other history traces it further back than this, or so far by several hundred years.

Egypt was planted soon after the division of the earth, in the days of Peleg—about two hundred years after the deluge. We have no authentic history of Egypt which ascribes to it a higher antiquity.

S.—What are some of the lessons taught us in that great and terrible catastrophe which has been considered.

F.—We see in it, first of all, the dreadful *depravity* of the human race. On what other ground than this can it be accounted for, that the world should have become so soon and so frightfully wicked,—so utterly corrupt, that it repented the Lord that he had made it, and it only remained for him to destroy it?

This event also teaches, as do many other events in history, “both the goodness and the severity of God,”—his *goodness*, in bearing so long with ungodly sinners, and favoring them with so many mercies; his *severity*, in at length lifting the strong hand of his justice, and sweeping them all away.

We see also, in the event before us, the *faithfulness* of God to his

people. Never, either before or since, was the church of God brought into such an extremity. Never was it apparently so near destruction, and yet it was not destroyed; it was saved. God's word of promise had been pledged to it; and though heaven and earth seemed passing away, not one jot or tittle of that word could fail.

Let us learn, too, from the example of Noah, in this instance, the importance of standing up for God and truth, though we may be called to stand alone. Never was man more sorely tried, or more strongly tempted to hold his peace and follow a multitude to do evil, than Noah must have been, for the last hundred years before the flood. His ease, his worldly comfort, his credit, his property, everything dear to him was at stake, and all were urging him together to stop his preaching, to suspend his work upon the ark, and follow in the course of an evil, gainsaying world. But no; he had received a message from God, and he must proclaim it. He must stand up for truth and right, though earth and hell opposed. And the sequel proved that the path of duty was to him, as it is to every one, the path of safety. God took care of him, preserved and blessed him, and when the whelming ruin came, he and his family were safe.

CONVERSATION XII.

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE DELUGE.—Noah's first work.—First permission to take the life of animals and eat their flesh.—Blood prohibited.—The death penalty for murder.—The rainbow.—Was this its first appearance.—Noah's history.—His sons.—Where they settled.—Occupation.—Tower of Babel.—Confusion of tongues.—The original language.—Site of Babel.—Ancient historians.

Son.—What was the first work of Noah after leaving the ark?

Father.—It was to build an altar unto the Lord, and offer upon it a burnt sacrifice,—full proof that the institution of bloody sacrifices had been continued all along through the antediluvian ages, pointing believing worshipers to the great atoning sacrifice which, in the fullness of time, was to be offered for the sins of the world.

S.—Was Noah's offering accepted?

F.—It was, and was followed by the richest promises to the patriarch and his posterity. “I will not again curse the ground for man's sake, neither will I any more smite every living thing, as I have done.” And “God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth; and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all the fishes of the sea. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat unto you. Even as the green herb, have I given you all things (Gen. ix. 1-3).

S.—Was not a new grant here made to the human family, as to a subsistence?

F.—There was—a permission to take the life of animals, and to eat their flesh. The antediluvians had no permission from God to eat flesh. Their sustenance was to be the herb of the field (Gen. i. 29).

S.—Aside from this grant, should we have no right to take the life of animals?

F.—Except in self-preservation, or for self-defense, it might not be easy to vindicate the right. What right have we to kill inoffensive animals, merely for our own pleasure, or for the sake of their

flesh, unless we have a special grant from God? It would hardly satisfy us to plead our liking for their flesh, or the right of the stronger against the weaker.

S.—In the grant to take the life of animals, why was their blood prohibited?

F.—Moses does not give a reason in this place, but he does in another. “The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul” (Lev. xvii. 10, 11).

S.—The death penalty was now affixed to the crime of murder; had it never been exacted before?

F.—So far as we know, it had not been. Cain was not put to death for his murder; and neither was Lamech (Gen. iv. 24). And this laxity of law may be one of the reasons why the earth, at that time, was filled with violence. But now God says: “At the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. ix. 6). This regulation was not a Jewish one, intended only for that people; for it was given hundreds of years before the Jews, as a distinct people, had an existence. Uttered now, at the very reorganization of the world, it was intended obviously for the race. It is to be regarded as of universal and perpetual obligation.

S.—God now established a covenant with Noah and his posterity, and set his bow in the cloud as a token of his covenant. Are we to understand that the rainbow had never been seen before?

F.—Perhaps not. If there were clouds and rain before the flood, I think it must have been seen occasionally. But a new *significance* was now given to the rainbow. “I do *appoint* my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and the earth.”

S.—How long did Noah and his sons dwell near the place where they had left the ark?

F.—We do not know precisely. Probably not less than twenty years. It was here that the good man planted a vineyard, and drank too freely of the wine thereof, and exposed himself to

the derision of a son and grandson. Canaan, a son of Ham, born after the flood, was now old enough to be joined with his father in the curse, as, in all probability, he had been in the transgression. "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

S.—What do we hear of Noah, after this.

F.—Absolutely nothing; except that he lived three hundred and fifty years,—almost to the time of Abraham. In the opinion of some, he did not migrate with his sons to the land of Shinar, but remained in the East, had another family, and that China, and perhaps some other eastern countries, were settled directly by him. This supposition, if admitted, will account for the utter silence of Scripture respecting Noah, during the last three hundred years of his life. It accounts also for the early settlement of some oriental countries. China seems to have been settled as early as Egypt; and yet we have no account of its having been so early reached by any of the descendants of Shem, Ham, or Japheth.

S.—But is it not said of the three sons of Noah, that "by them was the whole earth overspread?"

F.—It is; but then the word earth, in this passage, may refer only to the *historical* earth—those portions with which Moses was acquainted, and which are mentioned in other parts of the sacred history.

S.—To what country did the three sons of Noah, at length, migrate? Where did they establish themselves?

F.—As I have said before, it was in the valley of the Tigris, the land of Shinar. It was in this country that the human race was first planted. It was in this vicinity, somewhere, that the ark was built. Hence when Shem, Ham, and Japheth came again into this fertile and beautiful valley, they found themselves at home. The flood, no doubt, had made some changes, but it had left many familiar objects. Here were the old rivers, the extended plain, the valley, perhaps, in which they were born.

S.—How did the emigrants employ themselves in their new abode?

F.—Their first labor was to cultivate the soil, and prepare habitations for themselves and their families. But as years rolled on, and their numbers were multiplied, they projected a great public undertaking. That they might get to themselves a name, and prevent the possibility of their being scattered, or destroyed by another flood, they resolved to build a city, and a tower whose top should reach even unto heaven (Gen. xi. 4). So they set themselves, with all their might, to build what was afterwards called the tower of Babel.

S.—Were they sufficiently numerous, at this time, to engage in such an undertaking?

F.—I suppose they were. The work was not commenced until about two hundred years after the flood, when their posterity may have amounted to thousands, perhaps millions. They had a knowledge of the arts after the flood, as they had before, and were competent every way to undertake the work which the Holy Spirit has ascribed to them.

S.—How did God regard this great undertaking?

F.—He was displeased with it, and took measures to frustrate it. Instead of dwelling together, and rallying round a great central city and tower, God designed that the human family should be separated—scattered abroad over the face of the earth; and in order to accomplish *his* purpose, and defeat their own, he took the wisest measure possible. He “came down and confounded their language, so that they could not understand one another’s speech.”

S.—How are we to interpret the words here used?

F.—Various interpretations have been put upon them; but the meaning, as it seems to me, is very obvious. God gave the human family a language at the first. It was not a thing of human invention, but the gift of God. He adapted the human organs to the use of a language, and he gave a language, undoubtedly, to the first human pair; so that Adam and Eve could converse together, and converse with God, and teach their children to talk, as we do ours. And the Being who gave a language, could easily change it, or, as

the Scriptures say, *confound* it. He could cause those who all their lives had used a particular language to forget it instantly, and to speak another. The change here experienced was very like to that which was wrought on the Apostles at the day of Pentecost. They were endowed instantly with the gift of tongues, or with ability to converse in languages which they had not learned. The Apostles did not indeed, like those at Babel, forget their former tongues, but they received the greater gift of speaking in new tongues.

S.—What do you suppose was the original language, that first spoken by the human race?

F.—I know not that this question can be answered positively; and yet I have a strong impression that the original language was the Hebrew. In support of this opinion, I will urge but a single fact. The proper names of most of the antediluvians are Hebrew—derived from Hebrew roots, and having Hebrew significations. Thus Adam, in Hebrew, signifies *red earth*; because it was from such earth that the body of the first man was formed. So Eve signifies, in Hebrew, *living*, or *life-giving*; because she was the mother of all living. Cain signifies a *possession*, an *acquisition*; because his mother said at his birth, “I have gotten a man from the Lord.” Abel signifies *mourning*, *sorrow*; because of the sorrow of his parents perhaps for their sins, or for their hard labor in subduing the earth. Seth signifies something *put*, or *substituted*; because Seth was given in the place of Abel who had been killed. I might proceed in this way, and define most of the antediluvian names. Now it is very improbable that these names were translated into Hebrew from some other language. And if they were not translated; if they were originally what they now are; in other words, if the original name of Adam was *Adam*, and of Eve, *Eve*, and so of the rest; then it is quite certain that the original, primeval language was Hebrew. This language seems to have descended to God’s chosen people in the line of Shem; as all the Shemitic languages, to this day, are but *derivatives*, *offshoots*, from the original Hebrew.

S.—Do we not have a strong confirmation of this account of the

early confounding of languages in the subsequent history of the world?

F.—We certainly do. The languages now spoken among men are numerous, and variously diversified. The most of them are *derivative* languages, borrowed one from another. Yet a few seem to have been originally distinct. But the elements, the laws, the general structure and principles of language are everywhere the same—a fact pointing us back to a period when there was but one language, as the Scriptures represent.

S.—Where was the Tower of Babel situated?

F.—Undoubtedly on the site of the ancient Babylon. Indeed the first builders of Babylon seem to have carried out, so far as they were able, the original design of the builders of Babel. They enclosed the tower with a wall, and built up a magnificent city around it. It stood on the Euphrates, in north latitude 36°. The remains of the tower were long visible, and may be even to this day. They are expressly spoken of by Berosus, Herodotus, and other ancient historians.

CONVERSATION XIII.

ORIGIN OF NATIONS.—The dispersion.—Tribes and families of one tongue.—Nations in the the line of Japheth.—Portions of the earth populated by his descendants.—The children of Shem and who they are.—Egypt and Arabia peopled by the children of Ham.—The desire for conquest.—Rise and fall of nations.—Importance of the book of Genesis.

Son.—When the language of the Babel builders had been confounded, so that they could no longer have intercourse one with another, they began to disperse and to be scattered abroad. In what way was their dispersion effected?

Father.—It was not done accidentally or promiscuously. There was order and method in their dispersion. They are said to have been settled “after their tongues, and after their families, in their nations” (Gen. x. 5). In the confounding of tongues, it is likely that the members of each large family or tribe had a tongue by themselves. They could understand one another, but could not understand the men of another tribe. This would separate the different families or tribes, while it kept the members of each particular tribe together.

S.—Which was the eldest of Noah’s sons?

F.—Japheth was the eldest. Ham was the youngest (Gen. ix. 25); and Japheth was older than Shem (Gen. x. 21).

S.—Who were the sons of Japheth, and where were they settled?

F.—Japheth had seven sons, *viz.*, Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The family of Gomer is supposed to have established themselves in the ancient Phrygia, bordering on the Hellespont, the sea of Marmora, and the Black Sea. From Magog descended the Seythians and modern Tartars, inhabiting northern and central Asia. Madai was the father of the Medes, inhabiting a country lying south of the Caspian sea. From Javan descended the Ionians, or Greeks. The settlement of Meshech lay east of that of Gomer, on the south-eastern shore of the Black sea. The settlement of Tubal was farther east, between those of Meshech

and Madai, and between the Black and Caspian seas. Tiras settled what was afterwards called, from his name, Thrace.

It will be seen that five of these sons of Japheth are supposed to have settled in Central Asia, near the Black and Caspian seas, and in regions north and east of them. Here they multiplied and spread themselves for a time, all speaking the same language. But owing to the severity of the climate, or to some other cause, a portion of them resolved to emigrate. They passed down into southern Asia, and then eastward into India, driving out most of the original inhabitants, and taking possession of the country. Meanwhile, another portion of the same great family migrated from their seats in Central Asia, and took possession of northern and western Europe. In this way we account for the similarity between the Aryan and some European languages. There is no evidence that any of this great family who went into India returned; nor is such a supposition necessary, in order to account for the similarities of language which have been observed.

S.—What do we know as to the settlements of the grandchildren of Japheth?

F.—Of his grandchildren, Moses mentions only two families, *viz.*, those of Gomer and Javan. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. The sons of Javan were Elisha, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. “By these,” says the sacred writer, “were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands.” By these, was southern and Central Europe peopled. Ashkenaz gave his name to what is now the Black sea. It was called by the Greeks the sea of Axenos, or the Axene sea; from whence it came to be called the Euxine or Black sea. Tarshish gave his name to what is now the Mediterranean sea. The ships of Tarshish, of which we hear so much, were ships that sailed on the Mediterranean.* Germany is thought to have received its name from Gomer.

S.—Who were the sons of Shem, and where did they reside?

*There was doubtless, some port, perhaps more than one, called Tarshish; but this name also belonged to the sea. See Ps. xlvi. 7.

F.—Shem had five sons, *viz.*, Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. Elam was the father of the ancient Persians. Ashur settled Assyria; and from him the country received its name. Arphaxad seems to have remained with his father in the land of Shinar. He was the ancestor of Abraham. Josephus assigns Lud to Lydia; but of this there is some doubt. The descendants of Aram settled Syria and Armenia. From Aram the name Armenia is thought to be derived.

S.—What is said of Shem's grandchildren?

F.—Of the grandchildren of Shem, as of Japheth, only two families are mentioned, *viz.*, those of Arphaxad and Aram. Arphaxad begat Salah, and Salah begat Eber, from whom the Hebrews took their name. Eber had two sons, Peleg and Joktan. In the time of Peleg, the languages of men were confounded, and the earth was divided,—about two hundred years after the flood. Joktan had thirteen sons, who all migrated eastward. It is not unlikely that the original inhabitants of India, and of all south-eastern Asia, were the descendants of Joktan. The name of one of Joktan's sons was Ophir; and the probability is that Ophir, the ancient land of gold, was in south-eastern Asia.

Aram, another of the sons of Shem, had four sons, *viz.*, Uz, Hull, Gether, and Mash,—all of whom settled in the country before assigned to Aram, *viz.*, Syria and Armenia. Uz is thought to have founded the city of Damascus—probably the oldest city now on the earth.

S.—The sons of Ham,—who were they, and where did they plant themselves?

F.—Ham had four sons, *viz.*, Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan. Cush first lived east of the Euphrates, near its mouth, and his country was watered by the ancient Gihon. He afterwards migrated into southern Arabia, and then over the red sea into Africa. Cush had six sons, *viz.*, Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, Sabtechah, and Nimrod. The first five of them settled with their father in Arabia and Africa, and are called in our Bibles, Ethiopians. They were a

colored race, which spread themselves over the greater part of Africa. Nimrod seems not to have left the land of Shinar. "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calnah." He was a warrior as well as hunter, and a leader in the mad project of building the tower of Babel. Hence Babel is called the beginning of his kingdom.

Egypt was early settled by Mizraim, and his seven sons; perhaps, also, by his father Ham. Egypt is called "the land of Ham" (Ps. cv. 23.)

The descendants of Phut are supposed to have migrated into Africa, and to have settled Lybia. The descendants of Canaan were the original Canaanites, who were dispossessed by the Israelites, when they came out of Egypt.

S.—Which family of the descendants of Noah were at the first the most powerful; and how did they severally prosper?

F.—The children of Ham seem to have been most powerful, at the first. Nimrod ruled, for a time, Chaldea or the land of Shinar; also in Arabia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Canaan; the sons of Ham had powerful kingdoms.

But at length the Shemites began to distinguish themselves and to prevail. Persia, Assyria, Syria, Armenia, and portions of India were settled by the sons of Shem. At length, they drove out the posterity of Ham from Arabia and Canaan, and possessed those countries. From this period, the Hamites have been confined chiefly to Africa.

But in later times the children of Japheth have distinguished themselves above all others. Greece, Rome, Germany, France, Spain, England,—nearly all Europe, northern Asia, and a large part of India, have been peopled by the descendants of Japheth. God has greatly enlarged Japheth, and caused him to dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen. ix. 27).

S.—These chapters of Genesis, over which we have passed, though seeming, at first, like a dry list of names, are really a very important part of the sacred history.

F.—They are so indeed; and more than this, they contain the seeds of *all history*. More reliable knowledge of the different races of men, of the origin of nations, of the early settlement of the earth, —more true *ethnology*, may be gathered from these chapters, than from all ancient history besides.

CONVERSATION XIV.

ABRAHAM TO HIS SEPARATION FROM LOT.—Birth of Abraham.—When and where.—Family connections.—Marries his half sister.—First call.—Its object.—Second call and the promise.—Particulars of his journey to Canaan.—Damascus is passed.—A disreputable act.—Sarah's beauty.—Pharaoh sharply reproves Abraham.—Cause of Lot and Abraham's separation.—Selfishness of Lot.

Father.—The chapters in Genesis over which we have passed may be regarded as introductory to the life of Abraham, in whose family God was about to establish his visible church. It will give me pleasure to reply to any of your questions respecting this venerable man of God.

Son.—Can you tell us when and where Abraham was born?

F.—He was in the tenth generation from Noah, in the line of Shem, and was born three hundred and fifty-two years after the flood. The place of his birth was “Ur of the Chaldees,”—the same as the modern Orfa, now one of the stations of the American Board of Missions. By the Greeks the place was called Edessa, and was the capital of king Agiarus, who was an early convert to the faith of Christ.

The modern city lies on the edge of one of those rugged spurs which descend from the mountains of Armenia into the Assyrian plains. The place is easily, almost naturally, fortified; and besides, it is blessed with an abundant spring of the purest water, which makes the spot an oasis—a paradise in the Chaldean wilderness. In this beautiful city, from which, even now, the traveler turns reluctantly away, the patriarch Abraham was born, and spent the earlier portion of his life.

S.—What were his immediate family connections?

F.—His father Terah had three sons, whose names are given in the Bible, *viz.*: Haran, Nahor, and Abraham. Haran was sixty years older than Abraham, and died in Ur, leaving two daughters and a son. The daughters were Milcah and Iscah; the son's name was Lot. Milcah was married to her uncle Nahor; and some have

thought that Iscah was but another name for Sarah, the wife of Abraham. But this contradicts the account of Abraham himself, who makes Sarah to be a half sister, the daughter of Terah by a second wife. "She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother" (Gen. xx. 12).

S.—Why was Abraham and his family called to remove from Ur?

F.—It was on account of the prevailing idolatry, which had infected even the family of Terah. It was while he dwelt at Ur that he received his first call from God to leave the land of his nativity, and go into a foreign country. The object of the call undoubtedly was, to separate him and his immediate household from the contamination of idols, and thus preserve and perpetuate the knowledge of the true God in the earth.

S.—How was the call for a removal made known to Abraham?

F.—We are not informed. We only know that it was an intelligible call, so much so as to satisfy, not only Abraham, but the other members of the family; for they all listened to it,—Terah, Nahor and his wife, Abraham and his wife, and Lot,—and removed, at once, to a place which (in honor of the eldest son and brother of the family, now deceased) they called Haran. It is sometimes called, in Scripture, Padan-Aram. Here the family dwelt together until the death of Terah, at the advanced age of two hundred and five.

S.—When did Abraham receive his second call for a removal into the land of Canaan?

F.—Soon after the death of his father, when he was seventy-five years old. The call in this instance was very positive: "Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land which I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

With this requisition, as in the former case, Abraham hesitated not to comply. He believed God, and obeyed him. Leaving behind his brother Nahor and family, he took his wife, and Lot, his

brother's son, and all the substance that they had gathered in Haran, consisting of servants, flocks and herds,—and departed to go into the land of Canaan.

S.—In what direction was Canaan from his present home?

F.—It was far to the south and west. Canaan was thinly inhabited, at this time, by the descendants of Canaan, a son of Ham. The Canaanites were mostly idolaters; and yet the knowledge of the true God was not entirely lost among them. Melchizedek and several others with whom Abraham had intercourse, seem to have worshiped the same God as himself.

S.—How long was he on the journey, and what were some of the incidents of it?

F.—We are not particularly informed. It is thought that he touched at Damascus; and the fact that his most trusty servant, years afterwards, was called “Eliezar of Damascus,” gives color to this supposition. Being under the special guidance and blessing of heaven, his path was undoubtedly made plain and safe to him. He arrived first at the plain of Morah, near to Sichem,—the same which was afterwards Samaria. Here he encamped for some considerable time, and builded an altar unto the Lord. Here the Lord appeared unto him, and gave him a promise, that the land to which he had come should be given to his posterity for a possession.

S.—What were Abraham's subsequent removals?

F.—From Sichem he removed into what was afterwards Mount Ephraim, and pitched his tent between Bethel and Hai. Here he also builded an altar, and called on the name of the Lord. From Bethel, Abraham proceeded southward through what was afterwards the land of Judah; but encountering a grievous famine, he was constrained to go into Egypt for bread. He found a Pharaoh on the throne, at the head of an organized government. The Egyptians, however, were a scattered and weak people, compared with what they came to be afterwards.

S.—What did Abraham do in Egypt that was discreditable to him?

F.—He denied his wife. Sarah was a beautiful woman; and Abraham feared to be known as her husband, lest the king, or some of his courtiers, should destroy him for her sake; and so he passed himself off as her brother, and persuaded her to be to him as a sister. She was, indeed, his half-sister, as I have before said—“the daughter of his father, but not of his mother.” Still, there was an equivocation practiced, a crooked inconsistent policy pursued, a manifest want of faith in God, which was altogether unworthy of Abraham, and which might be expected to involve the parties in trouble. And so the event very shortly proved; for Pharaoh, being pleased with the lady, and understanding her to be the sister of Abraham, sent and took her to himself. He also treated Abraham well for her sake, and made him presents of sheep and oxen, man-servants, and maid-servants, camels and asses. But Pharaoh was not long deceived in regard to the true relation between Sarah and Abraham. He learned that she was the stranger’s wife; and so, sending for Abraham, he sharply reproved him, and sent him away.

S.—In what circumstances did Abraham leave Egypt?

F.—He had been greatly prospered there, and had become very rich, in cattle, in silver, and in gold. He returned through the southern part of Canaan; and, coming to his former residence between Bethel and Hai, he repaired the altar which he had formerly built, and devoutly called on the name of the Lord.

S.—Up to this time, Abraham and Lot had dwelt together. What led them now to separate?

F.—Their substance had so much increased, and their circumstances were so changed, that they found it inconvenient to live together any longer. Their cattle mingled, their herdsmen quarreled, and their flocks, when together, required a wider extent of pasturage than they could reasonably claim in a land of strangers. In this emergency, Abraham took Lot aside, stated the case to him, and kindly proposed that he should make choice of a place of settlement for himself. “Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then

I will go to the right ; or if thou depart to the right, then I will go to the left.”

S.—How did Lot treat this generous proposal? In what direction did he go?

F.—He decided to remove to the fertile regions of the east and south. Perceiving the valley of the Jordan that it was well watered, even as the land of Egypt, or the garden of the Lord, he resolved to go and settle there. Proceeding gradually down this fertile valley, he came, at length, to the plain of Sodom, before the cities built upon it had been destroyed.

CONVERSATION XV.

ABRAHAM TILL THE FORMATION OF A CHURCH IN HIS FAMILY.—Expedition of the Four Kings.—Capture of Sodom and Gomorrah.—Lot and Family among the prisoners.—Abraham to the rescue.—Victory.—Abraham's generosity.—Melchizedek.—Who and what he was.—Without father or mother.—Neither beginning of days nor end of life.—Jerusalem before the Jews.—Relations between God and Abraham.—Sarah's expedient.—Result of unbelief.—Ishmael.—A church established.—Significance of circumcision.—Piety of Abraham.

Son.—We have pursued the life of Abraham until the time of Lot's separation from him. Where did he then go?

Father.—He journeyed southward to the plains of Mamre, not far from the ancient city of Hebron, and here, as was his invariable custom, he built an altar unto the Lord. He formed an acquaintance too, and an alliance, with some of the principal inhabitants of the place,—with Mamre, from whom the locality derived its name, and with his two brothers, Aner and Eshcol.

S.—What sad event took place in that vicinity, in those times?

F.—Four confederate kings or chieftains, from the land of Shinar and of Elam—that old cradle of the human race—sallied forth on a war of conquest. They swept over the intervening countries, conquered the Amorites and Amalekites in northern Arabia, and came to a pitched battle with the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and others who were confederate with them. In this battle, the kings of the East were victorious; Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities were taken; and all the people,—among whom were Lot and his family,—were carried away captives. When the news of this disaster reached Abraham, he was greatly distressed by it, particularly at the fate of Lot; and he resolved to attempt his recovery. He armed his own servants, three hundred and eighteen men; he enlisted his confederates, Mamre, Aner, and Eshcol; and by long and forced marches, he overtook the freebooters at a place in Syria, called Dan.* He came upon them by surprise, in the night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is nigh to Damas-

*Not Dan in the land of Israel, but a much older city in Syria. 2 Sam. xxiv. 6.

cus. This expedition, which involved a march of from three to four hundred miles, was entirely successful. Abraham recovered and brought back all the spoil which the conquering kings had taken. He brought back Lot also, and all his goods, and all the captives, male and female.

S.—Who came out to meet Abraham, on his return with the captives?

F.—One of them was the subdued and humbled king of Sodom. And he said unto Abraham, “Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.” But Abraham declined the offer, saying, “I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I would not take anything that was thine,—not so much as a thread or a shoe-latchet,—lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abraham rich.” Another great personage, who came out to congratulate Abraham on his victory, was Melchizedek.

S.—Who was this Melchizedek? What was he?

F.—I have no doubt that he was, just what he is represented to be in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis,—king of Salem, a city which was afterwards called Jerusalem, and also a priest of the Most High God. He united in himself,—as did the more ancient patriarchs generally,—the offices of king and priest. He brought forth bread and wine to refresh the conquerors, after their long and weary march. He also blessed Abraham in the name of the Most High God, and in consideration of his sacred as well as royal character, Abraham gave him tithes of all that he possessed.

S.—How are we to understand what is said of Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that he “was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end life” (Heb. vii. 3)?

F.—I acquiesce in the opinion of the most judicious interpreters, that this is true, not literally, but *genealogically*. The Jews made much of their genealogies. Every one must have his genealogy, and must be able to find his place in it. He who could not point

to the name of his father and mother, to his origin and descent in the genealogies, was said to have none. He whose birth and death could not be indicated was said to have no beginning of days, or end of life. And all this was true of Melchizedek. He bursts upon us suddenly, unexpectedly in the history, and then disappears forever from our sight. He had no genealogy, so far as we know, and so far as Moses knew. Genealogically speaking, he was without father, mother or descent, without beginning of days, or end of life.

S.—What relations and intercourse subsisted between God and Abraham in these times?

F.—Abraham had frequent and delightful communion with God. He had frequent visions and revelations from God. God oft repeated his promise of a numerous posterity, and that they should inherit the land to which he had come. He predicts, indeed, that previous to the fulfillment of this promise, his children would be brought into circumstances of great trial and affliction. “Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. But that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterward they shall come out with great substance. But thou shalt go to thy grave in peace.”

S.—For the greater assurance of Abraham, what farther was God pleased to do?

F.—He confirmed his promises to Abraham by a solemn covenant, after the most ancient form of covenanting. “Take me a heifer three years old, and a she-goat three years old, and a ram three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon, and when thou hast slain them, divide them in the midst, and lay the pieces one over against another.” Between the severed pieces Abraham is supposed to have passed, to denote his acceptance of the covenant. And when the sun went down, the Lord also passed between them, in the appearance of a smoking furnace and a burning lamp.

This is the most ancient form of ratifying a covenant of which we have any knowledge. We have a similiar form in the Iliad of

Homer.* The parties passing between the severed pieces of the slaughtered victims were understood to invoke the most terrible judgments on themselves, in case they proved unfaithful. The language of the transaction was virtually this: "As the bodies of these animals are cut asunder, so may our bodies be mutilated, in case we prove perfidious."

S.—How did Sarah regard God's promise of a numerous posterity?

F.—Her faith began to fail, at least so far as she was concerned. She was still childless, and had no prospect of ever being a mother. In her anxiety on the subject, she came to her husband with a strange proposal. She had in her household an Egyptian maid-servant named Hagar,—probably one of those which Pharaoh gave to her when she came out of Egypt,—and she proposed to her husband to take Hagar to his bed. "It may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abraham listened to the voice of Sarah."

S.—And what was the result of this expedient?

F.—As it originated in unbelief, it soon began to bring forth the bitter fruits of sin. Hagar was no longer the quiet, submissive servant that she had been. She began to be lifted up with pride, and to despise her mistress; and this provoked Sarah to treat her harshly and cruelly. In consequence of such treatment, Hagar fled from her mistress, probably with a design of returning into Egypt. She was found by a fountain of water in the wilderness on the way to Shur. Here the angel of the Lord appeared to her, promised her a son and a numerous posterity, told her what kind of character her son would be, and encouraged her to return and submit herself to her mistress. Accordingly she did return, and brought forth a son, to whom the angel had already given the name of Ishmael.

S.—Where was Abraham's home at this period?

F.—It was for many years at Mamre. A prince and a shepherd, he lived at ease, honored and beloved by all his acquaintance, with his numerous flocks and his household around him. But when he

*Iliad, Book iii., line 388.

was ninety and nine years old, the Lord appeared again to him, renewed to him and to his posterity the promise of Canaan, and assured him that he should have a numerous seed in the lines not only of Hagar and Ishmael, but of Sarah. "Sarah also shall have a son, and I will bless her. She shall be a mother of nations, and kings shall spring of her."

S.—What great design did God propose and accomplish at this time?

F.—The formation of a *visible church* in the family of Abraham, of which he was to be the patriarchal head. The world was fast relapsing into idolatry. Men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and the true God whom they had rejected was about to reject them. He was about to give them up, as Paul expresses it, "to vile affections," and "to a reprobate mind." Still, God will have a covenant people on the earth; and his original design, as I have before said, in calling Abraham from the land of his nativity, and bringing him into Canaan, was to save him and his house from the contamination of idols, and preserve the true religion in his family. This was the object of all the trials to which he had been subjected, and of the revelations and promises which, from time to time, had been made to him. And now, when he was almost a hundred years old, the great design was to be consummated. Accordingly, God says to him: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, *to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.* And this is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and thee, and thy seed after thee: *Every man child among you shall be circumcised.* Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a *token* of the covenant betwixt me and you. He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every man-child in your generations; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, shall be cut off from his people. He hath broken my cove-

nant." "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, or bought with his money—every male among the servants of Abraham, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety and nine years old when he was circumcised" (Gen. Chap. xvii).

S.—Are we sure that we understand aright the significance of this transaction?

F.—After the explanation of it in other parts of the Bible, more especially in the writings of Paul, the design and import of it can hardly be mistaken. God here propounds a covenant to Abraham and to his household, into which they enter. A visible token is appended to the covenant, which all the males of the family receive. They are thus constituted *God's visible covenant people*—in other words, *his church*. Hence, from this time, God begins to speak of the posterity of Abraham, or such of them as adhered to the covenant, as *his people*, and to speak of himself as *their covenant God*.

S.—What is the significance of circumcision? What does the rite import?

F.—It imports the *cutting off* from the heart of all carnal affections; in other words, *the circumcision of the heart*, which is the same as *regeneration*. Thus the command, "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart," is equivalent to another Divine command, "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit."

S.—Had this covenant with Abraham anything more than a *literal* signification?

F.—Yes; it had a *spiritual* signification, which the patriarch and his pious descendants undoubtedly understood. Thus the promise of a seed in which all the nations and families of the earth should be blessed, was understood to be a promise of Christ, and of the blessings of the gospel. So the promise of a numberless posterity looked beyond the literal descendants of Abraham, and includes all true believers in Christ. And the promise of Canaan for an everlasting possession included more than an earthly inheritance.

It looked to a better, that is a heavenly country—the Canaan of everlasting rest.

F.—Do you think that *true piety* was required in the covenant with Abraham?

F.—I have not a doubt of it. Can a covenant which requires the circumcision of the heart, or regeneration, and in which God says, “Walk before me, and be thou perfect,” and the visible token of which is represented as “the seal of the righteousness of faith,”—can such a covenant require anything less than true piety of those who enter into it? That there were hypocrites in the church of Israel—at times, many hypocrites, there can be no doubt. And so there have been hypocrites in the Christian church; but then this does not impair the validity of the church or its covenant. All persons who unite with our evangelical churches must be either pious persons, or hypocrites; and the same was true of those connected with the church of Israel.

S.—Had there been no visible church in the world till the time of Abraham?

F.—Yes, there was a church, and I think a visible church, before the flood. But all the old patriarchal institutes had been perverted and corrupted; the whole world was lapsing together into idolatry; and if the church of God was to be perpetuated, new and extraordinary measures must be adopted. Hence, the call of Abraham from the land of his nativity, and God’s repeated appearances and revelations to him, and at length the formal institution of a church in his family, with a solemn covenant, and a new and significant initiatory rite.

CONVERSATION XVI.

ABRAHAM TILL HIS DEATH.—Angels' visit.—Interview.—Eating natural food.—Who the chief angel was.—Abraham's plea for Sodom and Gomorrah.—Treatment of the angels of Sodom.—Their message to Lot.—Peril of Lot.—Abraham viewing the destruction of the cities.—Pillar of salt.—Profane writers concerning it.—The vicinity of Sodom and Gomorrah on fire for years.—Recent discoveries.—Abraham again denies his wife.—Birth of Isaac.—Character of Ishmael.—Isaac on the altar.—Mount Moriah.—Interesting circumstances.—Sarah's death and burial.—Second wife.—Abraham's will.—His death.

Son.—A memorable event occurred at Mamre, shortly after the circumcision of Abraham and his household. Will you please describe it?

Father.—As Abraham was sitting in his tent-door, he saw three strangers coming towards him. He rose from his seat, went forth to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground; and addressing himself to the chief one of them, he said: "My lord, I pray thee turn not away from thy servant, but let a little water be brought to wash your feet, and rest yourselves under this tree; and I will bring bread, and comfort ye your hearts; and afterwards ye shall pass on." A noble example this of primitive, patriarchal hospitality! The strangers, who seemed to be men, acceded to the request of Abraham, and a bountiful repast was soon provided. To this they sat down; and while the patriarch waited upon them, they did eat.

S.—How could these celestial visitants eat natural food?

F.—Perhaps they assumed natural bodies for the occasion; in which case they really ate, like other men. Or if we suppose them to have had no other than spiritual bodies, then their eating would have been only apparent. At any rate, they *seemed* to eat. And while the repast was going on, one of them inquired for Sarah; and upon being told that she was in the tent, he said: "I will surely return at the appropriate time, and Sarah shall have a son." This conversation was overheard by Sarah, and because of the strangeness and the improbability of the assurance, she laughed at it. And

when she was reprov'd for her laughter and unbelief, she denied that she did laugh. But the Lord, who now plainly discovered himself to be a Divine messenger, said, "Nay, but thou didst laugh."

S.—At the close of the repast, and as the strangers rose to depart, what occurred?

F.—Abraham accompanied them a little way, when the chief of them (who was now understood to be but a visible manifestation of the Lord Jehovah) acquainted Abraham with his purpose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness, grounding the fearful revelation on his peculiar favor to Abraham, and the assurance he had that he would command his children and his household after him, and that they would keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment.

S.—What had become of the two accompanying angels?

F.—They had gone forward on the way to Sodom, while Abraham remained communing with the Lord. And here we have those remarkable intercessions for a guilty, debauched, and abandoned city which we find recorded in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis: "Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee, Lord, to do after this manner, that the righteous should be as the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Peradventure, there be *fifty* righteous in the city; or if not fifty, *forty*; or if not forty, there must be *thirty*; or *twenty* certainly; or at least *ten*." And the Lord said, "I will not destroy the city, if only ten righteous persons are found in it." Abraham could proceed no further. He could ask no more. He ceased praying, and returned to his place.

S.—How were the two angels treated at Sodom?

F.—They were kindly received by Lot, and conducted to his house; but here they were beset by riotous men, whose lust and passion could by no means be restrained, until they were miraculously struck with blindness, and groped in vain to find the door.

S.—What message did they bring to Lot?

F.—They warn'd him of the impending destruction of Sodom,

and directed him to get his family and his substance together, and be ready in the morning to leave the city. And when there was some delay in the morning, the angels hastened Lot. They even laid hold of him, and his wife, and his two daughters, and brought them forth without the city, and said, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee; tarry not in all the plain, lest thou be consumed." And Lot fled into Zoar at the rising of the sun. And the Lord rained upon Sodom brimstone and fire out of heaven, and overthrew those cities, and all the inhabitants thereof, and all that grew upon the ground. And Lot's wife—who was a heathenish, wicked woman—looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

S.—Was Abraham soon apprised of this destruction?

F.—Yes; he rose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the Lord, and looked off towards Sodom, and towards the plain on which it was built, and lo! the smoke of the country went up, as the smoke of a furnace.

S.—What can you tell us of the place where these burned cities stood?

F.—It became, as Moses tells us, "a salt sea." The same is called the *Asphaltites*, or *Dead Sea*. The Jordan and several smaller streams pour their waters into it; but it has no visible outlet. The waters are carried off, probably, by an abundant evaporation.

This remarkable collection of water is about seventy miles long from north to south, with an average breadth of from ten to twenty miles. It properly consists of two parts. The northern portion, into which the Jordan enters, is very deep; the southern part is shallow. The deeper portion was probably a sea before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; the southern or shallow portion is thought to have been the ancient plain of Siddim, on which the doomed cities stood. On the eastern shore of this shallow portion is the site of the ancient Zoar, into which Lot and his daughters escaped. Further east are the mountains of Moab into which they wandered, and where Lot spent the remainder of his life.

S.—What became of the pillar of salt?

F.—There was a pillar of mineral salt standing here as late as the time of Josephus, which he tells us he had seen. A remarkable pillar of salt is still standing there. It was seen by Lieutenant Lynch and his party in the year 1848, and has been seen by many others.

S.—Are there any notices of this event among heathen writers?

F.—There are many such. Diodorus Siculus, after having described the lake Asphaltites, says, that in his day, the adjacent country was still on fire, and sent forth a grievous smell, to which he imputes the sickliness and short lives of the neighboring inhabitants.* Strabo, having made mention of the same lake, tells us that the craggy and burnt rocks and caverns round about, and the soil all turned to ashes and dust, give credit to a report among the people, that formerly several cities stood there, of which Sodom was the chief, but that, by earthquakes and out-breaking fires, some of them were entirely swallowed up, and others were forsaken of their inhabitants.† Tacitus describes the lake much after the same manner, and then adds that, not far from it are fields, now barren, which once were fruitful, being adorned with large cities which were burnt with lightning, and that the country still retains traces of their destruction.‡

S.—Have any attempts been made in modern times to verify the destruction of the ancient Sodom?

F.—Only a few years ago, Lieutenant Lynch, an American officer, explored the Jordan and the Dead Sea, under a commission from the United States government. Near the close of his journal, this gentleman says: “We entered the Dead Sea with conflicting opinions. One of our party was skeptical, and another a professed unbeliever of the Mosaical account. After a close investigation of twenty-two days, we were unanimous in the conviction of the truth

*Lib. xix.

†Lib. x.

‡Lib. v.

of the scriptural account of the destruction of the cities of the plain. I record with diffidence the conclusions we have reached, as a protest against the shallow deductions of would-be unbelievers.*

S.—What became of Lot, after the destruction of Sodom?

F.—He retired with his two daughters into the mountains east of the Dead Sea, and dwelt there in a cave. The Bible records faithfully the story of his incest with his daughters, and of the two sons, Moab and Ammon which were born unto him. From these descended the Moabites and Ammonites, who stood in close relation to the Israelites, and of whom we hear so much in the sacred history.

S.—Did Abraham continue to reside at Mamre, after the destruction of Sodom?

F.—He did not. The remembrance, and perhaps the stench, of the ruined cities was disagreeable to him. He came and dwelt among the Philistines at Gerar, whose king was Abimelech.

S.—What are some of the incidents of his residence at Gerar?

F.—He fell into the same error here, which he had formerly committed in Egypt. He denied his wife, passing her off as his sister; whereupon Abimelech took her, and was about to make her his own wife. But God warned him of his danger in a dream, told him who Sarah was, and bade him restore her to her husband. So Abimelech called Abraham, reproved him for the deception he had practiced, gave him back his wife, and with her valuable presents—sheep and oxen, man-servants and maid-servants. He also gave him full permission to dwell anywhere in his country that he chose.

S.—What very interesting event took place in Abraham's family about this time?

F.—The promise of God so oft repeated to him was fulfilled, and Sarah brought forth a son. They called his name Isaac, as the Lord had commanded, and on the eighth day he was circumcised. And the child grew and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast at the weaning of Isaac.

S.—What became of Ishmael after this?

* Lynch's Narrative, p. 380.

F.—Sarah became displeased with him, and demanded that he and his mother should be sent away. Abraham loved Ishmael, and was unwilling to comply; but having taken counsel of God, he yielded to what he found to be the Divine pleasure. He directed Hagar to take her son, with provisions and water, and to go out into the wilderness, intending, no doubt, to provide for her future wants. She departed into the desert of Beer-sheba, where she and her son came nigh perishing with thirst. But an angel appeared unto her, as he had done on a former occasion, led her to a fountain of water, and so preserved their lives. And here Ishmael remained with his mother, grew up to manhood, and became a skillful archer and hunter. His mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

S.—What kind of man was Ishmael, and who are his descendants?

F.—It had been predicted of Ishmael that he would be a wild man; that his hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him; but that he should live in the presence of his brethren. It had been predicted, too, that he would be fruitful and multiply, and that his seed would become a great nation. And all this has been, and is, remarkably fulfilled. He had himself twelve sons, who are spoken of as princes, having castles and towns (Gen. xxv. 16). Partly by overcoming the original settlers of Arabia, and partly by mingling with them, Ishmael is regarded as the patriarch and progenitor of the Arabs,—a people that never have been conquered, and perhaps never will be. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Parthians made vigorous attempts to overcome the Arabians; but without success. Ishmael's hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him; and still he lived in the presence of his brethren. In later times, the Arabs, under the name of Saracens, attacked the Romans, took from them the greater part of their dominions, and established a vast empire of their own. The hordes of Arabia remain to this day, the same wild, roving, independent, and unconquerable people, fulfilling, in a remarkable degree, the predictions which were uttered respecting them almost four thousand years ago.

S.—Where was the home of Abraham during his long residence in the land of the Philistines?

F.—Chiefly at Beer-sheba, the southernmost point of the possessions of Israel in the land of Canaan.

S.—What interesting event took place in these days?

F.—It was while Abraham resided here, that he received that most trying and mysterious injunction: “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I shall tell thee of.”

S.—Could such a command as this have possibly come from God? And if it did, was it the duty of Abraham to obey it?

F.—I see no difficulty in the case. God did not command Abraham to *murder* his son—to slay him with malicious intent. Such a command God could not have given; nor, if he had, could it have been the duty of Abraham to comply with it. God required nothing of Abraham which he might not perform in the exercise of the holiest and best affections. God had a better right to Isaac than Abraham had. He had given the son, and he had a right to take him away in any manner he pleased,—whether by sickness, by wild beasts, by some sudden stroke of providence, or by the hand of his own father. “Go to Mount Moriah, and there offer up thy son as a burnt sacrifice upon my altar.” Abraham saw, at once, that God had a right to lay such an injunction upon him, and, with his usual promptness, he prepared to obey. He was cheered, no doubt, by the thought that if, in obedience to God, he took the life of his son, that life might be restored. God could raise him from the dead, and fulfill, through him, all his past assurances of a numerous posterity.

S.—Where was Mount Moriah?

F.—Moriah was the mountain on which Solomon afterwards built the temple (2 Chron. iii. 1). One part of it was probably Calvary, where our Lord was crucified. It could not have been less than a hundred miles from Beer-sheba to this place. Accordingly we are

told that Abraham did not reach it until the third day after commencing his journey.

S.—But Abraham did not sacrifice his son after all.

F.—He intended to do it; he expected to do it. He bound his son, and laid him upon the altar, and took the knife in his hand to slay him. But as the trial was now complete, the Lord interposed to prevent the sacrifice.

S.—What was the design of God in this strange transaction?

F.—His design was, first, to try the faith and the obedience of Abraham. As he was to be “the father of the faithful,” the patriarch and visible head of God’s covenant people, it was proper that his faith should be severely tried. Then, secondly, this transaction was designed, undoubtedly, to furnish to Abraham, and through him to the whole ancient church, a type, a symbol, of the sacrifice of Christ. As Abraham, in effect, offered up his son so God would, *in fact*, offer up his. He would do it on the same mountain, perhaps in the same place. The consent of the victims, in both cases, was gained. A more striking emblem of the sacrifice of Christ could not possibly have been given to the ancient church, than was furnished in the transaction of which we have spoken.

S.—On leaving Beer-sheba, where did Abraham remove?

F.—He came to Hebron, near Mamre, in the land of Canaan. And here Sarah died, at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven—thirty-seven years after the birth of Isaac. And when the mourning for Sarah was ended, Abraham applied to the children of Heth—the native inhabitants of Hebron, for a burying place, in which to deposit the remains of his long loved companion. The Hittites generously proposed to him to occupy any of their sepulchres; but he declined their proposal, requesting that he might purchase the cave of Machpelah, and hold it as a place of burial. The owner of the cave now proposed to give it to Abraham, without money or price. But this generous offer Abraham, in the most respectful manner, declined, choosing rather to purchase it, at its full value. To gratify him, a price was now set upon it, which was promptly

paid. "Abraham weighed unto Ephron, the owner of the land, the price which he had named, *viz.*, four hundred shekels of silver, current money, with the merchant.* And the field, and the cave, and all the trees that were in the field, were made sure unto Abraham in the presence of the children of Heth." When the contract had been finished, Abraham buried his wife in the cave of Machpelah; and there, after a time, he was buried himself. And so were Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah buried there, and perhaps other members of the same family.†

S.—What course did Abraham pursue in order to procure a wife for his son Isaac?

E.—He conferred with Eliezer, the chief steward of his house, and charged him that he should not take a wife for his son of the daughters of Canaan; but "go to my country," *i. e.* to Haran, "and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son from thence." And the more strictly to bind his steward to a faithful performance of his wishes, he administered to him a solemn oath,—telling him, at the same time, that if he came to Haran, and a suitable woman of their kindred would not return with him, he should be clear of the oath which he had taken.

Thus charged, Eliezer set out on his long journey, with a retinue of servants and camels suitable to his master's quality and state. Of the incidents of the journey we are not informed. We only know that in good time he arrived at Haran, whence Abraham had emigrated some sixty-five years before, and where he had left his brother Nahor. Here he rested his camels at evening by a well, and lifted up his heart in prayer to God for his direction and blessing. He prayed that, from among the young women who should come out of the city to the well, God would clearly indicate to him the one whom he had raised up to be the wife of Isaac. And his prayer was heard. Without going into all the particulars of the wonder-

*About two hundred and twenty-five dollars of our money.

†Over this cavern now stands a Turkish mosque, into which no Jew or Christian has been permitted, until very recently, to enter.

ful story, suffice it to say that, while he was yet praying, Rebecca, a grand-daughter of Nahor, and a second cousin of Isaac, came out to the well with her pitcher for water. She answered to all the conditions which Eliezer had mentioned in his prayer, so that he knew, at once, that she was the person for whom he was sent. He made himself known to her, gave her valuable presents, and was invited to her father's house. He here told his story, circumstantially, from beginning to end, and when he was through he said: "Now, if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and, if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left." And Bethuel, the father of Rebecca, and Laban, her brother, answered and said: "The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot speak unto thee good or bad. Behold Rebecca is before thee; take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." So, with the full consent of Rebecca, she was sent away on the morrow, with her nurse and other female servants, and in a little time became the wife of Isaac.

S.—After the marriage of Isaac, what change took place in the family of Abraham?

F.—Though Abraham was now a hundred and forty years old, it may be said of him, as it was afterwards of Moses, "his eye was not dim, neither was his natural force abated." He was a healthful and vigorous old man, enjoying in peace, plenty, and honor, the fruits of a temperate and upright life. Isaac was happily married and settled; and the father began to think that it might conduce to his happiness to be married also. He was at this time only ten years older than Terah was at his birth, and of the same age with Terah at the birth of Sarah.

S.—Who was the second wife of Abraham?

F.—She was Keturah, a pious woman, probably of his own household. She bare him six sons, *viz.*: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shual. These all settled in Arabia, mingling more or less with the Moabites and Ishmaelites, and became heads of houses or of nations in that sunny land.

S.—Where did Abraham reside, after his second marriage ?

F.—We are not particularly informed. It must have been in the extreme south of Canaan,—perhaps at Hebron, or Beer-sheba, or possibly still further south, at the well Lahai-roi. At this place we know that Isaac dwelt, after his father's death (Gen. xxv., 11).

S.—What disposition did Abraham make of his property ?

F.—Although Abraham had other sons, he well knew that Isaac was the child of promise. It was through him that the blessings of the covenant were to come upon the world. Accordingly, his substance in the land of Canaan was all given to Isaac ; while to his other children he gave gifts, and sent them away.

S.—When did Abraham die ?

F.—Laden with honors and with years, he died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five, thirty-five years after his marriage to Keturah. It is pleasant to know that his other sons united with Isaac in paying honors to the venerable patriarch at his funeral. He was buried, as I said, in the cave at Machpelah, where more than forty years before, he had deposited the remains of his beloved Sarah.

CONVERSATION XVII.

REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM.—His reputation among the nations.—Skilled in Celestial Science.—Ancient historians regarding him.—The Moham-medan Koran.—A beautiful story.—A Persian legend.—Abraham's faith.—Abraham as an example.—His transgressions.—His name honored by posterity.

Son.—It might be expected that a man so eminent for wisdom and goodness as Abraham, and so well known in all the principal countries of the East, would leave some memorial of himself, beyond the time of his own posterity. Do we find it so?

Father.—We do. The name of Abraham was long known not only among the Israelites, but in other ancient nations. Thus Berossus, the Chaldean, speaks of him as “a man righteous and good, and skilled in celestial science.” Hecateus, who resided at the court of the Ptolemies in Egypt, wrote a work in his praise. Nicolaus of Damascus tells of his coming out of Chaldea into Syria, and thence removing into Canaan, where his posterity became exceeding numerous. Eusebius quotes Eupolemus and Antipanus, heathen authors, both of whom make honorable mention of Abraham, and note some of the principal events in his history.

S.—I have heard of interesting legends respecting Abraham among the Mohammedans; will you repeat some of them?

F.—The following, which I give in the language of the Koran, indicates the manner in which (amidst prevailing idolatries) the mind of Abraham became established in the doctrine of one God: “When night overshadowed him, and Abraham saw a star, he said, *This is my Lord*. But when the star set, and was out of sight, he said, *I will not have this*. Then the moon arose, and he said, *This is my Lord*. But the moon went down also, and he said, *If I worship this, I shall be led astray*. Next, the sun arose, and he said, *This, surely, is my God*. But when the sun was gone, he cried, O my people! I am clear of all these things. I now turn my face to Him who *made the heavens and the earth*.”

S.—This is a beautiful story. Can you think of another?

F.—I have another in mind, which is of Persian origin, showing how Abraham learned to be tolerant in religion. I quote from Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophecy*: "When Abraham sat in his tent door, as his custom was, waiting to entertain strangers, he saw a venerable man coming towards him, leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, who was a hundred years old. He received him kindly into his tent, washed his feet, provided him a supper, and caused him to sit down. But observing that the old man did not ask a blessing on his meat, he inquired the reason. The old man replied that he worshiped fire, and no other god. At this, Abraham grew angry, thrust him out of his tent, and exposed him, unsheltered, to all the evils of the night. Then God called to Abraham out of heaven, and asked where the stranger was. I thrust him out of my tent, said he, because he does not worship thee. But God answered, I have suffered him these hundred years, though he dishonored me; and couldst thou not endure him for a single night? Upon hearing this, Abraham took him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and good instruction."

S.—This is too good to be a fiction. It is worthy of Abraham himself.

The history of Abraham, over which we have passed, is of great importance to us as an example. That its good lessons may not be lost upon us, will you please to indicate some of them specifically?

F.—He was, indeed, an example to his spiritual children of nearly every grace and virtue of religion. His life serves to illustrate, first of all, the nature and the efficacy of *faith*—that faith which springs from the heart, and controls the life. When Abraham received a revelation from God *he believed it*; and when a command, growing out of such revelation, was issued, *he obeyed it*. Thus when called to leave his country, and go to a foreign land, *he went*, asking no questions. And when called to the dreadful act of sacrificing his son, he did the same. He prepared, at once, to make the sacrifice, trusting in God to fulfill his promise in raising him from the dead.

S.—I have often admired Abraham's patience in *waiting upon God*.

F.—You are right in this; and here is another point in which he is an example. We are apt to be in a hurry, expecting God to fulfill his promises *right off*, in our own way and time, or not at all. But Abraham understood God's method of dealing with his creatures better than this. Abraham had an early promise of a numerous posterity; but it was twenty-five long years after he entered Canaan, before the child of promise was born. He had promise after promise that the land of Canaan should be given to his posterity for a possession; but he lived not to see the fulfillment of these promises. Still, he doubted not that they would be fulfilled; and in God's own way and time, they were.

S.—The *devotional* spirit of Abraham was very manifest.

F.—It was so indeed; and here again we have him for an example. He loved God, and loved his worship. He loved to have communion with him in acts of worship. Accordingly, wherever he pitched his tent,—at Sichem, at Bethel, at Mamre, at Beer-sheba,—from the time of his coming into Canaan to the day of his death, we find him erecting an altar, and calling on the name of the Lord. Such was his habit, his course of life everywhere. No one could spend a day in Abraham's family, without understanding that he was a friend and worshiper of the God of heaven.

S.—Can you think of any other points in which Abraham may be held up as an example?

F.—Yes; look at his worldly *integrity* and *generosity*. Witness his generous treatment of Lot, when he told him to take his choice in what part of the land to dwell. “If thou wilt take the right hand, then I will go to the left; or if thou depart to the left hand, then I will go to the right.” Witness his generous treatment of those who suffered in the sacking of Sodom. “I will not take from thee so much as a thread, or a shoe-latchet, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abraham rich.” Witness also his persistent uprightness, in purchasing the field of Machpelah of the children of Heth. How much have Christians in our own time to learn of Abraham, in regard to this matter of worldly integrity!

I might notice many other traits in which Abraham was an example to us all. Witness his princely hospitality in receiving the strangers who came to him at Mamre, when he had the honor of "entertaining angels unawares." Witness his deep feeling and anxiety for sinful men about to be destroyed, as evinced in his fervent intercessions for the Sodomites. This was very like Paul, who could not speak, without weeping, of those who were enemies of the cross of Christ; or rather it was like the great Seed of Abraham, who beheld Jerusalem from the brow of Olivet, and wept over it.

And when he came to the close of life, Abraham was an example to all heads of families, in making a satisfactory disposition of his worldly estate. He set, not only his heart, but his house in order. He made large gifts to Ishmael, and the sons of Keturah, and sent them away; while Isaac, as the son of promise, he retained and richly endowed in the land of Canaan.

S.—Still, you do not regard Abraham as a perfect man.

F.—No; he did not claim to be; nor is he so set before us in the Scriptures. His denial of his wife, in two separate instances, was strangely inconsistent with his general character, and was followed (as such expedients generally are) with unpleasant results. His consenting to Sarah's proposal in regard to Hagar, was also a blot upon his character, which no length of years can entirely obliterate.

S.—Abraham, it seems, was mortal, like the rest of us.

F.—Yes; though he lived to a good old age, he could not live always. Though he sustained his probation, and performed his part nobly on the earth, and left behind him a name second to that of no mere man in point of honor and influence, yet he could not escape the stroke of death. Like the long line of patriarchs who had gone before him, he died. His dust still reposes in the cave at Machpelah, awaiting the resurrection of the just.

CONVERSATION XVIII.

ISAAC TO HIS DEATH.—The birth of Jacob and Esau.—Heads of two nations.—Esau's birthright sold for a mess of pottage.—What is signified.—Isaac like his father denies his wife.—Isaac in the land of the Philistines.—His departure.—Esau's marriage and its consequences.—Esau losing the blessing.—His grief.—Jacob threatened with vengeance.—Flight of Jacob.—Character of Isaac.

Son.—We have heard something of the life of Isaac, but not all. Please tell us more of him and his posterity.

Father.—For twenty years after his marriage he continued childless, when Rebecca was delivered of two sons at a birth. Esau and Jacob had been the subjects of much prayer, and of divine predictions, before they were born. It had been foretold that they would be the fathers of two nations—of two sorts of people; and that the elder should serve the younger. Esau, the elder of the two brothers, was a hairy man, a cunning hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a plain man, a shepherd, dwelling in tents. Esau was the special favorite of his father, but Jacob of his mother. These boys were fifteen years old, when their grandfather Abraham died. They, no doubt, had often seen him, and had the benefit of his counsels and prayers.

S.—We are told, in Genesis 25th, and in other Scriptures, that Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage. Pray tell us what this means? What was it precisely which Jacob bought, and Esau sold?

F.—It was, undoubtedly, the rights and privileges which, according to patriarchal usages, belonged to the first-born. Among these pre-eminently, in the case before us, were those *covenant* blessings which belonged to Abraham and Isaac. These were what Esau despised, and sold for a mess of pottage. These were what, when the blessings had been given to Jacob, he could not recover, “though he sought them earnestly with tears.” It was the selling of these rich covenant blessings for a mess of pottage, which led the Apostle to speak of him as a “profane person” (Heb. xii. 16).

S.—Did Isaac remove from place to place, like his father ?

F.—He did not. He seems never to have traveled far from his birthplace, in the extreme south of Canaan. He purposed, in a season of famine, to go into Egypt; but the Lord prohibited him, saying: “Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and bless thee;” repeating, at the same time, the rich covenant blessings which had been so often made to his father. So Isaac turned aside, and dwelt at Gerar—only a short distance from his usual abode.

S.—Here he found an Abimelech on the throne,—was it the same who so kindly received his father ?

F.—Probably not, but rather one of his sons or descendants.

Here Isaac fell into the same error which his father had committed before him, *viz.*, the denial of his wife. He said of Rebecca that she was his sister; being afraid to call her his wife, lest the people of the land should kill him for her sake. But Abimelech soon discovered that she was his wife, and sharply reproved Isaac for his deception. He did not, however, send him away, or inflict upon him any punishment. So far from this, he granted him protection, saying to his people: “Whoever toucheth this man or his wife, with intent to injure them, shall surely be put to death.”

S.—How long did Isaac reside among the Philistines at Gerar ?

F.—He was here several years, and was remarkably prospered in all his worldly interests. The seed which he sowed yielded him a hundred fold. He had flocks and herds, and great store of servants. His prosperity, at length, excited the envy of the Philistines, and they began to annoy him. They filled up the wells which his father had digged; and when the servants of Isaac digged new wells, the herdsmen of Gerar strove with them, and drove them away. At length Abimelech came to Isaac and said: “Go from us, for thou art mightier than we.” So Isaac departed unto Beer-sheba, and built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord; and the Lord appeared to him, and blessed him, and confirmed to him the promises which were so often made to Abraham his father.

S.—Please tell us of Esau’s marriage, and its consequences.

F.—When Esau was forty years old, without consulting his parents, he connected himself in marriage with two Canaanitish women, *viz.*, Judith and Bashemath, of the daughters of Heth. And these, it is said, “were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebecca;” or, as the Septuagint translates it, “they *quarreled* with Isaac and Rebecca.” At any rate, the connection was an unhappy one, which served more than ever to alienate the heart of Rebecca from her eldest son. Still, they seem to have lived together, or near to each other, at Beer-sheba, or Mamre, or Hebron, for a series of years. Isaac, a quiet old gentleman, was the head of the household; Esau was an expert hunter, who supplied his father with venison, of which he was very fond; while Jacob had charge of the flocks and herds.

S.—Pray tell us how Jacob managed to secure his father’s blessing, which was intended for Esau.

F.—When Isaac was a hundred and thirty-five years old, and his eyes were dim that he could not see, he one day directed Esau to take his quiver and bow, and go out into the field and secure some venison; “and make me savory meat,” said he, “such as I love, that I may eat, and that my soul may bless thee before I die.” And Esau did as his father commanded. He went to the field to hunt for venison.

Meanwhile Rebecca,—who had heard what had passed, and who was resolved that the paternal blessing should rest, not on the head of Esau, but on that of Jacob,—called her younger son, and concerted with him a plan, by which her purpose might be carried into effect: “Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two kids of the goats, and I will make of them savory meat such as your father loveth; and thou shalt bring it to him that he may eat and may bless thee before his death.” But Jacob objected. “Though my father cannot see, he can feel; and as Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man, he will put forth his hand to feel of me, and will know that I am a deceiver; and so shall I bring a curse upon myself, and not a blessing.

S.—And what did his mother say to this objection?

F.—"Trust me for that," said she, "only do as I have directed." So Jacob went and brought the kids to his mother. And she made the savory meat, and she took Esau's raiment and put it upon Jacob; and she put the skins of the kids upon his hands, and on the smooth part of his neck; and told him to take the meat and carry it to his father. He did so; and by dint of deception and falsehood, effectually imposed upon the good old man, and secured to himself the blessing which was intended for Esau; "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let peoples serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

S.—And what took place when Esau returned, and the cheat was discovered?

F.—Both Esau and his father were greatly distressed. Esau wept aloud and said, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father! Bless me, even me, also, O my father!" Overcome by his entreaties, Isaac bestowed upon Esau such a blessing as he could; not to revoke that which had been given to Jacob, but in consistency with it; "Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. By thy sword thou shalt live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

S.—For this deception and falsehood on the part of Jacob and his mother, is there any good excuse?

F.—I think not. It is no excuse for them that, in securing the blessing as they did, they were fulfilling a Divine purpose, which had been disclosed even before Jacob and Esau were born. The means which they used were altogether unworthy of them. They were base and sinful; and in resorting to them, they have left a stain upon their characters, which no length of years can wash away. No wonder that Esau was offended with his brother; and we scarcely wonder that, in the heat of his anger, he should threaten his brother's life.

S.—In these alarming circumstances, what did Rebecca do ?

F.—To screen her beloved Jacob from danger she proposed to him to flee to Haran, to the house of her brother Laban, and there remain until Esau's anger should abate. And to secure the consent of Isaac to the proposal, she coupled with it another object. "I am weary of my life," said she, "because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob shall take a wife from among them, what good shall my life do me?"

The thought here suggested struck Isaac most agreeably. So he called Jacob to him, and charged him not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan ; but "Go thou to Padan-Aram" (another name for Haran), "to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father, and take thee a wife of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother." And having renewed his blessing upon Jacob, he sent him away.

S.—How old was Jacob at this time ?

F.—He was about seventy-five years of age. The particulars of his journey, of his residence in the family of Laban, and of his return to Canaan after the lapse of some twenty years, will be treated of in another place. Rebecca supposed, probably, that he would be absent but a little while. She expected him soon to return, with one of her nieces for his wife, to be a comfort to her in her declining years ; but the probability is that she never saw him more. She seems to have died some twenty years after this,—about the time that Jacob left Padan-Aram for Canaan,—and was buried in the cave at Machpelah.

S.—What do we hear of Isaac after this ?

F.—Very little that is of general interest. He continued to reside at Mamre, until the return of Jacob, after an absence of about thirty years, twenty of which were spent with Laban, and ten at Shechem and Bethel, in the more northerly parts of Canaan.

S.—What have you to say of the character of Isaac ?

F.—He was without doubt a truly pious man. With less capacity or enterprise than either Abraham or Jacob, he was distin-

guished chiefly for the virtues of social and domestic life. If he never startles us by any stirring adventures or great undertakings, he was one whom all about him must have respected and loved. His name is still an honored one, and shall go down with honor to the end of the world.

CONVERSATION XIX.

JACOB TO THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.—Jacob's journey.—His dream.—His vow.—Marries his two cousins.—Has twelve sons and one daughter.—Separation from Laban.—The stolen images.—Jacob wrestles with the angel.—Fulfills his vow.—Benjamin born.—Rachel's death.—Her monument standing at the present time.—Jacob returns to his father.—Isaac's death and burial.

Son.—In our last conversation, we pursued the history of Jacob to the time of his being sent from home, to escape the wrath of his brother Esau. His subsequent life must be one of great interest. Will you assist us farther in the study of it?

Father.—The journey from Beer-sheba, in the extreme south of Canaan, to Haran or Padan-Aram, beyond the Euphrates, cannot be less than five hundred miles. The circumstances of the case required that Jacob should be sent away privately, without any parade, or extensive outfit. He entered upon his long journey on foot and alone. As to the incidents of it, we only know what took place at Bethel. As he passed along in weariness and solitude, oppressed with a sense of his cares and dangers, night overtook him in a certain place, where was no dwelling and no inhabitant. The sun was set; and with a stone for his pillow, and the canopy of heaven for a covering, he laid him down to rest. In his sleep, he was favored with a most remarkable vision. He saw a ladder standing upon the earth, the top of which reached unto heaven; and behold the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it. And the Lord Jehovah stood above it, and there graciously repeated and confirmed the promises which had before been made to Abraham and to Isaac. “The land on which thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the east and to the west, and to the north and to the south; and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest; and I will bring

thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have accomplished all that which I have promised.”

S.—How was Jacob affected by this revelation?

F.—The vision which he had seen, the voice he had heard, filled the mind of the patriarch with holy awe. He exclaimed, as he awoke, “Surely, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not! How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven!” He set up the stone on which he had rested, for an anointed pillar, and called the name of it *Bethel*—the *house of God*. And he vowed a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in the way in which I shall go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God; and of all that the Lord shall give me, I will surely give a tenth unto thee.” From this time, Jacob seems to have been another man. I have always regarded the scene at Bethel as the time of his conversion.

S.—How was Jacob prospered in the remainder of his journey, and what was the result of it?

F.—Encouraged by the Divine promises, he went joyfully on his way, and soon came to the place of his destination. Almost the first person he saw was Rachel, the daughter of his uncle, Laban, who came to water her father’s flock. He made himself known to her, assisted her in watering the sheep, was at once invited to Laban’s house, and became a member of his family. And here he remained twenty years, having the principal charge of Laban’s flocks. Fourteen years he served his uncle for his two daughters, Leah and Rachel, and six years he attended the herds and flocks upon shares, a certain portion of the increase belonging by contract, to himself.

S.—And how was Jacob prospered in these years?

F.—During his last six years with Laban, he was prospered greatly. His substance increased so rapidly, as to excite the envy of Laban and his sons. They said: “Jacob hath taken away all that was our father’s, and of that which was our father’s hath he gotten all this wealth.”

Meanwhile, Jacob's family had increased. He had become the father of twelve children, eleven sons and one daughter. He began to think that it was time for him to provide more distinctly for his own, and that, in order to do this, he must return to Canaan. Indeed, he was admonished so to do by an express revelation from God. So he called for his wives, Leah and Rachel, explained to them his purpose, and readily obtained their consent and approbation.

S.—How did Jacob manage to get away?

F.—He took his wives and his children, his flocks, his herds, and all his substance, and departed secretly from Padan-Aram, while Laban was absent shearing his sheep. Jacob had been gone three days, before Laban heard of it. He then collected a great company and pursued after Jacob, and on the seventh day overtook him in Mount Gilead. This mountain was about forty miles east of the sea of Galilee, in a region called, in the New Testament, Trachonitis, almost to Canaan.

S.—What was Laban's object, in so hotly pursuing his son-in-law?

F.—Undoubtedly to capture him, and force him to return; but the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and warned him to desist: "Take care that thou do nought to Jacob, either good or bad." So they met; and, after some mutual chiding and reproof, entered into a covenant. And they made a great heap of stones, and called it *Gilead, i. e. witness*; because it was to remain a token, a witness, to the contracting parties, and having feasted together, Jacob and his father-in-law parted in peace, and Laban returned to his place.

S.—Was idolatry practiced at this time in the family of Laban.

F.—It certainly was; and one of the complaints of Laban against Jacob was, that he, or some of his company, had stolen his *images*. But Rachel, who had taken them, had so effectually concealed them, that they could not be found. We learn from this fact, not only that Laban and his family were idolaters, but that Rachel herself had not been weaned from the detestable practice.

S.—Had Jacob any other dangers to apprehend, after parting with Laban?

F.—He had; he was now approaching the land of Canaan, and must expect, ere long, to meet his brother Esau; and knowing his brother's long cherished resentment, he dreaded the result. And though he was encouraged at Mahanaim by a vision of angels, still his mind was not at ease. So he selected some of his more trusty servants and sent them to Mount Seir to meet Esau, that they might tell him of his approach to Canaan and crave his forgiveness and favor. As the journey from Mahanaim to Mount Seir was more than a hundred miles, the embassy must have occasioned no little delay. And when the messengers returned, their report, instead of allaying his fears, served greatly to increase them: "Thy brother Esau cometh out to meet thee, and four hundred men with him?"

S.—No wonder Jacob was alarmed. Encumbered as he was with his wives and children, his flocks and his herds, and having few or no means of defense, what could he do against such a force?

F.—Having no other resource, Jacob betook himself to prayer. "O Lord God of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, Return unto thy country and I will deal well with thee; I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and smite the mother with the children."

S.—Did Jacob satisfy himself with mere prayer?

F.—He did not. He felt the necessity, as every supplicant should, of uniting *means* with prayers. So he took a rich present of goats and sheep, of camels, kine and asses, and divided them into several companies, and sent them forward, one after another, to meet his brother, that, if possible, he might appease and melt him by these successive gifts. And having arranged all things in the best possible manner, he betook himself again to prayer. He remained all night alone with God, and had a most remarkable manifestation of the Divine presence and favor. A man appeared

to him, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, and wrestled with him the greater part of the night, and prevailed not against him. This wrestling, though literal, was but the symbol of a mightier struggle which was going on in Jacob's heart.* Towards morning, the stranger,—seeing he could prevail in no other way,—touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and instantly maimed him. By this Jacob knew, if he did not know before, that his companion was a Divine person; and this only made him the more importunate. So when the Messenger said, "Let me go for the day breaketh," Jacob replied, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." A remarkable instance this of power and perseverance in prayer. Jacob obtained the desired blessing. He obtained also this noble testimony: "As a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed."

Jacob's prayer and his success are beautifully set forth in one of Wesley's hymns, beginning thus:

"Come, O thou traveler unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see,
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee.
With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day."

S.—What was the result of this importunate and persevering appeal to God? —

F.—On the day following, Jacob and Esau came together, and the interview was one of great kindness and tenderness. Esau ran to meet Jacob, fell on his neck and kissed him; and they both wept. Jacob introduced him to his wives and children, showed him his flocks and herds, and persuaded him, against his will, to accept the presents which had been sent him. Esau, on his part, invited Jacob to accompany him to Mount Seir, and dwell with him; or at least to accept a body guard to conduct him and his family into Canaan;

*From the most ancient times, wrestling has been regarded as a symbol of prayer. To this day, the religious exercises of some Orientals consist in wrestling, and are conducted often with such vehemence as to dislocate the joints. See Wolf's Travels and Adventures, Chap. 22.

both which offers Jacob thought proper to decline. The brothers separated with the strongest professions of friendship and love; and though they must often have met afterwards, they seem never to have quarreled more.

S.—Shortly after this, Jacob seems to have crossed the Jordan, and entered the land of Canaan. Where was his first stopping place?

F.—In Shalem, near to Shechem, where he bought a piece of ground, and built an altar unto the Lord. Here Jacob must have remained some ten or twelve years. Why he was not more in haste to pass into the south of Canaan, and dwell with his father, we do not know. While Jacob abode here, his mother died, and Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, came to reside with him at Shechem.

S.—How do we know that Jacob remained so long at Shechem?

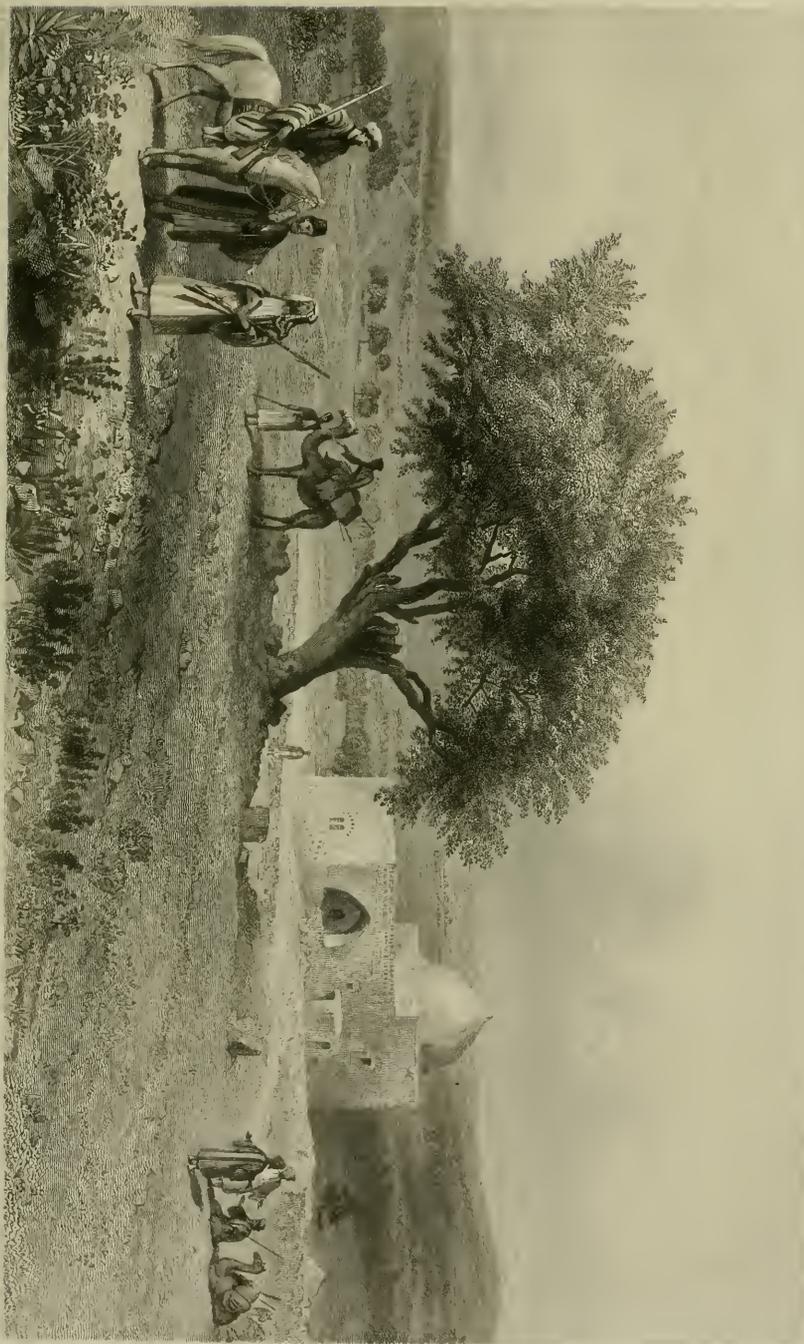
F.—We infer it from the fact that his daughter Dinah, who could not have been more than five or six years old when he left Padan-Aram, here came to be marriageable, and her hand was earnestly sought by Shechem, a prince of the country. It was the proposed match between Shechem and Dinah which led to the removal of Jacob. By some means, Shechem had got possession of Dinah, and had dishonored her. This so provoked her brothers, that they rose upon the Shechemites and slew them. This outrage was committed without the knowledge or consent of Jacob. He was distressed on account of it; and fearing that the people of the land would rise upon him and destroy him, he moved his residence to Bethel.

S.—Had Jacob any other reason for going to Bethel?

F.—He had. He had never yet fulfilled the vow which he made, when on his way to Padan-Aram, that if the Lord would be with him, and return him in safety to his native land, then *the Lord should be his God*, and the stone which he had erected should be to him as *the house of God*, and a sanctuary for his worship.

S.—What did Jacob do in preparation for the solemnities at Bethel?

F.—He required of his household that they should put away all



the strange gods that were among them, and change their raiment, and be clean. And they gave up their idols and ear-rings, and Jacob took them, buried them under an oak at Shechem, and we hear of them no more.

After the solemnities at Bethel, God appeared again to Jacob, assuring him that he should be the father of nations, and that all the land of Canaan should be given to his seed for a possession.

S.—What was Jacob's next remove after leaving Bethel?

F.—He journeyed southward, and came to Ephrath, the same as Bethlehem. Here Rachel died in childbed, after giving birth to her second son, Benjamin. She was buried at Ephrath, and Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave, which was standing in the days of Moses, and some think is standing at the present time.

From Bethlehem, Jacob journeyed still farther south, and came to his aged father at Mamre. He may have personally visited him before, but he had now come, with his family and household, to reside with him, or near him, and be his support and comfort in declining years.

S.—Is anything more to be said about the last years of Isaac?

F.—He was at this time about one hundred and sixty-five years old. He had lost his eye-sight, and had been bereaved of his wife; still, he seems to have been enjoying a quiet old age. He lived fifteen years after the return of Jacob, and died at the advanced period of a hundred and eighty,—five years older than his father Abraham. His sons were both present at his burial, and seem to have come to an amicable division of his estate. Esau took his portion and departed to Mount Seir. Their riches were too great for them to dwell together.

CONVERSATION XX.

JACOB AND HIS FAMILY UNTIL THE RECOGNITION IN EGYPT.—Jacob's partiality for Joseph.—Envy of the brothers.—Their crime.—Character of the elder sons.—Joseph's romantic career.—Cause of the Egyptian famines.—Joseph's brethren go to Egypt to buy corn.—His treatment of them.—Demands Benjamin.—Grief of Jacob on parting with his youngest son.—Second journey into Egypt.—Pathetic scene in Joseph's palace.—The hidden cup.—Consternation of the brothers.—Judah's eloquent appeal.—Joseph sobs aloud and reveals himself.

Son.—How old was Jacob when he returned to his father?

Father.—He must have been about a hundred and five years old. His sons were several of them grown to manhood. As his numerous flocks could not be accommodated with pasturage where they were, Jacob trusted his sons to drive them to a distance from home, and to have the charge of them. For one of his sons, Jacob had a dangerous partiality. This was Joseph, an amiable and pious youth, about seventeen years of age—the first-born of his beloved Rachel.

S.—How were Jacob's other sons affected by his partiality for Joseph?

F.—It excited their envy; and this was increased by the prophetic dreams of Joseph, which he had the simplicity to relate, importing that the whole family would, at some day, be subordinated to him. Inflamed by their prejudices, the elder brothers meditated mischief against Joseph; and Providence soon enabled them to carry their plans into execution.

S.—What did they do to Joseph?

F.—They were tending their father's flocks at Dothan, several miles from home; and Jacob said to Joseph, "Go and see if it be well with thy brethren, and with the flocks, and bring me word again." So he went out from his father to go to his brethren; and when they saw him at a distance, they said one to another, "Behold the dreamer cometh!" and they conspired against him to kill him. They were dissuaded, however, from this bloody purpose, and con-

cluded to sell him into slavery. So they sold him to a company of Midianites who were passing by into Egypt, for thirty pieces of silver. At the same time they took his coat—a beautiful coat which a father's fondness had provided—smeared it with the blood of a kid, and sent it to their father, hoping in this way to satisfy him that Joseph had been torn in pieces by ravenous beasts. And this was the conclusion to which Jacob naturally came: "Joseph is, without doubt, rent in pieces! An evil beast hath devoured him!" And Jacob rent his clothes, put sackcloth on his loins, and refused to be comforted, saying, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning."

S.—What was the character of Jacob's eldest sons at this time?

F.—They must have been very wicked, unprincipled young men. They could not have had the training and instruction which Abraham bestowed upon his children. Their mothers were probably idolaters, envious of each other, and often at variance. Their father was much from home, in charge of Laban's flocks and his own; he had little opportunity to command his children and his household after him; and they grew up in the practice of wickedness. Witness their murder of the Shechemites, their unfeeling, inhuman treatment of Joseph, and their cold-blooded hypocrisy in deceiving and distressing their venerable father, and in keeping up the deception for a course of years.

S.—Where, in the mean time, was Joseph, and what became of him?

F.—The Midianites who bought him took him with them into Egypt, and sold him to Potiphar, one of the chief officers in the court of Pharaoh; and here the Lord was with him and greatly prospered him. His conduct was so judicious and trustworthy, that Potiphar set him over his house, and confided to him all that he had. The story of Joseph in Egypt is so admirably told by the sacred writer, that I will not undertake to paraphrase or abridge it. I would rather refer you to the narrative itself. With an inimitable simplicity, and with a sufficient degree of particularity, Moses

has told us of the great favor which was shown to Joseph by his master; of his wife's most wicked design against the young man's chastity; of her wrath and revenge when she found herself defeated; of his being unjustly cast into prison; of the kind regard of the keeper of the prison towards him; of his interpreting the dreams of the chief butler and baker; and finally of his being called to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh, which proved the occasion of his enlargement. He tells Pharaoh of the coming seven years of plenty, to be followed by seven years of famine; and advises him to gather together, in storehouses, all the surplus food of the first seven years, and lay it up against the years of want, that so there may be bread in Egypt, and the people perish not. His excellent advice was accepted by Pharaoh, and Joseph was put in charge of the whole business of collecting, storing, and distributing the abundance of Egypt. In fact, Joseph was made governor of all Egypt, was married to an honorable woman, a daughter of the priest of On, and rode in the second chariot of the kingdom.

S.—How was Joseph affected by this high promotion?

F.—It did not detract at all from his diligence in the discharge of official duty. For the first seven years, the earth brought forth by handfuls; and Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it could not be numbered. Meanwhile, two sons were born to him, Manasseh and Ephraim, who afterwards became heads of distinct tribes in Israel.

S.—How old was Joseph when the famine came upon Egypt?

F.—About thirty-seven. He was seventeen years old when he came into Egypt, and was thirty years old when he was taken out of prison to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh. Hence thirteen years had elapsed which he had spent either in the service of Potiphar, or in prison. Seven years more were spent in laying up corn in the storehouses of Egypt, and then the predicted famine came—a famine which prevailed, not only in Egypt, but in all the surrounding country.

S.—What causes these distressing famines?

F.—In general, we may say they are caused by drought. When a drought occurs in upper Egypt, so as to prevent the overflowing of the Nile, a famine in Egypt proper is the direct result. These droughts and famines often extend, not only to the head waters of the Nile, but to Arabia, Palestine, and other adjacent countries. There were two such famines in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the first of which, like that of Joseph, lasted seven years.

S.—It is time that we turn from affairs in Egypt to consider those in the south of Canaan. Where was Jacob and his other sons all this while?

F.—Jacob was still residing in the old homestead, at Hebron, or Mamre, or in that vicinity. He had buried his father, and also Leah, both of whom were laid in the cave at Machpelah. Joseph's brethren were all of them married, and had families of their own. Even Benjamin, the youngest, had a family of sons. He was the darling and delight of his father, after the supposed loss of Joseph.

S.—The drought and famine in Egypt extended also to Canaan; and what did Jacob propose to his sons to do?

F.—He called them together and said unto them: "Behold I have heard that there is corn in Egypt. Get you down thither and buy for us, that we perish not." So the ten elder sons of Jacob went down into Egypt to buy corn, leaving Benjamin at home with their father. And when they came to Joseph, he recognized them, though they knew not him. And they bowed themselves before him, with their faces to the earth. And Joseph, wishing to try them, spake roughly unto them, charged them with being spies, and put them in prison three days. But they assured him that they were not spies. They told him truthfully who they were, and whence, and for what purpose they had come. They told him of their aged father, and of their younger brother whom they had left at home. Joseph thus learned, without being suspected, that his father and Benjamin were still alive. It was finally arranged that one of their number, Simeon, should be left in Egypt as a hostage; that the rest should return to Canaan with bread for their households; and that

when they came again for corn, their youngest brother should come with them.

S.—Did the rough treatment of these men in Egypt lead them to think of their poor brother whom, years before, they had sold into Egypt as a slave ?

F.—It did ; and more than this. It aroused their consciences to a sense of their sin. They said one to another, without suspecting that the governor understood them, “ We are verily guilty concerning our brother Joseph, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear. Therefore is this distress come upon us.”

S.—What did Joseph now do ?

F.—He fulfilled the promise which he had given to his brethren. Having detained Simeon, he filled the rest of their sacks with corn, put their money privately into their sacks, gave them provisions for their journey, and sent them away. They returned in safety to their father, and told him all that had befallen them,—how the governor had treated them, had imprisoned them as spies, had retained Simeon as a hostage, and had charged them, on their peril, not to return, unless their younger brother came with them. They told him also of their surprise and fear when they found that the price of their corn had been returned to them.

S.—How was Jacob’s mind affected by the intelligence which his sons brought to him ?

F.—The message was painful and perplexing to him, more especially that part of it which related to Benjamin. “ Already,” said he, “ I am bereaved of my children. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not ; and ye will take away Benjamin also. No ; my son shall not go down with you. Should any evil befall him, I could not survive it. Ye would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

S.—As the famine continued and increased, what further measures were taken ?

F.—Various arguments had been used with Jacob to induce him to send Benjamin with his brethren ; but to no purpose. At length

hunger accomplished what persuasion could not. He yields the point, and consents to part with Benjamin. He directs that the returned money should be carried back to the governor, and with it a present, such as they, in their distress, might be able to afford. "And God Almighty bless you, and give you mercy before the man, that he may send you back, and Benjamin with you." So the sons of Jacob departed, and went a second time into Egypt.

S.—And how did Joseph receive them?

F.—He made a feast for them in his own house, and kindly inquired after the health of their father. And when he saw Benjamin he said, "Is this the younger brother of whom ye spake?" And he said, "God be gracious unto thee, my son."

By this time the feelings of Joseph overcame him. He was obliged to retire to his chamber and weep. He soon returned, however, and to the astonishment of his unconscious brethren, he seated them at table according to their respective ages. "How should the governor of Egypt know," they thought, "what our ages are?" And to increase their astonishment, when he filled their plates, he sent Benjamin five times as much as either of the others.

S.—When the dinner was over, what was done?

F.—Joseph commanded to fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they could carry, to put their money again into their sacks, to put his own silver cup into the sack of Benjamin, the youngest, and to send them away. But scarcely had they left the city, when Joseph sent his servants after them, charging them with stealing his cup, and ordering them back to answer for their fault. They solemnly denied the charge, affirming that they knew nothing of the matter. They even consented that he on whom the cup should be found should be put to death. Their asses were at once unladed; their sacks were searched; and the cup was found in the sack of Benjamin, the youngest.

S.—Their mortification and distress at this discovery must have been intense.

F.—It was so, indeed. They rent their clothes; they returned

to the city ; they fell down before the governor and said, "What shall we speak unto thee ? or how shall we clear ourselves ? Behold, we are thy servants, both we, and he with whom the cup is found." But Joseph said, "No ; he only in whose hand the cup is found shall be my servant. But as for you, return ye in peace unto your father."

S.—What reply did they make to this proposal ?

F.—Judah who, by common consent, seems to have been chief speaker among his brethren, presented himself before the governor, and gave utterance to one of the most touching and powerful speeches that ever fell from mortal lips. For simplicity, appropriateness and melting pathos, I know nothing like it in all the specimens of ancient or modern oratory. After a brief introduction, Judah recounts to the governor the substance of what passed at their first interview,—how the governor inquired after their father, and their younger brother, and enjoined, as the condition of seeing them again, that their younger brother must come with them. "And we said, He is the child of our father's old age, and his brother is dead, and his father loveth him. He cannot leave his father ; for if he should leave him, his father would die. But thou saidst, except your younger brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And when we came to our father, we told him the words of my lord. And when our father said again to us, Go down to Egypt and buy us food, we answered, We cannot go down, except our youngest brother be with us. And our father answered, Ye know that my wife Rachel bare me two sons ; and one went out from me, and was torn to pieces, and I saw him no more. And if you take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore, when we be come to our father, and he seeth that the young man is not with us, he will surely die, and his life shall be set to our account. For thy servant became surety for him to our father, saying, if I bring him not unto thee, then shall I bear the blame to my father forever. How then shall I go up to my father, and my younger brother is

not with me? How can I see the evil that shall come on my father?"

At this point, Judah ceased speaking; for the governor could bear no more. He instantly ordered away all his servants. He wept and sobbed aloud. And he said unto his brethren, "I am Joseph whom ye sold into Egypt! Doth my father yet live?"

S.—The feelings of his brethren at this moment must have been inexpressible. What could they say?

F.—They could say nothing. They stood dumb, confounded, and troubled in their brother's presence. But he encouraged them to come near to him, and said, "Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me into Egypt; for God did send me before you to save your lives with a great deliverance. Haste ye now, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thy son Joseph is yet alive, and God hath exalted him, and made him ruler over all Egypt. Come down unto me; tarry not. Five more years of famine still remain, in which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. Come down unto me, and dwell near me in the land of Goshen, thou, and thy children and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast; and there will I nourish thee, lest thou and thy household come to poverty."

S.—Was this interview cordial and affectionate to the end?

F.—It was exceedingly so. Joseph fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them; and after that, his brethren talked with him.

CONVERSATION XXI.

JACOB AND JOSEPH TILL THEIR DEATH.—Pharaoh invites Jacob to Egypt.—Jacob's joy.—Removal to Egypt.—Meeting of Joseph and his father.—Jacob blesses the king.—Joseph's government.—Jacob about to die.—His sons called about him to receive his blessing.—Christ's coming predicted.—Last words.—Death and burial.—Magnificence of this funeral unequalled.—Joseph's life a lesson for the young.

Son.—Our last conversation closed with the recognition of Joseph and his brethren. What are we to suppose was the design of Joseph, in keeping his brethren so long in ignorance respecting himself, and in trying and perplexing them as he did? Some have thought that his object, in putting his cup into Benjamin's sack, and getting him back, was to separate him from the rest of his brethren, retain him in his service, and let the others go. Is this probable?

Father.—I think not. A moment's reflection must have satisfied him that this was impossible. How could he retain Benjamin with him and not acknowledge him as a brother? And how could he make himself known to him, and keep his father and his other brothers in ignorance? No; the object of Joseph's strange treatment of his brethren from first to last, was undoubtedly *to try them*. He wished to see whether adversity had humbled them; what their feelings were towards their father and their younger brother; whether they were men to be trusted, and whether he might safely bring them near to himself. When he had satisfied himself on these points, he was willing to avow his relation to them—to own and treat them as brethren.

S.—How was Pharaoh and his court affected, when they knew that Joseph's brethren had come to him?

F.—We are told that their coming pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. The king commanded that the men should return at once to their father, with carriages, and with abundant provision for the way; and that they should bring their father, their wives, their children, and all their substance into Egypt, promising to give them the good of the land. Joseph also gave them rich presents, and

sent more valuable presents to his father; and with his advice and blessing, he sent them away.

S.—And how was Jacob affected when the news from Egypt reached him?

F.—He was entirely overcome by it. He fainted, and was for a time as one dead. But he revived and said, “It is enough! Joseph my son is yet alive! I will go and see him before I die.”

S.—Is it likely that Joseph’s brethren now made full confession to their father, as to their past treatment of Joseph?

F.—It is. They were not in a situation to keep anything back. Besides, if they had been disposed to cover up their guilt, they must have known that it would not be concealed. It is to be hoped, therefore, that they made a full confession, and were forgiven.

S.—Did Jacob have God’s approbation in going into Egypt?

F.—Yes; the God of his fathers met him at Beer-sheba while on the way, and said, “Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I am with thee, and will make of thee there a great nation. And I will bring thee up from thence, and Joseph shall be with thee to close thine eyes in death.”

S.—On their arrival in Egypt, Jacob and his family stopped in Goshen. Where was this locality?

F.—Goshen was a fertile country, lying east of the Nile, in a part of Egypt nearest to Canaan. Memphis, the capital of lower Egypt, and the residence of Pharaoh, was distant about twenty miles.

S.—The meeting of Joseph and his father must have been one of touching interest.

F.—It was so indeed. When Joseph heard of his father’s arrival, he made ready his chariot, and went out to meet him, and when he saw him, he fell on his neck, and wept there a long time. And Jacob said to Joseph, “Now let me die; for I have seen thy face, and thou art yet alive.”

S.—Did Joseph present any of his newly arrived friends before the king?

F.—He introduced five of his brethren into the royal presence. And when Pharaoh inquired as to their occupation, they said, “Thy servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers, and we have no pasturage for our flocks in the land of Canaan, because of the famine. We pray thee let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” Joseph also presented his father to Pharaoh; and the venerable patriarch blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto him, “How old art thou?” And Jacob answered, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the years of the life of my fathers.”

S.—What decision was made as to the future residence of the strangers?

F.—Pharaoh graciously consented that they should dwell in the land of Goshen. So Joseph placed his father and brethren there, —where he nourished and sustained them, and all that pertained to them, during the remaining years of famine.

S.—How did Joseph proceed in the important work of distributing bread to the people?

F.—He first gathered up all the *money* that was found in Egypt, in payment for corn. Then he took of the people their cattle, their horses, their asses and flocks, for which he fed them a full year. After that he purchased their lands for Pharaoh, excepting such as belonged to the priests. When the famine was over, he gave them seed to sow their land, reserving a fifth part of the product to Pharaoh, and leaving four-fifths to the cultivators of the soil.

S.—Joseph’s administration in this matter has been thought, by some, to be hard and oppressive. Is there any ground for such a complaint?

F.—Certainly not. It must be remembered that Joseph was acting in this matter, not for himself, but for Pharaoh. A man may be generous in disposing of his own goods, but there is no virtue in being generous with the property of another. Joseph bought the corn of the people, in a time of plenty, with Pharaoh’s money;

and bought it, so far as we know, at a fair price. He carefully stored it, and kept it at Pharaoh's expense; and when the famine came, he sold the corn for Pharaoh at a fair price. The people came to him voluntarily with their money, their cattle, their lands, and he took them for Pharaoh, thereby saving the people alive. And when the famine was over, he gave them seed to sow the land, and permitted them to cultivate it on shares, reserving only a fifth part of the produce for the lawful owner, and leaving four-fifths for themselves. In view of these facts, we submit, whether Joseph should be regarded as an oppressor of the Egyptians, and not rather as an inestimable benefactor. He was an instrument in the hand of God of saving their lives—of saving their country from desolation, and themselves from destruction; and so he was regarded to the day of his death.

S.—How long did Jacob live after he went into Egypt?

F.—About seventeen years—perhaps the most quiet part of his life. He had his children, his grandchildren, and probably his great-grandchildren around him, as it is said that his family grew and multiplied exceedingly. He saw Joseph occasionally, as the intervals of business would permit, and took an oath of him that he would not bury him in the land of Egypt. “I would lie with my fathers,” said he; “bury me in their burying-place, in the field of Machpelah.”

S.—What were the circumstances attending the death of Jacob?

F.—Learning that his end was near, Joseph went up to him to Goshen, carrying his two sons with him. And Jacob blessed Joseph, and blessed his sons, making them heads of tribes, as though they were his own children: “May the angel which redeemed me from all evil bless the lads; and let my name be named upon them, and let them grow into a multitude in the might of the earth.”

S.—What was the last thing which Jacob did for his sons?

F.—He summoned them around his bed to hear his last words: “Gather yourselves together, ye sons of Jacob, that I may tell you

what shall befall you in the last days." It would be interesting, had we time, to go over with all these monitory and prophetic words (see Gen. xlix). The patriarch addresses each of his sons successively, according to their ages, and notes, in few words, the leading characteristics and events of their history. Addressing Judah, he says, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between thy feet, until *Shiloh* come. And unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Jacob here predicts that one from the tribe of Judah should have supreme authority in Israel, which was fulfilled in David and Solomon. He also predicts that before all traces of royal authority should pass away from Judah, the great Messenger of the Covenant should appear; which was fulfilled in Christ.

The blessing of Joseph also was rich and abiding. "The blessings of thy father shall prevail over the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be upon the head of Joseph—upon the head of him who was separated from his brethren."

The venerable patriarch, having closed his prophetic sayings, had nothing left for him but to die. So he drew up his feet in the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered to his people. And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and kissed him, and wept over him, thus testifying in death, as well as in life, the ardor of his filial love.

S.—What was the first care of Joseph, after the death of his father?

F.—It was to have his body embalmed, after the manner of the Egyptians. This, and the mourning connected with it, occupied seventy days. Meanwhile, Joseph acquainted Pharaoh with his father's wishes, and with his own oath and promise to him, as to the place of his burial. "My father made me swear, saying, In my grave which I have prepared in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now, therefore, let me go up, and bury my father, and I will come to thee again." And Pharaoh not only gave permission,

but ordered a great company of his servants, and of the elders of his house, to accompany Joseph and his brethren on this melancholy expedition. So there went up both chariots and horsemen, a great multitude. It may be doubted whether there ever was such a funeral procession, before or since. Here was a great company,—how great we know not,—Egyptians and Israelites, chariots, horsemen and footmen, moving on with Oriental pomp and magnificence, a distance of two or three hundred miles; and all for what? To deposit the remains of a venerable man, a holy man, the sire and patriarch of Israel, in their last resting-place—the grave which he and his fathers had prepared. And when they came near the place, they paused and mourned, with a great lamentation, seven days; insomuch that the Canaanites took notice of it and said, “This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians.” So they buried Jacob by the side of his father and mother, his grandfather and grandmother, in the cave of Machpelah;—and then they returned into Egypt.

S.—When Joseph and his brethren had returned from burying their father, they were afraid lest he should remember their former ill treatment of him, and undertake to avenge it. Was there any ground for this fear?

F.—None at all. He wept when his brethren presented the case before him. He cheered and comforted them, saying: “Fear not; seek God’s forgiveness, and you may be sure of mine. Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, to save much people alive as it is this day. I will nourish you and your little ones; fear not.”

S.—How long did Joseph live after his father’s death?

F.—More than fifty years, enjoying, as he was entitled to, the favor of the king. He died at the age of one hundred and ten. Before his death, he sent for his brethren and said unto them: “God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and when ye go out, carry my bones with you.” So they embalmed the body of Joseph, and put it in a coffin, and it remained in Egypt until the departure of the children of Israel.

S.—The narrative over which we have passed is most remarkable and instructive. Will you please indicate some of the lessons which it is fitted to impress?

F.—It certainly shows the wonders of God's providence, and the safety, under all circumstances, of putting our trust in him. He is able to bring light out of the deepest darkness, and to make even the sins of men contribute to his praise. Without furnishing the slightest excuse for human wickedness, he overrules it in thousands of instances—perhaps in every instance of its permission—for his own glory and the greatest good. All this is repeatedly and strikingly illustrated in the narrative over which we have passed. Jacob did not intend or expect to marry Leah. By a vile trick she was imposed upon him; and yet she was to be the progenitress of the Messiah. But for her connection with Jacob, the Savior of the world had not appeared. Jacob loved Joseph, and hoped never to be separated from him. Yet Joseph must be torn away by wicked hands, and sent into an apparently hopeless exile, in order to save Jacob and his family from destruction. Yet who thanks Laban for his vile imposition? Or Joseph's brethren for selling him to the Midianites? "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good." A voluntary act of sin is one thing; God's overruling that act, in opposition to all its natural tendencies, and to the intentions of its perpetrator, for his own glory and the greatest good, is quite another thing. The perpetrator is without excuse; but the overruling providence of God is praiseworthy and glorious.

S.—Long and carefully concealed sins are often brought singularly to light. Have we not an illustration of this point in the narrative before us?

F.—We have. The cruelty of Joseph's brethren was perpetrated secretly. It was known to no one except themselves. They took effectual means to conceal it from their father, and to quiet any suspicions which he might otherwise have been led to entertain. They had heard nothing of the matter for years, and thought that they should hear of it no more. And yet they did. In a manner the

most unexpected and overwhelming, it was suddenly brought to light. "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." Oh what a voice was that! It stunned and confounded them! A voice from the eternal throne could not have startled and astonished them more! It is for us to learn a lesson from this disclosure. "He that covereth his sin, shall not prosper." "Be sure your sin will find you out."

S.—When Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was a young man. Is not his whole example a lesson for the young?

F.—His resistance of temptation, his simple trust in God, his patient waiting for God to appear for his deliverance,—in these and other respects, he was an example to us all. But there is another point of view in which God's dealings with him are instructive. God had destined Joseph to a high station of honor and usefulness, but does not immediately advance him to it. Why not? Young Joseph is not yet prepared for it. He must first be tried and proved, instructed and humbled. He must go into the school of adversity, and there learn lessons of wisdom which he could learn nowhere else. Hence he must be torn from the fond embraces of his father, sold into slavery, and be confined in a loathsome prison for years. Dark days these for afflicted Joseph! Verily, he had reason to say of the Almighty, "Clouds and darkness are round about him!" And yet this was but a necessary discipline. It was just what the young man needed. Without it, he could not have been so well prepared for his future advancement and glory.

Let not the young, in our day, shrink from trials, or be disheartened under them. Trust in God, wait patiently upon him, and do his will, and trials will not injure you. You will come out of the furnace as silver, and find that every trial has been a blessing.

CONVERSATION XXII.

MOSES UNTIL HIS CALL TO GO INTO EGYPT.—Oppression of the Hebrews.—The cause.—Cruel command of the Egyptian king.—Mothers to drown all the new-born male children.—Moses born.—A mother's devotion.—Moses providentially saved.—Born a slave.—A prince by adoption.—Becomes a fugitive shepherd.—The religion of the Egyptians.—The burning bush.—The message from God.—Aaron to be his helper.

Son.—During the life of Joseph, and for many subsequent years, the Israelites were in high favor with the Egyptians. But after a time there was a change, and they were treated with great cruelty. How is this change to be accounted for?

Father.—There was, undoubtedly, a revolution—a change of dynasty in Egypt. A king came to the throne who knew not Joseph, and had no sympathy with the Hebrews; and as they were rapidly increasing in number, and the land was likely to be filled with them, the new king thought to oppress them, and by harsh treatment to keep them down. He first compelled them to forsake their flocks, and to build treasure cities for himself. He set over them task-masters, to afflict them with burthens. But the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied.

S.—What other cruel artifices did the new king practice upon the Israelites.

F.—He undertook to destroy all the male children. They were to be destroyed by the Hebrew mid-wives, as soon as they were born. But the mid-wives feared God, and contrived to evade the bloody injunction which was laid upon them.

Pharaoh now resorts to another expedient. He commands that every son that is born to the Hebrews shall be cast into the river, but that every daughter should be spared alive. It was while this terrible edict was in force, that Moses, the great leader and lawgiver in Israel, was born. His father's name was Amram, a grandson of Levi; and his mother's name was Jochebed. These parents had two children older than Moses, who were born before the murderous decree was enacted, *viz.*, Miriam and Aaron. But the life of Moses

was forfeited before his birth. His parents succeeded however in concealing him three months; and when this was no longer possible, his fond mother prepared a little ark of bulrushes, daubed it with slime and pitch, put the child into it, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And she set his sister Miriam to watch at a little distance, that she might see what became of the child.

S.—And what did become of it? Was it destroyed?

F.—No; God had other designs respecting Moses than that he should go to fatten the monsters of the Nile. Accordingly, a succession of incidents the most remarkable and interesting, began to be unfolded, issuing almost immediately in his deliverance. A daughter of Pharaoh comes down to the river to bathe, and as she walks on by the side of it, she discovers the little ark. Prompted by curiosity, she sends one of her maidens to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and the babe wept. She had compassion on it, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." At this critical moment, Miriam ran up to Pharaoh's daughter and said, "Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And Pharaoh's daughter said, "Go." So Miriam ran and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." And the mother took the child and nursed it.

S.—Was ever anything more natural, and at the same time wonderful than this? There is not an improbable incident in all the story; and yet we have here a train of incidents which, in a few hours restores the little one to the arms of its mother, to be nursed, not only in safety, but in honor, and at a price to be paid from the coffers of the cruel king. Surely, the resources of God's wisdom and goodness are exhaustless, and should never be despaired of by his suffering people. How long did Moses continue with his mother?

F.—We do not know. Probably some four or five years, until the usual time of weaning,—when he was restored to his adopted

mother, and trained up under her care. She called his name *Moses*, from the Hebrew *Masha*, which signifies something drawn from the water.

S.—It is said that in the court of Pharaoh, Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. How much does this imply?

F.—We do not very definitely know. Without doubt he was instructed in the Hebrew and Egyptian languages, and enabled to speak and write both with accuracy and elegance. He was instructed, too, in geometry and astronomy. The Egyptians also had some knowledge of architecture, as is evident from their costly structures. This architecture, however, was heavy and inellegant compared with that of the Greeks. The Egyptians were skilled, to some extent, in the medical art; though their skill was less employed, probably, in restoring the sick, than in preserving the bodies of the dead. The Egyptians understood likewise the art of war, in which it is altogether probable that Moses was instructed. Josephus has a story of his leading forth the Egyptian army in a war with the Ethiopians. This may be true, though we have no account of it in the Scriptures.

S.—What was the philosophy and religion of the Egyptians at this period?

F.—It was pantheistic. “All things are full of God, and are but developments of God.” Hence, this people were led to observe signs and omens, and to practice enchantments and magical arts. Hence, also, they were led to worship, not only the lights of heaven, but birds, and beasts, and creeping things. These are all of them Divine. God is more strikingly developed in some than in others, but to some extent in them all. Fetichism has always been a result of pantheism. Without doubt, Moses was instructed in this philosophy and theology; but he soon learned to despise them. He knew, in childhood, that he was a Hebrew; he kept up an intercourse with the Hebrews; and instead of being decoyed into the abominations of Egypt, he became a devout worshiper of Israel’s God.

S.—Please tell us of an incident which occurred in one of his visits to the Hebrews.

F.—He saw an Egyptian smiting and abusing a Hebrew. In the heat of his indignation, he slew the Egyptian, and buried him in the sand. The day following, he saw two of the Hebrews engaged in strife. He reproved the aggressor, and sought to bring about a reconciliation. But the wrong-doer tartly replied, “Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?” Moses learned from this reply, that the fact of his having killed the Egyptian was known, and fearing the wrath of Pharaoh, he fled into the land of Midian.

S.—Where was this land?

F.—Midian, it will be recollected, was one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah. These sons all settled in Arabia, southward and eastward from the home of Isaac. At the time of Moses, they had penetrated southward as far as Sinai and Horeb. It was into this region that Moses fled from the wrath of Pharaoh. He became acquainted in the family of Jethro, a priest of Midian, whose flocks he tended, and whose daughter Zipporah he married. He was forty years old when he came into the land of Midian, and here he resided forty years.

S.—What more can you tell us of Jethro, the priest of Midian?

F.—He was a wise, faithful, judicious man, and a worshiper of the true God. On one occasion, we find him offering sacrifices to the God of Israel (Ex. xviii. 12).

S.—How did Moses employ himself during his residence in the land of Midian?

F.—We do not certainly know. It seems to have been the quietest and happiest portion of his life. His occupation as a shepherd must have afforded him much time for reflection and communion with God. He may have written, during this period, the book of Genesis. He may also have written the book of Job.

S.—What remarkable appearance did Moses witness, near the close of his residence with Jethro?

F.—He had led his flock, on one occasion, near to Horeb, the mount of God, and here he witnessed a most remarkable phenomenon—a flame of fire streaming from a bush, and yet the bush was not consumed; and as he drew nigh to look at it, a voice came forth from the burning bush, warning him not to approach too near, and directing him to take the shoes from his feet; “for the place where thou standest is holy ground.”

S.—What further did God say to Moses at this time?

F.—As Moses stood listening in reverent wonder, the voice proceeded to say: “I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and of Jacob.” The God of Israel, having thus revealed himself, goes on to assure Moses that he had seen the oppression of his brethren in Egypt, and heard their cry, and had come down to deliver them. “Come now,” says he, “and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring my people out of Egypt.” But Moses excuses himself from so hazardous a service: “Who am I that I should stand before Pharaoh, and bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” God therefore encourages him by an assurance of his continual presence; reveals himself to him by a new name, *I am that I am*; promises him the gift of miracles with which to confound all gainsayers; and actually performs a miracle in the presence and by the hand of Moses, to satisfy him as to the divine authority of his mission. Still Moses pleads to be excused. He is unwilling to leave his beloved retirement, and enter on so great a work: “Oh Lord, I am not eloquent, but am of slow speech, and of a slow tongue.” Hereupon God promises to be with his mouth, and to teach him what to say; and not only so, to give him Aaron his brother for an assistant, who was known to be an eloquent man.

S.—To what conclusion did Moses now come?

F.—He dare not stand out and excuse himself any further. He left his flock to the care of his servants, returned to Jethro, told him what he had seen and heard, and asked permission to go and visit his oppressed brethren in Egypt. And without a word of objection, Jethro told him to go in peace.

CONVERSATION XXIII.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.—Departure of Moses for Egypt.—The meeting of Moses and Aaron.—Their first acts.—Interview with the king.—Their request.—The king's reply.—The effect on the Hebrews.—Miracle of the Rod.—The result.—Meet the king by the river.—The mystic rod laid over the water.—The miraculous result.—Success of the magicians.—The succession of the plagues.

Son.—At the age of eighty years, Moses was now just entering upon the great work of his life—that for which his whole previous course had been one of preparation. What did he do first?

Father.—He took his wife and his two sons—took also the rod of God in his hand, and commenced his journey into Egypt. His family, however, accompanied him but a little way. They returned to Jethro, to await the issue of events.

S.—Before entering Egypt, who came out into the wilderness to meet Moses?

F.—It was Aaron, his brother. The two brothers had not met for a long period, and now they came together under very peculiar circumstances. They met under a joint commission from God. They had it in charge to perform a work which no unaided mortal could achieve. They first went to the elders of Israel, delivered their message, and performed their miracles before them; and the people, we are told, believed, rejoiced, bowed their heads, and worshiped the Lord.

S.—After this, Moses and Aaron ventured into the presence of Pharaoh, and asked, in the name of the Lord, that the Israelites might go out into the desert, and hold a feast unto the Lord their God. How did Pharaoh receive them?

F.—He answered them proudly, insolently, “Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” He went on to chide Moses and Aaron for hindering the people in their work. He insisted that the people had not enough to do, and proceeded to increase their already intolerable burthens. They must make brick, as before, but should have no

straw; and if the usual tale of brick was not delivered, they should be beaten. And when the people expostulated, he refused to listen, but continued to repeat the charge, "Ye are idle; ye are idle."

S.—How were the people affected by this result?

F.—They were discouraged, and began to murmur. Moses also was discouraged; so that when God ordered him to go again to Pharaoh, he said, "Behold, the children of Israel will not hearken unto me. How then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" But God told him to go and deliver his message, and assured him that, though Pharaoh might be obstinate for a while, he would at length be humbled, and consent to let the people go.

S.—What did Moses and Aaron now do?

F.—They ventured in again, and stood before Pharaoh; they repeated the request which they had before made; and to assure him of the authority under which they acted, they cast down their rod before him and it became a serpent. Pharaoh was of course astonished, and he called around him his magicians, to see if they could do the same with their enchantments. And the magicians did it, or they seemed to do it; for they cast down their rods, and they became serpents. Howbeit, Aaron's serpent prevailed over theirs, and swallowed them all up. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he refused to let Israel go.

S.—Where did Moses next meet Pharaoh?

F.—It was by the river Nile. He demanded of the monarch the release of the Israelites, and assured him, in case of refusal, that the waters of the river should be turned into blood. But Pharaoh was not at all disposed to yield. Wherefore, the mystic rod was lifted, and instantly the waters of Egypt—the river, the ponds, the pools of water—were changed into blood; and so they continued for seven successive days. This was a terrible infliction; but it had no softening effect upon the heart of the monarch. He called his magicians; and they succeeded in doing, in a small way, what Moses had done throughout the land; they changed water into blood.

S.—What did Moses threaten at his next interview with the king?

F.—He said, as before, “Let my people go that they may serve me. And if thou refuse, behold I will smite all thy land with frogs. They shall come up into thy house, and into thy bed-chamber, and into thy bed, and into the houses of thy servants, and upon all the people; and the whole land shall be full of frogs.” But Pharaoh disregarded the warning, and the frogs came. They came in such multitudes, that they literally covered the land of Egypt. And though the magicians succeeded in imitating the miracle, yet the infliction was so disgusting and annoying, that Pharaoh could not endure it. He called for Moses and Aaron, and besought them that they would entreat the Lord to take away the frogs. So Moses entreated the Lord, and the nuisance was abated. The filthy creatures were taken away; but Pharaoh’s promise was soon forgotten, and he refused to let the people go.

S.—Please tell us here what these magicians really did with their enchantments. Did they work miracles, or did they only counterfeit them by some sleight of hand?

F.—In answer to your inquiry, it may be remarked, in the first place, that no being but God can perform a proper miracle. A proper miracle involves a suspension or contravention of the regular course of nature; and as God has established this course, so he alone can suspend or contravene it. Magicians, conjurers, necromancers, devils, and those who are under their influence may do strange things—things which to us may seem supernatural or unaccountable; but they cannot perform proper miracles. This is the prerogative of God alone.

This being premised, the case before us may be resolved in one of two ways. Moses performed proper miracles; or rather, God performed them through his instrumentality. And now, if we suppose that the magicians did the same things, they did them as mere instruments in the hands of God. God used them as his instruments in performing the miracles, that he might more thoroughly try the heart of Pharaoh, and the more illustriously display his own power and glory. But it is very doubtful whether any real

miracle was performed by the magicians. They did uncertain things with their *enchancements*, which is equivalent to saying that they did not really do them at all. They imposed upon the eyes of spectators, as jugglers then did all over the East, and as they do in our own times.

S.—But to return to the narrative; what infliction comes next?

F.—God next directs Moses to smite the ground with his rod, that the dust of it may become lice. They did so and instantly the sands of Egypt are transformed into little crawling vermin which our translators call lice. They swarmed upon man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt. The magicians now acknowledge themselves outdone. They could make frogs, or seem to make them; but they could not make lice. They went to Pharaoh, and told him that they were convinced. This is the finger of God. Nevertheless, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and he will not let Israel go.

S.—What is God's next demand upon the relentless monarch?

F.—“Let my people go that they may serve me; and if thou refuse, behold I will send swarms of flies upon thee”—biting, stinging, tormenting flies—“and they shall be upon thee, and thy servants, and upon all thy people. But in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites dwell, there shall be no flies.” And the Lord did so. The flies came and filled the houses in the land of Egypt. But Goshen escaped; none of the flies came there.

S.—How was the hardened monarch affected by this visitation?

F.—It was more astounding to him than the preceding. He was sorely afflicted and distressed by it. So he called for Moses and Aaron, and proposed that the Israelites should hold a sacrifice unto the Lord their God, in the land of Egypt where they were. But Moses said, “No; we cannot do this. We shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians unto the Lord our God, and they will stone us.” Pharaoh consented, therefore, that they should go out of Egypt; only go not far away. “And entreat the Lord that these tormenting flies be destroyed.” So Moses went out from Pharaoh

and prayed unto the Lord, and the judgment was removed. Still, the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he refused to let the people go.

S.—What was the next trial upon the hard heart of Pharaoh?

F.—“Let my people go that they may serve me; else I will visit all thy cattle with a deadly murrain, and while the disease shall be upon thy cattle, it shall not touch the cattle of the Israelites.” And all this was verified on the following day. The cattle of Egypt in great multitudes died, but the flocks of the Israelites were spared alive.

S.—What plague was next visited?

F.—God directs Moses and Aaron to take handfuls of ashes from the furnace, in the sight of Pharaoh, and throw them into the air, to be blown about everywhere by the winds of heaven; and wherever these ashes fly, they carry with them a fatal poison. The bodies of the Egyptians begin to break out in swelling scabs and blisters, and their whole surface becomes a noisome spring of sores. So far from resisting this torturing plague, the bodies of the magicians were affected by it. The boils and blisters covered them. In their misery they went to Pharaoh, and warned him not to trifle further with the mighty power of God.

S.—What was the next message from God to Pharaoh?

F.—“Let my people go that they may serve me; else I will send upon Egypt a terrible storm of hail, such as hath not been from the beginning until now. Send, therefore, and shelter what of thy cattle is left, that the hail destroy them not.” And such of the Egyptians as feared the Lord gathered their cattle into houses, while others left them in the fields. And on the morrow the threatened judgment came. A storm of thunder, lightning and hail burst upon devoted Egypt,—the more terrible to the inhabitants, because such a scene had never before been witnessed there. The fire ran along the ground, and the hail smote all that was in the field. Only in the land of Goshen there was no hail.

S.—And how was Pharaoh now affected?

F.—Pharaoh now was terribly frightened. He sent in haste for Moses and Aaron, and said, “It is enough. The Lord is righteous, but I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord that there be no more such mighty thunderings and hail, and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.” And Moses, though he had no great confidence in the monarch’s promises, consented to intercede on his behalf. In answer to the prayer of Moses, the storm passed quickly over, the sky became clear, and the thunder, the rain, and the hail were stayed. And Pharaoh again breaks his promise. He sins yet more, both he and his servants, and will not let the people go.

S.—It has been thought by some, that God’s treatment of Pharaoh was hard and cruel, in visiting him with so many stripes and judgments. What is your opinion on the subject?

F.—So far from hardship and cruelty, it is obvious that God’s dealings with Pharaoh were most forbearing and merciful. Where shall we look for such an instance of forbearance as in the case before us? God had raised up Pharaoh, and blessed him with riches, honor and power; he had placed him on the throne of one of the greatest kingdoms on the earth; he had committed his people Israel for a time to his hands; and he had cruelly, murderously oppressed them. God had called on him repeatedly to relax the hard hand of oppression, and let his people go that they might serve him,—accompanying the call, in every instance, with the most astounding miracles,—enough to convince any mortal that the message had come from God. He extorted from Pharaoh promise after promise, that if the inflicted judgment could be removed, he would let God’s people go. And yet he did not. He hardened himself more and more, and the oppressed Israelites were retained. And now what is to be done? Will God wait upon Pharaoh any longer, and try him further, or will he lift his hand in vengeance and cut him off?

S.—These are solemn questions. We hope you will answer them.

F.—The sequel shows that God’s thoughts and ways are not like ours. He has a yet further probation in reserve for cruel Pharaoh. So he threatens him with a swarm of locusts—one of the most terri-

ble scourges that ever fell upon the children of the East. They are to cover the face of the earth; they are to fill the houses of Pharaoh and his servants, and eat up all that the hail has left. This threat alarmed the servants of Pharaoh, and they entreated the hardened monarch to yield. "Knowest thou not that in this unequal contest, Egypt is already spoiled?" So Moses and Aaron are called for, and a compromise is attempted. The *men* of Israel may go and serve the Lord, but their wives and children must be left behind. But to this proposal Moses will not listen. Hence he is driven out from the presence of Pharaoh, and the judgment comes. God causes an east wind to blow all that day and night, and the next day, the land is covered and darkened with the locusts. Swarm after swarm comes up from the east, and settles down upon the devoted country, till not a green thing is left in all the land of Egypt. And now the same thing is acted over as in the former instances. Pharaoh is affrighted and humbled. He confesses his sins, and prays to be forgiven. "Entreat the Lord only this once, that he will take away the locusts, and I will let the people go." Moses, therefore, intercedes again, and again the judgment is removed. And again Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and he will not let the people go.

S.—And now what does Moses do?

F.—Without going to the king with his usual message, Moses now stretches forth his hand towards heaven, and calls for *darkness*—a thick, impenetrable darkness, that may be felt. And instantly the orbs of heaven are, as it were, quenched. At any rate, they are so obscured and covered, that not a ray of light from them, for three whole days, falls upon the desolate land of Egypt. At the same time, there was light in all the dwellings of the children of Israel. And now Pharaoh is again aroused. He calls for Moses and Aaron, and tries to compound the matter with them: "You may take your wives and children, but leave your flocks and herds behind." But on this point, Moses is inflexible. He will make no concessions: "The flocks and herds must go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind."

At this Pharaoh is enraged. He drives God's messengers from him, and tells them never to come into his presence again: "In the day that ye see my face again, ye shall die." And Moses said, "Thou hast well spoken; I will see thy face no more."

S.—The prime object of these successive visitations was to attest the Divine authority of the mission of Moses. Had they any other object aside from this?

F.—I think they had. They were aimed directly and designedly at the idolatries of Egypt, with a view to bring them into contempt. Thus, as the Egyptians were worshipers of the Nile, God turns it into blood; and then causes it to breed myriads of frogs, to annoy and disgust its stupid votaries. As they worshiped cattle, God sends swarms of flies to torment their divinities, and a grievous murrain to destroy them. Among the objects of their worship were the sun, moon and stars. Hence, when these were eclipsed, their divinities utterly failed them. The Egyptian priests were fastidiously cleanly. When, therefore, the whole dust of Egypt was turned into lice, swarming alike upon priest and people, the worship of their divinities was entirely suspended, and the magicians were constrained to confess, "This is the finger of God."

CONVERSATION XXIV.

THE DELIVERANCE OF THE PEOPLE.—The death plague.—Borrowing of the Egyptians.—Rameses.—Route of Hebrews.—Their number.—Pillar of cloud and pillar of fire.—Duration of stay in Egypt.—Feast of tabernacles.—Its institution.—The pursuit by Pharaoh and his army.—Terror of the Hebrews.—First murmur of discontent.—Passage of the Red Sea.—Was it a miracle.

Sen.—God had now sent ten successive miraculous plagues upon Pharaoh and his people, with a view to humble them, and constrain them to send away the Israelites. But all had been in vain. Israel was still in bondage, and the heart of the monarch is harder than ever. Are this people never to be delivered? Are God's promises in regard to them to fail?

F.—No; Pharaoh is entirely in the hands of God, and the resources of his power are not exhausted. God will send one visitation more, and that shall be effectual. "About midnight," saith the Lord, "I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and *all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die*, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth on the throne, unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout the land of Egypt; but against the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue. And the Egyptians shall come down unto you, and bow themselves before you, and say, Get ye out, and all the people that follow you. And after that, ye shall go out."

S.—Here certainly is a most terrible and yet merciful prediction. What were the people directed to do in preparation for it?

F.—They were directed to go out among the Egyptians, and ask of them favors—valuable gifts, jewels of gold and of silver; for God would not suffer his people to go out from their hard toil and service empty-handed. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and they gave to the children of Israel whatsoever they asked; insomuch that it is said, "They spoiled the Egyptians."

S.—Our translators say that the Israelites *borrowed* of the Egyptians. Is that the sense of the original?

F.—Not necessarily. The words translated *borrow* and *lend* may as well be rendered *ask* and *give*. There is no intimation in the original of any fraudulent design on the part of the Israelites.

S.—Was anything more to be done, in preparation for the coming judgment and deliverance?

F.—Yes, one thing more. Every householder in Israel was to take a lamb of a year old, without blemish; and on the fourteenth day of the month at even the lamb was to be slain. The householder was then to take of the blood of the lamb, and sprinkle the door-posts of his house; and the blood upon the door-posts was to be a sign to the destroying angel, that he might *pass over* the houses where it was sprinkled, and not enter into them to destroy. And as to the flesh of the lamb, they were to roast it, and eat it, that very night, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs; and so much of it as was not eaten that very night was to be burned in the fire.

S.—Of what Jewish festival was this the origin?

F.—The *Passover*—the most solemn annual festival of the Jews. It was first observed on the night when they went out of Egypt; and ever afterwards observed on the fourteenth day of the first month.* The feast was to be kept seven days.

S.—How were the people employed on the evening of the fourteenth day?

F.—It was a busy time in all the families of Israel. The paschal lambs were slain, the door-posts were sprinkled, the flesh was roasted, the unleavened bread was mixed, and all things were got in readiness, according to the commandment.

And now the impending judgment fell. At midnight, the angel of the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt, from Pharaoh down to his meanest servant. There was not a house of the Egyptians in which there was not one dead.

S.—And how was Pharaoh now affected?

* Answering to a part of our March and April—on the first full moon after the Equinox.

F.—He rose up in haste, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, “Rise up and get you forth from among my people, and take with you your wives and your children, your flocks and your herds, and all that ye have, and go, serve the Lord as ye have said.” The Egyptians also were urgent upon the people, that they might be sent out of the land in haste; for they said, “We be all dead men.” And the Lord gave his people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and they gave unto them silver and gold, and raiment—all that they desired.

S.—And the Israelites,—what were they doing?

F.—Seizing the favorable moment, they commenced their journey out of Egypt immediately. They took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading troughs and clothes upon their shoulders; and as all things had been gotten in readiness previously, by the command of Moses, they entered on their march at once. The place of their departure was Rameses, in the land of Goshen; and traveling in a south-easterly direction, about twenty miles, they encamped at Succoth.

S.—How many left Egypt at this time?

F.—There were six hundred thousand footmen, besides women and children; also a mixed multitude which went out with them,—probably not less than two millions in all. They took also their flocks and herds, which were very numerous. Here, then, was a vast cavalcade—a vast collection of human beings and brute beasts, to be started on a sudden at the dead of night—to be marched out into the desert, they hardly knew whither. But then they had an experienced and divinely commissioned leader, and, what was infinitely better, they had the infallible guidance of their covenant God. He went before in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; so that in following him, they could not mistake the path of duty, or of safety.

S.—How long were the children of Israel in Egypt?

F.—About two hundred and fifteen years.

S.—Is it likely that, in this time, they could have increased from seventy souls to the number of from one to two millions?

F.—The statement is not incredible ; for, in the first place, when they went into Egypt, they were charged by Joseph to bring, not only their father, but their *households* with them. This included not only their wives and children, but their laborers and household servants. How many servants there were, we are not informed ; but the males among them had all been circumcised, and they were considered as belonging to the people of God. Then we are told that the Israelites proper “increased abundantly, and that the land was filled with them.” I do not suppose that any miracle of multiplication took place ; for none was needed. Only allow that they were uncommonly blessed in this respect, that their children were numerous and healthy, that they married young, and constituted fruitful families, and the supposed difficulty disappears.

S.—What is meant when it is said that the Children of Israel “went up *harnessed* out of Egypt?”

F.—Not that they were all armed, but only that they marched in military order, rank and file, and not as a confused rabble. The early military education of Moses would enable him to arrange this matter successfully.

S.—There is some difficulty in conceiving of the march of these two millions of people from Rameses to Succoth in a single night. They were aroused suddenly at or near midnight, on the fourteenth day of the first month. They eat what they can of the lamb, and burn the rest. They rush out among their Egyptian neighbors, to beg or borrow of them for the journey. They clutch everything as it is,—their dough before it is leavened, their kneading troughs and clothes,—and hasten away before the morning. Their train extends for miles in length,—with their flocks and herds for many miles. Please consider this matter further and make it more plain to us.

F.—It is easy to multiply difficulties in a case like this ; but they are not insuperable. As before remarked, the Israelites had been expecting to go for weeks, perhaps for months, and had been preparing for the journey. Four days previous, they were told to have their

lambs in readiness, and told when to kill them. On the night of the fourteenth, they had probably been up all night, awaiting the summons; and when it came, they were soon in their places, under their respective leaders and ready for the march. Those who were not at Rameses would join the company on the way; those who had charge of the flocks were also in readiness, and all were in successful motion before morning. Probably no army was ever in a better condition to start at a moment's warning, than were these Israelites, when they went out of Egypt.

S.—What injunctions were laid upon the Israelites soon after leaving Egypt?

F.—When they had come to their first encampment, the Lord took occasion to renew upon them the institution of the Passover, to be observed religiously in all their generations. This was not only a commemorative ordinance, designed to keep in mind their deliverance from Egypt, but it also had an *onward* aspect. It was a type,—and is so spoken of in many Scriptures,—a type of the deliverance of all true believers from a worse than Egyptian bondage—the harder bondage of sin and death. It was as answering to the paschal lamb, that our Savior is so often called “the Lamb of God.” He is also “our *Passover* slain for us.”

There was another injunction laid upon the Israelites in connection with their deliverance from Egypt. As all the first-born in Israel were spared when the first-born in Egypt were destroyed, God claimed henceforth the first-born of Israel as in a peculiar sense his own. The first-born of clean beasts were to be offered in sacrifice; while the first-born of unclean beasts, and of men, were to be redeemed by other offerings. Thus our Savior, who was the first-born of his mother, was redeemed by the offering of “two turtle doves, or two young pigeons” (Luke ii. 24).

S.—When the Israelites left Egypt, why were they not led into Canaan by the nearest route, which would have brought them there in a few days?

F.—Because this would have led them through the land of the

Philistines, and involved them in bloody and destructive wars. God preferred rather to lead them by the way of the Red sea.

S.—You said that their first encampment was at Succoth, which signifies booths or tents. What annual festival was enjoined to commemorate this?

F.—It was the feast of *tabernacles*, that all their generations might know that the Lord made them to dwell in *booths*, when he brought them up out of the land of Egypt.

S.—What was the course of the Israelites after leaving Succoth?

F.—They pursued their journey eastward unto Etham, near the Red sea. From this point, instead of going directly forward round the northern extremity of the sea (now Suez) into Arabia, they were directed to turn southward, and encamp at Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. This must have seemed a strange movement to the unbelieving in Israel, as it certainly was to Pharaoh and his people, who constantly kept their spies upon them: For when Pharaoh learned what course the fugitives had taken, he said at once, “The wilderness hath hedged them in; they are entangled in the wilderness; up, let us pursue after them and bring them back.” So he mustered all his chariots and horsemen, and madly rushed forth in pursuit of the Israelites.

S.—It is repeatedly said in this narrative, that *the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh*; and as frequently that *Pharaoh hardened his own heart*. How are these passages to be reconciled?

F.—I answer; Pharaoh hardened his own heart, by voluntarily pursuing such a course as tended of necessity, as men are constituted, to harden his heart. God may be said to have hardened his heart—not by any special agency, or by interfering in any way, with Pharaoh’s freedom—but by continuing him in being, in the exercise of all his faculties and powers, and by continuing in regular operation all those laws of matter and mind, under the influence of which, as Pharaoh was acting, his heart must become dreadfully hard. Such a result could not have been prevented but by a miracle, which God was under no obligations to perform. In this view

of the case, the two representations are perfectly harmonious. Pharaoh hardened his own heart *voluntarily*—by a voluntary persistence in sin; and God hardened it *providentially*—by continuing him under his providential control, and not interposing to prevent the natural consequences of his own obstinacy and wickedness.

S.—When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were pursuing them, how were they affected?

F.—They were greatly terrified, and began at once to murmur against Moses and against God.

S.—What did Moses do, in this emergency?

F.—He said unto the people, “Fear not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will show you to-day; for as to the Egyptians of whom ye are afraid, ye shall see their faces no more forever.” And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them upon the right hand and the left, and the Egyptians pursued after them into the midst of the sea, not seeming to know whither they went. And as it drew towards morning, and the Israelites were safely landed on the eastern side, Moses stretched out his hand again over the sea, and the divided waters returned unto their place, and whelmed the Egyptian army in one common ruin. There remained not so much as one of them to tell of their destruction. And when the sun arose, the Israelites saw their dead bodies drifting upon the shore.

S.—How were the people affected by this great deliverance?

F.—They rejoiced, and shouted in great earnest. They sung that triumphant song recorded in Exodus fifteenth: “I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation.”

S.—Do we know the particular part of the sea over which the Israelites crossed?

F.—We do not. We only know that it was near the northern extremity of the western arm of the sea, probably a few miles south of Suez. Here the sea is narrow, not more than two or three miles over, and could easily have been crossed in a single night.

S.—Some think that there was no proper miracle in this dividing of the sea; that the east wind drove back the waters, so as to leave a fording place dry. What do you think of such a statement?

F.—It does not fully answer to the description of the sacred writer, or to the magnitude of the event as referred to in other parts of the Bible. The waters were divided, and stood up as a wall on either side of the Israelites. And when Moses lifted his rod, they rushed back to their place, and the Egyptians were instantly destroyed. There is nothing gained by endeavoring to exclude the idea of miracle from this great and glorious deliverance.

CONVERSATION XXV.

FROM THE RED SEA TO SINAI.—The march to the desert.—Incidents by the way.—Famine threatened.—Sighing for the flesh-pots of Egypt.—Bread of heaven.—First mention of the Sabbath since the creation.—A supply of quails.—Wonderful circumstance of the manna.—A pot full preserved.—Moses smites the rock.—Remarkable result.—First battle.—Their enemies.—Where they came from.—First mention of Joshua.—Pious Jethro.—His advice.—Establishment of courts of justice.—Mount Sinai.

Son.—After crossing the Red sea, where did the people go?

Father.—Moses marched his people three days' journey, eastward, into the desert of Shur,—where they found no water. And when they came to the Fountains at Marah, they could not drink of them, for they were bitter. Wherefore, Moses took a branch from a tree which the Lord had showed him, and cast it into the waters,—and they were sweet. The next remove of the Israelites was in a south-easterly direction unto Elim, where were twelve fountains of pure water, and three-score and ten palm trees—a delightful place for their encampment. Yet they tarried not long to enjoy it; but turning a south-easterly course, they came again upon the shore of the Red sea. From this point they traveled due east into what was called the Wilderness of Sin, or Sinai.

S.—A full month had now elapsed since the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and the provisions which they brought with them were consumed. And what were they to do? In a dry and barren desert, how were these two millions of people to be fed? I do not much wonder that the faithless among them began to murmur and complain. “Why have ye brought up this multitude into the wilderness, to kill them with hunger? Would to God that we had lived and died in Egypt, where we sat by the flesh-pots, and did eat bread to the full?” What did the Lord say to them on this trying occasion?

F.—He said, “Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you, and ye shall go out and gather a supply of it day by day. Let none of it be kept over from one day to another, except on the sixth day,

when ye shall gather twice as much as on any other day; for on the seventh day, the Sabbath, it shall not be found.”

S.—Is not this the first mention, in the Scriptures, of the weekly Sabbath, after its institution?

F.—It is. There can be no doubt, however, that it was observed by the patriarchs; since we know that they divided their time into weeks of seven days. The Sabbath, you perceive, is referred to here, not as a new institution, but as one already known, and in accordance with which the supply of manna was to be regulated.

S.—What more did God do for Israel at this time?

F.—God manifested himself in visible glory to the congregation, reproved their murmurings, and promised them not only bread, but flesh to eat. So in the evening, vast multitudes of quails made their appearance, and covered the camp, and the people took of them as many as they needed. The supply of flesh, however, at this time was only temporary. On the following morning, as many of the quails as had not been killed, flew away. But the manna was a permanent provision. It continued to be dispensed, day by day, for forty years, until the people reached the promised land.

S.—What was done to commemorate this wonderful supply of bread?

F.—God commanded Moses to take a pot, and fill it with manna, and lay it up for a witness to coming generations, that they might learn the goodness of God, and never distrust his providential care.

S.—The people were now encamped in the Wilderness of Sin. Where were they next led?

F.—From the Wilderness of Sin, they pursued their journey eastward,—stopping first at Dophkah, and then at Alush, and then at Rephidim, near to Mount Sinai. At this latter place, they were in distress for water, and began to murmur and complain. And the Lord commanded Moses to gather the people unto the rock Horeb, and in their presence to smite the rock with his rod. He did so; and water in abundance poured forth from the smitten rock, and the wants of the congregation were supplied.

S.—While the people were stopping at Rephidim, we are told that the Amalekites came upon them with an army and fought against them. Who were these Amalekites?

F.—They were a wandering tribe who lived in the deserts, subsisting, like the Bedouins of our day, in part, by plunder. They had watched the movements of this great company just coming out of Egypt, and hoped that they might be an easy prey. But Moses directed Joshua,—of whom we now hear for the first time, and who was, by common consent, generalissimo of the armies of Israel,—to collect an army, and go out and fight against the Amalekites, while he stood on the top of a hill, with the rod of God in his hand. And Joshua did as he was commanded. Meanwhile, Moses was in his position on the hill, to pray for the success of his people. And so it was that when Moses lifted up his hands, Israel prevailed; but when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. And lest the hands of Moses should be weary, Aaron and Hur stood on either side of him, and stayed them up.* And Amalek was beaten, and driven back before the armies of Israel. It was at this time that the Lord pronounced a curse upon Amalek, declaring that he should be cut off from being a people,—which curse was terribly executed in the days of Saul (See 1 Sam. xv).

S.—We read of another event of interest which occurred at Rephidim. What was it?

F.—Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, who resided not far from this place, came unto him, bringing his wife and children. And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance to him, and took him to his tent. And he told him of all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and the Egyptians, of the wonderful deliverance of his people, and what had befallen them by the way. And Jethro rejoiced and said, “Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for wherein the Egyptians dealt proudly,

*Hur is supposed to have been the husband of Miriam, and brother-in-law to Moses and Aaron.

he was above them." And Jethro offered sacrifices and a burnt offering unto the God of Israel, and all the elders of Israel came, and feasted with him upon the sacrifice. We are glad to record these things of pious Jethro, who was not only a wise and faithful man, but a sincere worshiper of the true God; thus showing that true religion was not yet wholly obliterated in the nations that were not in visible covenant with Jehovah.

S.—What good advice did Jethro give to Moses before he left him?

F.—Observing that Moses was constantly occupied, from morning till evening, in hearing and deciding cases which came up among the people, he advised that a series of courts should be established, and that only the greater and more difficult questions should be brought unto Moses. "Choose you out of all the people able men, such as fear God and hate covetousness, and place them over the people, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, and rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; and let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall decide." This advice, so obviously reasonable, was accepted of Moses and of God; and the inferior courts which had been recommended were established. The object of Jethro's visit having been accomplished, he returned to his own land.

S.—On leaving Rephidim, where did the Israelites next pitch their tents?

F.—On an extended plain, directly at the foot of the ancient Sinai. Dr. Robinson speaks of it as a place admirably adapted to the use of the Israelites. The names Horeb and Sinai are used interchangeably in the Scriptures. The probability is that one of these names—perhaps Horeb—was given to this whole cluster of mountains, while Sinai denoted a single peak.

We leave the congregation of Israel on the plain in front of Sinai, where they were to receive their law, and to abide for some considerable time.

CONVERSATION XXVI.

ISRAEL AT MOUNT SINAI.—The seventy elders of Israel.—Who they were.—God becomes the civil head of the nation.—Getting ready to meet God.—Danger of the Mount.—The trumpet sounded.—What it was.—Wonderful sights and sounds.—Majesty of God.—Delivery of the law.—Sprinkling the blood of the covenant.—Solemn ceremony.—Seeing God.—The priesthood appointed.—Receiving the ten commandments.—The golden calf.—What Moses did.—Building the tabernacle.—Aaron's two sons killed.—Organizing an army.

Son.—Had the Israelites any organized civil government previous to the giving of the law at Sinai? And if so, what was it?

Father.—The most ancient Hebrew government, like that of the surrounding tribes, was *patriarchal*. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob governed their households, with an authority well-nigh unlimited. The twelve sons of Jacob ruled their respective families in the same way. But when their descendants had become sufficiently numerous to form large tribes, each tribe had a prince or ruler of its own, called, “the head of the house of his father” (Num. i. 4-16). And when the tribes had increased to such a degree as to require a more thorough supervision, they were divided into sections or clans, each of which was subject to a head or chief. These subordinate chiefs, of which there were fifty-eight, together with the heads of the tribes,—of which there were twelve,—constituted the seventy elders of Israel (Ex. xxiv. 1).

In addition to these, there was a *learned class*, whose duty it was to act as readers and scribes, and to keep the genealogies of the people. They are called officers, in the fifth chapter of Exodus. Of the appointment of judges, at the suggestion of Jethro, we have just heard. These were distributed through all the families and tribes of Israel, and brought the speedy administration of justice to every man's door.

S.—Did Moses attempt to disturb that order of things which existed before his time?

F.—He did not. Other institutions were ingrafted upon it, and

connected with it; but the order itself was continued down to the end of the Jewish commonwealth.

S.—What was the *theocracy* said to have been established at the foot of Sinai?

F.—It was God's *civil* government over the nation of Israel. He was their sovereign Creator and Disposer already,—as he is of all creatures,—and had a right to do with them as he pleased. He was also their *covenant* God; and they were, in a peculiar sense, his *covenant* people—his church. But God now proposes to become their *civil head*; to give them a code of laws; to set up a civil government over them; to be,—as Isaiah expresses it,—“their Judge, their Lawgiver, and their King” (Chap. xxiii. 32). And he proposes that this shall be done *with their own consent*. Accordingly he summons Moses to meet him in the mount, and, through him, makes the proposition to the children of Israel. To this the people answered, with one accord, “*All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient.*”

S.—Please tell us what was done to prepare the people for a solemn interview with their King?

F.—Moses says to them, “Be ready against the third day; for on the third day, the Lord will come down, in the sight of all the people, upon mount Sinai. And beware, lest ye come near the mount to touch it; for whosoever toucheth it shall surely die.”

S.—What took place on the third day?

F.—On the morning of that day, there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud,* so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire.

S.—What more did God say and do on this awful occasion?

F.—When God had made this exhibition of himself with a view to impress the people with a holy awe, he proceeded to thunder forth, in

*Not any trumpet made with human hands. It was the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.

THE GIVING OF THE LAW FROM MT SINAI



an audible voice, from the top of the mount, the ten commandments. And when the people heard the thunderings, and the voice of the trumpet, and saw the lightnings and the mountain quaking, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

Following this, the Lord proceeded to give to the people, through Moses, a variety of laws, some relating to his worship, but more relating to their own social and civil affairs. He also promises to send his Angel before them, to keep them in the way, and bring them into the promised land; but they must consent to obey and follow him, and cautiously avoid all connection with the surrounding idolatries. When Moses brought this message to the people, they again answered with one accord, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient."

S.—A solemn compact or covenant had now been entered into between God and this people, and how was it confirmed?

E.—After the usual patriarchal manner, by sacrifice, Moses builded an altar under the hill, having twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel; and he deputed young men to officiate as priests,—for the Levitical priesthood was not yet established,—who offered burnt offerings and peace offerings unto the Lord. And Moses put half of the blood in basins, and the other half he sprinkled upon the altar. He also took the book of the covenant, which he had written out, and read it aloud in the hearing of the people; and the people answered again, in the most solemn manner over the sacrifice: "All that the Lord hath commanded we will do, and be obedient." Then Moses took the blood in the basins, and sprinkled it on the people saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you." Thus was the compact or covenant between God and the nation of Israel most solemnly ratified. They had chosen the Lord to be their king, had put themselves under his direction, and promised obedience; and he had consented to be their Ruler, to go before them into the promised land and to order all their affairs in wisdom and goodness.

S.—What followed this solemn transaction?

F.—God was now pleased to admit the representatives of his people to a nearer vision of himself. He invited Moses and Aaron, with his two sons, and the seventy elders of Israel to come up higher into the mount, where it is said, “they saw the God of Israel” (Ex. xxiv. 10). They saw, I suppose, no distinct similitude, but a *dazzling brightness* underneath which was a paved work as of sapphire, like unto the body of heaven in its clearness.

Moses was now called to a longer waiting upon God in the mount; and so, leaving the charge of the people with Aaron and Hur, and taking with him only his lieutenant, Joshua, he went up high into the mount of God; and the glory of the Lord covered the mount. And having waited seven days, he heard the voice of the Lord calling him to come up higher; and he went up alone into the midst of the cloud, and was there with God forty days and nights. In this time, God gave him minute instructions respecting the ark of the covenant, and the tabernacle of the congregation, with all its appurtenances and furniture. He directed him to set apart Aaron and his sons to the service of the priesthood. He appointed two learned Israelites—Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan—to oversee the building of the tabernacle; and he gave to Moses two tables of stone, on which were inscribed with his own finger the law of the ten commandments.

S.—How were the people affected during the long absence of Moses?

F.—They became impatient. They did not know what had become of their leader. They affected to fear lest he had perished in the mountain. At any rate, they wished to be gone; and so they went to Aaron, and told him to make them gods which should go before them. And Aaron, either from fear, or from some worse motive,—told them to break off their golden ear-rings and jewels, and bring them unto him; and he took their jewels, and melted them in a furnace, and wrought for them a golden calf. And they

worshipped before it and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

S.—How is this strange transaction to be accounted for?

F.—It can be accounted for only on the supposition that the people, during their long residence in Egypt, had become fearfully contaminated with its idolatries. Hence their desire to have an image in shape like a calf, which was one of the idols of Egypt. Various suppositions have been made to exculpate Aaron, but I think without success. If he did not go heartily into the measure he was afraid to oppose it. He assisted in collecting the materials and in casting the image; and when it was finished, he built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast; and the people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play.

S.—What did God say to Moses, who was now with him in the mount?

F.—He said, "Go, get thee down; for thy people have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made them a molten calf, and worshipped it, and offered sacrifice before it. Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." But Moses, though shocked and confounded, as he must have been, interceded most earnestly and successfully for his guilty people. He pleaded God's promises to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. He pleaded, especially, the honor of the Divine character and name. Wherefore should the Egyptians say, "For mischief did he bring forth the children of Israel, to stay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth!"

S.—Did this earnest intercession prevail with God?

F.—It did. Moses was heard, and the Lord's anger was stayed. He went quickly down out of the mount, with the two tables of stone in his hand. And when he drew near to the camp, and saw the calf, and the people singing and dancing around it, he was so fired with holy indignation that he threw down the tables of stone, and

broke them in pieces. He then seized the molten calf, and cast it into the fire. He ground it to powder, dissolved it in some chemical fluid prepared for the purpose, and made its worshipers drink of it. He next called Aaron to an account for what he had done. Aaron pleaded his fear of the people, and his inability to resist their wishes, but not, probably, in a manner to satisfy his brother. Moses now proclaimed, in the gate of the camp, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let all such come together unto me." And the children of Levi,—of which tribe were Moses and Aaron,—came promptly forward at the command of their great leader. At the command of Moses, they took every man his sword, and went through the camp, slaying all those, without distinction, who had taken a leading part in this revolt from God; and there fell, that day, about three thousand men.

S.—What did Moses now say to the people?

F.—He told them that they had committed a great sin. Nevertheless, said he, "I will go up again unto the Lord. Peradventure, I may make an atonement for your sin." And Moses returned unto the Lord in the mount, and said, "Oh! this people have sinned a great sin. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; but if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book that thou hast written." And the Lord said, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Go thou and lead this people unto the place of which I have spoken. I will not go up, as before, *in the midst* of them; but my Angel shall go up *before* thee, and bring thee into the land which I promised to thy fathers."

S.—What could Moses have meant, when he prayed, on certain conditions, to be blotted from God's book?

F.—The sense is quite evident, I think, from the connection. God had said, "Let me alone, that I may consume this wicked people in a moment; and I will spare thee, and make of thee a great nation." But Moses says, "*No, no*; I cannot consent to such a proposition. If thou art determined to destroy this people, then destroy me with them. I would not be spared to see their ruin." Such, as it seems to me, is the purport of the good

man's prayer,—evincing the inextinguishable love and kindness of his heart.

S.—In consequence of what God said, that henceforward he would go *before* his people, and not in the *midst* of them, what did Moses do?

F.—He took one of the tents or tabernacles (for the great public tabernacle was not yet built) and pitched it without the camp, at a little distance from it, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And the cloudy pillar stood above it, and when Moses entered into the tabernacle, the pillar descended and stood at the door. And when the people saw it, they stood up and worshiped, every one in his tent door.

S.—What direction did God give to Moses, preparatory to his going a second time into the mount?

F.—“Hew thee two tables of stone, like unto the first, and I will write upon them the words that were on the first tables which thou didst break; and be ready in the morning, and come up to me in the top of Sinai.” And Moses prepared the tables, and went up with them into the mount; and the Lord met him there, and proclaimed his name and his attributes thus: “The Lord, the Lord God; merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” And when Moses heard these words, he made haste and bowed himself to the earth and worshiped. Again he interceded for his guilty people; and God promised, on condition of future obedience, that he would still go with them. He wrote the ten commandments on the tables which Moses had brought, and dismissed him to go down to the congregation, when he had remained, in communion with God, another forty days. And when Moses came down to the people, his face shone with a heavenly luster, so that his friends were afraid to approach him. He was constrained to put a veil on his face, except when he went into the tabernacle of the Lord.

S.—On his return to the people, what great work did Moses undertake?

F.—He commenced taking up collections for the building of the tabernacle. And so abundant was the liberality of the people, that a sufficient sum was soon furnished, and placed in the hands of those who did the work. The contributions at this time, in silver and gold, are supposed to have amounted to more than a million of dollars—a prodigious sum to be contributed by these fugitives from bondage,—proving also that their numbers must have been as great as Moses represents. While the tabernacle was building, the holy garments for the priests, and the breast-plate of diamonds and cunning work were got in readiness; and on the first day of the first month,—a year lacking fourteen days from the time that the Israelites came out of Egypt,—the tabernacle was put up and consecrated, and Aaron and his sons were set apart and attired for the holy priesthood. The ark or chest containing the two tables of stone was deposited behind the veil in the most holy place, where it could be approached only by the high priest, and by him only once in a year. And when all had been finished, according to the commandment, Moses blessed the congregation; and the glory of the Lord so filled the tabernacle, that Moses for a time was not able to enter it. And here the pillar of cloud and fire abode all the while that the children of Israel were in the wilderness. When it was taken up, they journeyed after it, and when it was let down they rested, until they came to the promised land.

S.—When did the work of the priests commence in the new tabernacle?

F.—On the eighth day of the first month, the offerings were made. At the close of the service, Moses and Aaron blessed the people in the name of the Lord; and the glory of the Lord was most illustriously manifested. A fire came forth from the Lord, and consumed the burnt offering and the fat; which when the people saw, they shouted and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the earth.

S.—In what way was the joy of the occasion interrupted?

F.—Nadab and Abihu, the two eldest of Aaron's sons,—being

unduly elated with the honors of the priesthood, and perhaps flushed with wine, undertook to offer incense at a time, and in a manner, not appointed by the Lord. They took their censers and incense, and instead of taking fire from the altar, they put on common fire, and offered it up before the Lord. The consequence was, that fire came forth from the Lord, and killed them in an instant. Of course, Moses and Aaron, and all concerned about the tabernacle, were terrified and shocked. But Moses reminded his distressed brother of one of the important sayings of God: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified;" and Aaron held his peace. The bodies of the deceased young men were immediately removed, and the services of the day were not allowed to be interrupted. This injunction, however, was given in respect to the priests: "Drink no wine, neither strong drink, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die. This shall be a statute forever throughout your generations."

S.—When did the Israelites keep their second Passover?

F.—They kept it on the fourteenth day of the first month—just one year from the time of their departure out of Egypt. And this seems to have been their last Passover, until they had crossed the Jordan, and entered the land of Canaan. The difficulty of procuring, in the desert, fine flour for the unleavened bread may have been a reason why the Passover was for so many years intermitted.

S.—What important event took place shortly after the Passover?

F.—On the first day of the second month a command was issued that the men of war in the congregation should be numbered; and the number of them (excluding the Levites) was found to be 603,550.

S.—After the enrolling of the men of war, how were they marshaled?

F.—They were divided into four battalions, and formed into a hollow square. In the center of the square, was the tabernacle of the congregation, surrounded by the priests, and these surrounded by the tents of the Levites. On the east side of the square, which

was the front, were the tents of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; on the south side were the tents of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; on the west side were the tents of Ephraim, Manassah, and Benjamin; and on the north side were the tents of Dan, Naphtali, and Asher. Such was the order of the Israelites' encampment, and such the method of their march,—not in disorder and confusion, but as a regularly drilled and disciplined body. When the pillar of cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the trumpet was sounded. Then the standard of Judah was raised, and the three tribes which belonged to it set forward. Next, the standard of Reuben's camp was raised, and the three tribes in its connection advanced. Then followed, in like manner, the standards of Ephraim and of Dan, with the connected tribes. Meanwhile, the Levites had taken down the tabernacle, and with a part of it loaded on wagons, and a part carried on their shoulders or in their hands, were marching in the center. Shortly after this enrolling and marshaling of the host, the cloud was lifted up from the tabernacle, the trumpet sounded, and the people were summoned to depart from the foot of Sinai, where they had rested about a year.

CONVERSATION XXVII.

THE ISRAELITES AT KADESII.—Leaving Sinai.—Dissatisfaction.—A supply of meat provided.—Aaron's jealousy of Moses.—His Ethiopian wife.—The sister of Moses smitten with leprosy.—Spies sent into Canaan.—Their report and its results.—Instant death of the spies.—The command to go back into the wilderness.—An insurrection.—Awful destruction of the insurgents.—Budding of Aaron's rod.—Its testimony.

Son.—On leaving Sinai, in what direction did the Israelites travel?

Father.—They went a three days' journey, in a north-easterly direction, unto Taberah; but the people grew weary, began to complain, and some of them loitered in their march. Wherefore a fire from the Lord broke out upon them, and consumed many who were in the rear of the camp. But Moses prayed for them, and the fire was quenched.

S.—Shortly after this, the people were again dissatisfied, and begun to cry for flesh. "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt, the cucumbers and melons, the leeks and onions. But now our soul is dried up. There is nothing at all but this manna, and our soul loatheth this light bread." What did Moses do, when he heard these murmurings?

F.—He went as usual to the Lord, and asked his help, and the Lord answered him: "Go tell this people, to-morrow ye shall have flesh. Ye shall eat it, not one day, nor two, nor twenty, but a whole month, until ye are satisfied and glutted with it."

S.—Was this strange promise fulfilled?

F.—It was. There arose a wind from the sea, and brought up an immense quantity of quails, such as they had met with once before, and they fell around the camp a day's journey on either side; and the people gathered them till they were more than satisfied. But while they were feasting and rioting upon them, the Lord smote them with a malignant disease,—perhaps the natural effect of over-eating,—and many of them died.

S.—Where do we next find the congregation of Israel?

F.—At Hazereth, where they rested several days. It was here that Miriam and Aaron gave vent to their envy against Moses—a spirit which they had indulged, perhaps, ever after the affair of the golden calf. They reproached him on account of what they were pleased to call his Ethiopian wife. They said also, “Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?” These murmurings may have been uttered privately; but the Lord heard them, and summoned the parties to meet him at the door of the tabernacle. He cleared and commended Moses, but sharply reproved Miriam and Aaron; and to punish the former, who seems to have been the chief instigator, he smote her at once with leprosy. And when Aaron looked upon his sister, behold she was a leper, as white as snow. And Aaron said unto Moses, “Alas! my brother, I beseech thee lay not this sin upon us. Let not our sister become to us as one dead. And Moses cried unto the Lord, and Miriam’s leprosy was healed. Nevertheless, she was shut out of the camp, as one unclean, seven days.

S.—Where did this great multitude next encamp?

F.—On leaving Hazereth, they pursued a north-easterly course, and, after one or two stops, arrived at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran. They were now on the southern border of Canaan, the promised land—the place whence Moses had expected all along to enter it. From this place he sent spies—one from each tribe, to go up into the land of Canaan, search it out, and bring back a report unto the people. So the spies went up into the southerly part of Canaan, traversed it in various directions, and, after forty days, returned to the camp of Israel, bringing with them some of the fruits of the land.

S.—What report did they bring of their exploration?

F.—All, with the exception of two, brought back a discouraging report. “It is a good country, but the people be strong that dwell there. The cities are walled, and very great. We saw giants, the sons of Anak there. We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we.”

S.—How were the congregation affected by this report of the spies?

F.—They were greatly distressed, and began immediately to murmur against Moses, and against God. “Wherefore have ye brought us to this land, to fall by the sword, and that our wives and our little ones should be a prey? Let us make a captain, and return into Egypt.” It was in vain that Moses and Aaron and Caleb and Joshua endeavored to pacify and encourage the people. They would not be diverted from their purpose, and were ready to stone those who labored to withstand them.

S.—How did those who withstood them escape?

F.—At this critical moment, the Lord interposed. He appeared in his glory at the door of the tabernacle, and, addressing Moses, said: “How long shall this people provoke me? How long ere they will believe me, after all the signs that I have wrought among them? I will smite them with pestilence, and utterly disinherit them; and I will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they.” But Moses fell down and interceded for his guilty people, as he had done once before, on the top of Sinai. He pleaded especially the honor and glory of God; that the honor of his name was concerned; that if he destroyed this people the surrounding nations would hear of it, and would say: “Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which he promised to their fathers, therefore hath he slain them in the wilderness. Pardon therefore, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy people, according to the greatness of thy mercy.”

S.—Did the Lord hear and answer this powerful intercession?

F.—He did in part. He said to Moses: “I have pardoned, according to thy word; but truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. And as for these men, who have seen my glory and my miracles, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened unto my voice, surely *they* shall not see the land which I promised to their fathers, but *their carcasses shall fall in this wilderness*. But your children, which ye said

should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall inherit the land. To-morrow turn ye, and get you again into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea and wander there for forty years, until the entire multitude of you who were twenty years old and upward when ye came out of Egypt (with the exception only of Caleb and Joshua) shall have perished from the earth." To sanction this terrible denunciation, God smote the ten spies, who brought back an evil report of the land, with instant death.

S.—What was the effect of this dreadful denunciation upon the congregation of Israel?

F.—They were stunned and confounded by it. They mourned greatly, and declared themselves willing to incur any danger, if they might be permitted to go up at once, and take possession of the promised land. So earnest were they in this matter, that, in opposition to the warnings of Moses and the command of God, they equipped themselves, and went the next morning to fight the Amalekites, whose hostile bands were hovering round them. But the Lord was not with them and they could not prosper. They were smitten before their enemies, who pursued them even unto Hormah.

S.—What other painful incidents occurred, while the Israelites were at Kadesh?

F.—Here occurred the formidable insurrection under Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Korah was a great-grandson of Levi; and other Levites, to the number of two hundred and fifty, were confederate with him. Dathan, Abiram, and the other leading insurgents, were of the tribe of Reuben. The complaint of the Levites was, that Moses and Aaron took too much upon them, seeing that all the congregation were holy, and that God was in the midst of them all alike. To test this matter, Moses told them to take their censers on the morrow, and put fire in them, and come to the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord would show who among them he had chosen to be his priests.

The complaint of the Reubenites was the usual one, that Moses

and Aaron had led this great multitude out of Egypt—a land of plenty, into the wilderness to consume them.

On the morrow, Korah and his company appeared promptly at the tabernacle with their censers and incense, and most of the congregation seemed to be with them. And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation. And the Lord said unto Moses, “Speak unto the congregation that they separate themselves from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.” And the people did so. Then Moses said, “Hereby shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they visited after the ordinary visitation of men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, and they go down alive into the pit, then shall ye understand that these men have provoked the Lord.” Moses had scarcely done speaking, when the ground clave asunder under the tents of these wicked men, and swallowed them all up; and they went down alive into the pit, with all that pertained to them, and they perished from among the congregation. At the same time, there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty Levites who came with Korah to the tabernacle to offer incense.

S.—It would seem as though the issue of this rebellion were enough to prevent all similar attempts in future.

F.—And yet it did not; for on the very next day the conspiracy was renewed. A portion of the congregation began to murmur against Moses and Aaron, saying: “Ye have killed the people of the Lord.” But as the tumult increased, the glory of the Lord appeared again at the door of the tabernacle, and a voice came forth to Moses and Aaron: “Get you up from among this people, that I may consume them in a moment.” And no sooner was the threat pronounced, than it began to be executed. A plague broke out in the congregation, and hundreds were dying of it. In this dreadful emergency, Aaron, at the command of Moses, seized his censer, and put fire upon it, and ran into the midst of the congregation to make

atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed,—not, however, until fourteen thousand and seven hundred of the rebellious people were destroyed. Thus early did God begin to cut off the adult portion of this people, and fulfill his threat that they should not enter Canaan.

S.—What was done at this time to prevent all future complaints respecting the priesthood?

F.—Moses proposed a test, to which the people consented. The elders of the tribes were to bring each an almond rod to the tabernacle, with the name of his tribe inscribed upon it. Aaron also was to bring a rod for the tribe of Levi. These rods were to be laid up in the tabernacle over night; and the rod which, in the morning had budded, was to indicate the Lord's pleasure as to the priesthood. All this was done accordingly; and when the rods were examined in the morning, it was found that Aaron's rod alone had budded; and not only budded, but it had blossomed and bore fruit. And God commanded that Aaron's rod should be laid up in the tabernacle for a witness, to put an end to the murmurings of the people.

The Israelites had now been for a time at Kadesh, and had passed through some of the most exciting and awful scenes. They were soon to leave and enter upon their long sojourn in the desert. We will follow them in our next conversation.

CONVERSATION XXVIII.

THE SOJOURN IN THE DESERT.—Wandering in the desert.—Their occupation.—Providence of God.—Their second encampment at Kadesh.—The sister of Moses dies.—Water again brought from the rock.—Moses angered.—Its results.—Death of Aaron.—Conquest of Canaan begun.—The fiery serpents.—Entering the promised land.—The device of the Moabites and Midianites.—Balaam slain.—Joshua chosen leader.—Cities of refuge.

Son.—On leaving Kadesh, in what direction did the Israelites move?

Father.—They took their journey backward into the wilderness, as the Lord had directed; and in this wilderness they sojourned almost thirty-eight years—forty years from the time of their leaving Egypt—until nearly all the adults who came out of Egypt were dead. How they spent their time during this long and trying period, we are not particularly informed. In Numbers, chap. xxxiii., we have the names of sixteen places which they successively occupied. Probably they occupied some of them more than once. It should be remembered that they were a nomadic people, as were their fathers before them. In Egypt, they had been shepherds; and now that they had come out into the desert with their flocks and herds, they probably wandered from one place to another, where they could best find pasturage and water; for it must be remembered that northern Arabia is not all sand and rock. Many places are fertile and capable of sustaining, as they always have done, a large population. Meanwhile the covenant God of the Israelites took the best possible care of them. Their clothes did not wax old on their backs, nor their shoes on their feet; their supply of bread was continued constantly, day by day; and their flocks would yield them milk and flesh. We hear of no murmurings or rebellions during this long period. The spirit of rebellion was effectually subdued at Kadesh, and the old half-heathenized, Egyptianized part of the congregation was passing rapidly away. On the whole, considering the previous habits and customs of this people, and their

means of support and improvement, we may hope that these eight and thirty years were not spent unpleasantly or unprofitably. It was to them a season of trial and discipline, but we hope not one of essential discomfort.

S.—Did they ever return to Kadesh?

F.—They did. At the beginning of the thirty-ninth year after the exode from Egypt, we find the Israelites wending their way northward in the direction of Canaan. They arrived at Kadesh in the first month—the place of their encampment so many years before. Here Miriam, the sister of Moses, died and was buried. While here, the supply of water failed, and the congregation were distressed; so they began to murmur, as of old, against Moses and against God. And the Lord said to Moses: “Take ye the rod, and go out, in the presence of the assembly, to yonder rock, and smite it, and it shall give forth water.” Moses did so. He assembled the congregation before the rock, and said to them, with a criminal impatience: “Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of the rock?” And Moses smote the rock twice, and the water gushed out abundantly. But God was displeased with him for the spirit he had manifested, and denied him the privilege of leading his people into Canaan. He might go to the top of Pisgah, and see it with his eyes, but he must not enter it.

S.—What was the intention of Moses in coming to Kadesh the second time?

F.—It was his expectation, undoubtedly, to enter Canaan from that place; but he found all the passes secured by the Canaanites and Amalekites, with whom he did not care to engage in war. He next presented request to the king of Edom to pass easterly through his borders, promising to injure nothing, and to pay for all that he received; but the king of Edom would not consent, and threatened, if the Israelites entered his country, to give them battle. Hence nothing remained to the great leader of Israel, but to turn southward, compass the land of Edom, and go up into Canaan on its eastern border.

S.—What took place, on this journey, at Moserah, on mount Hor?

F.—Here Aaron died and was buried. Being forewarned of his death, Moses took off from him his priestly garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son. He then went up with him into the mountain, where the venerable priest died. And all Israel mourned for him thirty days.

S.—What occurred during this season of mourning?

F.—The Israelites were suddenly attacked by Arad, a king in the south of Canaan, who took some of the people prisoners. But the Israelites went out against him, discomfited him, and destroyed his cities. This was the beginning of the conquest of Canaan.

S.—The Israelites having now reached the southernmost point of their journey, what course did they pursue?

F.—They turned northward, skirting the eastern borders of Edom and Moab, with neither of which nations they were permitted to go to war. It was in this part of their journey that the Israelites were bitten by fiery flying serpents, and miraculously healed by looking at the brazen serpent, set up by Moses for their deliverance. On their way northward, they passed the brook Zered, and the river Aman, which rise in the eastern mountains, and run westward into the Dead Sea. These are said to have been the first rivers which the Israelites had seen, after leaving the Nile in Egypt.

S.—On coming to the country of the Amorites, what did Moses do?

F.—He sent a message to Sihon, their king, asking permission to pass through his land. But instead of giving his consent, Sihon gathered his people together, and came out to fight against Israel. And the children of Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, took his cities from him, and dwelt in them. They also took Jazer, another city of the Amorites; and pushing still further north, they approached Bashan, where Og, the giant, held his reign. This monster of a man drew out his army, and gave battle to the Israelites. But the armies of Israel prevailed against him, slew Og and his

sons, and all his people. They took from him three-score cities, all fenced with high walls, gates, and bars.

S.—After this victory, what course did the Israelites take?

F.—They fell back to the plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan, opposite Jericho. And here the journeyings of the Israelites may be said to have terminated. From this point, in the following spring, they crossed the Jordan, and entered the promised land.

S.—How were the kings of Moab and Midian affected by the near approach of the Israelites to them?

F.—They were greatly alarmed, and, not daring to engage them in battle, they sent messengers to Balaam, a celebrated Chaldean diviner, begging that he would come and curse Israel for them. Balaam took counsel of God on the subject; for, heathen as he was, he had some knowledge of the true God, and was favored, at times, with divine revelations. But God would not suffer him to go and curse Israel.

S.—When Balaam's refusal was made known to the king of Moab, what did he do?

F.—He sent other and more honorable messengers, with a promise of still richer rewards. Balaam at this time evidently wished to go; for “he loved the wages of unrighteousness.” Still, he must go through the formality of again asking counsel of God. And God now granted him permission. He did as much as to say: “If you want to go, go; nevertheless, what I shall say to thee, that only shalt thou speak.”

So Balaam went with the princes of Moab. It was on this journey that the angel of the Lord withstood him twice, and threatened to destroy him. It was at this time that the very ass on which he rode reproved him with a man's voice, and “forbade the madness of the prophet.” Still, he was permitted to finish his journey; but under a strict injunction that he should speak that, and that only, which the Lord should say.

S.—Arrived among the Moabites, what did Balak the king of Moab, do?

F.—He took the seer unto his high places, where he might have a view of the camp of Israel, and, in repeated instances offered up costly sacrifices, while Balaam went aside to ask counsel of God. But in every instance, God turned the wished-for curse into a blessing. “How shall I curse those whom God hath not cursed? And how shall I defy those whom the Lord hath not defied? Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel? Behold I have received commandment to bless Israel; and he *is* blessed, and I cannot reverse it.”

S.—After these rich and repeated blessings, what did Balaam do?

F.—As if vexed with himself for not being permitted to curse Israel, and thus get the promised reward, Balaam resolved to do as a politician, what he could not do as a prophet. He *counseled* the Moabites and Midianites to send their daughters into the camp of Israel, to debauch the young men, and draw them into idolatry; not doubting that this would be the most likely way to bring down upon them the curses of heaven, and this artifice succeeded entirely. The very next account we have of the Israelites is, that many of them had been drawn away by these outlandish women, not only to commit fornication, but to be present at their sacrifices, and worship their idol gods.

S.—And what was done to these impious idolaters?

F.—The greatness of their sin appears in the severity of the punishment which followed it. God commanded Moses to take the leaders of those who had been concerned in this wickedness, and hang them up before the Lord. At the same time, a plague broke out in the camp, by which no less than twenty-four thousand persons were destroyed.

S.—When these disorders had been suppressed and the offenders punished, what next was done?

F.—The next thing was to take vengeance on the Moabites and Midianites, who had corrupted Israel with their fornications and idolatries. So Moses detached an army of twelve thousand men—one thousand from each tribe—and sent them against their enemies.

And they vanquished them with an immense slaughter, and took from them a vast amount of spoil, in flocks and herds, silver and gold, which was divided among the people. In this war, that old diviner Balaam, who essayed to curse Israel, but could not, was slain (Num. xxxi. 8).

S.—What other things required to be done, before entering the promised land?

F.—One was, the numbering and enrolling the men of war. This was done with great care; and the number of males, from twenty years old and upwards, exclusive of the priests and Levites, was 601,730,—less by two thousand than when they were numbered at Sinai, almost forty years before; so thoroughly had the work of death been accomplished upon that generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt.

Another thing to be done was the appointment of a leader to take the place of Moses. Moses requested of the Lord that one might be appointed, and Joshua was expressly indicated and announced. Then Moses took Joshua, and set him before Eleazer the priest, and before all the congregation, and laid his hands upon him, gave him a charge, and solemnly consecrated him as the future leader and judge of Israel.

S.—While these things were doing, a proposition came to Moses and the elders of the people, from the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh, that, as they had much cattle, and as the country east of the Jordan where they were, was a fine grazing country, they might have their portion and inheritance there. How did Moses regard this proposition?

F.—At first, he disapproved of it, supposing that these tribes intended to desert their brethren, and go no further with them. But when he learned that this was not the case—that they would send over their men of war to assist in the conquest of Canaan, and stand by their brethren until the whole land was subdued, he cheerfully granted their request. And not only so, he divided unto them severally the bounds of their inheritance; and the work of settlement in it immediately commenced.

S.—What further did Moses do for his people before his death?

F.—He described the boundaries of the land of Canaan, and appointed twelve men, one from each tribe, to divide it among the nine and a half tribes that were left to inherit it. He also repeated the injunction that they were to dispossess and drive out the original inhabitants, destroy all their images, and keep themselves pure from their idolatries. He directed that forty-eight cities should be given to the Levites, six of which were to be cities of refuge, into which the man who had *accidentally* killed any one might flee and be safe. But for the intentional murderer, no refuge or expiation was provided; he must surely be put to death.

Only one thing more remained to the illustrious leader of Israel before his death; and that was to gather the tribes around him, and deliver to them his last words. These will be the subject of our next conversation.

CONVERSATION XXIX.

MOSES' LAST WORDS AND HIS DEATH.—Prediction of the Messiah.—The song of Moses.—Goes alone up the mount to die.—He sees the promised land.—His age.—Important lessons from his life.—As a historian.—His faith.—Meditations on the life of Moses.

Son.—When did Moses commence delivering his last message to the children of Israel?

Father.—He began on the first day of the eleventh month, in the fortieth year from the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and continued the service as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. He begins by briefly recounting to the people their journeys and trials from the time when they left Sinai till they arrived at their present encampment. To promote their humility and self-distrust, he rehearses the murmurings and rebellions of their fathers, and the sore and repeated punishments which had been inflicted on them. He tells them of his own sin at the waters of Meribah, and of the judgment denounced upon him in consequence—a judgment of which he had found it impossible to obtain a remission, so that he might himself accompany them into the promised land. He repeats to them the laws which from time to time had been promulged, with some variations, explanations, and additions. The law of the ten commandments was scarcely altered. Being engraved on tables of stone, and intended for perpetual and universal observance, it could not be. This work of repeating the laws was now the more necessary, since those who first heard them had gone to the dead, and a new generation had taken their place.

S.—What memorable prediction do we find in this last address?

F.—A manifest prediction of the Messiah: “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. My word shall be in his mouth, and unto him shall ye hearken” (Deut. xviii. 15).

S.—What was the main object aimed at by Moses in this address?

F.—It was, in one word, *obedience*. He knew that not only the prosperity, but the very life of his people depended on their obedience; and hence he had recourse to every method he could think of, and quite exhausted the power of language in his exhortations, that he might induce them to obey. He placed before them the happy consequences of obedience, and the sure and terrible results of wandering from God. He set before them, to use his own language, “blessing and cursing, life and death.” He solemnly renewed their covenant with God, and required that the law should be publicly read to them at the great annual festivals by the priests. He did more than this. When the tribes had got possession of the promised land, he required that they should be assembled between the mountains Gerizim and Ebal, where blessings should be pronounced upon those who kept their covenant, and curses upon those who broke it. He commanded that an altar should be erected on the other side of Jordan, on which should be indelibly inscribed the conditions of their peace with God.

S.—What further did Moses do for his people on this solemn occasion?

F.—He not only delivered the address of which we have spoken, but he wrote it in a book—the same book of Deuteronomy which we now have. And as though this was not enough, he composed a song, and recited it to the people, and required that they should commit it to memory, setting forth the blessings of an obedient life, and the judgments that must follow upon transgression. He renewed his charge to Joshua, who was to be his successor, and took leave of the tribes in a prophetic blessing much after the manner of the patriarch Jacob, addressing each tribe separately, and speaking symbolically of its future course and destiny.

S.—Having now performed his last service on earth, what further remains to this great and good man?

F.—He takes his leave of the camp of Israel, and goes up alone into the mountains of Abarim, to a peak called Nebo and Pisgah, that he may take a view of the promised land, and then die. And

what a spectacle is this ! The venerable leader and head of God's covenant people for a whole generation, who had fought their battles, composed their differences, borne with their reproaches, healed their backslidings, organized their government, and led them along, under God, to their present position, at the age now of one hundred and twenty years, yet "his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated,"—this venerable old man going up alone into the mountains to die ! He has no fears or anxieties for himself, but all are expended upon his people ; and, as he can do no more for them, he cheerfully commits them to their covenant God.

He goes to the place which God has appointed ; looks over, for the last time, into the land of promise ; surveys its towns, its plains, its sunny hills, its meandering streams ; and when he has feasted his eyes sufficiently, *he quietly closes them in death*. He resigns his spirit into the hands of angels, who are waiting to convoy it to a happier Canaan than that on which he had just looked. The Lord took care of his lifeless body. He buried it in a valley in the land of Moab, and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

" On Nebo's lonely mountain,
Beyond the Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There is a lonely grave.
And no man dug the sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angel of God upturned the sod,
And laid the good man there."

And when the children of Israel found that Moses was dead, they wept for him, in the plains of Moab, thirty days.

S.—The character and work of Moses are worth studying. Treasured up in them is much valuable instruction. Please direct our thoughts to some of the more important lessons.

F.—It may be well to consider, first of all, our *indebtedness* to Moses, more especially as an historian. Bunsen tells us that "history was born on the night when Moses led forth his people from Goshen." We have fables and fictions earlier than this, but nothing deserving the name of history. Without the writings of Moses,

how little should we know of the creation of the world; of the original happy state and sad apostasy of man; of the earliest institutions given to our race; of the chronology of the primitive ages; of the deluge, and the causes of it; of the dispersion of the nations, and the first settlement of the different parts of the world. On this one point—the origin of ancient nations—the writings of Moses give us more light than all others put together. We little think, unless we reflect, how great is our indebtedness to Moses for almost all our knowledge of ancient times and things.

S.—The Apostle Paul cites Moses as an example of *strong faith* (Heb. xi. 23-29); does his life illustrate this trait of religious character?

F.—It does; he began to show his faith at a very early period; and from that time to the end, his life was pre-eminently one of faith. “By faith, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” It cannot be supposed, however, that this important decision was made without a struggle. For Moses had the same natural propensities as other men—the same love of pleasure, of honor, and of power. But when the critical moment came, when he must decide between the gratification of these low desires, and the love and favor of Israel’s God, he did not hesitate; he could not hesitate. He cast away the former, and clung to the latter. He trusted in the God of his fathers, and let worldly prospects and interests go. And to this decision of faith, formed in early life, Moses persistently adhered to the end. He adhered to it during his long exile in the land of Midian; he adhered to it in all the trials and perils of his intercourse with the proud, the hardened, the unbelieving, the shuffling monarch of Egypt; he adhered to it at the Red sea, at the foot of Sinai, in the disappointment at Kadesh, and through all his subsequent wanderings in the deserts. Amidst the murmuring of friends and the assaults of foes, in perplexities and difficulties, in victory and defeat, in the face of danger and of death, we find Moses (with

a single exception) the same meek, submissive, trustful, obedient man, walking by faith and not by sight, seeking only to know the will of God that he might do it, up to the last inch in which it was clearly revealed. It was this uniform, consistent piety, the result of his faith, which gives to the character of Moses its special charm. He might have been a great man without piety,—a great philosopher, a great general, a great monarch and conqueror, a Nimrod, a Belus, a Sesostris, a Shishak; but without his uniform and consistent piety, his character had never shone out upon the ages, as it now does, with the luster of a consistent goodness.

S.—In the history of Joseph, we were led to remark on the wonder-working providence of God, in ordering the circumstances of his early life. May not the same remark be applied to Moses?

F.—It certainly may, and with an equal propriety. Had Moses been born at any other period, or in any other place, he would have been born out of place, and the great purpose of his life had not been accomplished. And then after his birth, he must be hid three months in his father's house, until the right time came for his being exposed upon the river; and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter and her maidens must conclude to take a walk upon the banks of the river, or perhaps to bathe in it; and as they walked, they must come to the right place, and see the little ark, and have their curiosity excited to look into it; and when compassion was moved for the little sufferer, and the princess had concluded to adopt it, Miriam must be at hand with the proposal, "Shall I run and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" In all these events, we see the providence of God fulfilling his own eternal counsels, and yet not interfering in the slightest degree with the free-agency of his creatures; for all the individuals here concerned acted as freely and as naturally as though God had no providence over them, or purpose respecting them. And thus it is that God's providence is ever at work. We should never distrust it, or fret under it, or call in question its wisdom or its goodness.

S.—We are apt to think that the providence of God is concerned only with *great events*; but should not the history of Moses convince us of our mistake on this point?

F.—Most certainly it should. Upon what slender threads hung, at one time, the life of Moses! One hour earlier or later in that walk of the ladies by the side of the river, a few rods higher up, or lower down, and the little ark had not been seen, and Moses had been lost. And when the ark was seen and opened, if the little stranger, instead of quietly weeping, had been petulant and angry, as children often are, the young princess, instead of pitying it and taking it, would have dashed it from her to be thought of no more. A tear-drop on a babe's cheek is a very little thing; and yet, how much, under God, depended on that tear! Without it, we might never have heard of Moses, or had the Pentateuch, or been blessed with that inspired record of events, reaching back to the earliest age of the world, which Moses has left us.

S.—Is there anything emblematical, and instructive as to *the Christian life*, in the journey of Moses, with his Israelites, through the Wilderness?

F.—There is; and so the case is represented by the Apostle Paul. Having referred to the principal events of their pilgrimage, he says, "All these things happened unto them for *ensamples*, and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). In tracing the progress of the Israelites through the wilderness, we sometimes find them in pleasant places, as at Elim, where were three-score and ten palm trees and twelve wells of water; and sometimes in uncomfortable places, as at Marah, where the waters were bitter. We sometimes find them famishing with hunger and thirst; and then, in answer to prayer, bread is given them from heaven, and water gushes forth for them from the smitten rock. They are sometimes complaining, and then rejoicing; sometimes subduing their enemies, and sometimes fleeing in dismay before them. The Israelites are led, not by a direct path from Egypt into Canaan, but by a very crooked and often myste-

rious one; and yet they have an infallible guidance, and are led in the right way. They at length come together on the banks of the Jordan, and all who are prepared for it pass over into the promised land.

Such are some of the incidents of the pilgrimage of the children of Israel; and there is not one of them but has its fulfillment in the Christian life. The Christian sometimes finds himself in pleasant places, and sometimes in rough places; sometimes ready to famish for the bread and the water of life, and then he is fed with the heavenly manna, and quaffs living water from "that spiritual rock which follows him, which rock is Christ." Sometimes the Christian is hopeful, strengthened, and goes on his heavenly way rejoicing; and then we find him, like the wandering Israelites, much discouraged because of the way, and disposed to loiter and complain. In conflicting with spiritual enemies, Christians are sometimes victorious, and then vanquished; and when wounded by the great adversary, the method of their deliverance was symbolized in the deserts: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." The path of the Christian through this world is often mysterious, running this way and that, he hardly knows where; and yet there is no mistake made in providence; he is led in the right way. God knows the wants of his children better than they do, and will not withhold that measure of discipline which their best good requires. And as the Israelites came at last to the Jordan, and passed over into the promised land, so, at the time appointed, which is the best time, God will bring all his children down to the cold river, and through its deep waters to their eternal rest. May the pilgrimage of each one of us terminate in this way!

CONVERSATION XXX.

JOSHUA AND THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.—Joshua called Jesus.—The book of Joshua.—Who wrote it.—Joshua sending spies into Canaan.—Fall of Jericho.—The tabernacle set up at Shiloh.—Value of the book of Joshua.—Who were the Canaanites.—Evidences of the conquest of Canaan other than the Bible.—Had the Israelites any right to the land of Canaan.

Son.—How much do we know of the history of Joshua ?

Father.—Very little. He was of the tribe of Ephraim, and was born in Egypt about the year of the world 2460—thirty years later than the birth of Moses. He was fifty years old when he came out of Egypt, and ninety years old when he led the Israelites into Canaan. His name was the same in Hebrew with Jesus in Greek. Hence Joshua is repeatedly called Jesus in the New Testament.*

S.—When do we first hear of Joshua ?

F.—We first hear of him, when Amalek fought with the Israelites at Rephidim,—not long after they came out of Egypt. Moses said unto Joshua : “Choose you out men, and go and fight with Amalek ; and I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand.” And Joshua did as Moses had said, and he discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword (Ex. xvii. 9).

S.—What tokens of regard and confidence did Joshua receive, at different times, from Moses ?

F.—When Moses went into the mount to receive the two tables of stone, Joshua accompanied him. He was also one of the twelve spies, whom Moses sent from Kadesh to spy out the promised land. And when Moses was admonished that his departure drew nigh, he was directed to take Joshua, to set him before the priest and the congregation, to give him a charge, and thus formally inaugurate him as his successor.

S.—Who wrote the book of Joshua ?

F.—It is evident, from several passages, that it was written by some one who was cotemporary with the events recorded. Thus

*See Acts vii. 45, and Heb. iv. 8.

it is said (Chap. v. 1) : “When all the kings of the Amorites heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan, until *we* were passed over,”—importing that the writer was one of those that passed over. Again it is said : “Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and she dwelleth in Israel *unto this day*,”—implying that Rahab was alive, when the book was written (Josh. vi. 25). A portion of this book, we are expressly told, was written by Joshua (Chap. xxiv. 26). The probability is, that he wrote the greater part of it, or that it was written under his inspection ; though some of the last verses must have been added by a later hand.

S.—What is the general subject of the book of Joshua ?

F.—It is the conquest of Canaan, or that part of it lying west of the Jordan, and the settlement of Israel in the promised land. A portion of the country given to the Israelites had been conquered before.

S.—How does the book commence ?

F.—With a solemn charge to Joshua, to lead the armies of Israel over the Jordan, and put them in possession of the land which had been promised to their fathers : “Be strong and of a good courage ; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed : For the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Next, we have an account of Joshua’s sending spies to spy out Jericho, of their entertainment by Rahab, of the covenant which they made with her, and of their safe return. Joshua now makes preparation for crossing the Jordan. The waters are miraculously divided, as the Red Sea had been, and the whole congregation pass over in safety.

S.—What was the first care and work of Joshua, after passing the river ?

F.—He paused on the western bank until all the males of the congregation, who had not before received the rite of circumcision, were circumcised. Then they celebrated the feast of the Passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month at even, on the plains of Jericho—the first Passover that had been celebrated for forty years—the first that most of the congregation then living had ever witnessed.

S.—How does the conquest of Canaan commence?

F.—With the siege and capture of Jericho,—followed by the sin and destruction of Achan and his family, and the discomfiture and subsequent victory before Ai. The fall of Jericho, in the peculiar manner in which it was effected, was calculated to impress upon the Israelites, and to do it early, that all their strength was in God, and that all their dependence must be upon him. For, certainly, the means that they used had no tendency at all to throw down the walls of a fortified city. The scenes before Ai were also calculated to impress upon the people the necessity of a strict adherence to the Divine commands. If they presumed to transgress, however secretly, they might be sure that their sin would find them out.

S.—What followed the destruction of Ai?

F.—There was the league with the Gibeonites, who contrived, by stratagem, to circumvent the unsuspecting leader of Israel, and draw him into a treaty offensive and defensive. The kings in the southerly part of Canaan now combine together against Gibeon, and against Israel; but they are defeated by Joshua with prodigious slaughter. During this great battle of Beth-horon, the Lord poured upon the enemies of Israel a tremendous storm of hail, and more died with hail-stones, than were slain with the sword. It was during this battle, that the sun and moon stood still, in answer to the prayer of Joshua, until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies.

S.—What followed the conquest of the southerly part of Canaan?

F.—Almost immediately, there was another and still greater confederacy of Canaanitish kings, inhabiting the northern part of Palestine, where armies are said to have been “as the sand on the sea-shore for multitude, with horses and chariots very many.” All these the Lord delivered into the hands of the Israelites, who smote and consumed them, until none of their great army was left. With this battle ended the proper conquest of Canaan. There were a few border tribes and several strongholds which were not subdued,

and which, subsequently, gave the Israelites much trouble. But the land was so far subdued that the people now rested from war, and entered on the more agreeable task of dividing and settling the country.

S.—Where was the tabernacle of the congregation set up, and the public worship of God established?

F.—It was established at Shiloh, a central position in the country of Ephraim, near to the city which had become the property and the permanent home of Joshua.

S.—How does the book of Joshua end?

F.—In the concluding chapters, we have an account of the return of the two tribes and a half,—who had faithfully assisted their brethren in the conquest,—to their cities on the eastern side of Jordan; also of Joshua's farewell address to the Israelites, and of his death. His farewell address is much in the style of Moses' valedictory on a similar occasion. Both are, in the highest degree, touching, appropriate and eloquent, and must have left a deep impression on the minds of the people.

S.—What can be said as to the value of the book before us?

F.—It contains the history of Israel for about twenty years—a short but most eventful period. It is one of the most interesting and important books of the Old Testament; and should never be separated from the Pentateuch, of which it is both the continuation and completion.

S.—How long did Joshua live after the conquest?

F.—About ten years. He was one hundred and ten years old when he died. He was buried at Timnath-serah, in the border of his inheritance on mount Ephraim, where rest his remains unto this day.

S.—Who were the Canaanites whom Joshua dispossessed?

F.—They were the same people originally as the Phœnicians, who built Tyre and Sidon and Carthage, and introduced letters and civilization into Greece. They may have advanced farther in some of the arts than the Israelites; but they were base, cruel, bloody idolaters, and as such were under the curse of God.

S.—Have we any evidence of the conquest of Canaan, aside from that contained in the Scriptures?

F.—We have. Thus Procopius, the historian who accompanied Belisarius into Africa, in the sixth century, found at Tigisis (the same as Zangiess) two stone columns, near a great fountain, on which was engraved, in Phœnician letters, the following inscription: “We are they who fled from the face of Joshua the robber, the son of Nun.” The same monument is spoken of by others, and is regarded by learned men at the present day as a genuine testimonial to the truth of the sacred history.

S.—What right had the children of Israel to invade and destroy the Canaanites?

F.—They had no right at all, except that which was given them by God. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof;” and he has a right to give it to whomsoever he will. The Israelites had no right, unbidden, to take possession of the land of Canaan; but God had a right to give it to them; and he had given it to them in a thousand grants, and in the most explicit terms. The Israelites had the best possible title, therefore, to the land of Canaan; and their invasion of it, at the appointed time, so far from showing their rapacity and wickedness, proved their obedience.

S.—Does not this book give a sanction to *war*—to *offensive* war—to war in its most odious and objectionable form?

F.—I think not. God had a right to destroy these guilty Canaanites in any way he pleased,—by fire or flood, by earthquake, pestilence, or wild beasts. He had also a right to destroy them in *war*—to commission some other nation to go against them, and exterminate them. He could not commission a nation to go against them in a *wicked* spirit—a spirit of malice, plunder and blood, but to go by his authority and as his instrument, in his fear and to his glory, and execute a merited work of destruction in his name. Thus God commissioned Joshua to go against the Canaanites; and in this spirit, so far as appears, the great leader of Israel went. And as to any sanction or encouragement which, by so doing, he

gave to the practice of war, I only say: When other nations can show as high a commission for going to war as Joshua had, *let them go*. But until they can produce a like commission from God, let them never attempt to justify their wars, by pleading the example of Joshua.

S.—What traits of the Divine character do we find specially illustrated in the book of Joshua?

F.—We see both the *justice* and the *faithfulness* of God,—his justice in bringing a merited destruction upon the devoted Canaanites; his faithfulness, in fulfilling his promises to the patriarchs, that he would give the land of Canaan to the children of Israel for a possession. The descendants of Canaan took possession of this land soon after the flood. It was a good country, a fertile and beautiful country; and long did God continue to try and prove its original inhabitants with mercies. The sun shone upon them, the rains descended, the earth brought forth its increase, and, as years rolled by, the people rioted on the profusion of God's bounty and mercy. But instead of being melted under a sense of his goodness, they were hardened; instead of their growing better, they constantly grew worse. Still, God was not in haste to execute his judgments and sweep them away. He waited more than six hundred years,—all the while trying them with mercies, and calling upon them in his providence to be wise. Even after he had purposed to destroy them, and had revealed his purpose to Abraham, he waited more than four hundred years, because (to use his own expression) “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”

But at length, the cup of their iniquity was full, and so was the cup of Divine indignation; and when the last drop had fallen into this fatal cup, it was poured out upon them to their utter ruin,—an example both of the goodness and the severity of God; of goodness, in waiting so long upon this guilty people, and trying them with so many mercies; of severity, in at length executing upon them his threatenings, and sweeping them all away.

On the other hand, we have here illustrated the *faithfulness* of

God, in fulfilling his promises to his covenant people. These promises, it will be remembered, were not fulfilled as soon as made. They looked far into the future, through intervening periods of deep darkness and mystery. But in the appointed time—the best time—they were all fulfilled. The Canaanites were driven out, or exterminated, and Israel was put in possession of the promised land. So true is it that the God of Israel is a *faithful* God—faithful both to reward his people, and to punish his enemies as they deserve.

S.—We have in the book of Joshua an account of the division of the conquered country, one portion being allotted to this tribe or family, and another to that. What should we learn from this?

F.—That as God meted out the boundaries of the families of Israel, so he now determines the bounds of our habitations, and exercises a constant and particular providence over us. It should be our earnest endeavor to learn *where* God would have us be, and *what* he would have us do; and if we can believe that we are in the way of his appointment, then we need ask no more questions. We should be satisfied with our lot.

CONVERSATION XXXI.

THE RULE OF THE JUDGES.—Who wrote the book of Judges.—Names of the judges.—Term of office.—Duties.—Idolatry of the Israelites.—Its consequence.—Six hundred Philistines killed with an ox-goad.—Deborah's song.—Gideon.—His son Abimelech the usurper.—Samson.—Treachery of his wife.—Capture of the ark.—Jephthah and his daughter.

Son.—Who wrote the book of Judges?

Father.—The probability is that certain parts of it were written by the scribes, in the time of the Judges. We know that there were such men in all the tribes, whose business it was to keep an account of the respective families, and to register the more important transactions. As the book before us is somewhat fragmentary in its character, the probability is that parts of it were written by these men. It must have been compiled, however, and set in order, by some inspired man; and we know of no one to whom it may be with so much probability attributed as to Samuel. He lived near the close of the rule of the Judges; he held the pen of a ready writer; he was an inspired man and a prophet; and the compiling of the book, and (in part) its authorship, I think may be ascribed to him.

S.—Who were the Judges, and what was the nature of their office?

F.—They are not to be confounded with the Judges appointed by Moses in the wilderness, who still resided among the people, and brought the administration of justice to every man's door. The Judges about whom you inquire were the successors, not of these legal justices, but rather of Moses and Joshua. They stood in the place of God, and exercised an authority inferior only to his. God, it will be remembered, was not only the religious ruler of this people, but their *civil Sovereign*. They had chosen him to be such, and had promised obedience. He had given them a full code of political laws and institutions, and he needed some one to administer the government under him, or at least, to superintend its admin-

istration. This work devolved upon Moses and Joshua, so long as they lived; and when they died, it descended to the Judges.

S.—How many Judges were there, and what were their names?

F.—Between Joshua and Saul, there were fourteen of them, *viz.*, Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Tolah, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Samson, Eli and Samuel. Some of these were appointed directly by God; others were called to office by the force of circumstances or by the people, with the manifest approbation of God. Abimelech alone may be regarded as a usurper, and I have hesitated about numbering him among the Judges of Israel. They were called forth, ordinarily, to meet some emergency, and had a general direction of affairs both in peace and war. There was no salary attached to their office, and no income appropriated to them, unless it might be a larger share in the spoils of war, and presents made to them in token of personal regard. They were simple in their manners, moderate in their desires, and generally free from ambition or avarice. They continued in office during life, but had no authority to appoint successors. They were in general a noble class of men, who felt that whatever they did for the Israelitish nation was above all reward; who chose rather to deserve well of their country, than to be enriched by its wealth.

S.—What was the state of Israel under the Judges?

F.—In general, it was a state of peace and prosperity. This remark may excite surprise; nevertheless, it is true. Thus after Othniel, it is said that the land had rest forty years; after Ehud, eighty years; after Deborah and Barak, forty years; and so on. To be sure, there were, in these seasons of rest, occasional and terrible outbreakings of wickedness, followed, of course, by distressing judgments; but these were confined, for the most part, to particular tribes, or sections of the country. There was a good deal of idolatry among the people. This was their constantly besetting sin. Still, the tabernacle of God was open at Shiloh, and his altars were revered. On the whole, it is not likely that, during any other equal time, the people ever enjoyed so much quietness and prosper-

ity as they did under the Judges; and this shows how unreasonable they were in wishing to terminate this form of government, and to have a king.

S.—How long did the rule of the Judges continue?*

F.—This cannot be determined by the book itself; for though the years of oppression and of rest are frequently given, they are not so in every case; and the probability is that they often run into each other. Assuming the correctness of the statement in 1 Kings vi. 1, that Solomon commenced building the temple in the 480th year after the exode of the Israelites from Egypt, it will not be difficult to decide as to the time of the Judges. The Israelites were forty years in the wilderness; and it is supposed that the conquest of Canaan and the settlement of it may have occupied seven years more. Here then are forty-seven years to be taken from the four hundred and eighty. Allowing forty years to the reign of Saul, and forty more to the reign of David, and supposing Solomon to have commenced building the temple in the fourth year of his reign, here will be eighty-four years more (amounting in all to 131) to be taken from the 480. And 480—131 leaves 349 years to be given to the judges, or to be reckoned between the settlement in Canaan and the commencement of the reign of Saul.

There is another reason why this shorter view of the rule of the judges is to be preferred. We find only four generations between Salmon (who married Rahab, the hostess of Jericho, soon after the

*It may be thought that Paul has answered this question for us. For in a speech in one of the Jewish synagogues, he says: "After that," *viz.*, the conquest and division of Canaan, "he gave unto them judges about the space of *four hundred and fifty years*, until Samuel the prophet," Acts xiii. 20. But this chronology can never be made to harmonize with that of the Old Testament. In 1 Kings vi. 1, it is said that "in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, Solomon began to build the house of the Lord." How then can there have been four hundred and fifty years between the settlement of Canaan and the birth of Samuel? The difficulty may be obviated by adopting another translation of the passage from Paul, which the original will well permit. The Apostle, I have no doubt, intended to say: "After these things, *occupying about four hundred and fifty years*, God gave them judges, until Samuel the Prophet." This rendering makes the four hundred and fifty years to refer, not to the time of the judges, but to events which took place *previous* to them, running back almost to the time of Abraham's settlement in Canaan.

settlement in Canaan) and David. Salmon and Rahab were the parents of Boaz, and Boaz and Ruth were the parents of Obed, and Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse of David. Now we must stretch these four generations to the utmost limit of probability to make them last 349 years. They cannot possibly be extended another hundred years.

S.—As we shall not have time to examine all the particulars in the book of Judges, will you please give us a brief analysis of its contents?

F.—The book properly consists of two parts. The first sixteen chapters are a continuous history; the last four chapters, containing the story of Micah and the Danites, the story of the Levite and his concubine, and the consequent war upon the Benjaminites, belong to an earlier part of the history, and were thrown in at the end so as not to interrupt the course of the narrative. They constitute a sort of appendix to the book. The book of Ruth may be regarded as a second appendix; since the events there so beautifully recorded took place in the time of the Judges.

S.—Please tell us, first, of the historical part of the book.

F.—The history commences with a vigorous attempt on the part of some of the tribes to subdue the remainder of the Canaanites. They failed, however, to destroy them utterly, but contented themselves with putting them under tribute. Soon they began to associate with them, and to contract family alliances; and then it was no longer possible to destroy them, without destroying their own kindred. The next step was to go to their festivals, and participate in the worship of their gods. This led them into idolatry with its kindred abominations; and this brought upon them sore and distressing judgments from their covenant God and King.

S.—Who was the first oppressor of the Israelites after their settlement in Canaan?

F.—His name was Chushan-rishathaim, an invading monarch from the east, who is styled king of Mesopotamia. He entered the territories of Israel, and imposed a tribute, which lasted eight

years. At the end of this period, the people were humbled, and cried unto the Lord for help, who raised up Othniel, a son-in-law of Caleb, to take up arms against the invader. The invader was defeated and driven back, and Israel had rest forty years.

S.—What was the conduct of the Israelites during these forty years?

F.—In many places, they fell into their old habits of idolatry and wickedness. It was at this time that Micah set up his household gods in Mount Ephraim, and succeeded in procuring a Levite to be his priest (Chap. xvii). It was at this time that the Danites took the city of Laish, and called it Dan, after the name of their ancestor. They also stole the gods of Micah, and carried away his priest (Chap. xviii). It was during this interval that the disgraceful events respecting the Levite and his concubine took place, followed by repeated assaults upon the Benjaminites, in which the tribe was almost destroyed (Chap. xix). We have no difficulty in fixing the date of these transactions, since they occurred during the life of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the high priest; consequently within some fifty years after the settlement in Canaan (Chap. xx. 28).

S.—By whom were the Israelites next chastised for their wickedness?

F.—After the death of Othniel, the Israelites revolted still farther from God; and to chastise them, God suffered Eglon, the king of Moab, assisted by the Ammonites and Amalekites, to bring them into bondage eighteen years. This hard service again brought them to reflection and repentance. They cried unto the Lord for help, and he raised them up a man out of the diminished tribe of Benjamin, who wrought their deliverance. This man was Ehud, who, being employed to carry the annual tribute to the king of Moab, slew him with a concealed weapon. He then gathered the Israelites together, fell upon the bands of Moab, and destroyed them. After this, the land had rest for the long period of eighty years.

S.—The next invaders of Israel were the Philistines; and who appeared for their deliverance?

F.—This was Shamgar, the son of Anah, who, strengthened like Samson by a supernatural power, slew six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad.

S.—Previous to this, idolatry had sprung up and was spreading among the Danites, in the north of Palestine. Who was sent for their chastisement?

F.—God let loose upon them Jabin, who styled himself king of Canaan, and reigned at Hazor. This man had a powerful army, with nine hundred war chariots, all under the control of Sisera, one of the most experienced captains of the age. The Israelites were so distressed by him, that they durst not travel the highways, or cultivate their fields, or dwell in villages, but were forced to retire into caverns and fortified places. In their distress, they cried unto the Lord; and he sent them relief by the hands of Deborah and Barak. Instigated by Deborah, Barak drew together an army at Mount Tabor. With all possible dispatch, Sisera marched his forces to attack him. While his army was encamped at the foot of the mountain, Barak came down upon him with such fury, that he could make no resistance, but fled in the utmost consternation. At the same time, God poured upon his army a terrible storm of rain and hail, which swelled the rivers to such an extent that, in attempting to cross them, great multitudes of the Canaanites were swept away. The rout was complete, the victory was gained, and to celebrate it, Deborah composed the beautiful song recorded in Judges, chapter fifth. After this victory, the land had rest forty years.

S.—During this period, there was a distressing famine in Israel, and many of the people were obliged to seek a subsistence in other countries. What interesting story comes in here?

F.—The story of Ruth.

S.—After the death of Deborah and Barak, the Israelites fell into their old impieties, and were again delivered into the hands of their enemies. Who were now their oppressors?

F.—The Midianites, assisted, no doubt, by the Moabites and the Amalekites. These predatory hordes came up in vast numbers,

robbed them of their cattle, and carried off all the fruits of the earth. They left them nothing on which to subsist. In their affliction, the Israelites cried unto the Lord, and he called Gideon, the Abiezrite who dwelt at Ophrah, to be the judge and deliverer of his people. The story of Gideon, of the raising and trial of his little army, and of his victory over the Midianites, is one of the most instructive and interesting in the Bible.

S.—What followed, after the death of Gideon?

F.—His son Abimelech made himself king. He reigned at Shechem, and slew all his brethren, save one, but he did not prosper in his wickedness. The men of Shechem rejected him,—after which he fell upon them with a great slaughter. In the course of the war, he was himself slain by the hands of a woman.

S.—Who judged Israel, after the death of Abimelech?

F.—Tola, the son of Puah, came into office, and continued in it twenty-three years. After him came Jair, a Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years. In his time, there was a general defection from the worship of the true God. “The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and of Zidon, and of Moab, and of the Philistines, and of the children of Ammon.” This was the most alarming defection which had occurred among the Israelites; and, as usual, it prepared the way for distressing judgments. The Ammonites were let loose upon them from the east, and the Philistines from the west and south, and the people were enslaved eighteen years. In this time, they had abundant opportunity to reflect, and to see the error of their ways. They mourned over their sins; they acknowledged the justice of their inflictions; they put away the strange gods that were among them, and returned unto the service of the Lord. And he interposed again on their behalf. The deliverer, in this instance, was Jephthah, the Gileadite. He engaged the Ammonites, on the east side of the Jordan, and smote them with a very great slaughter. After this Jephthah lived in peace and honor, and judged Israel six years.

S.—Who were his immediate successors?

F.—First, Ibzan of Bethlehem, who judged Israel seven years. After him was Elon, of the tribe of Zebulun, who ruled ten years. Following him was Abdon, an Ephraimite, who continued eight years. Of these judges the sacred historian has recorded very little. During their administration, the Israelites seem to have had rest and peace,—the result of which was a falling away from God. They relapsed into their old idolatries, and God delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years.

S.—Near the close of this long period, who was raised up to annoy the Philistines?

F.—Samson, one of the most singular characters of which we have any account in the Bible. We should hardly think him to be a pious man, but that Paul mentions him among the worthies who lived and died in faith (Heb. xi. 32). Samson was a Nazarite—consecrated to be such by his parents, before his birth. The vow of a Nazarite bound him to abstain entirely from wine and strong drink, and to wear his hair and beard unshorn. On the fulfillment of his vow, Samson was to be endowed with supernatural strength, and thus qualified to be the deliverer of his people. While his strength continued, he had various strange encounters with the Philistines, in all of which he was victorious. On one occasion he slew a thousand of them with no other weapon than the jaw-bone of an ass. His besetting sin was the love of women, and this, at length, ruined him. He became enamored of a vile, mercenary woman, a Philistine, whose name was Delilah. After various attempts, she drew from him the secret of his prodigious strength. It was conditioned on the fulfillment of his Nazarite vow, and the wearing of his hair. Knowing this, she cut off his hair, while sleeping with his head upon her knees. And now he fell an easy prey to the Philistines. They took him and bound him, cast him into prison, and made him turn a hand mill, like the meanest slave. But in a little time Samson's hair grew again, and with it his strength gradually returned; so that when the Philistines brought him forth to

mock at his misery, and thousands of them covered and filled the house before which he was standing; he managed to get hold of the two main pillars of the house, and pulled it down, thus destroying himself and a multitude of his enemies. He slew more in his death than he had done in his life.

S.—Who judged Israel at the same time with Samson?

F.—It was Eli, the high priest. He was born before Samson, and lived long after his death. Eli became a judge in Israel at the age of fifty-eight, and his administration continued during the next forty years. He died at the age of ninety-eight.

S.—Were the Philistines conquered and humbled by Samson?

F.—Not at all. They continued their depredations, and kept the Israelites in perpetual fear. Near the close of Eli's life, the people gathered courage, and went out to Aphek to give battle to the Philistines; but they were beaten before their enemies, and four thousand of them were slain. Hoping to retrieve their loss in another encounter, the Israelites went to Shiloh, took the ark of the covenant from between the cherubim, and carried it into their camp; but though the ark and the priests were there, the God of Israel was not. The Israelites were discomfited, and thirty thousand fell. Nor was this all; the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli who attended it were slain.

S.—When Eli heard of this defeat, and of the capture of the ark, how was he affected?

F.—He fainted, fell from his seat and died. He was a good man, and zealous for the worship of the true God; but he failed essentially in the training and government of his children. "His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

S.—I have a few more questions on the book of Judges, when this long conversation may close. My first inquiry relates to the conduct of Ehud and of Jael, in taking the lives of Eglon and of Sisera.* Did they do right in thus destroying their enemies? Were their acts pleasing in the sight of God?

*See Judges iii. 15-23, iv. 18-21.

F.—I know not how to justify the acts of these deliverers of Israel, but upon a single supposition, which is, that they both acted under a *Divine impulse*, which amounted to a *revelation*, a *commission from the Most High*. To my own mind, this supposition is not improbable; and on this ground we have a full justification of their conduct. God had a right to cut off these cruel oppressors of his people in any way he pleased—by disease, by wild beasts, or by the sword of their enemies. He had a right to commission Ehud to go and kill Eglon; and there are some things in the narrative which confirm this view of the case. “I have a message *from God* unto thee, O king!” Now who shall say that Ehud had not a message from God—that, in thus speaking, he did not tell the truth?

And so in the case of Jael. The skill, the adroitness, the heroism she displayed, as well as the praises which were bestowed upon her in the inspired song of Deborah, all go to show, that she acted under a *Divine impulse*, which amounted to a *revelation*.

S.—My next question relates to the case of Jephthah and his daughter. When Jephthah went forth against his enemies, he made a vow unto the Lord that, if he was enabled to triumph over them, and came back to his house in peace, whatsoever should first come forth from his doors to meet him should be the Lord's, and he would offer it up for a burnt offering. So when he returned, the first that came out to meet him was his daughter—an only child. And it is said that he did to her according to his vow. The question now is, Did he offer her up for a burnt sacrifice? Could he be justified in so doing?

F.—My own opinion is, that he did not offer her as a burnt sacrifice; and my reasons are the following: First, the language of Jephthah's vow, interpreted as it well may be, does not imply it. The Hebrew letter *van*, commonly translated *and*, is in some instances translated *or*, and may be so rendered here. And thus rendered, the vow would read: “Whatsoever cometh forth first to meet me, when I return in peace, shall surely be the Lord's, *or* I will offer it up for a burnt offering.” The meaning is, “If the

creature first coming forth is suitable for a burnt offering, it shall be offered up; but if not, it shall be consecrated and devoted to the Lord." Now his daughter was not suitable for a burnt offering. He could not so dispose of her, in consistency with the Mosaic law, or the spirit of his religion. What then does his vow bind him to do? To consecrate and devote her to the Lord,—to be in a peculiar sense his; so that she should never be given in marriage to any man. This seems to me to be the purport of the vow. And I remark, secondly, what is said of her afterwards is consistent with this interpretation, and with no other. Her companions bewailed, not her early death, but her *perpetual virginity*; and what her father said of her, after he had done to her according to his vow, *viz.*, that "she knew no man," would be quite superfluous on supposition of her death.

S.—I only ask further that you would point out some of the practical suggestions growing out of this interesting book.

F.—We see, first, the tendency of our fallen human nature, to *backslide from God*. The history of Israel, through all these years, is little less than a history of their backslidings. Nor did their oft-repeated corrections and recoveries cure them of this propensity. No sooner was the infliction lightened and the restraint removed, than back they would fall into their former courses of sin.

We see, also, the astonishing *forbearance of God*. Why did he not give up this people utterly? Why did he bear with them after such repeated provocations? Why not abandon them to their own hearts' wanderings? Because he is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin."

We see the readiness of God to return to his people, so soon as they return to him. Whenever these Israelites began to relent, and to cry to him for mercy, his soul was grieved for their miseries, and we hear him saying: "How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver you, Israel? My heart is turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together."

Let us hear, then, the conclusion of the whole matter: If God's people would not feel his correcting rod, then they must refrain from sin. Let them live near to God at all times, and walk closely and consistently with him, and their peace shall be as a river, and their righteousness as a flowing stream. They may dwell perpetually in the sunshine of his love.

CONVERSATION XXXII.

SAMUEL AND SAUL.—The ark in the lands of the Philistines.—A fearful curse to them.—Their dread of it.—Plan to dispose of it.—The result.—Samuel implored for a king.—Samuel anoints Saul.—The first king of the Israelites.—His reign.—A successor chosen.—The intercourse of Samuel and Saul broken.

Son.—Who was the successor of Eli as the judge of Israel?

Father.—Samuel,—a judge and a prophet of greater eminence than any that had lived since the death of Joshua. He was consecrated to God from his birth, and as soon as he was weaned, was brought to Eli at Shiloh, to be trained up in the service of the tabernacle.

S.—Under what circumstances did God first reveal himself to Samuel?

F.—He was called, in mere childhood, to denounce the judgments of God upon the house of Eli for their wickedness—a message which he faithfully delivered, and which was terribly fulfilled in the death of Eli and his two sons, at the time when the ark of God was taken. It is probable that Shiloh, which had so long been the seat of the tabernacle worship, was at this time captured and destroyed.

S.—How old was Samuel at the death of Eli?

F.—Probably about twenty-two. He had been known, for years, as a prophet in Israel. He now became their judge, yet we hear little of his doings for the next twenty years,—all which time, though the Israelites were constantly distressed by the Philistines, they persisted in their idolatries.

S.—Was the ark of the covenant any help to the Philistines, while it remained with them?

F.—No; but rather a curse. They first took it to Ashdod, one of their principal cities, and put it in the house of Dagon, their god; but the image of Dagon fell down before it, and broke off its head and arms, so that there was nought but the stump of Dagon left. Also the men of Ashdod were smitten with a terrible disease; and

in their distress and terror, they concluded to send away the ark to Gath. But the people of Gath fared no better. They were smitten with the same disease, and resolved to remove the ark to Ekron. But the Ekronites wisely refused to receive it; and then it was concluded to send back the fatal, dreaded symbol into the land of Israel where it belonged. So they placed the ark in a new cart, and hitched to it two milch cows, which, as if by instinct, but really by a Divine direction, drew the ark back into the land of Israel.

S.—What became of the ark, on its return to the Israelites?

F.—It first rested at Beth-shemesh, in the land of Judah; but for presumptuously looking into the ark, God smote the men of Beth-shemesh, and many of them died. Upon this, the survivors sent to Kirjath-jearim, requesting that the ark might be received there. And there it *was* received, and there it rested more than eighty years,—through the whole administration of Samuel and Saul, unto the first part of the reign of David.

S.—When the Israelites had been sufficiently humbled, and began to seek after God, what did Samuel do for them?

F.—He said unto them: “If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods that are among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” Then the children of Israel put away their idols, and entered anew upon the service of the Lord. Encouraged by these appearances, Samuel gathered the people together to Mizpeh, a central city in the land of Benjamin, and there kept a day of solemn humiliation, fasting and prayer. There was a general and public confession of sin, and an earnest supplication to God for mercy.

S.—Did the Philistines attack the Israelites at this time?

F.—They did. When they heard of their assembling at Mizpeh, they came out in great force against them. But the Lord thundered upon the Philistines with a great thunder, and terrified and discomfited them. And the children of Israel pursued after them till they came to Bethcar. And Samuel here took a stone and set it

up in token of the victory, and called the name of it Ebenezer, the *stone of help*, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

S.—In the season of peace which followed this victory, how did Samuel employ himself?

F.—He diligently improved the time for the instruction and benefit of the people. He had his house in Ramah, near to Mizpeh, where he built an altar unto the Lord. He also went an annual circuit to Bethel, to Gilgal, and to Gilead on the other side Jordan, reforming abuses, administering justice, and instructing the people in the ways of the Lord.

S.—What mistake of administration did Samuel make about this time?

F.—He appointed his two sons to be judges in the southernmost part of the land. This was an innovation upon previous custom; and it operated unfavorably, both upon the young men, and upon the minds of the people. His sons, we are told, "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." Their conduct so disaffected the people, that the elders of Israel came together to Samuel at Ramah, and requested him to anoint them a king, that they might be, in this respect, like the other nations. The proposition was displeasing to Samuel, who endeavored to dissuade them from it, but in vain. They continued to clamor for a king; and God, at length, directed Samuel to yield to their wishes. They should have a king; but then he must be such an one as God should appoint; and he must reign over the people as *God's vicegerent*, subject to his authority, and bound, like every one else, to obey his laws.

S.—Who was the first king of Israel?

F.—Saul the son of Kish, a Benjamite. He was a man of high promise, portly in appearance, taller by his whole head than any of his fellows, and possessing, so far as appears, an unblemished character. Saul must have been at this time near forty years old; Samuel was between fifty and sixty. Saul reigned forty years, and Samuel died only a few years before him, at the age of ninety-two.

S.—On the accession of Saul, did Samuel cease to be a judge in Israel?

F.—He did not; for it is said expressly that “he judged Israel all the days of his life” (1. Sam. vii. 15). Saul was a military chieftain. He had charge of the army and of the military defenses of the country; but the administration of justice, and the instruction of the people, were entrusted to Samuel, as they had been before. Indeed Saul himself was, to some extent, under the control of Samuel. As an inspired prophet of God, Samuel directed his movements, reproved him for his faults, in some instances countermanded his orders, and, finally, when he found that he could not confide in Saul, set up another and better man to succeed him.

S.—What was Saul’s first military expedition?

F.—It was against the Ammonites. Nahash, their king, had besieged Jabesh-Gilead, a town on the east side of the Jordan, and had sent a most insulting message to the men of Jabesh. He would consent to spare them only on the condition of their coming out to him, and submitting, every one of them, to have his right eye bored out. Saul, hearing of this, quickly raised an army, and went to the relief of the men of Jabesh. He routed the Ammonites, and scattered their forces in all directions.

S.—What was Saul’s second expedition?

F.—It was against those old and valiant enemies of Israel, the Philistines. They had gradually extended their conquest eastward, until nearly all central Palestine had come into their possession. The sanctuaries so long frequented in the center of the country, Bethel, Mizpeh and Shiloh, were deserted, and when Saul was inaugurated, the services had to be performed in the very outskirts of Palestine, at Gilgal, in the valley of the Jordan.

S.—A war now commenced with the Philistines; who was chiefly instrumental in introducing it?

F.—It was Jonathan, the brave son of Saul. He attacked and took a garrison of the Philistines at Geba, in the second year of his father’s reign. Shortly after this, when Saul was in imminent

danger of being destroyed by the Philistines at his own home in Gibeah, Jonathan and his armor-bearer went out against the enemy single-handed and alone, and slew about twenty men. At the same time, there was an earthquake, and a great trembling. In their terror, the Philistines fled away in such haste that they trod down and destroyed one another. When Saul saw what was doing, he and many others joined in the pursuit, and the Philistines were beaten with great slaughter.

S.—How was Saul's conduct in this war regarded?

F.—It was displeasing to God, to Samuel, and to the people generally. Nevertheless, God did not yet desert him. He was with him in his subsequent wars, and gave him the victory over his enemies. He fought against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah on the other side Jordan, and whithersoever he went he prospered.

S.—In the midst of this prosperity, what message did Samuel bring to Saul from God?

F.—God said to him, "I remember what Amalek did to Israel; how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came out of Egypt. Go, therefore, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that he hath, both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Such was the charge which Saul received from God. We shall see how he fulfilled it. He gathered a great army and went down into the south country to fight the Amalekites. And he smote them with a great slaughter. He destroyed all their people, but spared Agag, their king, and also the best of their sheep and oxen, their fatlings and lambs. Of course, he failed to obey the whole Divine command, and exposed himself anew to the displeasure of God, and to the rebukes of Samuel. Samuel now told him plainly, that as he had rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord had rejected him from being king over Israel. "The Lord hath rent the kingdom from thee, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou."

S.—How was Saul affected by this rebuke?

F.—He professed to humble himself and repent. He asked forgiveness of God and of Samuel, and begged that Samuel would still stand by him, and honor him before the people and the elders of Israel. To this Samuel consented for the time ; but he soon returned to his house at Ramah, and all pleasant intercourse between him and the king was from that period broken off. Nevertheless Samuel seems to have had an affection for Saul, and sincerely mourned that the Lord had rejected him.

CONVERSATION XXXIII.

SAMUEL, SAUL AND DAVID.—David anointed.—The effect of Samuel's desertion on Saul.—David and Goliath.—Their combat.—Saul's jealousy of David.—David marries the daughter of Saul.—Samuel dies.—Schools of the prophets.—Saul calls up the spirit of Samuel.—Death of Saul.—Did Samuel appear to Saul.—Lessons taught in this chapter.

Son.—After the rejection of Saul, what was Samuel commissioned to do ?

Father.—He was sent to Bethlehem, to anoint David, the son of Jesse, to be the future king of Israel. David was now about seventeen years old, “ruddy, of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to.” He had been trained as a shepherd, and like other shepherds had learned to play the harp, and perhaps other instruments.

S.—After the anointing of David, it is said that “the spirit of the Lord came upon him.” What are we to understand by this ?

F.—He was from this time endued with an unwonted spirit of courage and valor, as well as of faith and confidence in God. It was under the influence of this spirit that he was enabled, while a shepherd, to stay the lion and the bear, and to rescue his flock from between their teeth.

S.—What was the effect upon Saul of Samuel's desertion of him ?

F.—It rendered him moody and melancholy, soured his temper and hardened his heart. In Scripture phraseology, “the spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit from God troubled him.” I would not say that a literal evil spirit had nothing to do with the case ; perhaps it was so. But whatever the cause, the effect upon Saul was most unhappy. His nervous system became deranged, and he was gloomy, irritable, turbulent, untractable. As a remedy he was advised to have recourse to music ; and having heard of David as a skillful player on the harp, he sent and called him to stand before him. This was David's first introduction at court,

and he succeeded with his harp in soothing and calming the troubled spirit of Saul.

S.—How long did David remain with Saul?

F.—Probably not very long. The Philistines were preparing for another invasion of Israel, and the bustle of the occasion may have had the effect to relieve the mind of Saul, so that the services of David were no longer needed. At any rate, he returned to his father, and was again employed in caring for the sheep.

S.—Where did the Philistines first show themselves in this war?

F.—They encamped at Shochoh, a town nigh to Bethlehem. Saul and his army went out to meet them, and encamped so near that there was but a valley between them. David's three eldest brothers were in the army of Saul, and David was sent by his father to carry provisions to them, and to inquire after their welfare. It was at this time that Goliath presented himself for forty successive days, challenging any one of the Israelites to fight with him, and defying the armies of the living God. His boastings and blasphemy moved the spirit of David, and he offered himself to go and fight the Philistine. With the story of his victory, and the consequent victory of the Israelites you are familiar. I need not repeat it.

S.—What was the effect of this great achievement of David?

F.—It was to bring David into notice and honor, and to excite the envy and the hatred of Saul. But Jonathan became attached to David with a singular and undying love. The women of Israel sang his praises with harp and tabret, saying, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." The effect of all this was to inflame the wrath of Saul, and from that day forward he sought the life of David. Twice he undertook to kill him with a javelin, while David was playing the harp before him. Repeatedly, he engaged him in close conflict with the Philistines, hoping that they might take his life. He charged Jonathan and his servants to kill David, but they loved him too well to be guilty of his blood. He gave his youngest daughter to David, thinking that she might

be a snare to him, but she helped him to escape from her father's hands.

S.—How did Saul continue to treat David?

F.—Having become satisfied that David was the appointed of God to be his successor in the kingdom, the zeal and rage of Saul were enkindled the more for his destruction. He gave his officers charge to take David, wherever they might find him. He killed the priests of the Lord at Nob, because they had unwittingly harbored the fugitive, and shown him favor. He meanly pursued his valiant son-in-law from one desert and cavern to another, and hunted him like a partridge on the mountains. In two separate instances, during this mad pursuit, Saul fell completely into the hands of David, so that he might have taken his life with the utmost ease; but he refused to do it. Tired, at length, of this course of life, and despairing of safety so long as Saul lived, David fled into the land of the Philistines and took refuge with the king of Gath.

S.—During these commotions, where was Samuel, and what became of him?

F.—He died at his house in Ramah at the age of ninety-two. He had been a prophet in Israel eighty years, and a judge about sixty. At the command of God, he had commissioned one man to reign over Israel, and when this man disappointed him, at the same Divine command, he had anointed another. He had directed the affairs of the people, instructed them in the ways of the Lord, and administered justice with an even hand. He is supposed to have revised and edited the books of Moses and Joshua. He wrote the books of Judges and Ruth, and the first book of Samuel up to near the time of his death.

S.—What more did Samuel do for Israel?

F.—He set up a new class of institutions in Israel, *viz.*, the *Schools of the Prophets*. They were established in different places, as Ramah, Bethel and Gilgal, and had some one set over them to be their teacher and head. Here young men studied the law of Moses, and learned to expound it. They were also instructed in

sacred psalmody and music. Here, too, by some peculiar exercises, chiefly devotional, they prepared themselves to receive the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to impart the gift. In these schools were written sacred biographies, like those of Nathan the prophet, and Gad the seer. In them were trained up sacred poets and singers, such as Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, whose names occur in the Psalms. From them were taken most of the prophets, who followed each other, in long succession, from the days of Samuel to those of Malachi. Perhaps to no individual, after Moses and Joshua, were the Israelites so much indebted as they were to Samuel; and great was the lamentation at his death. He was buried in his own sepulcher which he had prepared at Ramah.

S.—Not long after the death of Samuel, the Philistines engaged in another war with Israel. Where was David at this time?

F.—He was still in the country of Achish, king of Gath, and Achish was minded to take him and his men with him to the war, to fight against his own people, but owing to the jealousy of the other lords of the Philistines, this calamity was averted.

S.—How was Saul affected in prospect of the coming war?

F.—When he saw the host of the Philistines he was greatly terrified; and when he inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. In his distress he sought out a woman that had a familiar spirit, though he had previously endeavored to drive all such characters out of the land. At his request, the witch professed to bring up Samuel, and he was permitted to have a conversation with the old prophet, but he derived no comfort from the interview. Samuel told him that the Israelites would be beaten before their enemies, and that himself and his sons would on the morrow be slain. And all this was terribly fulfilled. The men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and many of them were cut off in Mount Gilboa, among whom were the three sons of Saul. And when Saul himself was wounded and found that he could not escape, he fell upon his sword and put an end to his life. His body was found the next day by the Philis-

tines, who stripped it, beheaded it, and hung up the maimed trunk upon the wall of Bethsan. It was not suffered, however, to remain there. The men of Jabesh-Gilead, whom Saul, in the beginning of his reign, had delivered from the Ammonites, came and took it down. They also recovered the bodies of his three sons, and took them all to Jabesh, and burned them. The bones they buried under a tree, and mourned and fasted seven days.

S.—How old was Saul at his death?

F.—He died at the age of eighty, in the 2,948th year of the world, in the 337th after the exode from Egypt, and 1,056 years before the coming of Christ, having reigned over Israel forty years.

S.—What do you think of Saul's interview with the witch of Endor? Did the soul of Samuel really appear to Saul? Or was it all an imposition, a juggle of the witch?

F.—If Samuel was really raised, it is generally understood that the incantations of the witch had nothing to do in raising him; that he was raised, if raised at all, by the power of God; and that she was greatly surprised and terrified by the apparition. It is admitted that this view of the case is more in accordance with the literal meaning of the sacred text than any other; and yet very serious objections are urged against it. In the first place, the departed soul of Samuel was undoubtedly in heaven, whereas it is here represented as coming up from the under-world—coming out of the earth. Then, secondly, if God would not answer Saul, when inquired of in the appointed ways,—neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets, how unlikely it is that he would disquiet the soul of Samuel, and send him back to the earth, to bring a message to the terrified king! And, thirdly, if God would send Samuel at all on such an errand, how unlikely that he would do it in connection with a woman who claimed to have a familiar spirit, thus giving countenance to a personage and a practice which his law condemned!

In view of these reasons, some good men have insisted that there was nothing supernatural in this affair at all; that the witch knew, from the first, with whom she had to do; and that she thoroughly

imposed upon the affrighted king. It is not said in the narrative that Saul saw Samuel, or saw anything supernatural. The witch pretended to see him, and having often seen and heard him while he was alive, she was able to personate him exactly. She could tell how he looked, and mimic his speech; and knowing full well the state of things in the camp of Saul (for it was but a little way off) she could predict, without much hazard of failure, the issue of the morrow's battle. She could feign, too, all the surprise and terror which the occasion required. And as to the language of the narrative, it may be regarded as *phenomenal*, rather than literal,—as accommodated to existing appearances, and the prevailing habits of opinion and thought, rather than as describing the real facts of the case. Such is the interpretation of this remarkable story, as given by some excellent men. Whether it is to be accepted or not, I pretend not to say. I will say, however, that, in the general, it is safer to abide by the obvious meaning of Scripture, rather than be drawn or driven from it by *a priori* reasonings and difficulties.

S.—The lives of Samuel and Saul are highly instructive. Please hint at some of the important lessons which they teach.

F.—The life of Samuel shows us the beauty and the importance of early piety. Nothing can be more interesting than his intercourse and example in the corrupt family of Eli. The venerable priest, who could have had little comfort in his own children, must have rejoiced exceedingly in the piety and promise, the dutiful conduct and obedience of young Samuel. And as we trace the history of Samuel from its early beginning through his long and eventful life,—in directing the affairs of the nation, in the administration of justice, in the setting apart of kings, in the study and preparation of the sacred books, in the establishment of institutions for the future benefit of his people, in all his duties and his trials,—we shall find that the foundation of his high honors and great usefulness was laid in youth. It was his youthful piety which prepared him to be such a blessing to his people, and to the church of God throughout the world.

Something may be learned also from the life of Saul. It shows the uncertainty of hopeful appearances where true piety is wanting. Saul seems to have been a youth of high promise; and when, at the age of forty, he was exalted to the kingdom, no more suitable person, to appearance, could be found in the land. But his heart was not right in the sight of God, and soon the state of his heart began to show itself. Samuel learned, ere long, that he could not trust him, and that God who had exalted him was about to reject him.

And this leads to another remark: the tendency of our probation here on earth to draw out the secrets of our characters. Had Saul remained in private life, his integrity and uprightness might never have been suspected. But he was not destined to private life. His probation was to be of another kind; and it soon brought out his real character. And just so it is with us. God takes care to try us here on the earth in a great variety of ways. He turns us over and over, places us here and there, pursues one course of treatment with us and then another, till our characters are formed and sufficiently developed, and the purposes of our probation are accomplished; and then it is soon brought to a close. The silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl is broken, and we pass away to the retributions of eternity.

Indulge in one further remark suggested by the case of Saul,—the tendency of unsanctified afflictions to harden the heart. Some persons regard afflictions as of a softening, subduing character, and trust to the *punishment* of sin to bring all sinners ultimately to repentance. But we see in the case of Saul, as in a thousand others, that this trust is vain. During the last half of his reign, Saul had almost continual vexations and afflictions,—so much so at times as to move our pity. And what was the consequence? To melt and humble him and make him better? No; but to harden him and make him worse. And so it is in every case of unsanctified affliction. “Though thou bray a fool with a pestle in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.”

CONVERSATION XXXIV.

DAVID CONCLUDED.—The psalms partially written during Saul's persecution of David.—The news of Saul's death.—Its effect upon David.—David's eulogy on Saul — David made king.—A son of Saul also claims the kingdom.—David's reward to the regicide.—Military career of David.—Hiram king of Tyre.—Their friendship.—The ark brought to Jerusalem.—The temple projected.—David's sin.—Solomon's birth.—Singular fact.—David's death.

Son.—We heard, in our last conversation, of the persecutions of David at the hands of Saul: How long did these persecutions continue?

Father.—About eight years. It was during this period that David wrote many of his psalms. They grew out of the circumstances in which he was placed. Mixed up with complaints and imprecations, we find the devoutest aspirations, and the fullest expressions of faith and confidence in God. The church had never been favored with these quickening songs but for David's persecutions—an instance, among many, in which we find a permitted evil overruled for a greater good.

S.—Where was David at the time of Saul's death?

F.—At Ziklag, a town on the borders of the land of Israel, which had been given to him and his followers by Achish, king of Gath.

S.—Who brought to David the news of Saul's death?

F.—It was a fugitive Amalekite, who came to him with a lie in his mouth, pretending that he had himself killed Saul,—hoping, no doubt, to obtain a reward from David. And he did obtain a fitting reward; for David ordered one of his young men to fall upon him and kill him, because he had slain the Lord's anointed.

S.—What notice did David take of the death of Saul?

F.—He wrote that tender and beautiful elegy on Saul and Jonathan, which we find recorded in 2 Sam. chapter i.: “The beauty of Israel is slain upon his high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.”

S.—Is not this funeral elegy too eulogistic, too highly colored, in praise of Saul?

F.—Perhaps not; to be sure, during the last half of Saul's reign, he had treated David very hardly and cruelly; but during the whole forty years of his administration he had proved himself a brave military chieftain. He had enlarged and defended the coasts of Israel, and his people had, for the most part, enjoyed prosperity; and whatever else may be said of Saul, he had never, so far as we know, been guilty of idolatry, but had exerted his influence to root it out of the land.

S.—Where did David remove, shortly after the death of Saul?

F.—To Hebron, a central city in the land of Judah, whither the princes of Judah came, in a short time, to make him king.

S.—Who reigned, at the same time, over the other tribes of Israel?

F.—Ish-bosheth, a son of Saul. Abner, the son of Ner, a cousin of Saul, was chief of the forces of Ish-bosheth; and Joab, the son of Zeruah, David's sister, had the command of his army.

S.—How came Joab to be thus promoted?

F.—The fortress Jebus had never yet been taken from the Jebusites. It was a stronghold in which they had dwelt from the time of Joshua, and from which they defied the whole power of Israel. And David said, "Whosoever first smiteth the Jebusites and subdues them, shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruah went first up, and was chief" (1 Chron. xi. 6).

S.—How did the two kings of Israel get on together?

F.—For about two years, there were no hostilities between David and Ish-bosheth; but subsequently, a war broke out, and after several engagements, David triumphed. Following the struggle, Abner was treacherously slain by Joab. David was much displeased at the death of Abner, and took occasion to manifest his displeasure in every possible way. He made a public funeral for the fallen chief, wept over him, and pronounced his eulogy: "Know ye not that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel to-day?"

S.—After the death of Abner, what became of Ish-bosheth?

F.—Two of his servants killed him in his sleep, cut off his head, and brought it to David, hoping to receive a reward. But their reward was like that of the Amalekite who pretended that he had killed Saul. The king rebuked them severely, and then slew them. He cut off their hands and feet, and hung up their maimed bodies in a public place, to be a terror to regicides in all coming time.

S.—What followed the death of Ish-bosheth?

F.—The tribes which had followed him sent deputies to David at Hebron, acknowledging his title as king, and pledging their allegiance. He was now proclaimed king over all Israel, when he had reigned over Judah seven years and six months.

S.—Please give us some account of David's successes after this.

F.—Being thus invested with full regal power, and having under him a mighty army, David entered at once upon the great work of his life; which was to extirpate the remains of the original Canaanites, to enlarge and defend the borders of Israel, correct disorders, and root out idolatry from the land, to establish the worship of the true God, and confirm his people in it. He took possession of the stronghold of the Jebusites which Joab had captured, and called it after his own name. Jerusalem was built up around it, and became the capital of David's kingdom. He engaged in repeated wars with the Philistines, and so completely did he humble them, that they gave no more trouble to Israel for many years. Meanwhile, Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, to congratulate him on his successes. He also sent him a present of cedar trees, with carpenters and other artificers, to assist him in preparing a place for himself.

S.—What did David do meanwhile for the honor of religion and of God?

F.—He thought of the ark of God, which had been at Kirjath-jearim for more than eighty years, and took measures for bringing it into his own city, Jerusalem. After some delay, this was, with great pomp and solemnity, accomplished. David also thought of building a temple for the worship of the God of Israel, but was pro-

hibited by God from attempting it. The prohibition, however, was accompanied with assurances, that God accepted his good intentions, that his son and successor should build the temple, and that his posterity should reign for many generations.

S.—What were the feelings of David, in view of these gracious assurances?

F.—The heart of the good man was greatly affected. He went into retirement, sat down before the Lord, and said: “Who am I, O Lord God! and what is my father’s house, that thou has brought me hitherto? And even this was a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God! but thou hast spoken also of thy servant’s house for a great while yet to come; and now what can David say more unto thee?”

S.—What new military expeditions did David now undertake?

F.—He subdued the Moabites, demolished their fortifications, and slew their men of war, leaving only enough to cultivate the ground. From the country of Moab, he marched his army still farther east, to recover his territory lying on the Euphrates. The Syrians of Zobah, under the command of Hadadezer, came out with a strong force and gave him battle; but he routed them, and took from them a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen. The Syrians of Damascus, hearing of Hadadezer’s ill success, came to his assistance; but David routed them also, slew twenty thousand of their men, became master of their country, and laid them under tribute. On his return from Syria, he was met by a great body of Edomites to whom he gave battle. He slew eighteen thousand of them in the valley of Salt, and made them his tributaries. This was David’s most important military expedition. It contributed more than any other to establish his authority at home, and to make him known and respected abroad. His victory over the Syrians is spoken of not only in the Scriptures, but by heathen writers.*

S.—After these great victories, David thought to show favor to Hanun, king of the Ammonites. How were his overtures received?

F.—Hanun and his wise counselors had no faith in the good

*See Rankinson’s Evidences, p. 89.



Esau & Jacob

G. Smith

JACOB'S REPLY TO ESAU

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intentions of David ; he had sent an embassy to spy out the land. So they seized his messengers, treated them with great indignity, and sent them back to David. This led to a long and bloody war between the forces of David and the Ammonites, in which the latter were beaten, their capital was taken, their king's crown was wrested from him and given to David, and multitudes of the Ammonites were slain.

S.—What disgraceful event in the history of David took place during this war ?

F.—It was during this war, that David sinned and fell, in the matter of Uriah (2 Sam. chap. xi). The manner in which he received Nathan's pointed reproof for his sin, and in which he humbled himself and made full and public confession of his guilt, shows that, though David was not proof against temptation, his heart was essentially right in the sight of God. He sought and obtained forgiveness in respect to the *future* punishment of his sin, but from its distressing temporal consequences he was not delivered. The child of his adultery was taken from him at a stroke ; and then followed, in quick succession, the rape of Tamar, the murder of Ammon, and the rebellion and consequent death of Absalom, thus verifying the denunciations of the prophet, that the judgments of God should follow him, and that the sword should never depart from his house.

S.—When was Solomon born ?

F.—In the twenty-second year of the reign of David. He was the son of Bath-sheba, who had been the wife of Uriah. David had several older sons ; but Solomon was the chosen of God, and of his father, to be his successor in the kingdom. David had another son by Bath-sheba whom he called Nathan, after the name of the prophet ; and it is remarkable that from these two sons, in different lines, the parents of our Savior were descended. Joseph, the reputed father of our Lord, descended from Solomon, and Mary, his mother, from Nathan.*

*See the Genealogies in Matthew and Luke.

S.—What further military expeditions did David undertake in the latter part of his reign?

F.—He had four several engagements with the Philistines, in each of which he was victorious. In these battles, several of the race of the giants which remained were put to death. In commemoration of these and his preceding victories, David composed that triumphal song, beginning: “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, the God of my rock in whom I will trust” (2 Sam. chap. xx., Ps. xviii).

S.—What unwise measure did David carry into effect, near the close of life?

F.—He became criminally anxious to know the number of his people, and more especially of his men of war. Accordingly, he gave orders to Joab, and to his other high officers that the people should be numbered. Joab tried to dissuade him from his purpose; but in vain. Agents were therefore sent through all Israel,—excepting the tribes of Levi and Benjamin,—and brought in the number to the king. The numbers in Samuel and in the Chronicles do not agree; but the difference is owing, undoubtedly, to different modes of computation. After the numbering was finished, the king’s heart smote him, and the prophet Gad was sent to reprove him, for what he had done. The probability is that it was done from motives of ostentation; or from a false confidence—a disposition to trust to the multitude of his warriors, rather than to the mighty power of God. At any rate, David sinned in this matter, he became sensible of it, and his people were sorely chastised on account of it. A pestilence broke out among them which, in a short time, destroyed seventy thousand men. As the destroyer drew nigh to Jerusalem, the prophet Gad was sent to David with the command, that he should purchase the threshing floor over which the destroying angel stood, build an altar upon it, and offer up sacrifices and peace offerings. All this was done instantly, and the plague was stayed. This threshing floor was on Mount Moriah,—the very spot on which Solomon was directed, a few years later, to build the temple of the Lord.

S.—From this time to his death, how was David chiefly employed?

F.—In making preparations for the building of the temple. “Solomon, my son” said he, “is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries. I will now, therefore, make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.”

S.—David had passed through the rebellion of Absalom; what other case of treachery was there in his family, in his last days?

F.—Adonijah, the eldest of the king’s living sons, born of the same mother as Absalom, aspired to the kingdom. By some means, he obtained Joab and Abiathar the high priests over to his party. He invited all the king’s sons except Solomon, and most of the great men of the kingdom to a sumptuous entertainment, where the guests were expected, after feasting for a while, to proclaim him king, in place of David his father. But Nathan the prophet, and the mother of Solomon, having learned what was doing, went in and told the king. The intelligence aroused the enfeebled monarch, and he commanded Nathan the prophet, and Zadok the priest, with other high officers and ministers of state, to take Solomon, and put him on his own mule; to conduct him to the fountain of Gihon, a little west of Jerusalem, and there to anoint and proclaim him king. All this was quickly done, and the people of Jerusalem, by their loud acclamations, gave testimony of their joy at David’s choice. The noise was heard by Adonijah and his company, who saw at once that their design was defeated, and that they must shift for themselves in the best way they could. Adonijah fled to the altar for safety, where he obtained from Solomon a promise of pardon, on condition of his loyalty, and future good behavior.

S.—Was there not a more formal inauguration of Solomon subsequent to this?

F.—There was. David called together the officers of his army and his court, and made to them a solemn oration, reminding them of all God’s goodness to him personally, assuring them that the

succession of Solomon was by Divine appointment, and that it would devolve on him to build a temple for the public worship of God. He gave to Solomon a plan of the temple, and an account of the treasures which he had provided for it. He called upon the princes to contribute for the same object; and when he saw their readiness and their liberality, he concluded with a solemn thanksgiving to God, and an earnest prayer for Solomon that he might be enabled to accomplish all that had been enjoined. The next day, Solomon was anointed the second time. Zadok was constituted high priest, in place of Abiathar; and Benaiah was made chief commander of the army, in place of Joab. Shortly after this, the good king died, in the seventy-first year of his age,—when he had reigned forty years,—seven years at Hebron, and thirty-three at Jerusalem. He was buried with great pomp in a tomb which he had prepared for himself, in that most strongly fortified part of Jerusalem, which was called emphatically “the City of David.”

S.—Please give us, in few words, your estimate of the character of David.

F.—That he was a man of great natural endowments, and of fervent piety, there can be no doubt. He was an inspired prophet, a sweet poet, a brave and successful warrior, and a good king. His songs have been the delight of the church for three thousand years, and will continue to be so to the end of time. Still, he did not claim to be a perfect man. He had his foibles and his faults, of which no one was more sensible than himself. Falling in with the polygamous practices of the age, he could not govern his household as he ought, and the consequence was that, in the latter part of his reign, his children gave him much trouble. Still, his long reign was an inestimable blessing to his country. He vanquished the enemies of Israel on every side. He extended his dominions from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and from Damascus to Egypt. He rooted out idolatry from among the people, established on a firm basis the worship of the true God, and thus prepared the way for the splendid and prosperous reign of his son and successor, Solomon.

CONVERSATION XXXV.

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON—His age on ascending the throne.—His character.—Solomon's marriage to King Pharaoh's daughter.—The great event of Solomon's reign.—The temple.—Its dedication.—Visit of Queen of Sheba.—Solomon's fall into sin.—Evidence of his repentance.—His children.—Lessons taught by the life of Solomon.

Son.—How old was Solomon when he came to the throne?

Father.—Eighteen years; and he reigned over all Israel forty years.

S.—What was the character of Solomon?

F.—In the very beginning of his reign, it is said of him that “he loved the Lord exceedingly, and walked in the statutes of David his father.” Soon after his accession, he went to Gibeon, a few miles from Jerusalem, where were the tabernacle and the altar which Moses prepared in the wilderness, and here he offered, in sacrifice, a thousand burnt offerings. It was here that the Lord appeared to him, and, in answer to his own request, promised to give him wisdom and an understanding heart. He also promised to bestow upon him riches and honor, beyond that of any of the kings of the earth.

S.—What were among the first acts of Solomon's reign?

F.—He put out of the way several persons whom he thought dangerous to his government. Adonijah, who was suspected of plotting another insurrection, and Joab, who was known to favor him, were put to death. It may seem hard that Joab, the hero of so many battles fought in the service of his father David, should thus fall at the command of his son; but it must be remembered that Joab's treatment of David, on several occasions, was anything but respectful; that he had treacherously murdered, in cold blood, Abner and Amasa, two men whom David considered better than himself; that he was naturally cruel, imperious, revengeful, and ready for any conspiracy against Solomon in favor of Adonijah; and especially that David had signified his pleasure that the hoary head of Joab should not go down to the grave in peace.

S.—To whom was Solomon early married?

F.—To a daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and she, it is generally supposed, became a proselyte to the Jew's religion. At any rate, we never hear of her as exerting any influence in favor of idolatry. This is the first that we hear of any connection of the Israelites with Egypt, after their escape from bondage.

S.—What was the great event of Solomon's reign?

F.—The building of the temple, and the ordering and establishing of the temple worship. Next to this in importance was the building of a palace for himself, and another for his Egyptian wife. In all these great works, he was essentially aided, both in materials and artificers, by Hiram, king of Tyre. These events are distinctly referred to, not only in the Scriptures and in Josephus, but by the historians of ancient Tyre.

S.—In what year did Solomon commence building the temple?

F.—In the fourth year of his reign; but it was not finished until the eleventh year. The temple itself was not a very large structure; but the numerous courts and offices round about it constituted a vast pile. And when we consider the exquisite art, as well as strength with which the whole was finished, we are led to wonder that it could have been perfected in so short a period.

S.—What great occasion followed the building of the temple?

F.—Its dedication,—when the ark of the covenant was removed from the city of David, and deposited in the most holy place prepared for it in the temple. We have a full account of it, also of Solomon's prayer of dedication, of the sacrifices which he offered, and of the feast which he made for all the people, in 1 Kings, Chap. viii. At the close of this solemn service, God appeared unto Solomon a second time, told him that his offerings were accepted, and gave him assurances of continued favor, both to himself and his posterity, but *only* on the condition that he and they adhered faithfully to the service of the Lord. "If you shall turn at all from following me, you or your children, and shall go and serve other gods, then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given

them, and this house which I have hallowed for my name will I cast out of my sight, and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people."

S.—What other buildings did Solomon erect, besides his palace and the temple?

F.—He built "the house of the forest of Lebanon," where he frequently resided. He built also the walls of Jerusalem, and an armory, and a senate-house called Millo. He repaired and fortified Hazor, Megiddo, the two Beth-horons, Baalath or Baalbek, Tadmor in the desert, and Gezer, a city which the king of Egypt had given him in dowry with his daughter.

S.—What other engagements in business had Solomon?

F.—He engaged extensively in navigation. He had two ports on the Elanitic gulf of the Red sea, where he provided a navy, and where—in connection with his friend Hiram—he engaged extensively in navigation. He had also his ships of Tarshish on the Mediterranean sea. One of his fleets brought home no less than four hundred and twenty talents of gold, besides various other commodities and curiosities of great value. In short, Solomon soon came to be one of the richest and most powerful princes then on the earth. His annual revenue was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides the tribute which he received from subject kings. His furniture and ornaments were all of gold; silver being little accounted of in the days of Solomon. Presents of the greatest value were sent to him from different quarters, and to see his face and hear his wisdom was the prevailing desire of the great men of the age.

S.—What distinguished personage came to visit him from Arabia?

F.—The Queen of Sheba. She came with rich presents, and to test his wisdom with hard questions. But Solomon answered all her questions; and when she saw the magnificence and splendor in which he lived, she went away astonished and confounded, saying that, though the fame of him of which she had heard was very great, the half had not been told her.

S.—To what other pursuits did Solomon give attention?

F.—He devoted much time to ethical and philosophical inquiries. He wrote three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. He knew the virtue of all plants and trees, from the lofty cedar of Lebanon, to the lowly hyssop that springeth out of the wall. He treated also of beasts, of fowl, of creeping things, and of fishes.

S.—Solomon's situation must have been one of great temptation; how did he bear it?

F.—I am sorry to say that, for a time, his temptations overcame him. In conformity with the customs of oriental monarchs, he must surround himself, not only with all other forms of pageantry, but with a harem of outlandish women; and these, as might be expected, drew away his heart. He took wives from among the Moabites, the Hittites, the Edomites, and the Zidonians; and to show his liberality, he built high places for them in Jerusalem, and countenanced them in their idolatries. Wherefore the Lord was angry with him, and sent a prophet to reprove him, and to denounce impending judgments. The Lord also stirred up adversaries against him,—the kings of Edom, and Damascus, and more especially Jeroboam, one of his own servants. Jeroboam had been designated by Abijah the prophet, as the man who, in future, should reign over ten of the tribes of Israel. Having on this account, as well as others, excited the suspicion of Solomon, he fled for protection to Shishlak, the new king of Egypt, where he continued till Solomon's death.

S.—At what time did Solomon begin to countenance idolatry?

F.—We do not know precisely. The sacred writer tells us that “when he was *old*, his wives turned away his heart” (1 Kings xi. 4); and as he died at fifty-eight, his defection could not have been very long before his death.

S.—What evidence have we that Solomon ever repented and was restored to the Divine favor?

F.—The book of Ecclesiastes was written by him, and written late in life; and it furnishes abundant evidence of his ultimate

repentance and restoration. This book is mainly a record of his thoughts and feelings at different periods—of the working of his great mind and heart in the varied circumstances of life, and more especially during the melancholy period of his defection; and it comes out nobly at the close,—showing that Solomon had learned, in conclusion of the whole matter, that “to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man.”

S.—How many children had Solomon?

F.—Although he had so many wives, the Scriptures make mention of but three children, one son and two daughters (1 Kings iv. 11, 15). He died, as I have said, at the age of fifty-eight, having reigned forty years. He was buried near his father, in the city of David.

S.—The life of Solomon is one of great interest and instruction. Please notice some of the lessons of it.

F.—We learn from it, first of all, the danger of loving and pursuing the world. This was that which overcame Solomon. As a philosopher, he was in search of the *summum bonum*, the chief good of man. In what does this consist? Does it consist in worldly gratification? He had every means of gratification in his power, and he resolved to plunge into it, and make the experiment. He did so; and the experiment well nigh ruined him. He came out of it, oft repeating the exclamation, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! I found it all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.”

We learn from the case of Solomon, that at no period of life, so long as probation lasts, are we out of danger. It might be thought that Solomon, in his old age, when surrounded with so many inducements to persevere, could hardly be in danger of falling. And yet he did fall. He fell foully and shamefully, though we think not finally. Let those in years, as well as in youth, learn a lesson from him. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

Let those who have wandered away from God do as Solomon did—review their past lives, repent of their sins, and learn, with the wise king of Israel, that to “fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man.”

CONVERSATION XXXVI.

KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.—The division of the kingdom.—Judah and Benjamin loyal.—Idolatry of the ten tribes.—Invasion by the Egyptians.—Terrible slaughter.—Half a million slain.—Elijah the prophet.—Elisha his successor.—The remarkable letter from Elijah.—Death of Jezebel.—Jonah and Hosea the prophets.—Pul, king of Nineveh.—Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, carries the Israelites into captivity.—Origin of the Samaritans.

Son.—What led to the division of the kingdom of Israel, after the death of Solomon?

Father.—When Solomon was dead, Rehoboam his son went to Shechem, in mount Ephraim, where the elders of the people were assembled to make him king; but as the nation had been burthened with heavy exactions during some part of his father's reign, before they would consent to crown his son, they desired a redress of grievances. His father's wise counselors advised Rehoboam to satisfy them in this respect; but influenced by his boon companions, and carried headlong by his own stupidity and folly, he refused. He even threatened them with increased impositions; and this so disgusted the people, that they threw off their allegiance, and declared for another king. When Rehoboam saw what was done, he tried to pacify them, but in vain. He was obliged to consult his own safety by flight, and hastened back to Jerusalem. He secured to himself the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; while the other ten tribes,—occupying the larger and more fertile part of the country,—seceded, and made Jeroboam the son of Nebat their king. Thus was this great and goodly kingdom broken into two parts, and so continued to the time of its dissolution.

S.—How old was Rehoboam, when he began to reign?

F.—He was forty-one years, and consequently was born one year before David's death. To revenge the insult put upon him, he collected a vast army, with the intent to make war upon Jeroboam; but at the instance of the prophet Shemaiah, he changed his purpose, disbanded his army, and proceeded to garrison his dominions.

S.—Meanwhile, what was Jeroboam doing?

F.—He was not idle. He enlarged, beautified, and fortified Shechem, and made it his capital. He had more solicitude about the religion of his people than anything else, foreseeing that, if they went up to Jerusalem to worship, they would inevitably return to the house of David. Consequently he resolved on a bold innovation. He set up two golden calves, with their altars, after the manner of Egypt,—placing one of them at Bethel, and the other at Dan; and as the regular priests would not patronize his idolatry, he banished them from his kingdom and made him priests of the lowest of the people. In consequence of these measures, the priests and Levites generally went over to Rehoboam, and were followed by as many of the people as had any true regard for the God of Israel. God sent prophets to Jeroboam to reprove him; but neither warnings, nor miracles, nor inflicted judgments had any good effect. He persisted in his idolatrous practices, and bequeathed them to his successors for many generations.

S.—Did Rehoboam adhere to the religion of his fathers?

F.—Not long. For two or three years he kept up the worship of God at Jerusalem; after which, he and many of his people relapsed into the idolatries and filthy practices of the heathen. They set up groves and images upon every high hill, and under every green tree, and perpetrated the same abominations for which the Canaanites had been destroyed. Under all these provocations, God sent against them Shishak, king of Egypt. He came up with a powerful army, ravaged the country, took most of the fortified places, and carried away the shields of gold which Solomon had made. So soon were the vast treasures of Solomon dispersed, and his son and successor was left in poverty and infancy.*

S.—How long did Rehoboam reign?

F.—After Shishak's invasion, he reigned twelve years—seventeen

*Recent discoveries afford a striking confirmation of this part of the sacred history. The tomb of Shishak has been opened, and among the kings he had conquered is distinctly mentioned the king of the Jews. Rawlinson, p. 109.

in all—and died at fifty-eight—the same age with his father. He was a prince of small abilities, and a bad disposition. He seems to have been a spoiled child from his youth. It is presumed that Solomon entertained no high hopes respecting him; for he says, in a tone of deep despondency, “I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun, because I was to leave it to a man that should come after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool” (Ecc. ii. 18, 19). Rehoboam left many children, but appointed Abijam, the eldest, to succeed him.

S.—What can you say of Abijam’s reign?

F.—He may have been forty years old when he began to reign, and his reign continued less than three years. He was a brave, warlike prince. He got together an army of four hundred thousand men to fight against Jeroboam; and although Jeroboam’s army was twice as large, Abijam resolved to give him battle. But he first made a long and eloquent appeal to the army of Jeroboam (see 2 Chron. viii. 5-12). In this contest, Abijam was victorious, and Jeroboam lost five hundred thousand of his men—a terrible slaughter, from the effects of which he never recovered.

S.—Who succeeded Abijam?

F.—His son Asa, who may have been twenty years old when he began to reign, and whose reign continued forty-one years. For the first ten years, the kingdom of Judah was at peace, a period which Asa wisely employed in correcting abuses, destroying idolatrous groves and images, and in bringing back his people to the service of the true God. He also fortified his frontier towns, and prepared and trained a prodigious army to be in readiness in case of necessity. Nor was the necessity long in coming; for Zerah, the Ethiopian, who reigned in south-western Arabia, invaded Judah with a vast army. But he was defeated by Asa, with a much inferior force. Almost in the beginning of the battle, the Lord struck the Arabians with such a panic, that they fled, and trampled down each other. Asa pursued after them, took the spoil of their camp, carried away their cattle, smote their cities, and returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

S.—How was it with the other kingdom all this while?

F.—Jeroboam was now dead, and so also was his wicked son and successor Nadab; for when Nadab had reigned less than two years, Baasha, the captain of his forces, conspired against him and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

Perceiving that people were continually leaving the kingdom of Israel, and going over to Judah, Baasha took measures to prevent further emigration. He commenced fortifying Ramah, a border town, only six miles from Jerusalem, so as to cut off all communication between the two kingdoms. When Asa saw this, he sent messengers to Benhadad, king of Syria, that he might hire him to invade Baasha on the north, and thus divert him from his purpose at Ramah. The plan was successful. Baasha was constrained to depart from Ramah, and Asa came and carried away his materials into his own country.

But Asa sinned in this matter, and a prophet of God was sent to reprove him, because he had put his trust in man, and not in the Lord. Nor did Asa receive the reproof with submission and penitence. On the contrary, he was fretted with it, and put the prophet in chains. From this time forward, king Asa became petulant and unhappy. He had a distressing disease in his feet, which may account, in part, for his peevishness and ill-humor. Nevertheless, he is remembered as one of Judah's best and most prosperous kings.

S.—What other kings reigned over Israel, during the long reign of Asa?

F.—In this time, Israel was cursed with no less than five wicked kings. Following Baasha, were Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, and Ahab. Omri founded the city of Samaria, which was afterwards the capital of the kingdom. Ahab was the most profligate and wicked of all the kings of Israel; for he not only continued the worship of the calves, but having married Jezebel, daughter of the king of Tyre, he introduced into Israel the worship of Baal. He built a temple for Baal in the new city of Samaria, and set up an altar and a grove, where all sorts of impurities were practiced. He

was the first to set an example of persecution in Israel, by slaying the prophets of the Lord.

S.—What great prophet was sent to reprove Ahab for his wickedness?

F.—Elijah the Tishbite—one of the most renowned of the ancient prophets—armed with miracles of both mercy and judgment—who, when his work on earth was finished, was translated visibly to heaven. During the reign of Ahab, there was a drought and a famine in Israel of more than three years' continuance, which was finally removed at the intercession of Elijah.

S.—In the early part of Ahab's reign, Asa, king of Judah, died. Who succeeded him?

F.—His son Jehoshaphat, who, in all acts of piety and religion, imitated, if not exceeded, the doings of his father. He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. He sent priests and Levites into all the cities of Judea, to read and expound the law of God. In consequence of his fidelity, God blessed Jehoshaphat with riches and honors. His people loved him, and his enemies submitted themselves unto him and gave gifts. The great fault of his administration was, that he married his son and successor Jehoram to a daughter of Ahab. This alliance was offensive to God, and it involved him and his family in many troubles.

S.—In what business enterprise did Jehoshaphat engage?

F.—Like his ancestor Solomon, he engaged in commerce from the ports of the Red sea. In his first attempts he was unsuccessful, on account of his partnership with Ahab; but afterwards, when freed from this damaging alliance, he had better success. On the whole, Jehoshaphat was a good king. He was greatly honored and respected while he lived, and deeply lamented at his death.

S.—Who succeeded Ahab on the throne of Israel?

F.—His wicked son, Ahaziah; but his reign was inglorious and short, having lasted scarcely two years. He was succeeded by Jehoram, another son of Ahab, who commenced his reign in the

eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, and continued it twelve years. He put an end, for a time, to the worship of Baal, but persisted in the worship of the calves. It was during his reign, that the prophet Elisha made his appearance in Israel. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and, like him, performed many miracles. He saved the lives of three kings and their armies, who were crossing the desert to attack the Moabites, and were on the point of perishing with thirst. In answer to Elisha's prayer, a supply of water was furnished, and a victory gained. At a later period in the reign of Jehoram, Samaria was besieged by the king of Syria, until "an ass's head was sold for four-score pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver." But by a miraculous interposition, at the word of Elisha, the siege was suddenly raised, the affrighted Syrians fled, and from the spoils of their camp the starved city was abundantly supplied.

S.—Who succeeded Jehoshaphat on the throne of Judah?

F.—His son Jehoram. So that there were now two Jehorams reigning together,—one over the kingdom of Judah, and the other over Israel. One of them was a son, and the other a son-in-law, of Ahab and Jezebel; and both walked in the steps of those guilty corrupters of God's people. Jehoram of Judah began his reign by destroying all his brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat, and with them many of the chief rulers of the kingdom. He received one of the most remarkable warnings of which we have any account in the Bible—a letter of denunciation and reproof from Elijah the prophet, who, several years before, had been translated from earth to heaven. Whether the letter was sent directly from heaven, or whether the old prophet, foreseeing what was to take place, prepared it and left it behind him, I pretend not to say. However, it had no good effect upon the guilty Jehoram. He persisted in his wicked courses, and was visited with crushing judgments. His tributaries revolted from him, the Philistines and Arabians invaded his territories, and carried away his wives and children, and to crown all, he was seized with an incurable disease of the

bowels, under which he sank, after an inglorious reign of eight years.

S.—By whom was Jehoram of Judah succeeded?

F.—By his youngest son Ahaziah,—sometimes called Jehoahaz (see 2 Chron. xxi. 17). He was the son of Athaliah, the wicked daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and being entirely under his mother's influence, his short reign was one of idolatry and sin. He ascended the throne at the age of twenty-two.* Both he, and his uncle Jehoram of Israel, were slain on the same day, by Jehu the son of Nimshi.

S.—Under what circumstances were these two kings slain?

F.—In his wars with the Syrians, Jehoram, assisted by Ahaziah, had laid siege to Ramoth-gilead, which he claimed as belonging to himself. Here he was wounded, and retired to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds, leaving his army, under the command of Jehu, to carry on the siege. Ahaziah, too, had left Ramoth, and gone to Jezreel to visit Jehoram. While the two kings were absent from Ramoth, Elisha directs one of his prophets to go there, and anoint Jehu king over Israel. The prophet goes in the most quiet way possible, and executes his commission. But no sooner is it known that Jehu has been anointed, than the army arises at once, and proclaims him king. Whereupon, being surrounded by a company of valiant men Jehu rides post-haste from Ramoth to Jezreel, and kills both Jehoram and Ahaziah, and causes the death of old Jezreel herself. Next he writes letters to Samaria, about twenty miles distant, and orders that the heads of seventy of the royal family of the house of Ahab should be brought to him. He then slew all that remained of this wicked family in Jezreel, with their kinsfolk and their idolatrous priests, until he left none remaining. Jehu now gets into his chariot to go to Samaria. On his way, he meets more than forty of the royal house of Judah,—all of them connected with the family of Ahab,—going up to Samaria to visit their cousins. These, too, he

*He is said to have been forty-two, in 2 Chron. xxii. 2, a manifest error of some transcriber.

destroys, and then presses on to the capital, where he kills all that remains of Ahab, according to the word of the prophet Elijah. Next, he draws together all the priests and worshipers of Baal to Samaria, under pretense of a great festival, where he falls upon them and destroys them all. And thus was the worship of Baal, which Ahab and Jezebel had done so much to promote, effectually put down in Israel, to be revived no more.

S.—Of course, Jehu now came to the throne of Israel; what was the character of his reign?

F.—Though he commenced with a fiery zeal against idolatry, he did not carry it consistently through. He continued the worship of the golden calves, and bequeathed the same to his successors.

S.—Athaliah, the queen-mother, was still alive at Jerusalem. What did she do?

F.—When she heard what Jehu had done, she undertook to destroy all the seed-royal of David, and take the government into her own hands; and she well nigh succeeded in the attempt. No one was spared but Joash, an infant son of the late king. He was secreted by an aunt, the wife of Jehoiada the high priest, and was kept concealed in the temple for the next six years. During all these years, Athaliah reigned over the land, and idolatry triumphed.

S.—What became of this wicked queen Athaliah?

F.—When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada,—after taking all necessary precautions,—brought him out into the court of the temple, where he anointed him, crowned him, and proclaimed him king. Athaliah, hearing the shouts of the people, ran towards the temple, crying Treason! Treason! But the guards of the young king instantly fell upon her, and slew her with the sword.

S.—Young Joash was now made king over Judah! How long did he reign? And in what manner?

F.—He reigned forty years. During the first half of his reign, while Jehoiada, his great patron and instructor lived, he ruled faithfully and well. He took much pains in repairing the house of the

Lord, which, since the death of Jehoshaphat, had been neglected. He labored also to reclaim the people from idolatry, and establish them in the service and worship of God. But when Jehoiada was dead, Joash fell under the influence of bad advisers, who led him to tolerate and even countenance idolatry; and though prophets were sent to reprove him, he grew no better; he was angry with them, and persecuted them. He was so angry with Zechariah, a son of his old friend Jehoiada, for reproving him, that he took his life. Wherefore God visited him, as he was wont to do in like cases, with distressing judgments. He sent against him, year after year, the king of Syria, who, on one occasion, entered and pillaged Jerusalem. He also visited him with a complication of diseases. At length, two of his servants conspired against him and took his life.

S.—Who succeeded Joash on the throne of Judah?

F.—His son Amaziah, at the age of twenty-five. For a time, he governed his people well, and was prospered; but at length, like his father, he fell into idolatry, and was not reclaimed by the reproofs of the prophets. Consequently, he was visited with heavy judgments, and died in disgrace. His subjects became tired of him, pursued him to Lachish, and there slew him. His entire reign was twenty-nine years.

S.—When Jehu came to the throne of Israel, he had a promise that his sons should succeed him, to the fourth generation. Was this promise fulfilled?

F.—It was. The first of his sons who reigned was Jehoahaz; the second was Joash; the third was Jeroboam II., and the fourth Zechariah. In the days of Joash, the prophet Elisha died. Joash visited him in his sickness, wept over him, and received his blessing. Yea more; Elisha encouraged him to make war upon the Syrians, and promised him three successive victories,—all which was gloriously fulfilled. Jeroboam II. was one of the greatest of the kings of Israel, and died in great honor after a reign of forty-one years. He enlarged his dominions, north and south, till they were almost as extensive as in the days of David and Solomon.

S.—Who succeeded Amaziah as king of Judah?

F.—His son Azariah, sometimes called Uzziah. He reigned in all fifty-two years; and it may be said of him, as of his father, that in the first part of his reign, he governed the people well, and was prospered. He repaired the walls of Jerusalem, fortified them with towers, and was the first inventor of engines with which to hurl darts and stones. He was a lover of agriculture, and did much to encourage and improve it among his people. But like thousands of others, his prosperity ruined him. In his pride, he intruded himself into the priest's office, and took it upon him to offer incense. For this offense, he was smitten with leprosy, and continued a leper, living in a separate house, to the day of his death. His government was administered, meanwhile, by his brave son Jotham.

S.—What distinguished prophets lived at the period now before us?

F.—There were Jonah and Hosea, who prophesied chiefly in the kingdom of Israel. Following them were Joab, Amos, Obadiah, and Isaiah. Isaiah commenced his prophecy in the reign of Azariah, and continued it down to the time of Hezekiah.

S.—What was the state of the kingdom of Israel from this time to their carrying away into captivity? Please give us a brief abstract of their history.

F.—The brave Jeroboam II. lived until the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Azariah. Zachariah his son, who succeeded him, and who was the last of the descendants of Jehu, reigned only six months, when he was murdered by Shallum, a usurper. When Shallum had reigned one month, he was put to death by Menahem, one of his generals. By the help of Pul, king of Assyria, Menahem was enabled to hold the government ten years. This Pul is the first of the kings of Assyria whose name occurs in the Old Testament. He reigned at Nineveh, and may have been the king to whom Jonah preached.

Menahem was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, who was murdered, after two years, by Pekah, the son of Remaliah. Pekah held the

throne twenty-one years, but not without great trouble and perplexity. In repeated instances, Tiglath-pileser invaded his land, took his cities, ravaged the country, and carried away many of the people into captivity. At length, as Pekah had murdered his master, Hoshea, the son of Elah murdered him. He held the throne nine years, and was the last of the kings of Israel.

S.—Who put an end to the kingdom of Israel?

F.—It was Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. In the second year of the reign of Hoshea, Shalmaneser invaded his country, and put him under tribute. For several years, Hoshea paid the tribute; but becoming tired of it, he entered into a conspiracy with So, king of Egypt, and withheld his tribute from the king of Assyria. Upon this, Shalmaneser came against him with a great army, ravaged the country, besieged Samaria, and, after three years, took it. He put Hoshea in chains, and shut him up in prison to the day of his death. He carried the great body of the Israelites into captivity, and placed them in the northerly part of Assyria, in the kingdom of the Medes. At the same time, he brought a mixed multitude of people from the different provinces of his empire, and planted them in the cities of Israel; and from these foreigners, mixed up with some straggling Israelites who remained in the land, descended the *Samaritans*, of whom we hear so much in the subsequent history of the Jews. No wonder the Jews would not acknowledge them as the veritable seed of Abraham, and that an interminable prejudice existed between the two nations.

S.—How long did the kingdom of Israel stand?

F.—It commenced with Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and ended with Hoshea the son of Elah, when it had stood two hundred and fifty-six years.

CONVERSATION XXXVII.

KINGS OF JUDAH TO THE CAPTIVITY.—Reign of Jotham.—Succeeded by his son Ahaz.—Idolatry of this reign.—The temple closed.—Hezekiah's reign.—One of the best of the kings of Judah.—His character.—The temple opened.—Revival of the pass-over.—The brazen serpent of Moses broken.—A wonderful phenomenon.—Josiah's government.—The book of the law found on repairing the temple.—Death of Josiah.—Eulogy of Jeremiah.—Jerusalem and the temple destroyed.

Son.—The last of the kings of Judah of whom we have heard was Azariah, or Uzziah, the leper. Who succeeded him?

Father.—His son Jotham, who administered the government several years before his father's death. He came to the throne at the age of twenty-five, and reigned sixteen years. He was an excellent prince, distinguished alike for his piety, his justice, and his strict regard for the interests of his people. He repaired the walls of the city and the temple, and did much to strengthen and fortify his kingdom. He died in peace, at the age of forty-one, and was buried in the sepulcher of the kings.

S.—Who next reigned over Judah?

F.—Ahaz, the son of Jotham. He began to reign at the age of twenty, and continued in the government sixteen years. He was a wicked king, regardless alike of God, and of the welfare of his people. He not only worshiped the golden calves, but made molten images of the gods of the heathen round about, and caused his sons to pass through the fire to Moloch. For these offenses he was terribly chastised by the confederate armies of Rezin king of Syria, and of Pekah king of Israel. They vanquished his army, plundered his cities, and slew many of his princes. In his distress, Ahaz applied to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria for help. He sent him large presents of gold and silver, and promised to be his servant in time to come, if he would consent to help him against the kings of Syria and Israel. Accordingly the king of Assyria made war upon the Syrians of Damascus and upon the Israelites. He took from Pekah king of Israel all his possessions east of the Jordan, plundered

Galilee, and went into winter quarters at Damascus. Here Ahaz went to see him, and to do him homage as his tributary and vassal. At Damascus, Ahaz saw an altar with which he was so much pleased, that he sent a model of it to Jerusalem, with orders to the high priest to prepare one like it. When this was done, the altar of the Lord was taken away, to give place to the new heathen altar. At length, he caused the temple to be closed, and the worship of the God of Israel to be suppressed; devoting himself wholly to the worship of idols. But he was driven away in his wickedness at the early age of thirty-six, and his good son Hezekiah reigned in his stead.

S.—What was the character of Hezekiah?

F.—He was one of the best of the kings of Judah. Immediately on his accession, he set about a thorough reformation of religion. He caused the doors of the temple to be opened; cast forth the new Syrian altar, and put the Lord's altar in its place; and whatever other pollutions the sacred places had contracted, he caused to be purged away. He sanctified the priests, offered sacrifices according to the law, and appointed singers to praise the Lord, in the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. He revived the passover, and invited the people of Israel to unite with his own people in observing it. And so interested were they all in this solemn national festival, that they continued it fourteen days,—twice the usual appointed time. There had been no such passover in Israel since the days of Solomon. At the close of the feast, the people went out together, and brake in pieces the images, cut down the groves, demolished the altars of idol worship, and restored the worship of the God of Israel. They even destroyed the brazen serpent which Moses had made in the wilderness, because it had been perverted to purposes of idolatry. And God, whom Hezekiah so diligently served, granted him unusual prosperity. He overcame the Philistines, recovered from them the cities which his father had lost, and made great inroads on their own territories.

S.—What befell good Hezekiah about the middle of his reign?

F.—He was visited with distressing sickness, and was warned by the prophet Isaiah to prepare for death. At the same time he was threatened with an invasion by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. In his distress, he cried unto the Lord; and his prayer was heard. Soon the prophet was sent again unto him with a promise of recovery from sickness, and deliverance out of the hands of the Assyrians. In confirmation of the message, a stupendous miracle was wrought. The sun went ten degrees backward upon the dial of Ahaz on which it had gone down.

S.—Who sent messengers to congratulate Hezekiah upon his recovery from sickness, and to inquire respecting the wonder which was done in the land?

F.—The king of Babylon. Hezekiah was flattered with the attention shown to him, received the messengers gladly, and showed them all the treasures of his house. For his pride and ostentation in this matter, he was reprov'd by Isaiah, and was told that the time was near, when all his treasures should be carried to Babylon.

S.—By whom was the land invaded soon after this?

F.—By Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Having captured several of the cities of Judah, he came, at length, and sat down before Lachish, intending, when that was taken, to attack Jerusalem itself. Hezekiah made every possible preparation for defense. He fortified the city; he enrolled and drilled his army; and succeeded, for a time, in buying off the Assyrian army. But Sennacherib soon returned, and sent messengers to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. Hezekiah now brought the case more directly to God, and entreated the prophet Isaiah to intercede for him. He did so, and received for answer that Jerusalem was safe; that it was under the Divine protection; that Sennacherib should not come near it, nor shoot an arrow against it.*

At this juncture the king of Assyria was called away to defend his

*Detailed accounts of these expeditions of Sennacherib, and of the siege of Lachish have been recovered from the mounds near the Tigris, all going to confirm the sacred history. See Rawlinson's Evidences, pp. 19, 20.

own dominions, which were invaded by Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia. But in a little time, he was back again in Judea, more resolved than ever on the capture of Jerusalem. But his bloody purpose was most remarkably and effectually defeated. An angel from God came down into his camp, and slew 185,000 of his men in a single night. Terrified at this dreadful catastrophe, Sennacherib hastened back into his own country, where he was slain by his two sons.

S.—How did Hezekiah pass the remainder of his days?

F.—The latter part of his life was one of peace and quietness. He was revered by his own subjects, and feared and honored by the surrounding nations. He fortified Jerusalem in the strongest manner, brought a supply of pure water into it, and did all in his power for the improvement and happiness of his people. He died in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and in the twenty-ninth of his reign, and was buried in the most honorable of the sepulchers of the sons of David.

S.—Who was his successor?

F.—Manasseh his son, who was only twelve years old when he came to the throne. Falling into the hands of wicked advisers and guardians, he became as pre-eminently corrupt and sinful, as his father had been holy. He not only restored the high places, worshiped idols, and erected altars unto Baal, but he removed the ark of the covenant from its place in the sanctuary, and set up an idol in its stead. He practiced enchantments, consulted those who had familiar spirits, and made his children pass through the fire to Moloch. Nor was he content to work these abominations alone; but being naturally of a cruel temper, he persecuted those who would not unite with him. The prophets who were sent to reprove him he treated with the utmost contempt and outrage, and filled Jerusalem, not only with idols, but with innocent blood. The venerable prophet Isaiah, the friend and counselor of his father, he is said to have sawn asunder with a wooden saw. But it was not long before the vengeance of God overtook him. Esarhaddon, the son and successor of Sennacherib, undertook to accomplish what his

father had in vain attempted,—the subjugation of all Palestine to his sway. He first marched his army into the territory of the ten tribes, and carried away a multitude of Israelites—the remains of the former captivity. He then sent his generals into Judea, where they found and captured Manasseh, bound him with chains, and carried him a prisoner to Babylon.

S.—What was the effect of this infliction?

F.—His prison and his chains brought him to repentance. With deep sorrow and humiliation, he implored the Divine pity and forgiveness; and God was pleased so to melt the heart of the king of Babylon, that he consented to restore him to his liberty and kingdom.

S.—How did Manasseh demean himself after his return?

F.—He redressed, so far as possible, the mischiefs which his former impiety had occasioned. He cleansed and purified the temple, destroyed the idols, restored the reformation which his father had made, and obliged his people to worship and serve the Lord. After this, he reigned in prosperity about twenty years. His whole reign was fifty-five years—longer than that of any of the kings of Judah. He retained to the last a deep sense of his unworthiness, and was unwilling, on this account, to be buried in the sepulchers of the kings. We have what purports to be his penitential prayer, in one of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament. It is certainly a very humble and remarkable prayer, whether offered by Manasseh or not.

S.—Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon. What was his character?

F.—He imitated the wickedness of the first part of his father's reign; but not the repentance of the latter part. He gave himself to all sorts of impiety. But his time was short. Two of his servants conspired against him and slew him, when he had reigned only two years. He died at the age of twenty-four.

S.—How old was Josiah at his father's death?

F.—Only eight years. He began early to seek the Lord, and

was a prince of extraordinary piety and goodness. At the age of sixteen, he took upon himself the administration of the government; and, beginning with the reformation of religion, he endeavored to purge it from all those corruptions which had been introduced in the preceding reign. He traveled through his kingdom, demolishing altars, cutting down the groves, and breaking in pieces the molten images. He defiled Tophet which was in the valley of Hinnom, burned the chariots of the sun, and drove the Sodomites out of the land. He overthrew the altar of Jeroboam's calf at Bethel, where it had stood more than three hundred years.

S.—In repairing and purifying the temple, what was found?

F.—The priests found there the book of the law of the Lord. The probability is that they found the *original copy*, written by the hand of Moses, which had been deposited in the ark of the covenant with the tables of stone. The book was carried immediately to the king, who had never seen a copy of the law, and was read before him. He was much affected in view of the great guilt which had been incurred, rent his clothes, and sent some of his principal officers to Huldah the prophetess to inquire of the Lord. She returned answer, that the judgments threatened in the book of the law would ere long be executed; but, on account of the contrition of the king, they should not come in his day.

S.—What further reformation was attempted by Josiah?

F.—He called together the elders and people of the land, had the book of the law publicly read to them; and caused them to enter into a solemn covenant to observe and do according to its precepts. And when the season of the Passover came round, he kept it with more exactness and solemnity than had ever before been witnessed in Israel. In short, this excellent prince did all in his power to appease and avert the wrath of God; but the doom of Judah had been pronounced, and could not be revoked.

S.—What occasioned the death of Josiah?

F.—In the thirty-first year of his reign, the king of Egypt asked permission to pass through some part of Judea on his way to fight

the king of Babylon; but Josiah would not consent to it, and unwisely drew up his army in the valley of Megiddo to oppose him. The two armies came to battle, and Josiah was slain. And great was the lamentation in Judea on account of him. Jeremiah the prophet prepared a funeral elegy on the occasion, which was long sung by the singers of Israel.

S.—What changes took place in the government after the death of Josiah?

F.—At the first, his son Jehoahaz was called to the kingdom, but he reigned only three months. On the return of the king of Egypt from his war in the East, he deposed Jehoahaz, and sent him a prisoner into Egypt,—where he died. Jehoahaz had an elder brother, whose name was Eliakim: Him the king of Egypt took, changed his name to Jehoiakim, and placed him on the throne of Judah. He was a cruel, wicked prince, who strove to undo all that his pious father had accomplished; and when reproved by Jeremiah and the other prophets, he was angry, and put some of them to death. In the fourth year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon captured Jerusalem, and took him prisoner; but upon his humbling himself to the king of Babylon, and consenting to become his tributary and vassal, his throne and kingdom were restored to him. It was at this time that the first captives were taken to Babylon, among whom was Daniel and his three friends. Only three years after this, Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and entered into a confederacy with the king of Egypt; whereupon the Babylonians again invaded Judah, took Jehoiakim prisoner, and slew him with the sword. His lifeless body was cast out into the field, having none to bury it; thus fulfilling one of the prophecies of Jeremiah: “Thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah. His dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost, and I will punish him and his seed for their iniquity” (Jer. xxxvi. 30).

S.—Who next ascended the throne?

F.—A son of Jehoiakim, called Jehoiachin, and sometimes

Jeconiah, and Coniah. But he reigned only three months and ten days, when he was taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar and carried to Babylon. He was kept in prison until the death of Nebuchadnezzar,—after which he was released; but he never returned to Jerusalem. Many of the princes and principal inhabitants of Judah were carried into captivity at the same time with Jeconiah,—among whom was the prophet Ezekiel.

S.—What followed the captivity of Jehoiachin?

F.—Over those who still remained in the land, Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah, a third son of Josiah, exacting from him, at the same time, a most solemn promise to be true and faithful to himself. This engagement Zedekiah fulfilled for several years; but in the eighth year of his reign, he violated it, and entered into a confederacy with the king of Egypt. This brought Nebuchadnezzar again to Jerusalem, with a great army, by which the city was closely besieged, and after a time captured and destroyed. Zedekiah attempted to escape, but was taken, and brought before the king of Babylon for judgment. He first caused the children of Zedekiah to be slain before his eyes; then his eyes were put out, and he was carried in chains to Babylon, to be a close prisoner to the end of his days.

After the capture of Jerusalem, the officers of Nebuchadnezzar first gathered together all the wealth of the place, including the vessels of the house of the Lord; they then set fire to the city and temple; brake down the walls, the fortresses, and towers; and ceased not till they had made the place an utter desolation. Many of the people were put to death, and many others were taken to Babylon, to join their brethren that were already there.

S.—Were any of the Jews still left in Judea?

F.—Some of the poorer of the people—enough to till the ground and dress the vineyards still remained, and Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam was made their governor. With him Jeremiah chose to remain, rather than go with the captives to Babylon. In a short time, Gedaliah was murdered by Ishmael, one of the seed royal, who

hoped to make himself king. Failing in this, he fled for his life and took refuge among the Ammonites. Johanan the son of Kareah now took upon himself the office of governor; and fearing the return of the Babylonians to avenge the death of Gedaliah, he resolved,—in direct opposition to the word of the Lord by Jeremiah,—to flee into Egypt. He did so, taking Jeremiah and many others with him. It is supposed that Jeremiah died in Egypt.

S.—Were any captives carried to Babylon after this?

F.—Yes; about two years after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Babylonians came and swept over the land of Israel again, carrying away the poor remains of the scattered people. The holy land was now left waste and desolate to enjoy her Sabbaths, according to the denunciations of the prophets, until the time of the captivity should be fulfilled.

CONVERSATION XXXVIII.

BOOK OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES.—History of the books.—Original plan and division.—Discrepancies to be found.—How harmonized.—Omissions and additions found and arranged.—Design of the books.—Author or authors unknown.—Surmises.—Importance of the books as a matter of reliable history.

Son.—In tracing the history of the kings of Judah and Israel, we have relied chiefly on the books of the Kings and Chronicles. Please inform us in regard to these books.

Father.—The two books of Kings formerly constituted but one book, and are closely connected with the books of Samuel. Indeed, the two books of Samuel are called, in the Vulgate, the first and second books of Kings; while our books of Kings are the third and fourth. The present division and naming of these books are of modern date.

S.—Why are these books called *Kings*?

F.—Our two books of Kings may be so called from the fact, that they contain a history of the kings of Judah and Israel; or more probably from the fact, that the initial word of the first book is king. Thus the Hebrew names of Genesis, of Ecclesiastes, and of some other books, come from the initial words.

S.—Who was the author or authors of the books of Kings and Chronicles?

F.—On this subject there has been much difference of opinion. Some have thought them the work of the same author, and have ascribed the whole to Ezra; but I cannot be of this opinion. The books of Chronicles are evidently *supplementary* to those of Kings, and were written at a later period. This consideration is against the supposition that they belong to the same author. The most probable theory is, that these books were not originally composed by any one author, but were compiled by some inspired prophet or prophets from the authorized records of the Kings of Judah and Israel. That such records were carefully kept, there can be no

doubt. Under each reign, an individual was appointed for this very purpose. The records which these men kept are called the *Chronicles*, *i. e.*, the *Day-books*, *Diaries*, of the several kings, and are continually referred to, in our copies, as the sources from which the history was taken, and as containing more full accounts than it comported with the plan of the sacred writer to give. From these registers, and others equally authentic, our sacred narrative was undoubtedly compiled; the Holy Spirit directing the writer just what to take, and what to omit, and how to modify and correct the different statements, so that the completed work might be regarded as the inspired word of God.

S.—Do we know the compilers of the books of the Kings?

F.—We do not. There was a succession of inspired prophets, reaching all the way from David to Zedekiah, either or all of whom may have been concerned in this matter. Jeremiah had Baruch for a scribe; and it is not unlikely that Baruch, under the direction of Jeremiah, may have finished the writing of the Kings, excepting the last few verses of the second book. The whole may have been revised, and these last verses added, by Ezra, after the captivity.

S.—When were the books of Chronicles written?

F.—These were obviously written, or rather compiled, after the captivity; and were designed, as I said, to be *supplementary* to the books of Kings. They contain not a little which we find in the Kings, and often in the same words,—showing that the writers of both had access to the same original documents. Still, the Chronicles omit much that we find in the Kings, and contain much that we do not find there. They are called in the Septuagint *παρὰλειπομένα*, things *left out* or *omitted*. There is no reason to doubt that these books were compiled by Ezra.

S.—Are there any discrepancies between the statements in these books?

F.—If by discrepancies are meant *differences* of statement, there undoubtedly are such. Why should the latter books have been written at all if they were to contain the same as the former and in

the same words? But if, by discrepancies, are meant *irreconcilable contradictions*, I can only say that I have not found them. There are a few errors of transcribers, more especially in regard to numbers, which require to be corrected; but aside from these, there are no seeming contradictions which may not easily be reconciled.

S.—What historical facts are omitted in the Chronicles, which are found in the books of Samuel and the Kings?

F.—The following are the more material omitted facts:

1. The history of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, and of all the kings of the ten tribes, in their succession under Jeroboam. In the Chronicles, we have only incidental references to these kings; while in Kings, we have distinct accounts of them all.

2. The account of David's sin in the matter of Uriah is not in the Chronicles. Nor—

3. Do we find in the Chronicles the story of Amnon's treatment of his sister Tamar, and of his consequent death at the hands of Absalom. Nor—

4. Do the Chronicles inform us of Absalom's rebellion, defeat, and death.

5. The Chronicles have nought to say of the hanging of the seven sons and grandsons of Saul, to appease the Gibeonites, and avert the severity of famine (2 Sam. xxi).

6. David's song of thanksgiving, after having vanquished all his enemies, is not in the Chronicles.

7. We have no account in Chronicles of Adonijah's conspiracy and death; neither of the death of Joab. Nor—

8. Have we any account in Chronicles of Solomon's defection, in his old age, and of the consequent denunciations pronounced against him.

9. As we have no distinct history in the Chronicles of any of the kings of Israel, we hear nothing there of Ahab and his descendants, and of the intercourse of Elijah and Elisha with that wicked race of kings. The numerous miracles of Elijah and Elisha,—the story of the drought, the famine, and of Elijah's successful intercession for

rain; the miracles of both these men in raising the dead, and the narrative of Elijah's translation to heaven,—all this, and much more in regard to these prophets, is omitted by the writer of the Chronicles.

S.—What facts do we find in the Chronicles, which are omitted in the other books?

F.—1. There are the genealogical tables, reaching from Adam to the time of Ezra, and some of them much later,—the names in which must have been recorded by a later hand.

2. The number and names of David's mighty men; also the numbers from the different tribes of Israel, who came to David to Hebron to make him king.

3. The story of Hiram's kindness to David, in sending him materials and artificers from Tyre, to build him a house.

4. The number and names of the Levites who assisted David in bringing up the ark; also the song of praise which was sung on that occasion.

5. The account of the great preparation which David made, in the latter part of his life, for the building of the temple.

6. We have no account in the other books of David's appointing the courses of the Levites, the priests, the singers, the porters, and the captains, such as is given in the Chronicles.

7. David's charge to Solomon and the princes concerning the temple, and other matters, is much more full in the Chronicles, than in the Kings.

8. In the Kings, we have no account of Abijam's speech to Jeroboam and his army, nor of the great victory which he gained over them. Neither—

9. Have we, in the Kings, any account of Manasseh's repentance, and of his restoration to his throne and kingdom. Of this most remarkable display of the power and grace of God in the recovery of a flagrant and hardened transgressor, we should never have heard, but for the writer of the Chronicles.

On the whole, we have much reason to be thankful for the books

of Chronicles. Instead of raising cavils and objections in regard to them, and thus endeavoring to disparage their authority, and bring them into contempt, we should rather bless God for them, diligently study them, and gather up lessons of heavenly wisdom from them. Like all other Scripture, when properly used, these books will be found "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

S.—What seems to have been the design of the writer, and of the Holy Spirit, in giving us the books of Chronicles, in addition to those of Samuel and the kings?

F.—The *general* design in giving these books was to instruct and benefit the church of God, in all coming time. The more *specific* design of the writers was to benefit the afflicted church of God, in his own time. He wished to encourage the returned exiles from Babylon in building the new temple, by setting before them the high examples of David and Solomon. By showing them how much their former princes contributed to the old temple, he wished to stir up the princes and people around him to a corresponding liberality. He wished also to instruct the priests and Levites in their appropriate duties, by pointing them to the manner in which the orders of God's house had been observed in other days, and finally, as there was danger, in the confusion and distress of the times, that the genealogies of the people might be broken and lost, it seemed good to the writer of these books of Chronicles, and to the Holy Ghost who inspired him, to give a new and abbreviated edition of these genealogies, that so the line of them might be preserved, that our Savior might be known to be, what it had been predicted he should be, *the son of David*.

CONVERSATION XXXIX.

THE BOOK OF JOB.—A remarkable character.—Real or imaginary.—The land of Uz.—Its location.—Time at which Job lived.—The author of the book of Job.—The plan of the work.—Truth of the narrative.—Actual sound of God's voice.—Religious belief of those days.—The question of Job's second family being by the mother of the first.

Father.—Having now traced the history of God's people to the time of their captivity and dispersion, it will be necessary to turn back, and consider the books which have been omitted. And, first, the book of Job.

Son.—But do you think that such a man as Job ever lived—that he was a real, historical person?

F.—To be sure I do. Does not the Bible say expressly, "There was a man, in the land of Uz, whose name was Job?" And the two first chapters of the book are not poetry, but history. Then the existence of such a man as Job is assumed and spoken of, in other parts of the Bible. Thus in Ezekiel, Chap. xiv., it is repeatedly said, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in the city, they should deliver but their own souls." Here Job is as distinctly referred to as Noah or Daniel. The Apostle James also says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord," etc., (Chap. v. 11).

S.—If Job was a real, historical personage, my next question is, Where did he live? Where was the land of Uz?

F.—We cannot tell certainly, though I think we may with a high degree of probability. The land of Uz probably took its name from that of the original settler. Now there was an Uz among the children of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen. xxii. 21); and also among the descendants of Esau (Gen. xxxvi. 28); but both these are too late to meet the case before us. We also find the name of Uz among the grandsons of Shem (Gen. x. 23). He seems to have settled in Arabia, west of the Euphrates, between Chaldea and Idumea. And this was, probably, the residence of Job. In the

language of Scripture, this was an *eastern* country; and Job is said to have been “the greatest of all the children of *the East*.”

The supposition that this was the country where Job lived is strengthened by the fact that several of the persons and tribes mentioned in the book of Job resided in this vicinity. His three friends, and also Elihu, had their dwelling in Arabia, between the Euphrates and the Dead sea. The Sabeans and Chaldeans, who plundered the property of Job, were also in this vicinity. There is still a place in this country which the natives call Uz, and the tradition is, that this was the residence of Job.

S.—How early did Job live?

F.—We cannot tell certainly, but it must have been far back in the patriarchal age. He must have lived before the exode of the Israelites from Egypt, and the giving of the law at Sinai; for there is not an allusion to these important events in the whole book. There is a manifest allusion to the deluge, as a not very distant event. “Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden, which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood” (Job. xxii. 15, 16)? In fact, all the recorded circumstances respecting Job, such as the great age to which he lived; the nature of his property, consisting of flocks and herds; the religious rites which he practiced, which were purely patriarchal; the wandering tribes which plundered him, and the friends which visited him,—all go to place him among the patriarchs of the earliest times. He probably lived somewhere between the age of Terah, the father of Abraham, and the times of Jacob and Esau, about six hundred years after the deluge, and eighteen hundred years before the coming of Christ.

S.—Whom do you regard as the writer of the book of Job?

F.—I cannot tell certainly, but my belief is that it was written by Moses during his long residence in Arabia, previous to his call for the deliverance of his people. The story of Job’s unexampled sufferings, of his controversy with his friends, of his final deliverance and subsequent prosperity, must, of necessity, have been widely

known in Arabia, and could hardly fail to come to the ears of Moses during his residence in that country. Moses was perfectly competent, both as a poet and an historian, to write such a book; he was, probably, the only man in all that region who could write it; and what more natural than the supposition that he would employ some portion of his leisure in preparing it?

The consideration which, more than any other, satisfies me that Moses was the author of this book is, its unquestioned position in the canon of the Old Testament. Would the Israelites so early have accepted this book, and so pertinaciously have retained it among their other Scriptures, had it been of heathen or doubtful origin; had they not been able to trace it to their great lawgiver and judge? Nor does the fact that the book contains some Syriac and Arabic expressions militate at all against this supposition. The story, it must be remembered, is of Arabian origin. The book, too, was written in Arabia, and by one who had long been a dweller in that country. Why, then, should it not bear some marks of its original?

S.—I think you are right in ascribing the authorship of the book of Job to Moses. Its place in the canon of the Old Testament proves it. Please now inform us as to the plan and method of this ancient book.

F.—The body of the work, as you know, is Hebrew poetry; but the first two chapters and a part of the last, are prose. In the introduction, we have a brief account of Job's history, of his excellent character, of his great prosperity, and the reason of the sore trial with which he was visited.

S.—Do you think the account here given of the meetings of the spirits in the other world is literally true?

F.—It may be so; though I am inclined to interpret it differently. This part of the story has the air of a parable,—of which the Arabians are excessively fond,—a parable introduced to set forth the reason why God should so sorely afflict so good a man as Job. As a parable, this part of the narrative has great beauty and force. As veritable history, it is beset with many difficulties.

S.—What is the general subject of the poetical part of the book?

F.—It is a debate between Job and his friends on the question whether this life is one of retribution, or probation. Does God treat men, in this world, in strict accord with their characters? Does he uniformly prosper the good, and afflict the wicked, so that we may judge of the characters of men by the manner in which they are dealt with? In other words, did Job's great afflictions prove that he was a great hypocrite, and a very wicked man?

S.—What was the method of the debate? Was it conducted in an orderly manner?

F.—Following a season of sympathetic silence, Job opens his mouth, and gives utterance to his complaint. Then Eliphaz the Temanite,—who seems to be a leader among the three friends,—commences the discussion. To him Job replies. Next, Bildad the Shuite continues the argument; and Job replies to him. Zophar the Naamathite next assails the poor afflicted man; and Job replies again. This ends what I conceive to be the first session of the conference, and brings us to the close of the fourteenth chapter.

In the second session, the same order is observed, Eliphaz opens the discussion, and Job replies. Bildad continues it, and Job replies. Zophar adds his rebukes and reproaches, and Job replies again. Chap. xiv. to xxi. The third session proceeds in the same way, except that Zophar fails to perform his part, and Job has the last word. Chap. xxii. to xxxi.

The debate might have ended here, but that Elihu, who had been a listener, and was displeased that no answer had been given to Job rises up and delivers a long speech, much in the strain of Job's previous accusers. As he draws towards the close, a storm of wind, thunder, and lightning is seen rising in the desert, and approaching the affrighted speakers; and presently the voice of God himself is heard issuing from the cloud. And for awful sublimity and pathos, this speech of the Almighty has never been equaled. I will not attempt to describe it. To be appreciated, it must be read and pondered. Job is crushed under it, and exclaims, in the deepest

humiliation and penitence, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer? I lay my hand upon my mouth. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!" The friends of Job are sharply rebuked, and entreat him to make intercession for them. Job is restored to health, and to more than his former prosperity, is blessed with another family, and ends his days in peace.

S.—Do you suppose that God literally spake with an audible voice on this awful occasion?

F.—I have no doubt of it. He often spoke face to face with the patriarchs,—but never, unless on the top of Sinai, with such god-like sublimity and solemnity as at this time.

S.—As the book of Job belongs to the patriarchal age, it must be of great interest to know what religious opinions and observances prevailed at that early period. Will you please indicate some of these?

F.—Job and his friends all believed in the existence of *one God*—the Supreme, the Infinite, the Almighty. They regarded him as the creator of the world, and as its rightful governor. They believed in the existence of angels, an order of spiritual beings superior to ourselves, some of whom were holy—"the sons of God," and some were sinful. Man, in the time of Job, was regarded as a depraved and sinful being. "What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Chap. xiv. 15). These men also believed in the necessity of repentance and reconciliation with God; and that, if men would repent, they should be forgiven. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." "If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up; thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle" (Chap. xxii. 21, 23). The patriarchs believed that God was to be worshiped by sacrifices and burnt offerings, designed originally to point to the one great sacrifice that was to be made for the world. It was in this way that Job sought to make expiation for the sins of his children; and that the sins of his friends were to be expiated. (Chap. i. 5, 6; xlii. 8).

S.—Did Job believe in a future state of rewards and punishments?

F.—Yes; and (as I think) in the resurrection of the body. This is intimated in one of the passages commonly referred to to prove the contrary. “Man lieth down, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep” (Chap. xiv. 11, 12). Here is a clear intimation that, *when the heavens are no more,—when the last great day shall come, there will be a general resurrection.* But the same great truth is more explicitly set forth in another passage. “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Chap. xix. 26, 27). I adopt the common rendering of this disputed passage, for two reasons: First, it is the more obvious, natural rendering, and has been so admitted by the most eminent interpreters. And, secondly, the connection clearly indicates that something of great importance is about to be uttered—something that must never be lost sight of or forgotten. “O that my words were now written! O that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever!” After such an introduction, what might we expect that the Patriarch was about to say? That he expected to be healed of his sores, and to stand forth again a restored and prosperous man? Or should we not expect him to say something wonderful and glorious, more important than anything he had ever said? In short, should we not expect him to say just what, I think he does say: “I know that my Redeemer liveth,” etc. To my own mind, there can be no question here. Nor do I deem it improbable that God should vouchsafe to his tried and afflicted servant a truth, which had not before been so clearly revealed, but which, in later times, was often repeated, that the great Redeemer of lost men would one day come in the clouds of heaven, to judge the world in righteousness, and vindicate and save his once aspersed but beloved people.

S.—I have but one more question on this wonderful book. We

are told that, on Job's recovery and restitution, he had the same number of children given him, that he had before. Is it likely that they were by the same mother?

F.—I cannot speak with confidence on this point. We have no account of the death of Job's wife; and as his trial may not have lasted more than a year, she may have lived to have another family. Most interpreters, however, suppose a second wife.

CONVERSATION XL.

THE PSALMS.—What they are.—Their purpose and the authors.—Original and ancient division.—The peculiarity of Hebrew poetry.—The imprecations of the Psalms.—The glory of infidels.—The perplexity explained.—Inspiration of David.—Value of the Psalms to Christians.

Son.—What are the Psalms?

Father.—They are a collection of Hebrew lyrics, designed (or the most of them) to be sung in the temple, and in the public worship of the Israelites. Nor has their use been limited to the church of Israel. They were sung in the assemblies of the primitive Christians. They still have a place in all our churches, and will continue to have, to the end of time.

S.—Who were the authors of them?

F.—About half of them are expressly ascribed to David; and he probably wrote many that have no inscriptions. Twelve of the Psalms are ascribed to Asaph; twelve to the sons of Korah, or *for* the sons of Korah, who were singers; five are said to have been written for other singers, as Heman, Ethan, and Jeduthun; two were written for Solomon; and one—the ninetieth—was written “by Moses, the man of God.” One certainly—perhaps more—were written after the captivity (Ps. cxxxvii).

S.—Most of the Psalms are prepared with inscriptions. How much credit is to be given to these inscriptions?

F.—Some writers think them of equal authority with the Psalms; but this is not generally admitted. They are very ancient, however,—are written in the Hebrew language and, in general, may be regarded as correct. The ascriptions to David, to Asaph, and to Moses are obviously correct.

S.—You speak of the Psalms as a collection of sacred lyrics. Who are supposed to have collected them? And by what authority did they act?

F.—The Psalms were not all collected at once. They were divided anciently into five sections. The first closes with the forty-

first Psalm, and is composed entirely of the Psalms of David. It ends with this sublime inscription: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen."

The second section extends from Psalm forty-second to Psalm seventy-one. These Psalms are ascribed to different authors, and the whole ends with these words: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

The third section extends from Psalm seventy-two to eighty-nine. It contains but one of David's Psalms, and closes with the following ascription: "Blessed be the Lord forevermore. Amen, and Amen."

The fourth section is a short one, extending from Psalm ninety to one hundred and six. With two or three exceptions, these Psalms are anonymous, and their authors unknown. The section closes with the same ascription as the fourth.

The fifth and last section extends from Psalm one hundred and seventh to the end. It is of a miscellaneous character, and was probably intended to gather up such of the scattered Hebrew songs as were suitable for public worship. Many of them, I have no doubt, belonged to David.

The first two of these sections may have been collected in the time of David, and under his eye; the third and fourth during the time of the kings; and the last subsequent to the captivity. They were all collected and arranged by Divine authority and by inspired men. The last collection, and indeed the whole, must have passed under the eye of Ezra.

S.—The Psalms, we all know, are poetical compositions. What do you regard as the great peculiarity of Hebrew poetry?

F.—The poetry of the Hebrews does not run in rhyme, or rhythm. Its leading peculiarity is the *parallelism*, consisting in a repetition of the main thought in a following proposition, thus: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet" (Ps. xci. 13). "Lo, thine enemies, O Lord! for lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered." "The righteous shall flourish as the

palm tree ; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon ” (Ps. xcii. 9, 12). In some instances, the sentiment is repeated more than once : “ The floods have lifted up, O Lord ! the floods have lifted up their voice ; the floods lift up their waves ” (Ps. xciii. 3).

In several of the Psalms, we find an artificial arrangement, as the choruses in the 136th, adapting them to the use of the great choir of singers in the temple. The arrangement of the 119th Psalm is very peculiar. It is divided into twenty-two sections—the number of the Hebrew letters, and each of the verses in the several sections commences with the letter with which the section is headed. Thus each of the eight verses under the head of Aleph commences, in the Hebrew, with Aleph ; and each of the eight verses, under the head of Beth, commences with Beth. Whether the verses of this long Psalm were so arranged to assist the memory, or for some other purpose, we do not know. The general subject of the Psalms is the *law*, the *testimonies*, the *statutes*, the *commandments*,—in other words, *the revealed truth and will of God*, setting forth their excellence and their happy results. The whole has been compared to a string of beads, the several verses having little connection one with another, except that they all relate to the same general topic. Whether David composed and arranged this long Psalm, or whether it was put together by some subsequent compiler, it is impossible to tell. Its noble sentiments, as well as the position in which it stands, all go to proclaim it the word of the living God.

S.—The Psalms taken together are certainly a Divine book ; but there are passages in them,—I refer to the imprecations,—which sometimes trouble me. Will you favor us with your opinion in respect to them ?

F.—The imprecations in the Psalms,—over which infidels have long gloried, and with which good people are often perplexed,—are not of so difficult interpretation as is commonly supposed. Some of them are mere predictions of what *will* overtake the wicked, without expressing any malevolent desire. Others may be regarded as a *description* of feelings entertained at the time, without endorsing

or justifying the feelings expressed; in which case, inspiration is only responsible for giving an accurate description. This remark may perhaps apply to the closing verses of the 137th Psalm. The writer of this Psalm,—either during his residence in Babylon, or after his return,—sets himself down to describe the feelings of the captives. “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows, in the midst thereof: For there, they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” The description, thus commenced, goes on, obviously, to the end of the sixth verse; and why not suppose it to reach to the end of the Psalm? The captives in their misery are represented as saying, “O daughter of Babylon which art to be destroyed! happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us! Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!” This is what the writer of the Psalms affirms that the captives said and sung at the time. He gives a faithful account of it, without endorsing the sentiment expressed.

But most of the imprecations in the Psalms are to be regarded as *Divine denunciations* against the wicked. David was an inspired prophet of God. As the anointed ruler of Israel, he stood in the place of God; and through him God denounced the severest judgments upon the wicked,—as he does in thousands of other places in the Bible. Nor are these denunciations more severe or unaccountable than some which fell, or will yet fall, from the lips of the Savior. “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

S.—If I understand you, you would assume the inspiration of David, in accounting for his imprecations.

F.—Most certainly I would. If we were to regard David, in some of his imprecations, as speaking out of his own private feelings, and mixing them up, as they often are, with his highest and

devoutest aspirations, this would indeed be unaccountable. But when we regard him as the prophet of God, standing in the place of God, and giving utterance to *God's* denunciations against the wicked, the whole aspect of the thing is changed. We can understand now what it might be difficult to explain on any other supposition.

S.—How do you account for it that these Psalms have been so precious to the people of God in all ages,—not only to those for whom they were first written, but to Christians everywhere—to Christians now?

F.—I account for it, in the first place, because they are so admirably adapted to the worship of God; and worship is sweet to the children of God everywhere, and at all times. Then the Psalms are ever precious to the people of God, because they deal so largely in religious experience. A religious man is rarely, if ever, placed in circumstances where he will not find, in the Psalms, something appropriate to his case. Hence, in sickness, in bereavements, in persecutions, in old age, and on the bed of death, the Psalms become an invariable and most valuable companion. To the end of the world, the Psalms will occupy the same place, in religious experience, which they now do. To the end of the world, they will impart solace to the afflicted, and peace to the dying, as they have done for thousands of years that are past.

CONVERSATION XLI.

THE PROVERBS.—Was Solomon the author of them all.—The three thousand proverbs.—King Lemuel.—Location of his kingdom.—The design of the Proverbs.—Why they seldom refer to the Sabbath.—Remarks regarding their style.—Their practical value and adaptation to mankind.

Son.—This book is called, in the first verse of it, “the Proverbs of Solomon.” Did Solomon write the whole of it?

Father.—He did not. The first six verses, which are introductory, and the two last chapters, he did not write. Possibly, he may not have originated some of the Proverbs. But of the book in general, he was the author.

S.—Are there any sectional divisions in this book, as in the Psalms?

F.—Yes; there are five. Commencing with the seventh verse of the first Chapter, the first section extends to the close of Chapter ninth. This section consists, not of short pithy Proverbs, but of moral, religious instruction and warning, drawn out to considerable length. The second section consists entirely of Proverbs, and reaches to Chapter xxii., 17. The third section commences with the exhortation: “Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise.” This section, as to the form of it, is like the first, and continues to the end of Chapter xxiv. Thus far, the book may have been prepared and published in the days of Solomon. The fourth section commences with the twenty-fifth chapter, and contains “the Proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah copied out.” Of course, this part of the book was annexed to the preceding, some three hundred years after Solomon was dead. These “men of Hezekiah” had a large amount of material from which to select; since we are told that “Solomon spake three thousand Proverbs.”

The fifth section comprises the two last chapters which Solomon never saw. They contain “the words of Agur,” and “the words of king Lemuel.” They may have been annexed to the book by

the "men of Hezekiah," and the whole collection was thus completed. The introduction seems to have been written at the same time.

S.—What are we to think of *Wisdom*, which speaks so impressively in the eighth chapter of this book? Is it a personified attribute of God? or is it the Son of God?

F.—If it is a personification of the Divine Wisdom, its voice is entitled to the most reverent attention. It is the voice of God. But I incline to regard it, not as a personification at all, but as the veritable *Logos*, the Son of God. This agrees entirely with the account which the speaker gives of himself. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, then was I by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Nearly all the ancient and most modern expositors have regarded the speaker here as *the Christ*. And the changes which subsequently passed upon the original word indicate the same. This word was well translated by the Seventy, *sophia*. This was changed by Philo and other Alexandrian critics into *logos*; and this word the Apostle John appropriately adopts as a name of Christ. Thus the *Logos* of John may be traced historically back to the original word translated *wisdom* in the Proverbs.

S.—Who were Agur and the king Lemuel spoken of in the two last chapters of the Proverbs?

F.—According to the rendering in our English version, it is impossible to say who they were. That they were Israelites is evident, since these chapters were written originally in Hebrew. But what Israelitish king or kingdom existed in or near Palestine, in the times of the kings of Judah and Israel, who can tell? Professor Stuart gets some light on the subject from a passage of the sacred history recorded in 1 Chron. iv. 39–43. It seems from these verses that, in the days of King Hezekiah, a band of the Simeonites migrated into

Idumea in quest of pasture for their flocks. They destroyed the original inhabitants, and there formed a little community or kingdom for themselves. This territory was originally called Massa, from Massa, one of the sons of Ishmael who settled there (see Gen. xxv. 14). Massa is rendered *prophecy* in our translation; but Professor Stuart makes it a proper name, and thus translates the first verse of Proverbs, Chapter xxx. "The words of Agur, the son of her who ruled in Massa, 'I have toiled for God, I have toiled for God,'"*i. e.* to find the knowledge of God, "and have ceased. Surely, I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man."

King Lemuel, Professor Stuart thinks may have been the brother of Agur, and succeeded his mother in the government of Massa. The first verse of chapter thirty-first is thus translated: "The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him." This supposition accounts for a Hebrew community outside of Palestine, in the time of Hezekiah, and meets all the exigencies of the case. If the translation of Professor Stuart is admissible, we feel inclined to adopt it. It throws light on one of the darkest portions of the Old Testament.

S.—We will pass from the dark and the difficult in the book of Proverbs to things which are more obvious. What do you regard as the main design and object of the book?

F.—Undoubtedly, the main design was, to inculcate practical wisdom in managing the common intercourse and affairs of life. In its main aspects, it is moral, social, practical. Still, the subject of religion is not ignored. Its first words (after the introduction) are, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;" and this sentiment is never lost sight of or forgotten. Its warnings are, some of them, most impressive, and its denunciations terrible. Witness the latter part of the first chapter: "Wisdom crieth without," etc., to the end.

S.—How do you account for it that there is, in the book before us, so little reference to the Sabbath, and to the religious rites and festivals of the Israelites?

F.—Not, surely, on the ground that these rights were neglected in the days of Solomon, or that he set no value upon them. The truth is, he had no occasion to speak of them particularly. They did not come within his plan. The magnificent temple which he built, and the costly service which he established there, show in what estimation he held the rites of his religion; but in a book like that before us they would have been out of place.

S.—What have you to say further as to the style and method of this book?

F.—It is written after the usual manner of the Hebrew poets. We find the parallelism everywhere. In its proverbial style, it seems to have created a pattern, rather than followed one. In the subsequent ages, this method of inculcating truth became exceedingly popular all over the East. We have examples of it in the aphorisms of the son of Sirach, and in what is called, in the Apocrypha, “the Wisdom of Solomon.” For long ages, the wisdom of the East flowed chiefly in this channel. Pithy sayings, not homilies; pointed maxims, and not long discourses, prevailed everywhere. And this mode of teaching has its advantages. It makes an impression, and is much more likely to be remembered.

The book of Proverbs is emphatically one for all time. As man is essentially the same being, at all times and in all places, the rules and principles here laid down apply to him everywhere. There is very little in the book of Proverbs which is not as applicable to us in these days, as it was to the Hebrews three thousand years ago. The value of such a book,—couched in such pithy and pungent language,—must be in the future, as it is now, very great. Its usefulness will cease only when men cease to live and act like men in all their social and civil relations. In other words, it will not cease till earth and time shall be no more.

CONVERSATION XLII.

ECCLESIASTES.—Why so called.—Ancient Hebrew name.—Its author.—The plan.—Considered a drama by some.—Other opinions.—The question of the piety of Solomon.—Evidences of his repentance and recovery.—The grand object of wise men at this period.—Valuable lessons to be derived from this book.

Son.—Why is this book called Ecclesiastes?

Father.—This is the name given to it by the Septuagint translators. The Hebrew name of the book is *Cohleth*,—both words signifying *preacher*. The book may well be called *the preacher*; or more properly, perhaps, a *preachment*, a *discourse*. It is a discourse, which may have been delivered, originally, to an assembled multitude of Israelites, and recorded, under a Divine inspiration, to be read in their assemblies, and in the church of God, to the end of time.

S.—Who was the author of the book?

F.—I agree with the Rabbins, and with almost the entire body of commentators, ancient and modern, in regarding Solomon as the author of this book. Indeed, I see not how this opinion should ever have been called in question. In the first verse of the book, the writer says: “The words of the preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem.” But none of the sons of David, except Solomon, ever was king of Jerusalem. And much that the writer says of himself, in other parts of the book, agree to Solomon and to no one else.

S.—At what period of his life is it supposed that Solomon wrote this book?

F.—It must have been written by him late in life. Much of the language of the book is manifestly the language of years—of long continued observation and experience. “I made me great works, I builded me houses; planted me vineyards; made me gardens and orchards, and pools of water to water the same. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house.” To be able to

say this, and much more of the same sort, the writer must have lived a course of years. In the last chapter of the book, the author presents himself before us as an old man. With him, the period had arrived when "The grasshopper was a burthen," and "desire failed." The years had come, in which he was constrained to say, "I have no pleasure in them."

S.—What may we regard as the plan of this book?

F.—Critics differ on this point. Some speak of it as a drama, where there are several speakers, each giving utterance to his own opinions. But who these speakers are, and where they are introduced—where the drama,—if it be one,—begins or ends, no one can tell. The whole has the appearance of having been uttered by one speaker. The preacher, the author of it is one.

S.—Some critics regard the book as a regular, methodical treatise concerning the highest good of man, showing in what it does not consist, and in what it does.

F.—I know they do; and they go so far as to point out the different parts of the discourse,—the introduction, the divisions, the topics of argument, the peroration, etc. But to common minds, these different sections of the book are not obvious. Indeed, it is not likely that the royal preacher had any particular plan or method in mind, in writing the book before us.

S.—What then is the general design and subject of the book?

F.—In the course of his life, Solomon had mingled largely with the world. He had amassed its riches, he had attained its honors, he had pursued and enjoyed its pleasures to the full; and when he had run the whole giddy round, and made a complete experiment, he sits down, under a Divine inspiration, to record the result, as he had learned it in his own experience. And he does it in the most emphatic terms—terms which lie at the basis, and constitute the motto, the text, of the entire discourse: "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

And as it was experience which led Solomon to the choice of his text, so the greater part of the discourse is to be regarded as a *rela-*

tion of his own personal experience. At least, this is the idea which, as it seems to me, we are to carry with us through the entire book, if we would rightly understand it. We are to regard it as proceeding from Solomon the aged, and to be, in great measure, an account of the workings of his own mind—a narrative of what he had seen, thought and felt, purposed and accomplished, during his eventful life, and of the conclusions to which he was solemnly brought at the close of it. Mingled with the narrative, there would be, we might expect, many wise suggestions and counsels; and so, in fact, we find them. Here are striking analogies, weighty instructions, solemn warnings, pungent reproofs; but the leading idea, running through the whole, is that of *experience*: carrying this idea along with us, it will not be hard to understand those parts of the book, which have been regarded as of most difficult interpretation.

S.—Do you regard Solomon as a truly pious man?

F.—Most certainly I do. He became pious in his youth. It is said of him, in early life, that “he loved the Lord exceedingly.” Think also of his prayers, at the time of his inauguration, and at the dedication of the temple, and of the glorious answers with which his supplications were crowned. It was not till the eleventh year of his reign that the temple was dedicated, when he offered that memorable dedicatory prayer; and it was several years after this, that “the Lord appeared unto him the second time,” and renewed his gracious promises, on condition of continued fidelity; while at the same time he severely threatened him, in case he declined. It may be said of Solomon therefore,—we *hope* it may,—that, during the greater part of his reign, he walked in the ways of David his father.

S.—How do you account for the declension and fall of so good a man as Solomon?

F.—Of course, I cannot assign any good reason for it; and yet it was not a strange or unaccountable occurrence. It could hardly be expected of a good man, who plunged so deeply into the world—who drank so largely of the Circean cup, that he should escape

unharméd. In the earnest pursuit of knowledge and of wealth, in the possession of increased and increasing honors, in the indulgence, to satiety, of sensual pleasures, and some of them forbidden pleasures, his heart became engrossed, his conscience blunted, and his affections were drawn away from God. In the simple but expressive language of Scripture, "when Solomon *was old*, his wives turned away his heart after other gods."

S.—How long did Solomon's declension probably continue?

F.—We do not know definitely; but as he was advanced in life before it commenced, and he was undoubtedly recovered from it before he died, we may hope that it did not continue very long. And while it did continue, Solomon was not as one who had never loved the Lord. "His wisdom," we are told, "remained with him." He had desires, endeavors, struggles, conflicts, monitions of conscience, and strivings of the Spirit, such as are known only to the child of God. The workings of his great mind at this melancholy period must have been very peculiar, and to record them for the benefit of others, seems to have been a principal object with him in writing Ecclesiastes.

S.—What seems to have been a problem with the wise men of the East, at the time of Solomon?

F.—It was to discover the *summum bonum*—the chief good of man. Solomon went into this investigation. He sought to discover "what is that *good* for the sons of men which they should do under heaven, all the days of their life." The method which he took in pursuing this inquiry was not one of philosophical speculation, but of induction, of fact. As he had abundant means for making the experiment, he determined to test it in his own experience. And so we find him, according to his own account of the matter, turning this way and that, chasing first this phantom and then that, and pronouncing one after another to be "vanity and vexation of spirit." "I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore, enjoy pleasure. And behold this also is vanity" (Chap. ii. 1).

Again: "I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, and to lay hold on folly. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards, etc. And whatsoever my eyes desired, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy. Then I looked on all the work of my hands, and on all the labor that I had labored to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Chap. ii. 3-11).

Still another experiment Solomon tells us of. "I applied my heart to know and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness. And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands" (Chap. vii. 25-28).

S.—Does Solomon confess to his having had improper, sinful thoughts at times?

F.—Yes, often. At one time, he said in his heart, "As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? This also is vanity." Again he said, "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor" (Chap. ii. 15, 24). When he "considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter, then," says he, "I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive" (Chap. iv. 1, 2).

When Solomon saw that "there be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and that there be wicked men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; then," says he, "I commended mirth; because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for that shall abide with him of his labor all the days of his life" (Chap. viii. 14, 15).

On one occasion, Solomon expresses the following strange opinions: "All things come alike to all. There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not.

As is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath" (Chap. ix. 2).

At another time, he was so much beside himself as to believe and say: "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast" (Chap. ix. 19, 20).

S.—If I understand you, you think that Solomon is not here expressing his *present matured opinions*, but rather telling what his thoughts had been at different times—relating his past experience—confessing the vain and simple thoughts which he had at times indulged.

F.—Exactly so; and these expressions are not to be quoted as the word of God, or the word of Solomon in his sober, sanctified state, but rather as a confession of evil thoughts which had been obtruded upon him, in seasons of temptation.

S.—We are much obliged to you, father, for your explanation of the dark passages above quoted. They relieve the book of one of the strongest objections ever made to it, and are quite satisfactory. Let us now turn to more agreeable topics. Is there not much holy, revealed truth brought out in the book before us?

F.—There certainly is. We have here set before us not only the vanity and emptiness of the world, but the being, the perfections, the sovereignty and providence of God. We are impressively taught the evil nature and terrible consequences of sin. We are taught the immortality of the human spirit, which, when the body returns to the earth as it was, is said to return to God who gave it. We also learn the certainty of a coming judgment, and of a future and righteous retribution. "Know thou that, for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

S.—We have heard of Solomon's declension in his old age. Is

there sufficient evidence in the book before us of his repentance and recovery?

F.—I think there is. We know the temptations which beset and overcame Solomon. We know the courses of worldliness and sensuality upon which he entered, and which proved the occasion of his fall. And now in the book before us, he makes full and honorable confession of all this. He tells us that he did enter upon these forbidden courses, and *why* he entered upon them, and how they proved to him a “vexation of spirit”—a source of anguish “more bitter than death.” He goes into particulars on this painful subject, palliating nothing, concealing nothing, and disclosing the humiliating and terrible results to which he successively came.

S.—Is there not something peculiar in the phraseology of Solomon’s confessions?

F.—There certainly is. The fool, with Solomon, is a wicked man, and madness and folly are equivalent to transgression and sin. When he tells us, therefore, that he “gave his heart to know madness and folly,” and “to lay hold on folly,” this is a solemn confession of guilt. The phrase “vexation of spirit,” so frequently recurring, is one of peculiar intensity. It imports contrition of spirit, a breaking of the heart.

The book of Ecclesiastes, therefore, or a considerable part of it, is to be regarded in much the same light as the penitential Psalms of David. It is a relation, from the life of Solomon himself, of his own distressing experience in wandering away from God. It is a public acknowledgment of sin and guilt. And we can hardly conceive of a more interesting spectacle than to see this great and good man—this wisest of ancient kings—assembling his courtiers and his people round him, near the close of life, to tell them of his mistakes and errors, and of the pain which these things gave him; to make confession before them of his sins, and to warn them from following in the same forbidden paths;—taking occasion, at the same time, to utter the most weighty counsels, to publish the most solemn truths, and to lead forward the minds of all, whether young

or old, to the grand conclusion, "*Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*"

S.—Are there not valuable lessons of instruction to be gathered from this book?

F.—There are indeed;—lessons for the aged, lessons for the young, and, more especially, lessons for the *worldly-minded*—those that love and pursue the world. Of all men that ever lived, Solomon had the highest advantages for making a full experiment of the world. And he entered upon the experiment with the greatest earnestness. He tried it, too, in all its forms. If wealth can make any one happy, it should have made him so; for he possessed it to repletion. He acquired gold, until he hardly knew what to do with it. So if worldly honor can make any mortal happy, it should have had this effect upon Solomon; for he had climbed all its steeps, and reposed securely on its summit. Or if worldly and sensual pleasures can confer happiness, then Solomon must have been superlatively happy; for he denied himself no gratification of this sort. He withheld not his heart from any joy. Or if true happiness is to be found in outward splendor and magnificence, or in the successful accomplishment of great undertakings, then Solomon must have been a happy man. For, in respect to these, he excelled all the monarchs of the East. His fame went abroad to distant nations, and kings came together to hear his wisdom, and to see his glory.

Such, then, was the experiment which Solomon actually and personally made. Such was the extent to which he tried, pursued, acquired, and possessed the world. And what was the result? Solomon has recorded it—recorded it in mature old age—truly and faithfully recorded it—recorded it with the pen of inspiration. And what is it? Lovers of the world hearken. *What is it?* "VANITY OF VANITIES, SAITH THE PREACHER, VANITY OF VANITIES, ALL IS VANITY." "I tried this experiment," saith the preacher, "and I found it vanity and vexation of spirit. I tried that, and I found it vanity and vexation of spirit. I tried a third, and it was

vanity and vexation of spirit. And so it was with them all ; all was vanity and vexation of spirit.”

Lovers of the world, is not this enough? Ought not this to satisfy you? Having tried everything earthly, and found it vain, Solomon repaired anew to the unfailing source of good. He came back to the fountain of living waters. To fear God and keep his commandments he found to be the whole duty and the highest happiness of man. Let my world-loving readers come to the same conclusion, and they shall experience the same result.

CONVERSATION XLIII.

SONG OF SOLOMON.—Is this an inspired book, and does it belong to the canon of the Old Testament?—Its estimation among the Jews.—How considered among early Christians.—A Hebrew love-song three thousand years old.—An allegory.—Evidences given.—Indelicacies.—This explained.—The general design of the book.

Son.—There can be no question about the author of this book, since, in the first verse, it is expressly ascribed to Solomon. But do you think this an inspired book? Does it belong to the canon of the Old Testament?

Father.—I certainly think it an inspired book, if it belongs to the Bible; for Paul tells us that “*all Scripture* is given by inspiration of God.” And that it belongs to the canon of the Old Testament—that old Testament which our Savior read, endorsed, and sanctioned, is indubitable. It must have been a part of the Old Testament at least two hundred years before Christ was born; since it is found in the Septuagint, and has always made a part of that celebrated translation.

S.—How was it estimated among the Jews, and by Christians in former times?

F.—Among the Jews, it has ever been held in the highest estimation. Rabbi Akiba, who lived in the second century after Christ, says: “No man in Israel ever doubted the canonicity of the Song of Songs; for the course of ages cannot vie with the day when that song was given to Israel. All the sacred books are indeed holy things; but this is as the holy of holies.” Other distinguished Jewish writers speak of it in the same way. And the same may be said of most of the Christian fathers. This book has been greatly esteemed, also, by some of the most pious men of modern times, such as Leighton, Rutherford, President Edwards and McCheyne. Describing his feelings at a time of high religious enjoyment, President Edwards says: “The whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it about that time; and I found from time to time an inward sweetness in it, that would

carry me away in my contemplations.” Indeed, the spirit of Edwards, in his seasons of high enjoyment, is just that in which this book can best be studied and estimated. It is not the men of his stamp, but dry, cold, barren critics who have faulted it and been inclined to reject it.

S.—The song is manifestly a drama. Who are the principal speakers—the *dramatis personæ*?

F.—The principal speakers are Shelomoh and Shelomith, or Solomon and his bride. There is also a chorus of virgins, called “Daughters of Jerusalem;” and near the close, two brothers of Shelomith appear, and each of them speaks twice (Chap. viii. 8). Literally, this song is a Hebrew love-song, written three thousand years ago; but interpreted allegorically, it is beautiful and instructive, setting forth the love of Christ for his church, and the delightful and everlasting union between them.

S.—But what reasons have you for thinking it an allegory? What authority for giving it such an interpretation?

F.—My first reason for thinking it an allegory is, its place in the Old Testament. The canon of the old Testament was settled by inspired men after the return of the Jews from Babylon, and chiefly, it is supposed, under the direction of Ezra. Now if the writing before us had been a mere love-song, Ezra would never have admitted it into the canon, nor would it have been retained there through the intervening ages, till the coming of Christ.

Then the figure of marriage, here employed, is of continual occurrence, in both Testaments, to set forth the union between the Lord and his church. I need not refer to passages. They will occur to every reader of the Bible. We find this representation even in heaven. “Come hither,” says the revealing angel, “and I will show you the *bride*, the *Lamb’s wife*” (Rev. xxi. 9). The song of Solomon is but the personifying, the putting into the concrete, of the general representation of Scripture on the subject.

Things are also said in this song, both of the bride and by her, which can never be interpreted literally. If they are not allegory,

they are a monstrosity. The bride is compared to a "company of horses, in Pharaoh's chariots" (Chap. i. 9). She is "comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners" (Chap. vi. 4). Her "neck is like a tower of David, builded for an armory, whereon they hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men" (Chap. iv. 4). "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon; thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon; thy head upon thee is like Carmel" (Chap. vii. 4). And so far from being offended with such bombast as this, the bride says of herself: "I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers" (Chap. viii. 10). Representations such as these may well find a place in an eastern allegory, but they could never belong to a literal love-song anywhere. The comparisons employed forbid it.

I may further add, that the Jewish critics have always understood the Song of Solomon as an allegory; and in this they have been followed by the great body of Christian writers, both in ancient and modern times. Even Rosenmuller, though a rationalist, decides for the allegorical interpretation, as the only one possible.

S.—But does not the Song contain *indelicate* expressions, such as cannot be supposed to belong to an inspired book?

F.—There are fewer expressions of this sort than is generally supposed; and those which occur are chiefly owing to the translation. With regard to the question of delicacy, the views of people change with every generation. The English language in the time of Elizabeth, compared with that of the present day, is full proof of this. In a poem or drama three thousand years old, we may well expect some deviation from our present notions of propriety and delicacy; though it will not be found greater in the Song of Solomon, when properly translated, than in Hesiod or Homer, or even Spenser or Shakespeare.

S.—Assuming then the allegorical interpretation of the Song, what do you regard as its general design and import?

F.—Undoubtedly to set forth the mutual love of Christ and his people,—the vicissitudes, the trials, the backslidings, the repent-

ings, and, finally, the eternal and perfect union of the church with its Lord and Savior. And all this it does most impressively set forth. No wonder, then, that this book has been, and is, so dear to the more spiritual of God's children. No wonder that, among all the Songs of Solomon, this should have been selected as "the Song of Songs"—the chiefest and sweetest of them all.

CONVERSATION XLIV.

PROPHETS IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS.—Nature of the prophetic office.—The first prophet.—The succession till the time of the kings.—Elijah and Elisha.—The prophets of Baal slain.—Ascension of Elijah.—Miracles of Elisha.—No writings of either left.

Son.—Since we are now to review a long succession of prophets, permit me to inquire as to the nature and design of the prophetic office.

Father.—The prophets derived their office, as they did their messages, directly from God. The office was not hereditary, nor was it created by a popular election, or by any form of human appointment. The work of the prophets was very different from that of the priests. The priests approached God, in behalf of the people; but the prophets approached the people, in behalf of God. They were his ambassadors, sent to reprove the wickedness of men, to denounce judgments upon them, and urge them to repentance. They were sent also to encourage and comfort the people of God, by promises and predicted rewards. Their office and work were more like those of the gospel minister, than like that of the Jewish priest.

S.—Was there not a succession of prophets, even from the first?

F.—Yes; Enoch, the seventh from Adam was a prophet; and so were Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Samuel, and David, and many others. But we are now concerned with those who followed David, and lived in the times of the kings of Israel and Judah. We begin with

ELIJAH AND ELISHA.

S.—Pray tell us what you know of the great prophet Elijah.

F.—We know nothing of his early history. He breaks upon us like Melchizedek, without any mention of father or mother, or beginning of days. He is called the Tishbite, either from Tishba, a city beyond the Jordan, or from a Hebrew root signifying *to reform*. In the latter case, he might be called Elijah *the reformer*.

S.—What was the state of things in Israel, when Elijah was called forth?

E.—It was a time of great corruption and wickedness. Ahab had married Jezebel, a Phœnician princess, and, in addition to the calves of Jeroboam, had introduced the worship of Baal and Ashtarothe—the gods and goddesses of Tyre. He built a temple for Baal in the new city of Samaria, and set up an altar, and made a grove, where all sorts of impurities were practiced. He was the first to set an example of persecution in Israel, by slaying the prophets of the Lord. “He did more to provoke the God of Israel to anger, than all the kings that were before him.”

To him was Elijah sent, for the first time, with this message: “There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” The denunciation began at once to be inflicted; and the result was a terrible famine, in which all the vegetation of the country was dried up. Meanwhile, Elijah was directed to hide himself by the brook Cherith, beyond Jordan, where he was fed by the ravens for a whole year. And when the brook was dried up, he was sent by God to Zarephath, a city not far from Sidon. Here he lodged with a poor widow, whose barrel of meal and cruise of oil were not suffered to fail, during his stay at her house. Her dead son was also restored to life, at the word of Elijah.

The famine had now continued three years and a half when, at the command of God, Elijah once more presented himself before Ahab. And when the king charged upon him the distress of the land, he flung back the charge upon the king himself, and offered to decide the question between God and Baal, by a miracle from heaven. The trial took place on the top of Carmel, where Elijah confronted and confounded the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal. No fire appeared to consume their sacrifice, though Baal was the reputed god of fire; while the fire of Israel’s God descended, and consumed the sacrifice of Elijah, and licked up the very water in the trenches about his altar. Seizing the favorable opportunity, Elijah at once demands, and the king consents, that the priests of Baal shall be

slain. At the prayer of the prophet, a cloud now arises from the Mediterranean, and rain in abundance descends to water the land.

Elijah hoped, it may be, that this timely relief might soften the heart of the wicked Jezebel, and he consented to go down with the king to Jezreel; but hearing that she was angry and threatened his life, he made his escape.

S.—And where did he go?

F.—He fled beyond the bounds of Palestine into the deserts of Arabia, and concealed himself at Horeb, the mount of God. Here the Lord appeared to him in a still small voice, rebuked the despondency of the prophet, and directed him to return into the land of Israel. On his way he was to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to be his successor in the prophetic office. He first found Elisha, and anointed him. The others were anointed at a later period.

S.—After this, what do we hear of Elijah?

F.—He seems to have remained several years in retirement, when he was called again to confront Ahab. He met him at the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, whom he had plundered and murdered, and told him, in the name of the Lord, that he would requite him blood for blood; that his seventy sons should all be slain; and that the dogs should feast on the flesh of Jezebel,—all which in a little time, was terribly fulfilled.

S.—What more can you tell us of this wonderful prophet?

F.—After the death of Ahab, he retires again from the scene. But he is at length called forth to deal with Ahaziah, who had succeeded to his father's throne. Ahaziah, having met with an injury, sent to consult with Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, in regard to the issue of his disease. Elijah is directed by God to go forth and meet the messengers of the king, and assure them that he should not recover. After the consuming of two bands of fifty which Ahaziah sent for Elijah's apprehension, he at length appeared before the king, and repeated the denunciation which he had before given.

This was his last public effort for the reformation of Israel.



E. 190. 11/10/11

Edwin S. Hooper

THE TRANSLATION OF SOULS

Illustration of the translation of souls

After visiting the schools of the prophets at Bethel, Gilgal, and Jericho, in company with Elisha, the two prophets crossed the Jordan, whose waters were divided to let them pass. And as they walked on together, "behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them asunder, and Elijah went up, by a whirlwind, into heaven."

S.—Do we hear anything farther from Elijah in the sacred history?

F.—In the days of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, several years after the translation of Elijah, there came a writing to him from the old prophet, reproving him for his wickedness, and denouncing upon him the sorest judgments (2 Chron. xxi. 12). Whether this writing came directly from heaven, or whether the prophet (foreseeing the wickedness of Jehoram) had left it for him before his ascension, I pretend not to say. It seems to have had no good effect upon Jehoram.

Once more we hear of Elijah in the sacred history. He visited the earth, in company with Moses, at the transfiguration of Christ, and conversed with him respecting his approaching decease at Jerusalem (Matt. xvii. 3).

S.—Just before the ascension of Elijah, Elisha said to him; "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy Spirit rest on me." What was the purport of this request?

F.—My own opinion is, that he wished to be endowed with miraculous gifts, as fully as Elijah had been. We know that, in the Apostolic age, the bestowment of the Spirit by the laying on of hands generally meant no more than this (see Acts x. 46). It is certain that immediately after the ascension of Elijah, Elisha began to work miracles. For on returning over the Jordan, he smote the waters with Elijah's mantle, and they parted asunder to give him a passage. And when the sons of the prophets saw it, they said, "The Spirit of Elijah dost rest on Elisha." And during the remainder of his long life, miracles were wrought by Elisha, as they had been by Elijah. He filled the valley with water, and

saved the armies of Israel and Judah, when they were perishing with thirst (2 Kings iii. 20). He saved the widow of one of the prophets and her family, by miraculously increasing her pot of oil (2 Kings iv. 4). He raised to life the son of the Shunamite (2 Kings iv. 35). He also healed Naaman of his leprosy; he caused the iron ax to swim; he smote with blindness those who were sent by the King of Syria to apprehend him; he relieved Samaria in a time of siege and famine; and after his death, a dead man was raised to life, by being thrown into Elisha's grave (2 Kings xiii. 21).

By a series of miracles such as these was the attempt made to save the Israelites from idolatry, and from that ruin which impended over them. Elisha had less sternness and force of character than his predecessor, and was not qualified, like him, to deal with such sinners as Ahab and Jezebel. His miracles were all of them miracles of mercy. He lived more than ninety years, and was sincerely mourned for at his death by Joash, a grandson of Jehu, whom he had caused to be anointed king of Israel.

S.—To which of the Israelitish kingdoms did Elijah and Elisha minister?

F.—Almost exclusively to the ten tribes.

S.—Did either of them leave anything in writing?

F.—Nothing, unless it be Elijah's letter to the king of Judah. Neither of them is to be numbered among the sacred writers.

CONVERSATION XLV.

PROPHETS IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS.—Jonah, Hosea and Amos.—Jonah and his work.—First of the prophets sent to the heathen.—His call.—Attempts to evade it.—The result.—The great fish.—Speculation concerning it.—False or true.—Startling effect of his preaching in Nineveh.—God's veracity.—Jonah's gourd.—Hosea.—His predictions and peculiar style.

Son.—What prophets in Israel next follow Elijah and Elisha?

Father.—The four following were nearly contemporaries, *viz.*, Jonah, Hosea, Joel, and Amos. They prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Jeroboam II., king of Israel. We begin with

JONAH.

S.—Who was Jonah, and where did he exercise his ministry?

F.—He was the son of Amittai of Gath-hepher, and labored chiefly among the ten tribes. That he lived in the reign of Jeroboam II., one of the bravest of the kings of Israel, and predicted the great success of his arms, is certain from 2 Kings xiv. 26. He (Jeroboam) restored the coast of Israel from the entering in of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher.

S.—To what self-denying labor was Jonah next called?

F.—The success of his predictions regarding the conquests of Jeroboam may have given him popularity in Israel, and brought him into favor with the king; and, with a view to try him, God directs him alone, of all the ancient prophets, to go on a mission to the heathen. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city"—the greatest city then in the world—the capital of the vast Assyrian empire—"and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me."

S.—And how did Jonah regard this call?

F.—He thought the labor, the hazard, the sacrifice too great, and

he could not submit to it. So instead of going to Nineveh, he rose up and went directly the other way. He went down to Joppa, the principal port of Palestine, and shipped himself to go to Tarshish, thinking to escape from the presence of the Lord.

S.—Where was Tarshish, of which we hear so much in the Old Testament?

F.—The Tarshish to which Jonah was fleeing is supposed to have been Tartessus, a city of the Phœnicians in the south of Spain, so named from a grandson of Japhet (see Gen. x. 4). There was another Tarshish in the East, to which the ships of Solomon and of Jehoshaphat went, by the way of the Red sea.

S.—What befell Jonah in his attempt to escape from the presence of the Lord?

F.—The Lord soon taught him that he was in every place, and that there is no escaping from his presence or his power. He sent forth a great wind upon the sea, and the ship, with all it contained was likely to be swallowed up. Jonah confessed his sin to his shipmates, and at his own request,—to appease the Divine anger,—was thrown overboard into the sea. “Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and he was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (Chap. i. 17).

S.—Do you regard this story as literally true, and worthy to be believed?

F.—I do regard the account as literally true; for the book of Jonah, unlike most of the other prophecies, is not poetry, but history. And there is nothing incredible in the story. Great fishes have often swallowed up men; and God could, by a miracle, as well preserve Jonah in the belly of a great fish, as anywhere else. And when the object of the trial had been accomplished, he could cause the fish to “vomit out Jonah upon the dry land.” It is enough to establish the truth of this miracle, that our Savior refers to it as a type of his own burial and resurrection (Matt. xii. 40).

S.—After this wonderful deliverance, what does Jonah do?

F.—He consents to go to Nineveh, and deliver his message. He

accomplishes the long and tedious journey, enters the devoted city, and cries through all the streets thereof, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed."

S.—And what was the effect of this startling cry?

F.—It was wonderful, extraordinary. "The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even unto the least. The king also arose from his throne, and laid aside his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed throughout Nineveh, saying, Let not man nor beast, herd nor flock taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let every one turn from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not" (Chap. iii. 5-10).

S.—And in so doing, did not God forfeit his veracity? Did he not fail of punishing, as he had said?

F.—No; a simple threatening in no case pledges the veracity of a sovereign. If so, it would leave no room for repentance. The denunciation, in this case, was intended, no doubt, to be conditional, although the condition is not expressed. "Yet forty days, and Nineveh,"—unless she repents,—“shall be destroyed.” She did repent, and in mercy was spared.

S.—And were Jonah's feelings, on the sparing of the city, to be justified?

F.—By no means. They were unworthy, I do not say of an inspired prophet, but even of a man of ordinary benevolence. They showed that he needed yet other trials, in order to his perfection.

S.—Is Jonah to be regarded as a pious man?

F.—I hope so. His prayer, in what he calls "the belly of hell,"

is one of humility, of faith, of confidence in God ; and God heard him, and delivered him. With all his infirmities and imperfections, we trust Jonah had the grace of God in his heart.

S.—And what are we to think of the gourd which was prepared to shelter him—which “came up in a night, and perished in a night?”

F.—If it literally grew to the size of a tree, in a single night, it must have been produced by a miracle. It was intended not only as a shelter for the irritable prophet, but as a reproof to him. If he felt so much for a gourd, for which he had not labored, should God have no feeling of compassion for a fasting, weeping, and seemingly penitent city, “wherein were more than six score thousand persons too young to discern between the right hand and the left?”

HOSEA.

S.—What can you tell us of the prophet Hosea?

F.—Of his personal history we know nothing, except that he was the son of Beerī, and that he prophesied “in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam II., king of Israel.” He was cotemporary with Jonah, but probably outlived him. He labored chiefly, but not exclusively, for the ten tribes. His ministry was a long one, extending over a space of not less than seventy years.

S.—How are we to understand the strange command, issued in the very commencement of the prophecy: “Go, take thee a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms.”

F.—It has been made a question, whether this language is to be understood literally, or allegorically. In either case, the act was intended to be symbolical, setting forth the terrible wickedness of Israel, in forsaking God, and worshipping idols. In favor of a literal interpretation, it is urged, that the language plainly indicates it, showing no sign of parable or figure. But to this it may be replied, that the same is true of other parables. Witness the parable of Jotham, in Judges ix. 8: “The trees went forth, on a time, to

anoint a king over them: and they said to the olive tree, Reign thou over us." And when the olive tree declined, they said the same to the fig tree, to the vine, and to the bramble. How do we know that Jotham here utters a parable? It will be said, no doubt, that, literally understood, his words involve a physical impossibility. And does not the command to Hosea, literally understood, involve a *moral* impossibility? It would have been a sin for Hosea to marry a public prostitute, and raise up children of like character, to be called by opprobrious names. For what does the marriage covenant imply? That he must love and honor this wicked woman, that he must cherish and comfort her, that he must support her, live with her, and be to her a faithful husband for life. Now for Hosea to have bound himself, in covenant, to do all this for such a woman would have been a wrong, a sin. And God cannot command his creatures to sin. In the progress of the story, it appears that this woman was an adulteress (Chap. iii.); and yet the prophet was to take her as a wife. But this, according to our Savior's teaching, would be adultery on his part. "Whoso marrieth" such an one, "*committeth adultery*" (Luke xvi. 18). And could God literally command the prophet to commit adultery?

For myself, I must confess, that I feel the force of this reasoning, and feel inclined, with Calvin, to accept the whole story as a parable. Thus interpreted, it would answer the purpose of a symbol just as well, and the difficulty of a literal marriage would be avoided. The parable, if it be one, seems to go on through the first three chapters. The remaining chapters are chiefly occupied with the application of it,—pressing home upon the Israelites their horrible wickedness, as illustrated in the story of the adulterous marriage.

S.—Does the book of Hosea contain any obvious predictions?

F.—There are many predictions of the approaching overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, which were terribly fulfilled in the invasion of Shalmaneser. There are predictions, also, of the restoration of Israel, in the latter days. "I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely. I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall

grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon ” (Chap. xiv. 4).

S.—What do you think of the style of this book ?

F.—The first three chapters are prose. The remainder is for the most part poetry. But whether poetry or prose the style is peculiar. We find here no full, flowing sentences, after the manner of Joel, but the utterances are short, abrupt, and often obscure and disconnected. One must read the lines often, in order to see their connection, and understand them. In this respect, Hosea is perhaps the most perplexing to the interpreter of any of the Hebrew prophets.

S.—And what shall be said as to the spirit of the book ?

F.—Though it abounds with denunciation, still it is not harsh. The spirit is one of wounded, offended love. God is terribly incensed at the unfaithfulness of his people, his bride, but still he loves her, and cannot give her up. By every mode of address, he strives to bring her back to his embrace, and closes with the assurance that his desire, at length, shall be accomplished. “Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods.”

CONVERSATION XLVI.

PROPHETS IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS.—The prophet Joel.—Time of his writing.—His smooth and fluent style.—Amos.—Originally a shepherd.—Condition of Israel at this time.—Division of the book of Joel.—Comparison with the other prophets.—His fearful denunciation of the high priest.

Son.—How much do we know of the prophet Joel?

Father.—Very little, except what is told us in the first verse of the book, or may be gathered from circumstances incidentally mentioned in it. He is said to have been the son of Pethuel; but who Pethuel was, or in what part of the country he lived, we have no knowledge. That Joel lived in Judah, and probably at Jerusalem, may be inferred from the fact that, while he makes no reference to the other kingdom, he speaks of Jerusalem, the priests, the temple, the ceremonies and rites, with a familiarity which proves them to have been before his eyes.

S.—At what period of the Jewish history did he flourish?

F.—This can be gathered only from incidental notices. That he makes no reference to the Babylonian, the Assyrian, or even the Syrian invasions, indicates that he wrote before these occurred or were apprehended. No mention is made of idolatrous practices in Judah, but the priests and people are represented as harmoniously occupied in the services of the temple, as prescribed in the law. These circumstances indicate that Joel may have lived in the first half of the reign of Joash, while he was under the influence of Jehoida, the high priest,—previous to the subsequent lapse of the king into idolatry. If so, Joel lived earlier than Jonah, or Hosea, or Amos, and is the oldest of the prophets whose writings have come down to us.

S.—On what occasion did Joel lift up his voice of warning and exhortation?

F.—The calamity impending was a terrible famine, occasioned by drought and successive swarms of locusts. On this account, the prophet calls for fasting, humiliation and prayer. “Let the

priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." On the conditions of such fasting, penitence and prayer, the prophet encourages the hope of speedy deliverance. "Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. The Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith" (Chap. 17-19). Joel promises the people a deliverance, not only from famine, but from their enemies, more especially the Phœnicians, who had been plundering their borders, and selling their children into slavery. Yea, more than this, he carries his eye forward to gospel times, and promises a glorious outpouring of the Spirit, which began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 16). His promises reach even to the glories of the latter days. "Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion" (Chap. iii. 20).

S.—How will you describe the style of Joel?

F.—In respect to this, he stands pre-eminent among the Hebrew prophets. He not only possesses a singular degree of purity, but is distinguished by smoothness and fluency, and the finish and fullness which he gives to his sentences. He has no abrupt transition like Hosea, but is everywhere lucid and connected. Whatever of obscurity attaches to Joel is attributable to the subjects of which he treats, and not to the language which he employs. In studying these prophets, we see that their inspiration is quite consistent with great differences in point of style.

AMOS.

S.—You will next tell us of the prophet Amos.

F.—He was originally a shepherd of Tekoa, a small town in Judea, about twelve miles south-east from Jerusalem. The surrounding country is hard and gravelly, not fit for tillage, but suitable for the pasturage of sheep and goats. Here Amos spent the first half of his life, in an honorable calling, but probably in hum-

ble circumstances. He tells us that he "was not a prophet, nor a prophet's son," which means that he had no connection with the schools of the prophets. Though a native of Judea, he was called to Bethel, the seat of one of Jeroboam's calves, to publish his message to the ten tribes. This gave occasion to Amaziah, one of the idolatrous priests of Bethel, to say to him: "O thou seer, go, flee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there. But prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and the king's court" (Chap. vii. 12, 13).

S.—At what time did Amos prophesy, and who were his cotemporaries?

F.—He is said to have prophesied "in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." This earthquake is undoubtedly the one spoken of in Zech. xiv. 5, "in the days of Uzziah king of Judah." Hence, Amos must have been cotemporary with Hosea, though a little earlier; and we know that he was later than Joel, because he quotes from him.*

S.—In what condition was the kingdom of Israel at this time?

F.—It was a time of great prosperity in Israel. Under Jeroboam II., the kingdom was at the zenith of its power. Still, it was a time of great corruption and wickedness, which no one perceived or lamented, but all flourished together in fancied security. It was under these circumstances that the shepherd of Tekoa was sent to Israel with a message of warning, and a solemn call to repentance and reformation.

S.—What is the particular plan and method of this book?

F.—The book may be divided into three parts. First; sentences are pronounced upon the surrounding nations,—Syria, the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Jews, and, lastly, upon the kingdom of Israel. These occupy the first and second chapters. Secondly; there are special discourses against Israel,—messages of warning, reproof, and lamentation,

*Compare Joel iii. 16, with Amos i. 2.

accompanied with repeated calls to repentance (Chaps. iii. to vi). The third section of Amos, the three last chapters, contain his visions and revelations, partly consolatory, and partly of a threatening character, closing with assurances of the final restoration of Israel, and of great prosperity in the latter days.

S.—How does the style of Amos compare with that of the other prophets?

F.—It is less flowing and perfect than that of Joel, and less sententious and abrupt than that of Hosea. It is the style of an earnest, self-educated man,—perspicuous and strong, his images mostly original, and taken from those objects with which he was familiar in early life. In some few instances, the style is prosaic, but in general poetical. Near the close of the book, his appeals become so pungent and incisive, as to excite the wrath of the high priest of Bethel, and he complains of him to the king; and this brings down a terrible denunciation upon the head of the idolatrous high priest. “Thy wife shall be a harlot in the city, and thy sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by a line, and thou shalt die in a polluted land, and Israel shall surely go into captivity” (Chap. vii. 17).

The prophecies of Amos and Hosea, so near the close of the Israelitish monarchy, are a good illustration of the language of God to his unfaithful people by one of these prophets. “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim! How shall I deliver thee, Israel! My heart is turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together.” Before giving up his people and his land to desolation, he must send them prophet after prophet, he must oft repeat his warnings and his urgent calls to repentance; and it is not until all appropriate means have been employed in vain, and his patience is exhausted, that the haughty Assyrian is sent to destroy their cities, and carry them all away.

CONVERSATION XLVII.

PROPHETS IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS.—Isaiah.—The most illustrious of the prophets.—Supposed to be of royal descent.—Traditional account of his death.—Sawn asunder with a wooden saw.—His alleged crime.—The course of the sun stopped.—Evidences from other nations.—His eloquence.—Frequent allusions to the coming of Christ.

ISAIAH.

Father.—Our present subject is the prophet Isaiah,—by common consent, the most illustrious of the Hebrew prophets.

Son.—So I have regarded him, and am anxious to hear all that you may say in regard to him.

F.—Of the prophet personally, and of the time in which he lived, little is known except what he has told us. He was the son of Amoz—not Amos the prophet, but another of the same name,—and is thought by some to be of royal extraction. He resided at Jerusalem, and discharged the prophetic office under the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He was cotemporary, therefore, with Hosea and Amos, though in another field. He survived Hezekiah, and lived some years,—we know not how long,—under the reign of his cruel and wicked son, Manasseh. The current tradition among the Jews is, that he was slain by Manasseh, being sawn asunder with a wooden saw. And this agrees with the inhuman character of Manasseh as given in the Scriptures; for it is said that “he shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other” (2 Kings xxi. 16). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is said that some of the ancient worthies “were sawn asunder,” referring, probably, to the Jewish tradition that Isaiah came to his end in this way.

S.—What was the crime alleged against Isaiah, for which he was put to death?

F.—The principal charge, as stated in the Talmud, was, that Isaiah pretended that he had seen God. “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up” (Is. vi. 1); whereas Moses had

said, "No man shall see God and live" (Ex. xxxiii. 20). This, however, was a mere pretense. The real offense of Isaiah undoubtedly was, that he was an unyielding opposer of the existing idolatries.

S.—How old must Isaiah have been at the time of his death?

F.—This cannot be ascertained with certainty. He is said by the early Christians to have lived one hundred and twenty years. He sustained the prophetic office almost a hundred years. He had a wife and two sons whose hard names are given in Chapters vii. 3, and viii. 3.

S.—Did Isaiah commence his prophecy before the death of Uzziah?

F.—He did; for it is said expressly (Is. vi. 1), that he had his glorious vision of heaven "in the year that Uzziah died." The five previous chapters were probably written before Uzziah's death.

S.—Did Isaiah utter any predictions during the reign of Jotham?

F.—We have no positive evidence that he did. But in the time of Ahaz, we have an important prediction of the Messiah, under the name of Immanuel. (Chap. vii. 14.) We have another prediction of the Messiah in Chap. ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." But most of the early prophecies of Isaiah were given during the reign of Hezekiah. From the tenth chapter onward, he denounces the judgments of God upon the surrounding nations,—upon Assyria, upon Babylon, upon Moab, upon Damascus, upon Egypt, upon Tyre, and upon the kingdom of Israel; for this kingdom was not destroyed until the sixth year of Hezekiah. Mingled with these denunciations are many precious promises for the people of God, and pleasant prospects are set before them, especially under the reign of the coming Messiah. Chapters eleven and twelve are wholly Messianic, setting forth the peace and glory of Zion in the latter days.

S.—Is the kingdom of Judah overlooked in this dispensation of judgments?

F.—It is not. In chapter twenty-ninth, approaching judgments are denounced upon Judah; and ere long Sennacherib makes his appearance. “In the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them” (Chap. xxxvi.); and he sent Rabsheka to menace Jerusalem, and to insult the king. In answer to the prayer of Isaiah, the invader draws off his forces for the time; but he soon returns, and repeats his blasphemies and his threats. And now it was that Isaiah was sent to the king with a message of assurance and comfort. “The king of Assyria shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David’s sake. Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men” (Chap. xxxvii. 33–36).

S.—What important events followed his deliverance?

F.—Sennacherib departed in disgrace to his own land, where he was slain by two of his sons. Hezekiah was visited with sore sickness, but in answer to prayer, recovered, and fifteen years were added to his life. At his request, and in token of his deliverance, the sun not only stayed in its course, but went fifteen degrees backward, on the dial of Ahaz.

S.—Is this account credible? Is it possible? Have we any hint of its occurrence, from any other source?

F.—I suppose the event both possible and credible. The God who made this world and moves it could easily revert its rotatory motion; or he could cause, for the time, an unusual refraction of the rays of light; either of which would have given to the sun the appearance of moving back. And that the strange occurrence was observed in other countries, we have this evidence, that messengers were almost immediately sent from Babylon to Hezekiah, to congratulate him on his recovery, and to “inquire respecting the wonder that was done in the land” (2 Chron. xxxii. 31).

S.—How did Hezekiah receive these messengers from Babylon ?

F.—With great kindness ; but he too ostentatiously showed them all his treasures. For this, he was reprov'd by Isaiah, and was told that the day was approaching, when all these treasures should be carried to Babylon.

S.—Did Isaiah often appear at court after this ?

F.—Probably not. We hear of no further intercourse between him and the king. He seems to have gone into retirement—perhaps into one of the schools of the prophets. But the Spirit of God went with him, and some of his most glorious predictions were uttered during this period. The fall of Babylon is foretold, going into minute particulars. The captivity of the Jews in Babylon is also predicted, and their restoration by Cyrus,—calling Cyrus by name one hundred and fifty years before he was born. We have here, too, some of the most signal promises of the Messiah, particularly that in Chap. liii., relating to his vicarious sufferings and death. In the last chapters of the book, Isaiah has recorded some of the most glorious visions as to the future growth and prosperity of Zion,—stretching onwards to millennial times, and the end of the world. “Arise, shine ; for thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself ; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended” (Chap. lx. 1, 20). With visions and utterances such as these, did the holy prophet comfort himself, and comfort his brethren, amid the trials and distresses of Manasseh’s bloody reign, till he himself fell a victim to the persecutor’s rage, and was torn asunder by the wooden saw.

S.—Have not these last comforting chapters of Isaiah been regarded by some interpreters as spurious, or been ascribed to some later prophet ?

F.—They have, almost in our own times, by some of the cold critics of Germany. Volume after volume has been written, trying to make a distinction between the real Isaiah and the pseudo

Isaiah. But all this is sheer nonsense, and is so regarded now by the best critics in Germany. There has never been but one Isaiah, and his prophecy is obviously *one book*, bearing everywhere the impress of the same great heart and hand. No other prophet ever assayed to imitate him, or wished to deprive him of any part of his glory.

S.—What have you to say of his style and manner of writing?

F.—It is throughout perspicuous, elevated, and pure. Some parts of the book have never been excelled in point of eloquence. Take, for example, the description, in the fourteenth chapter, of the descent of the lost king of Babylon into hell. “Hell, from beneath, is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming. It stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth. All they shall speak, and say unto thee, Art *thou* also become weak as we? Art *thou* become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols. The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms, that made the world as a wilderness, and opened not the house of his prisoners? But thou art cast out of thy grave, as an abominable branch, and as a carcass trodden under foot.” Take, as another example, the message of the Lord to Sennacherib, recorded in chapter thirty-seventh: “The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed; and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel. But I know thine abode, thy going out and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. I will put my hook in thy nose, and thy bridle in my lips, and I will turn thee back in the way by which thou camest.” We may safely challenge all the poets and orators of ancient and modern times, to produce passages equal to these in point of sublimity, directness, eloquence and force.

S.—Why is Isaiah so commonly called the evangelical prophet?

F.—Because, in his predictions, he so frequently refers to the coming Savior, to his sufferings and death, and to the way of salvation through him. Because he so beautifully describes the increased light, and privileges, and blessings of gospel times. Because, too, he is so frequently quoted and referred to in the New Testament. For all these reasons, as well as for others that might be adduced, he is well entitled to the appellation so frequently accorded to him, *The Evangelical Prophet*.

CONVERSATION XLVIII.

PROPHETS IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS.—Micah.—Cotemporary with Isaiah.—Also predicts the coming of Christ.—Nahum—Little known of him.—His style more impassioned than the rest.—Prophesies the destruction of Nineveh.—Ruins of Nineveh lately explored.—Confirmatory to Bible history.

MICAH.

Son.—It seems from the first verse of Micah, that he prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Of course, he was cotemporary with Isaiah.

Father.—Yes, he prophesied at the same time, and at or near the same place, *i. e.* Jerusalem. He is called the Morashthite, from the town of Moresheth-gath, lying west of Jerusalem, not far from the country of the Philistines. We know also at what time Micah prophesied from a passage in Jeremiah xxvi. 18, which says: “Micah the Morashthite prophesied, in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, “Zion shall be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.” The severe rebukes of idolatry which we find in the first chapters of Micah indicate that they must have been written in the time of Ahaz, or at least in the first years of the reign of Hezekiah. We know they were written before the destruction of Samaria and the carrying away of the ten tribes, because that event is distinctly foretold. “I will make Samaria as a heap of the field; I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley; I will discover the foundations thereof” (Chap. i. 6). Samaria was destroyed in the sixth year of the reign of Hezekiah. There is another fact which indicates that Micah closed his message sooner than Isaiah. We find no distinct mention of the Assyrian invasion, which could hardly have been omitted, had it occurred during his prophecy.

S.—Is there any obvious division in the prophecy of Micah?

F.—There is. The three first chapters contain his stern reproofs of the wickedness of both Israel and Judah, and his loud and earnest calls for a reformation. In the next two chapters, the

prophet comforts the true Israel of God ; predicts clearly the coming of the Messiah ; and sets forth the future prosperity and glory of Zion. Some of his language on this subject is the same as that of Isaiah ; but which of the two copied from the other, I pretend not to say.* The two last chapters of Micah are of a more general and didactic character.

S.—How does the style of Micah compare with that of Isaiah ?

F.—To say that it is equal to that of the great evangelical prophet would, perhaps, be too high praise ; and yet it falls but little short of it. The style of Micah is concise, perspicuous, energetic, and in some passages vehement and eloquent. In administering both rebukes and promises, Micah evinces great tenderness of spirit, showing that his heart was deeply affected. His description of the character of God in the three closing verses of the book are very fine. “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage ? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again ; he will have compassion upon us ; he will subdue our iniquities ; he will cast all our transgressions into the depth of the sea. Thou wilt perform thy truth to Jacob, and thy mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

NAHUM.

S.—Of Nahum personally, I suppose little is known.

F.—Very little indeed. He is called the Elkoshite, probably, from a village in Galilee, called Elkesi. From his familiar references to Lebanon, Carmel, and Bashan, it is presumed that he lived in Palestine, and that here his message was delivered.

S.—The subject of the prophecy is the overthrow of Nineveh : Can you tell us where it was delivered ?

F.—Probably, in the latter part of the reign of Hezekiah, which would make him cotemporary with Isaiah, and perhaps with Micah.

*Compare Micah i. 4, with Is. ii. 2-4.

It was certainly delivered after the fall of Samaria, and the exile of the ten tribes (see Chap. ii. 2); also subsequent to the boastful but disastrous invasion of Judea by Sennacherib (Chap. i. 11-13). The destruction predicted by Nahum is that which was inflicted upon Nineveh by the Babylonians, a hundred years, or more, after the prophecy was uttered.

S.—Are there any obvious divisions in this prophecy?

F.—There are not. It is a single poem, and closely connected throughout.

S.—And how does the style compare with that of Isaiah and Micah?

F.—Very favorably. It is more impassioned, as it seems to me, than that of any of the prophets. His description of Jehovah (Chap. i. 2-9), is majestic and sublime. His description of the invading army, which is to destroy Nineveh, is graphic and awful. "Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and robbery. The prey departeth not,—the noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling wheels, and of the prancing horses, and the jumping chariots. The horseman lifteth up the bright sword, and the glittering spear, and there is a multitude of slain. There is no end of the corpses; they stumble upon their corpses" (Chap. iii. 1-3). The final ruin of Nineveh, as depicted in the last two verses, is mournful and impressive. "Thy shepherds slumber; thy nobles dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them. There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap their hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"

S.—What was the state of Nineveh, when this prophecy was uttered?

F.—It was in the height of its glory. It was never more prosperous than in the long reign of Esarhaddon, who came to the throne in the twenty-second year of the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah. But its doom was pronounced, as we have seen, by the God of nations, and in the appointed time it was terribly executed. There

was no recovery promised, as in the case of Jerusalem, when its ruin is denounced; and no recovery has ever reached it. So entire was its destruction that, for long ages, its site was unknown. Its ruins have recently been discovered and opened for the verification of ancient prophecy, and for the benefit of the world.

CONVERSATION XLIX.

PROPHETS IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS.—Jeremiah and Lamentations.—Who he was.—Cotemporary with Daniel and Ezekiel.—Threatened with death.—Preservation of the prophecies.—Destruction of the book by order of the king.—A new one made.—Persecution of Jeremiah.—Fall of Jerusalem.—Death of Egypt.—Book of Lamentations.—Their peculiarity.

Son.—Who was Jeremiah?

Father.—He was “the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin.” Anathoth was a city belonging to the priests, about three miles north-east from Jerusalem. Some have thought Jeremiah’s father was the same as Hilkiah the high priest in the time of Josiah—the same that found the lost book of the law; but this is not probable. Had this been the case, the fact would undoubtedly have been mentioned.

S.—Under what kings did Jeremiah prophesy?

F.—Under Josiah, and his four descendants—the last kings of Judah. He was cotemporary with Daniel and Ezekiel, who were prophesying in Babylon, while Jeremiah was delivering his messages in Jerusalem; also with Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Obadiah.

S.—When did Jeremiah commence his prophecy?

F.—In the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah. He was but a youth at this time; and when called to the prophetic work, excused himself by saying: “Ah Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.” But instead of excusing him, the Lord gave him a formal and solemn commission; and he continued in the prophetic office for more than forty years.

S.—Do we hear much of him during the reign of Josiah?

F.—We do not. He was young, and not inclined to put himself forward. Huldah was the prophetess to whom the good king applied, whenever he had occasion to inquire of the Lord. It cannot be doubted, however, that, in the great reformation which followed the finding of the book of the law, Jeremiah would help it forward by every method in his power. It is certain that he deliv-

ered some of his most pungent reproofs and exhortations at this time. These are contained, it is supposed, in the first twelve chapters of his prophecy.

S.—Is it not strange that he should utter such reproofs, while the reformation under Josiah was in progress?

F.—Jeremiah saw,—or if he did not, God did,—that the reformation was rather external than spiritual,—a reformation springing more from kingly authority, than from the heart. Accordingly, as soon as Josiah was dead, and a counter influence proceeded from the throne, the nation fell back at once into its old idolatries.

S.—Do we hear much of Jeremiah under the reign of Jehoahaz, otherwise called Shallum?

F.—We do not; he reigned only three months. But when he was deposed by Pharaoh Necho, and carried into Egypt, Jeremiah speaks kindly of him, and calls upon the people to bemoan his captivity (Chap. xxii. 10–13).

S.—What were some of the leading events of Jehoiakim's reign, and how was Jeremiah affected by them?

F.—In the weakness and disorder which characterized this reign, the work of Jeremiah became more prominent and difficult. The people were divided in their preferences, some for the king of Egypt, and some for the king of Babylon. Jêhoiakim had come to the throne as the vassal of Egypt; and for a time, the Egyptian party prevailed. Others held that their only safety consisted in accepting the supremacy of the Chaldeans. Jeremiah was of this party. Guided by inspiration, he could discern the signs of the times. He regarded the king of Babylon as God's instrument, who was doing his work, and who was destined, for a time, to prevail over all resistance (Chap. xxvii. 6, 7). Hard was it for one who sympathized so deeply in all the sufferings of his country, to bring himself to this conviction; and in declaring it, he exposed himself to the imputation of treachery. False prophets, too, had their word of the Lord, to set against his, and all he could do was to commit his cause to God, and wait the result. Jeremiah was, at this time,

threatened with death, and might have been put to death, had not his friend Ahikam, the son of Shaphan interposed for his rescue (Chap. xxvi. 2).

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the battle of Carchemish put an end to the hopes of the Egyptian party, and the armies of Nebuchadnezzar drove those of the Jews who had no defended cities, to take refuge in Jerusalem (Chap. xxxv. 2).

S.—What did Jeremiah do, at this time, for the preservation of his prophecies ?

F.—He was directed by God to write them in a book ; and Baruch, his scribe, was sent to read them to the people ; but the king gave vent to his impotent rage by cutting the book in pieces, and burning it in the fire. Howbeit, the book was re-written, and severe denunciations were added respecting the impious king (see Chap. xxxvi).

As the danger from the Chaldeans became more threatening, the persecution of Jeremiah became more severe. The people cursed him, and sought his life. Still, he went on with his work, reproving king, and princes, and people, and warning all of the approaching destruction.

S.—What became of Jehoiakim, the king ?

F.—He was slain by the Chaldeans, and his body was left, for a time, without burial, as Jeremiah had predicted (Chap. xxxvi. 30). Jehoiachin, his son, was placed upon the throne ; but he was soon taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and was sent to Babylon, in fulfillment of another of Jeremiah's predictions (Chap. xxii. 24–27). He was succeeded by Zedekiah, a son of Josiah, and the last that sat upon the throne of Judah. As he was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, and reigned under him, we do not find the same obstinate resistance to Jeremiah's counsels as in the case of Jehoiakim. He respected the prophet, feared him, and sought his advice ; but he was the mere shadow of a king, powerless against his own counselors, and in his reign the sufferings of Jeremiah were greater than ever before. He at one time sought to escape from Jerusalem, where he could no longer do any good, and take

refuge in his own town of Anathoth. Upon the discovery of his plan, his enemies charged him with an intended desertion to the Chaldeans ; and in spite of his denial, he was thrown into prison. The king would gladly have released him, but the princes conspired against him, and he was plunged into a horrible dungeon, where he must soon have died (Chap. xxxviii. 6). From this he was delivered by Ebed-Melek, an Ethiopian eunuch, and restored to his former place in the prison, where he had the company of Baruch, his scribe, and where he remained until the city was taken (Chap. xxxviii. 28).

At last, the fatal hour came ; the city was captured ; the temple was burned ; the king and his princes went into captivity ; and the prophet gave utterance to his sorrow in the book of LAMENTATIONS.

S.—What became of Jeremiah, after the capture of Jerusalem ?

F.—He was taken from prison, and permitted to have his choice, either to go to Babylon, where he would have been held in high honor in the king's court, or to remain with his own people. He chose the latter ; and Gedeliah, the son of his old friend Ahikam, was made governor over them. There was now a short interval of peace ; but this was soon broken by the murder of Gedeliah by Ishmael, who was of the seed royal, and one of the former princes of Judah. Failing to establish his authority over the remnant of the Jews, he escaped, and fled to the Ammonites. Johanan, the son of Kareah, now took charge of the people. Jeremiah counseled them to remain in the land, and be subject to the king of Babylon ; but they rejected his counsel, and went into Egypt, taking the prophet with them. And here his words were sharper and stronger than ever before. He predicts the speedy conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar ; utters a solemn protest against the continued idolatry of the Jews ; and this is the last that we hear of him (Chap. xliii. 8-13). He probably died in Egypt.

S.—Are the predictions of Jeremiah properly arranged in the book before us ?

F.—They are not. They follow each other without much order or method, to be selected and arranged by the interpreter. Who occasioned this disorder, we do not know. It may have been done by accident, or through the ignorance or carelessness of some ancient compiler. It is a serious interruption to the study of the book.

S.—What are some of the more remarkable predictions of Jeremiah?

F.—He predicted the fate of Jehoiakim, and of Zedekiah (Chap. xxxvi. 30, xxxix. 3). He predicted the captivity of the Jews, the precise time of its continuance, and their return to their own land (Chap. xxii. 8–12). He predicted the destruction of Babylon, and the downfall of many other nations (xxv. 15–33). He foretold the coming of Christ, his miraculous conception, the virtue of his atonement, the spiritual character of his religion, and the inward efficacy of his laws (Chap. xxxi. 31–34). The reputation of Jeremiah, as a prophet of God, went abroad to other nations, and many writers among the heathen have borne testimony to the truth and accuracy of his predictions.

S.—What is said as to the style of Jeremiah?

F.—He is proverbially styled “the weeping prophet.” The painful messages which he was called upon to deliver, and the many trying scenes through which he passed, made him so. He was perpetually conversant with objects of suffering, of grief, of pity. This characteristic of his writings appears frequently in the book we have examined, but more especially in the Lamentations.

S.—When was the book of Lamentations written?

F.—Very soon after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, but whether before or after Jeremiah went into Egypt, we cannot tell.

S.—Is there anything peculiar in the structure of the Lamentations?

F.—It is not so properly one poem, as five, each chapter consti-

tuting a song by itself. The first four chapters are written in the acrostic form, every couplet or verse beginning with a letter in the Hebrew alphabet, in regular order. The first, second, and fourth chapters contain each of them, twenty-two verses, according to the number of the Hebrew letters. The third chapter has triplets, each beginning with a Hebrew letter, and the number of verses is sixty-six. The fifth and last chapter is not an acrostic. The first two chapters describe the distresses and calamities of the siege of Jerusalem. The third is more personal, setting forth the sufferings of the writer. The fourth refers to the ruin and desolation of the city and temple. The fifth is a form of prayer for the Jews in their captivity. The whole is written with the utmost tenderness. "Never," says Lowth, "was there a more rich and elegant variety of beautiful images and adjuncts, arranged together in so small a compass. Every letter was inscribed with a tear; every word is the echo of a broken heart. During the exile in Babylon, the Lamentations of Jeremiah were read, it is said, year by year, on the ninth day of the month Abib (July), with fasting and weeping, to commemorate the miseries out of which the nation had been delivered."

CONVERSATION L.

PROPHETS IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS.—Zephaniah.—Time of his prophecy.
—Character of his predictions.—Habakkuk.—The general description of this book.—
Obadiah.—The shortest book in the Old Testament.—Subject of this prophecy.

ZEPHANIAH.

Son.—From the inscription to this book, we know who were the progenitors of Zephaniah, and that he prophesied in the days of Josiah, king of Judah. At what time in the reign of Josiah did he deliver his prophecy?

Father.—I think in the first half of his reign. He certainly prophesied before the fall of Nineveh; and Nineveh was destroyed in the sixteenth year of Josiah (Chap. ii. 13). He prophesied, too, before the land was cleared from idolatry, as it was in the latter part of Josiah's reign. The facts here referred to indicate pretty plainly the date of this prophecy—the first half of Josiah's reign—perhaps the tenth or twelfth year. This would make Zephaniah cotemporary with Jeremiah, though, perhaps, a little earlier.

S.—What is the purport of this short prophecy?

F.—The first chapter is occupied in denouncing terrible judgments upon the people of the land for their idolatry, pride, and wickedness. “The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of the trumpet and of alarm against the fenced cities” (Chap. i. 14). In the second chapter, judgment is denounced upon the surrounding nations—the Philistines, the Moabites, the Cushites, and the Assyrians—all which were speedily executed. The third chapter closes with an earnest call to the Jews to repentance and reformation, and promises of future restoration and peace.

S.—How does Zephaniah compare with the other prophets in point of style?

F.—His style is not so elevated and eloquent as that of some of the prophets, but is well adapted to his subject. It compares favorably with that of Micah and Jeremiah. It was a loud call to the degenerate Jews in the closing period of their monarchy,—one to which they should have listened,—to which, we think, Josiah did listen, and by which he was strengthened and encouraged in his efforts for a reformation.

HABAKKUK.

S.—Have we any means of knowing who Habakkuk was?

F.—We have not. The Jews have their traditions about him, but these are of no account.

S.—At what time did he live and utter his predictions?

F.—I cannot doubt that he was cotemporary with Jeremiah; that he lived and prophesied just previous to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In Chap. i. 6, God says: “Behold I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places which are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their horses are swifter than the leopards, and more fierce than the evening wolves.” This is enough to show the occasion of the prophecy, and the time when it was uttered.

S.—What will you say to the form and style of the book?

F.—The book is highly poetical—a poem throughout. The first two chapters are in the form of a dialogue between the distressed prophet, and the Sovereign Chastiser and Avenger of his people Israel. The prophet begins: “O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! Even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save (Chap. i. 2)!” In the fifth verse, and onward, God speaks: “Behold ye among the heathen, and wonder marvelously; for I will work a work in your days which ye will not believe, though it be told you.” In the twelfth verse and onward, the prophet continues his prayer. “Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God? We shall not die. Thou hast ordained *them* (the heathen) for judgment; thou hast established them for cor-

rection.” The Lord commences his reply, by saying: “Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it; for it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Chap. ii. 2). From this point, God goes on to denounce approaching judgments upon the Chaldeans, for their pride, their manifold oppressions, and for all their cruelty. The whole concludes with a magnificent psalm or prayer, in the third chapter, which, for boldness of conception, sublimity of thought, and majesty of expression, is not exceeded in the literature of the world. The book ends with an intense expression of confidence in God, amidst all the coming desolations. “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

OBADIAH.

S.—This is the shortest book in the Old Testament, containing only twenty-one verses. Do we know anything of the author personally?

F.—We do not. There are traditions and conjectures, but nothing on which to rely.

S.—What is the principal subject of this prophecy?

F.—It is a reproof of the Edomites, and a severe denunciation against them, for their cruelty to the Jews, and their rejoicings over them, in the day of their calamity. The cruelty of the Edomites, when Jerusalem was destroyed, is spoken of in other Scriptures (see Ps. cxxxvii. 7). In the last verses, the prophet speaks encouragingly to his own people, assuring them of a final deliverance and triumph over all their enemies.

S.—Is there any evidence that Obadiah had seen the prophecies of Jeremiah?

F.—There is; for in some instances he quotes Jeremiah almost verbally (compare v. 5 with Jeremiah xlix. 9).

S.—When was this prophecy uttered?

F.—Shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The prophecy of Obadiah, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, may have been delivered at about the same time.

S.—What is said of the style of this short book?

F.—“Its principal characteristics,” says Bishop Lowth, “are animation, regularity, and perspicuity.”

SECOND BOOK.

FROM THE CAPTIVITY TO THE COMING OF CHRIST.

CONVERSATION I.

THE JEWS UNDER THE BABYLONIANS.—Babylon.—Its location.—When and by whom founded.—Nineveh.—Division of Assyrian empire.—Invasion and destruction of Nineveh.—Daniel in Babylon.—Second transportation of Jews to Babylon.—Desolation of the country.—Description of the walls of Babylon and objects of interest.—Cyrus.—The capture of Babylon.

Son.—Where was Babylon? When was it founded, and by whom?

Father.—Babylon was situated on the Euphrates, in north latitude 32°. It was founded by Nimrod, a grandson of Ham, about one hundred and ten years after the deluge. It is supposed to have occupied the site of the ancient tower of Babel, from which it derived its name.

S.—Did Babylon subsist all along from the days of Nimrod to those of Nebuchadnezzar?

F.—It is supposed to have subsisted, though we hear but little of it for a long course of years.

S.—What sister city grew up near it, and at the same time?

F.—Nineveh, situated on the Tigris, about four degrees further north. This was the capital of the Assyrian empire, perhaps the oldest in the world.

S.—Who was the first king of Assyria that invaded Palestine?

F.—During the reign of Menahem, king of Israel, Pul, the king of Assyria came into the land, and Menahem gave him a thousand talents of silver. This was a little later than the preaching of Jonah at Nineveh. At this time Nineveh was a great city.

S.—Did the Assyrian empire, at this time, embrace both Babylon and Nineveh?

F.—It did; but shortly after, the empire was divided. Arbaces,

the governor of Media, and Belesis, governor of Babylon, conspired against the king of Assyria, conquered him, and divided his empire between them,—the former reigning at Nineveh, and the latter at Babylon. Arbaces was the Tiglath-pileser of the Scriptures—the same who fought against Pekah, king of Israel, and carried many of the Israelites into captivity (2 Kings, xv. 29). Belesis is the same as Nabonassar, with whose reign commences the celebrated astronomical era, called the era of Nabonassar. He is called Baladan in the Scriptures (Is. xxxix. 1).

S.—By whom was Nineveh taken and destroyed?

F.—By Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar. He seems to have reigned conjointly with his father, a few years previous to his father's death. It was while his father was yet alive, that he first invaded Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah. Jerusalem was conquered at this time, and the first company of captives were sent to Babylon, among whom were Daniel and his three friends.

S.—At what time did Nebuchadnezzar have his first vision?

F.—It was in the second year of his reigning alone, after the death of his father. He saw in his vision a mighty image, in shape like a man, whose head was of gold, whose breast and arms were of silver, whose belly and thighs were of brass, whose legs were of iron, and whose feet and toes were partly of iron, and partly of clay. The dream greatly astonished the king, and yet when he awoke, it was gone from him; he could recall nothing of it; nor could any of his wise men assist him at all in the matter. It was the disclosing of the dream, and the interpretation of it, which first brought Daniel into favor with Nebuchadnezzar, and established his reputation as the wisest man in the kingdom. Daniel was now a youth, not more than twenty-two years of age; yet he received the richest gifts, and was advanced to the highest honors. “The king made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over the wise men of Babylon.”

S.—At what time did Nebuchadnezzar set up that great image

at Babylon—a representation, perhaps, of the one he had seen in vision?

F.—It was in the eighteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the return of his army to Babylon, that the image was set up, and all the princes, governors, officers and people were commanded to fall down and worship it. The three friends of Daniel refused to comply, and were cast into a burning fiery furnace, from which they were miraculously delivered by the power of God.

S.—But where was Daniel on this occasion? Did he worship the image, and thus escape persecution?

F.—No; Daniel would not save himself from death in this way. The probability is that he was not accused. Owing to his high position and great influence with the king, the accusers of his three friends did not venture to aim their shafts at him. At any rate, they thought it safer to dispose of the others first.

S.—Were any more exiles transported from Jerusalem to Babylon, after the fall of the city?

F.—Yes; In the second year after the destruction of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre, which occupied him several years. While a part of his army lay before Tyre, another part was sent into the land of Israel, to glean the stragglers who still lingered there, and send them to Babylon. This was the last transportation of exiles from Judea, and the number carried away amounted to no more than seven hundred and forty-five persons.

S.—After the fall of Tyre, where did Nebuchadnezzar next turn his arms?

F.—As soon as he was released from Tyre, he marched his army into Egypt, and overran the whole country from one end to the other. Having loaded his army with the rich spoils of Egypt, and made the land his tributary, he returned to Babylon. During this raid upon Egypt, most of the Jews who had fled there, after the destruction of their city, fell into the hands of the king of Babylon, and were either slain, or carried captives to Babylon.

S.—After his return from Egypt, how did Nebuchadnezzar employ himself?

F.—He applied himself, at once, to the strengthening and adorning of his capital; and this work he continued, until he made Babylon one of the wonders of the world. The walls of the city were eighty-seven feet thick, three hundred and fifty feet high, and in circumference round the city not less than sixty miles. Then there were the towers upon the walls, the hanging gardens, the temples, the palaces, the walls and gates on the banks of the river within the city, the artificial lake and canals for the draining of the river in case of flood. Altogether, there never was such a city before, and probably never will be to the end of time.

S.—When did Nebuchadnezzar have his second prophetic vision?

F.—While engaged in completing his great works at Babylon, he saw, in vision, a great tree, which towered to the heavens, and whose branches reached to the ends of the earth. He saw it cut down by a watcher from heaven, and yet not utterly destroyed. He saw it sprout and come up again, after it had for a time lain desolate, and been wetted with the dew of heaven. This dream, and Daniel's interpretation of it, we have recorded in the fourth chapter of his prophecy. And in due time, it was all accomplished. For as Nebuchadnezzar was walking in his palace, and looking out upon the splendors and luxuries of his favorite city, he gave utterance to the pride of his heart in the following words: "Is not this great Babylon which *I* have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Whereupon there befell him instantly what Daniel had predicted: His reason and his kingdom were both taken away; he was driven from the society of men; he had his dwelling with the brutes; he did eat grass like an ox; and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. But, at the end of seven years, his reason returned, and his former kingdom and majesty were restored unto

him; and then it was that he made the following noble and humble confession: "I do bless the most high God, and praise and honor him who liveth forever and ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and whose kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are as nothing before him; and he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? I do praise and extol, and honor the king of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways are judgment, and those who walk in pride he is able to abase."

S.—What do you think of this confession, and of him who made it?

F.—From this period, Nebuchadnezzar became, as I would fondly hope, a truly pious man. He died, however, in a little more than a year, having reigned, in great prosperity and glory, sole monarch of Babylon, for the long period of forty-three years. He was an instrument in the hand of God of chastising many guilty nations, among whom were the Jews; and at length, through the influence of a distinguished Jew, he was brought to the open acknowledgment and worship of the only living and true God.

S.—Who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar on the throne of Babylon?

F.—His son, Merodach, or who is called in Scripture, Evil-Merodach. He was a profligate and vicious ruler; and yet he bestowed one act of kindness upon the Jews. He showed favor to Jehoiachin, a former king of Judah, who had now been in confinement at Babylon thirty-seven years. As the sacred writer expresses it, "the king of Babylon spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the thrones of the kings that were with him at Babylon, and changed his prison garments, and he did eat continually before him all the days of his life" (2 Kings xxv. 28).

S.—The reign of Merodach was short. Who succeeded him?

F.—After two short inglorious reigns, he was succeeded by Nabonadius, a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, called in Scripture, Belshazzar.

S.—What great powers were now being raised up for the overthrow of Babylon?

F.—The Kingdom of the Medes, lying north of Babylon, had long been one of great strength. It was now governed by Cyaxares II., called in Scripture, Darius the Mede. Another ancient kingdom now coming into notice was the Persian. This lay east of Babylon, was founded by Elam, a grandson of Noah, but never had distinguished itself among the nations until the times of which we speak. Cyrus, who was now on the throne of Persia, was a nephew of Darius the Mede. This brought the Medes and Persians into close alliance, and the principal thing attempted by the alliance was the overthrow of Babylon. Cyrus, I hardly need say, was the greatest warrior of his age, and almost of any age. He led the united forces of Media and Persia, and it was under him that Belshazzar, the last monarch of Babylon was conquered and the city taken.

S.—How was Babylon finally taken?

F.—By a close siege. This was the only way in which it could be taken; and to capture it by siege seemed almost a hopeless task. The walls were high and impregnable, and the number of men within to defend them was very great. They were furnished with provisions for twenty years, in addition to what might be raised in the gardens and tillage lands within the city. It is not strange, therefore, that the Babylonians, in their towers and on the walls, scoffed at Cyrus, and derided his seemingly vain efforts to molest them.

S.—What expedient was at length hit upon, by which Cyrus got possession of the city?

F.—As the city was built on both sides of the river, which ran under the wall and through the city, Cyrus contrived to draw off the waters of the river, and leave a dry channel under the wall on both sides. This was done at a concerted signal, on a night when it was known that the Babylonians were to hold a great festival, and would spend the whole night in reveling

and drunkenness. While the channel of the river was being drained, Cyrus posted one part of his army at the place where the water ran into the city, and another part at the place where it ran out, with orders to enter the city on both sides as soon as they should find the channel of the river fordable. Before midnight the river was sufficiently drained, and both parties entered through the opened channel into the city. But here they must have encountered an insuperable obstacle, had it not been for the drunkenness, and consequent carelessness of those within the walls. The brazen gates which opened down to the river from every street, and which were always shut by night, happened now to be left open; and through them, both parties of the invaders ascended directly from the channel of the river into the city. Thus remarkably was a prophecy of Isaiah, addressed to Cyrus by name, and uttered more than a hundred years before he was born, fulfilled at this time: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; *I will open the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut*" (Is. xlv. 1, 2).

S.—What took place after the soldiers had entered the city?

F.—They proceeded directly to the palace, where Belshazzar and his lords were drinking wine out of the golden and silver vessels which had been plundered from the temple at Jerusalem, and where the mysterious hand-writing on the wall had just been interpreted by Daniel. Here they surprised and slew the guards; and when the palace gates were opened, they rushed forward and planted themselves within. The king and his nobles encountered them, sword in hand, but they, and all who resisted, were immediately slain. After this, a proclamation was issued, promising life and protection to such as would lay down their arms, and threatening destruction to all who refused. Whereupon, all quietly submitted to the conqueror, and Cyrus became master of the city.

S.—What can be said of Daniel at this time and during the period since Nebuchadnezzar's death?

F.—Daniel was now an old man; he cannot have been less than

eighty years of age. We hear little of him after Nebuchadnezzar's death, until he was called to interpret the hand-writing upon the wall. In the first year of Belshazzar, he had his remarkable vision of the four beasts, denoting the four great monarchies of the ancient world, to be followed by the everlasting kingdom of Christ. In the third year of Belshazzar, he had his vision of the ram and the he-goat, by which were set forth the overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great, and the terrible persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the kings of Syria. At this time, Daniel "was occupied in *the king's business*;" which shows that he was in office under Belshazzar, though we hear but little of him.

S.—What became of Babylon, after its capture by Cyrus?

F.—The Babylonish empire now came to an end, after it had existed,—reckoning from the time of Nimrod,—seventeen hundred years. The city, to be sure, was not at once destroyed, but it never flourished more. Its decline was gradual, but constant, until it became a heap of ruins, and all that the prophets had foretold of its desolation was accomplished.

CONVERSATION II.

THE JEWS UNDER THE MEDO-PERSIANS.—Darius.—Daniel the prophet made a prince.—Death of Darius.—The proclamation of Cyrus.—Liberating the Jews.—Cyrus fore-ordained for this act.—The influence of Daniel in restoration.—Zerubbabel the leader.—A contribution of over three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.—An example of liberality.—Laying the foundation of the second temple.—Zoroaster the philosopher.—The Zend-Avesta.—Xerxes.—His immense army.

Son.—After the fall of Babylon, who reigned over the Medo-Persian empire?

Father.—Daniel tells us it was Darius the Mede; and this is true. For though Cyrus had won it by his valor, yet so long as his uncle lived,—who was also his father-in-law,—he allowed him not only a joint title to the kingdom, but the chief place of honor in it. This is that Darius who set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel was first; and who thought to set Daniel over the whole realm. This is that Darius who, to gratify the envy of his princes, cast Daniel into the den of lions; and who, upon his miraculous deliverance, published a decree that “men should, everywhere, fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast forever, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.”

S.—Where was Cyrus during these first years after the conquest of Babylon?

F.—While Darius was governing at Babylon, Cyrus and his army were in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, subduing the restive nations, and setting in order the affairs of his vast kingdom. The symbolic ram was “pushing westward, and northward, and southward, and there was none that could deliver out of his hand.” Cyrus was absent on this expedition about two years, when he was summoned home by the death of Darius. He now became sole monarch of the Medo-Persian empire, over which he reigned in great prosperity for the next seven years.

S.—What did Cyrus perform in behalf of the Jews?

F.—Long before Jerusalem was destroyed, God had said to his people by the mouth of Jeremiah; “Ye shall serve the king of Babylon *seventy years*; and after seventy years shall be accomplished, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place” (Jer. xxv. 11). At a still earlier period, God had spoken of Cyrus *by name*, as the instrument by whom the restoration was to be accomplished. It was Cyrus who should “say to Jerusalem, *Thou shalt be built*, and to the temple, *Thy foundation shall be laid*” (Is. xlix. 28). Accordingly, in the very first year of his reign, Cyrus “made proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it in writing, saying, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, which is at Jerusalem. And whoso sojourneth in any place, let the men of his place help him, with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will offerings which are for the house which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra i. 2-4).

S.—Is it certain that the captivity of the Jews had now continued seventy years?

F.—This question can be easily settled. It commenced a year and two months previous to the death of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar,—when Daniel and his three friends, and many others, were carried away. It continued through the entire reign of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, till the fall of Babylon, and through the two years of Darius the Mede, making, in all, a period of sixty-nine years and two months. If we suppose the proclamation above quoted to have been issued in the tenth month of the first year of Cyrus,—which is as early in the year as could well be expected,—we have precisely the term of seventy years, from the commencement of the captivity to the decree of restoration.

S.—Is it likely that Daniel had anything to do in procuring this decree of restoration?

F.—I think it is. Daniel was now a venerable man, an old minister of state, famed for his great wisdom all over the east, and of long experience in the management of public affairs. He had learned from books that the years of predicted captivity were now accomplished, and had been much in prayer for the restoration of his people. As he had the ear of Cyrus, it is next to certain that he would use his influence with him to bring about this desirable event. It is evident from the proclamation of Cyrus, that he had seen those prophecies of Isaiah in which he was designated as the restorer of the Jews; and who so likely to make him acquainted with them as his prime minister and chief counselor, Daniel?

S.—To what extent did the Jews take advantage of the decree of Cyrus?

F.—In consequence of the decree of Cyrus, the Jews and Israelites gathered themselves together out of the several parts of his empire to the number of forty-three thousand. With their servants, they numbered fifty thousand. I saw the Jews and *Israelites* gathered themselves together; for the decree of emancipation extended to all alike, and it is certain that many of the latter returned with the Jews. They had for their leaders Zerubbabel, the son of Salathiel, of the seed royal, and Joshua, the son of Jozadak, the high priest. Unto them were delivered all the vessels of gold and silver, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the old temple at Jerusalem. A part of these were now taken to Jerusalem, and the remainder were brought by Ezra at a later period.

S.—Did most of the Jews now return to Jerusalem, or did many remain behind?

F.—Vast numbers, and those in general of the richest class, remained behind. They were well to do in Chaldea, and did not relish the thought of a removal. Hence, from this time, we find multitudes of Jews in those eastern countries, where they continued till the coming of Christ, and where their posterity remain unto this day.

S.—How was it with the returning Jews, and what was their success?

F.—The exiles under Zerubbabel and Joshua arrived in Judea in the month Nisam—the first of their year, corresponding to a part of our March and April. Their first effort was to provide themselves dwellings, and to commence the cultivation of their fields. But in the month Tisri, the seventh of their year, they assembled at Jerusalem, and united in celebrating their great annual festivals. At the same time they made a contribution for the re-building of the temple, amounting to more than three hundred and fifty thousand dollars of our money—a prodigious sum to be offered by these poor exiles—an example of liberality such as the world has rarely seen. In the second month of the next year, the foundations of the new temple were laid with great solemnity,—some shouting and others weeping, so that “the noise was heard afar off.”

S.—How large was the second temple?

F.—It was of equal dimensions with the first; being built on the same foundation. Still, it was in many respects far inferior. It was not built of such costly materials, or adorned with such splendid ornaments, or surrounded with such elegant porches and courts. It was also lacking in those peculiar tokens of the Divine presence and favor,—the original ark of the covenant and tables of stone, the dazzling Shekinah, the Urim and Thummim, the holy anointing oil, and the holy fire. But all these defects were more than compensated when the Lord whom they sought came suddenly to his temple, and Christ, the great Prophet, Priest and King, honored it with his presence and worship.

S.—How were the Samaritans affected when they heard of the return of the Jews, and their efforts to rebuild their temple?

F.—They sent messengers to the Jews, offering to assist them in the work, and to unite with them in acts of worship; which offers the Jews declined. They did not acknowledge them as brethren of the same faith; and besides, they suspected the motives of the Samaritans. They had not come to do them good, but hurt. The sequel proved that these suspicions were too well founded. Because

the Jews declined their assistance and fellowship, the Samaritans became henceforth their bitterest enemies. They strove, by all means, to embarrass and hinder them.

S.—Who succeeded Cyrus on the throne of Persia?

F.—Cambyses his son, called by Ezra, Ahasuerus (Chap. iv. 6). To him the enemies of the Jews made supplication against them; and though he would not revoke his father's decree, he rather discouraged than aided the work at Jerusalem. Cambyses died after a reign of between seven and eight years, and was succeeded by Smerdis, a usurper, who pretended to be a son of Cyrus, and whom Ezra calls Artaxerxes (Chap. iv. 7). He was induced by the Samaritans to issue an order, which put a stop to the building of the temple during the remainder of his reign, which happily continued only a few months.

S.—Who succeeded Smerdis?

F.—His successor was the renowned Darius Hystaspis, who reigned thirty-six years. He was one of the best friends and powerful supporters that the Jews ever had. The Samaritans applied to him, as they had done before, to put a stop to the work at Jerusalem; but he searched and found the decree of Cyrus, and resolved that it should be carried into execution. He commanded that the tribute of the Samaritans should be paid over to the Jews, and that they should be liberally assisted with whatever else they needed. He finally ordered that, if any one should further oppose them, or attempt in any way to hinder them, a gallows should be made from the timber of his house, and that he should be hanged thereon. At the same time, the people were stirred up, by the fervid appeals of the prophet Haggai, to forget their discouragements, and engage in the work of the house with new energy and zeal. From this time the building of the temple went so rapidly on that, at the end of three years, it was entirely accomplished. In the sixth year of the reign of Darius Hystaspis, and, on the third day of the twelfth Jewish month Adar, it was solemnly and joyfully dedicated. There were offered up at the dedication "one hundred bullocks, two hundred

rams, and four hundred lambs, besides twelve he-goats for a sin offering, according to the number of the tribes of Israel." We have here an intimation that the persons concerned in this transaction were not merely Jews, but members, to some extent, of all the tribes of Israel.

S.—What said the Samaritans, when the temple was finished and dedicated?

F.—They claimed that they were no longer under obligations to pay custom or tribute; but on referring the question to Darius, he ordered that they should observe his edict, and pay tribute as before. It was now needed for the *support* of the temple, as it before had been for the building of it.

S.—What great Jewish festival was now celebrated in the new temple?

F.—The Passover. "Seven days, they kept the feast of unleavened bread with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the God of Israel."

S.—How long did Darius live, after the dedication of the temple?

F.—About thirty years. He was a prince of great wisdom, energy, clemency and justice. He was unfortunate in some of his military expeditions, more especially those against the Scythians and Athenians. It was during his reign that the Persians lost the famous battle of Marathon. But he extended the empire of Cyrus in other directions; having added to it, in the east, a considerable part of India, and in the west, Thrace, Macedon, and the Ionian isles.

S.—What distinguished philosopher flourished in Persia at this time?

F.—Zoroaster. He was not the author of the magician religion, but only the reformer of it; and the principal improvements that he made are said to have been borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures. He may have been personally acquainted with Ezekiel and Daniel, and studied the writings of Moses and the prophets. Like Mahomet

and other impostors, Zoroaster pretended to have been in heaven, and to have learned his religion there. He reformed the old magianism in its first principle, which was *dualism*—a god of light, and a god of darkness; the one the author of all good, the other of all evil. In opposition to all this, Zoroaster taught the doctrine of *one supreme God*—the prime Original and Author of all things; and that the two great leaders in the conflict going on in this world are both of them derived and inferior beings.

S.—Did Zoroaster and his followers worship images?

F.—They did not. Zoroaster taught his followers to worship the sun and the fire,—not that he considered either of these as a god, but they were the special residences and brightest exhibitions of God. The book containing the revelations of Zoroaster is called the *Zend-Avesta*, or by contraction the *Zend*. He presented a copy of it to Darius Hystaspis, bound in eleven volumes, each of which consisted of a hundred skins of vellum. The book is still preserved among the Magians in the east, and is regarded by them with great veneration. The wise men who came from the east to worship our Savior were undoubtedly philosophers of this class.

S.—Who succeeded Darius in the government?

F.—His son Xerxes, sometimes called *the great*. He was a grandson of Cyrus, whose daughter Darius had married. Xerxes confirmed to the Jews at Jerusalem all the privileges which his father had granted them. In particular, he ordered that the tribute from the Samaritans for the support of the temple worship should be paid.

S.—For what was the reign of Xerxes chiefly remarkable?

F.—For his unfortunate expedition in Greece. His preparations for this, in men, money, and naval armaments were immense. As had been predicted by Daniel, “he stirred up all against the realm of Grecia” (Dan. xi. 2). He formed a league with the Carthaginians, by which they were to assist him with an army and with ships. He drew together, from all parts of his vast empire, such a body of men as the world had never seen. According to

Herodotus, his active forces, when he arrived in Greece, amounted to 2,642,610 men; while the servants, eunuchs, women, sutlers, and others who followed the camp, were thought to be as many more. Here then was a collection of more than five millions of souls, brought together at a single point, for the subjugation of Greece. No wonder that Xerxes wept, as he looked down upon them from an eminence, under the impression that, in less than a hundred years, they would all be dead.

S.—How did this vast expedition terminate?

F.—You have all read of the manner in which this unwieldy army of Asiatics was received at Thermopylæ by Leonidas, and his invincible Spartans. You have read of the battle of Salamis, where the Greeks took and destroyed hundreds of the Persian ships, and obliged the rest to flee to the coasts of Asia. Upon the loss of his fleet, Xerxes, with the greater part of his army, hastened back into Asia, and took up their winter-quarters at Sardis. Meanwhile, the Carthaginians, on whom he had relied to assist him, were so totally defeated in Sicily, that scarcely a man remained to tell of the disaster. On his return out of Greece, Xerxes left behind him Mardonius, one of his generals, with three hundred and fifty thousand men. These encountered the Greeks at Platea, the next year, where they were utterly defeated, and the most of them were slain.

S.—What did Xerxes now do?

F.—He lost no time in getting back to Persia. He only stopped to destroy and to plunder all the idolatrous temples that came in his way. He is supposed to have done this, first, because, being himself a Magian, he was opposed to idol worship; and, secondly, because he needed the spoils of the temples to indemnify him for the enormous expenses of the war. From this time, we hear of no great Persian expedition into Greece; but soon the tide of war flows in the other direction, and Greece is pouring her armies into Persia.

S.—What can be said of Xerxes, after his return to Persia?

F.—The remainder of his reign was not creditable to him. He became involved in shameful domestic troubles, which could be terminated only in cruelty and blood. When these were adjusted, he gave himself up to luxury and ease, minding nothing but the gratification of his pleasures and lusts; on which account one of his military officers conspired against him, and slew him in his bed.

S.—By whom was he succeeded?

F.—By his third son, Artaxerxes Longimanus. He was the great grandson of Cyrus. The incidents of his reign, with the distinguished favor which he showed to the Jews, will be the subject of our next conversation.

CONVERSATION III.

THE JEWS UNDER THE MEDO-PERSIANS.—Artaxerxes supposed to have been the husband of Esther.—The decree of divorce.—Ezra and his commission.—The prediction of Daniel.—Ezra's government.—The great work of his life.—Introduction of the synagogue.—Nehemiah builds the walls of Jerusalem.—Origin of the Samaritan Pentateuch.—Malachi the last of the prophets.—Socrates the philosopher.—Plato born.

Son.—At the close of our last conversation, you said that Xerxes was succeeded by his third son, Artaxerxes Longimanus. Was he the husband of Esther?

Father.—It has long been a question, which of the Persian kings was the husband of Esther. I think that it must have been Artaxerxes Longimanus. He had great difficulties to contend with in the beginning of his reign, more especially from those who had slain his father, and from his eldest brother, governor of Bactria. But by his energy and wisdom, these were at length overcome; after which he set himself to reform abuses and disorders in his empire, to call the governors of the provinces to an account, and to remove such as had proved themselves unworthy. By these means, he not only strengthened himself in the kingdom, but secured the affection and confidence of his subjects.

S.—When peace had been restored, and the government was established, how did he celebrate his victories?

F.—He appointed a solemn festival to be observed in his palace for the term of one hundred and eighty days; and when these were ended, he made one for the *people* that were in Shushan, seven days. His queen, at the same time, made a like entertainment in her apartments for the women. “On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded his seven chamberlains to bring in the queen, with the crown royal on her head, that he might show to the princes and people her beauty. But the fair queen resented this injunction, as being inconsistent

with her dignity, and unbecoming the modesty of her sex. She would not come. Upon this, the king was highly incensed, and called around him his wise counselors, that he might confer with them in regard to her. Believing that the example of disobedience which the queen had set, to be one of dangerous influence in the realm, they advised that she be forthwith deposed and divorced; that she come no more into the presence of the king; and that her royal state should be given to another, better than herself. This advice was accepted of the king, and a decree went forth for its immediate execution.

S.—What followed the disgrace of the queen?

F.—This opened the way for the elevation of Esther, whose story is told with inimitable beauty in the book which bears her name. Her Jewish name was Hadassah, but her Persian name was Esther. She was instrumental, in the hand of God, of promoting, in various ways, the interests of her people,—more especially in delivering them from a threatened destruction, and in effecting the ruin of their proud and cruel enemy.

S.—In the first part of this reign, what did Ezra do for the benefit of his people?

F.—He obtained a commission from the king and his counselors, to go up to Jerusalem, with as many of the Jews as were pleased to accompany him, with full power to settle the state and reform the church of Israel, and to govern both according to their own laws.

S.—Who was Ezra?

F.—He was a priest by descent, and a very learned and holy man. He is spoken of as “a ready scribe in the law of his God.”

S.—What will you say of the commission given to Ezra?

F.—In its provisions it was liberal, ample, and abundant. It granted every favor, and all the authority, which any one could desire. He was authorized to take with him any number of his people who were minded to go, and any amount in gold and silver, and in vessels for the house of the Lord, which might be contributed. The decree is given in the seventh chapter of Ezra, and

nothing is wanting to it which the most devoted friend of the Jews could require. Ezra must have been in high reputation at the Persian court for integrity and wisdom, or such a commission could never have been given him.

S.—Having received his commission, what did Ezra do?

F.—He hastened his preparations with all possible dispatch, and commenced his journey from Babylon to Jerusalem on the first day of the first Jewish month—about the middle of our March. He halted a little at the river Ahava, till the rest of his company came up,—when, in a solemn fast, he commended both himself and them to the protection of the Almighty. They then set forward on their way to Jerusalem, where they safely arrived on the first day of the fifth month, having been just four months on the journey. Arrived at the temple, Ezra delivered to the keepers of it the gifts and offerings which had been made by the king and his princes, amounting to one hundred talents of gold, and six hundred and fifty talents of silver, together with vessels of gold and silver for the service of the temple, of exceeding value. He then entered upon his government, according to the king's decree, and continued it, much to the edification and comfort of the people, for the next thirteen years.

S.—What prediction of Daniel began to have its fulfillment, in this decree of Artaxerxes?

F.—His memorable prediction of the seventy weeks, at the close of which the Messiah was to be cut off. The prediction of Daniel is as follows: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy” (Dan., Chap. ix). It has been generally understood that, in these seventy prophetic weeks, or four hundred and ninety days, each day stands for a year; so that the whole period designated is four hundred and ninety years. Now it is a remarkable fact that, between the seventh year of Artaxerxes,

when the above commission was given to Ezra, and the year of our Lord's crucifixion, is precisely four hundred and ninety years.* This statement may be relied on as true, whatever theories may have been got up to account for it.

S.—What was the condition of the Jews at Jerusalem, when Ezra arrived among them?

F.—He found the people much degenerated and corrupted, and in need of a thorough reformation; and such a reformation he immediately attempted. He obliged those persons who had connected themselves in marriage with the people of the land to put away their strange wives, and to conform, in this respect, to the law of Moses. He took much pains to instruct the people in the law, multiplying copies of it, and causing it to be read and expounded on great public occasions. By degrees, he brought the Jewish church into an outward visible state, in which it remained to the coming of Christ.

S.—What other important work in regard to the Scriptures did Ezra accomplish?

F.—Being an inspired man, and one thoroughly versed in the sacred books of the Jews, he was led to collect and revise those holy records, and give to the Church a correct edition of them, or of such of them as had then been written. Some of these books he wrote himself, and the others he so prepared and set in order, as in effect to settle the canon of the *Old Testament Scriptures*. He settled it so perfectly, that it received the sanction of our Savior and his Apostles, and has been accepted by Jews and Christians in all periods since. This was the great work of Ezra's life. For this he will be remembered with gratitude and honor, so long as the Bible is read, or the world endures.

S.—Did Ezra introduce any new religious institution among the Jews at Jerusalem?

*Our Savior was crucified in the year of the Julian period, 4746. The seventh year of Artaxerxes was the year of the Julian period, 4256. The difference between the two numbers is 490.

F.—He is supposed to have instituted the synagogue and its worship. It is certain that there were no synagogues in the land previous to his time; and that they were in use shortly after his death. It would seem, also, that they must have been of Divine institution, or they would not have been so frequented by our Savior. Neither can it be doubted that they were of great advantage to the Israelites, tending, as they necessarily must, to multiply copies of the sacred writings, and to promote a better understanding of them among the people. Previous to the establishment of synagogues, the people, having no religious worship but that of the temple, and being comparatively ignorant of the law, were perpetually running into idolatry. The gods of the surrounding nations were a constant snare to them. But after the introduction of synagogues, in which the law was read and explained every Sabbath, they were as much averse to idolatry as they had been before addicted to it, and so it has been with the Jews ever since. They have fallen into other great sins, but with the worship of idols they have not been chargeable.

S.—What were Ezra's qualifications as a ruler, a magistrate?

F.—He seems to have been more a scholar than a ruler, more a teacher than a magistrate. After his utmost endeavors to reform abuses and to carry forward the work of the Lord, irregularities crept in among the people, and the inclosing and fortifying of Jerusalem were not completed. This is evident from the sad account of things which was brought to Nehemiah, then in Persia, and which led to his appointment, in place of Ezra, in the government.

S.—Who was Nehemiah, and what was his character?

F.—Nehemiah was a Jew, who originated at Jerusalem, but his ancestors are not known. He was now an inhabitant of Shushan, the royal city of Persia, was a man of indomitable energy and profound wisdom, was a possessor of great wealth, and held an important office near the king. He learned from certain Jews who came from Jerusalem, that his brethren there were in great affliction

and reproach; that the walls of the city were still broken down; that its gates had not been set up; and that, though the temple had been rebuilt and its worship established, the city remained comparatively desolate.

S.—How was Nehemiah affected by these tidings from Jerusalem?

F.—He sat down and wept, and mourned, and fasted certain days, and prayed before the God of heaven. He resolved, at the same time, that he would apply to the king for permission and authority to go to Jerusalem, and set up its gates, and repair its broken walls. Accordingly he sought an opportunity, when it came his turn to wait upon the king, and when Queen Esther was sitting beside him, to present a petition to this effect,—which was readily and liberally granted. A royal decree was issued for building the walls and gates of Jerusalem, and Nehemiah was sent there as governor of Judea, to put it in execution. And to do him the greater honor, the king sent a guard of horse, to conduct him in safety to his province. He also wrote letters to all the governors west of the Euphrates to aid him in his work, and to the keepers of his forests to grant him as much timber out of them as he should need. Thus commissioned and furnished, Nehemiah went up to Jerusalem, took upon him the administration of the government, and immediately commenced the great work for which he had come.

S.—How were the Samaritans affected by the new order of things at Jerusalem?

F.—No sooner had the Jews, under their new governor, commenced repairing the gates and walls of their city, than they were assailed by their old adversaries—Sanballat and his followers—with threats of personal *force and violence*; so that while a part of the people labored on the wall, another part were under arms for their defense. In consequence of the excellent arrangements of the governor, and the diligence and perseverance of the people, the wall of Jerusalem was repaired in less than two months, the gates were set

up, and a public dedication was celebrated with great solemnity by all the Jews.

S.—What further did Nehemiah do for the people?

F.—He set himself to ease the people of their burthens, and to accomplish necessary reforms,—in all which he was essentially aided by the counsel and co-operation of Ezra. Previous to this time, the rich among the Jews had been in the habit of exacting usury of their poorer brethren, and of oppressing them in various ways, so that many had been constrained to alienate their possessions, and even to sell their children into servitude, to procure bread for the support of themselves and their families. Upon hearing of these things, Nehemiah resolved to correct the evil at once; and so, having called the people together, he showed them how grossly they had violated the laws of God, and how much their oppressions tended to provoke his wrath. Whereupon it was resolved, by the whole assembly, not only that these odious exactions should cease, but that full restitution should be made.

S.—What plan did Nehemiah now propose for the benefit of the new city, Jerusalem?

F.—He wished to increase its population—to fill it up with houses and inhabitants; for while it lay unfortified, without walls and gates, few had been disposed to build houses there. He first persuaded all whom he could influence to come and establish their homes in the city, and then every tenth man was taken by lot, and obliged to come and make his dwelling there. In this way the city was soon filled with inhabitants, and began to assume something of its ancient greatness.

S.—Did Nehemiah continue permanently at Jerusalem?

F.—He did not. When he had been twelve years governor of Judea, he was under a necessity of returning to the Persian court, where he was detained for about five years. He then returned with a new commission, and found that his presence was greatly needed at Jerusalem. He found, for example, that his old enemy, Tobiah the Ammonite, had allied himself in marriage to the family

of the high priest; and that the high priest, for his accommodation, had assigned to him one of the chambers in the house of the Lord. But Nehemiah was not long in removing this evil. He cast forth, at once, "all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber," and commanded that it should be cleansed and restored to its former use.

Nehemiah also found that, during his absence, the portions of the singers and Levites had not been given them; so that they had been constrained to forsake their appropriate employments about the temple, and to seek a support by the labors of the field. This evil, also, was soon corrected. Nehemiah got the rulers together and chided them saying, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" Under his vigorous administration, the Levites were quickly restored to their places, and the tithes of corn and wine were duly rendered.

The next abuse with which Nehemiah grappled was the violation of the Sabbath. There were some among the Jews who trode their wine presses on the Sabbath, and brought sheaves and all manner of burdens into Jerusalem; also the Tyrian merchants brought fish, and all kinds of ware, and sold them on the Sabbath day. For these things, Nehemiah sharply reprov'd the rulers of the city, saying, "Did not your fathers thus? And did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath" (Neh. xiii. 18). From this time Nehemiah commanded that the gates of the city should be shut the evening before the Sabbath, and that no secular business should be performed, either within the city, or without the walls.

In putting an end to unlawful marriages, Nehemiah found that Manasseh, one of the sons of the high priest, had married a daughter of the notorious Sanballat, governor of Samaria, and refused to put his wife away. "Wherefore," says Nehemiah, "I chased him from me."

S.—What became of this Manasseh?

F.—He fled to Samaria, carrying a copy of the law of Moses

with him. He persuaded Sanballat to build a temple for him on mount Gerizim, after the same pattern as that at Jerusalem. We have here the origin of the Samaritan pentateuch, and of the worship on mount Gerizim, which continued till the coming of Christ.

S.—What prophet appeared in Jerusalem in these last days of Nehemiah?

F.—Malachi, the last of the Hebrew prophets. He does not, like Haggai and Zechariah, reprove the people for neglecting to build the fallen temple, but for neglecting what appertained to the true worship of God in it. In short, the corruptions which he charges upon the Jews are the same which Nehemiah undertook to correct, on his return from the Persian court.

S.—How long after this did Nehemiah live?

F.—We do not know precisely. The reformation which he so happily accomplished after his return to Jerusalem, is the last of his history of which we have any knowledge. He outlived his great prince and patron Artaxerxes, and was retained in office under Darius Nothus his son. Nehemiah, Ezra and Malachi—fellow laborers in the work of the Lord at Jerusalem—disappear from the sacred page together; and with them,—with the exception of a few names in the genealogies,—the canon of the Old Testament closes.

S.—What was the character of Nehemiah?

F.—This must be gathered from his works. That he was a man of great firmness, decision and energy as well as goodness—“a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well,”—is very obvious. That he had a quick and strong insight into human character, and much wisdom in the direction of public affairs is very plain. In short, he was, in a sense, a *model magistrate*, raised up and qualified for the particular service to which he was called, and to whom his nation was under the highest obligations. I ought to say a word of his great *liberality*, his *public spirit*. During the whole time that he was in office, he sustained the honors of it with a princely magnificence, and all at his own *personal expense*. He

would receive no salary or support from the people, because their burthens were heavy upon them (Chap. v. 18).

S.—How long did Artaxerxes (the Ahasuerus of Esther) reign?

F.—His reign continued forty-one years. His administration was peaceful and prosperous, and *eminently favorable to the Jews*. He reconquered the Egyptians, who had revolted from him, and held them in subjection to the end of his reign. He succeeded early in concluding a peace with the Greeks, which added much to his own security and tranquillity. During the latter part of his reign the Peloponnesian war was raging in Greece, which furnished sufficient employment for that restless and turbulent people, without turning their arms against the Persians. It was at this time that Socrates commenced his philosophical career at Athens, and that Plato, his most distinguished pupil and follower, was born.

CONVERSATION IV.

PROPHETS DURING THE CAPTIVITY.—Daniel.—His three companions.—Their education.—Enrolled among the king's servants.—Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream.—His elevation to posts of honor.—The image of Nebuchadnezzar.—The king's second dream.—Daniel's visions.—The hand-writing on the wall.—Honored by Darius.—In the den of lions.—His death.—Book of Daniel doubted.

Son.—How much do we know, personally, of the prophet Daniel?

Father.—Very little except what is recorded in the book of Daniel; and yet this book,—though not a biography or history,—gives us a pretty full account of him.

S.—Please relate the principal incidents of his life, as gathered from the book itself.

F.—Daniel was a Jew, born probably at Jerusalem, and connected with the royal family, if not of royal descent. Of his first years, nothing is recorded. Early in life, at the age, perhaps, of from twelve to fifteen, he was carried a captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. He was in the first company of captives that were carried away,—in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. There were three others, apparently of the same rank, *viz.*, Hananiah, Michael and Azariah, who were carried away with him. These four were selected, on account of their rank, and their high promise, to be educated in the language and literature of the Chaldees, that they might be employed in the service of the king. Liberal provision was made for them by the government, that, at the end of three years, they might be prepared for examination.

Daniel had before been instructed in Hebrew learning, and was thoroughly imbued with the principles of the religion of his fathers. Indeed, I would hope that both he and his three friends were, at this early period, truly pious. They were conscientiously averse, at any rate, to accepting the provision which the king had made for them. They would not “defile themselves with their portion of the king's meat, nor of the wine which he drank.” Hence Daniel made application to the prince of the eunuchs, who

had charge of them, that they might be permitted to live after their own laws and customs, and not after those of the Chaldeans. And after some hesitation and trial, the request of Daniel was granted.

For their conscientious fidelity in this matter, God blessed these young men, so that, at the end of three years, they were examined and highly approved of the king, and were enrolled among his servants. Indeed, it is said that "in all matters of wisdom, and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm."

S.—On what occasion was the superior wisdom of Daniel soon brought to the test?

F.—In the second year of king Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he had a dream which, at the time, troubled him, but which, when he awoke, was gone from him. He could remember nothing of it. And none of his magicians and astrologers could help him in this matter; and they were all of them in danger of losing their lives because of their inability. But when Daniel was summoned, he related to the king his forgotten dream, and told him the interpretation—an interpretation which has been in process of fulfillment ever since, and which reaches down to the end of time. In consequence of this, "Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon" (Chap. ii. 48).

S.—Some years after this, it seems that Nebuchadnezzar set up a great image of gold,—perhaps a likeness of that which he had seen in vision,—and required all his princes, and governors, officers, and people to fall down and worship it. And for refusing to do this, the three friends of Daniel were cast into a burning, fiery furnace. But we hear nothing of Daniel on this occasion. Where was he? Was he absent? Or did he actually worship the image?

F.—It is hardly likely that Daniel was absent; and it is very certain that he did not worship the image. The more probable supposition is, that *he was not complained of*. It was envy which prompted the complaints, and their authors scarcely dared to aim their shafts so high as Daniel. At any rate, they deemed it safer to dispose of some of the smaller offenders first. The issue proved that they had better not have meddled even with these (Chap. iii).

S.—Later on in his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had another dream—a great tree presented itself, whose height reached unto heaven,—and under whose shadow, all the beasts of the earth found shelter. He again summoned all his magicians and astrologers, and told them the dream; but they did not interpret it. And why did they not?

F.—Perhaps they could not, or foreseeing the probable drift of the vision, perhaps they dare not. But Daniel fearlessly told the interpretation, and warned the king to prepare for what was before him. The tree represented the king himself; its fall denoted a state of beastly derangement into which the king would fall, and in which he would continue seven years; the sprouts from the roots denoted that he would recover his reason, and that his kingdom should be restored to him. All this, suddenly and literally came to pass; and after his restoration, he made a noble confession, showing that he had been spiritually instructed and profited, and had become a worshiper of the true God: “I do bless the Most High, and I praise and honor him, that liveth forever, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and by whom all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Chap. iv. 35).

S.—How long did Nebuchadnezzar live after this period?

F.—Not very long; and during the remainder of his life, and the reigns of his three immediate successors,—although Daniel was still in office, and did, as he tells us, “the king’s business,” we hear nothing of him in any public capacity.

S.—Had he no visions during this period?

F.—He had two most remarkable visions. In the first year of Belshazzar, he had his vision of the four beasts, representing the four great monarchies of the ancient world—the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman—to be followed by the everlasting kingdom of the Most High (Chap. vii).

Two years later, he saw the vision of the ram and the he-goat, denoting the Medo-Persian empire, and its overthrow by the Grecian. He traces the Grecian empire until its division, on the death of Alexander, into four kingdoms. He traces one of these kingdoms (the Syrian) to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, setting forth his oppressions and persecutions, and his final overthrow. “He shall be broken without hand” (Chap. xiii. 25).

S.—Where was Daniel, when Babylon was taken?

F.—He was probably in the city. Belshazzar was having a drunken frolic, with his nobles, his wives, and his concubines, and drinking wine out of the golden vessels which had been plundered from the temple at Jerusalem, when, suddenly, there appeared a hand, writing something on the walls of the palace, which no one present could read or understand. The astrologers and the soothsayers were called in, but no one could read the writing. Daniel is now summoned into the royal presence; and he deciphers the mysterious inscription, and denounces the speedy downfall of Belshazzar and Babylon. And all this was accomplished at once. Cyrus and his army have already entered the city, and are knocking at the palace gate. He makes for himself an entrance, destroys the king and his princes, and the city is taken.

S.—How was Daniel regarded and treated by the conquerors?

F.—With great favor. Darius the Mede took possession of the kingdom, while Cyrus was pursuing his conquests in western Asia. “Darius set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty princes, and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel was first, that the princes might give account unto them, and the king should receive no damage.” Daniel was now, it would seem, a chief ruler

of the kingdom, and “the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”

S.—How was this high promotion of a foreigner and a Jew regarded by the other officers of government?

F.—It excited their envy, and they sought his ruin. But they could find no occasion against him, except in regard to his religion. Knowing that Daniel was in the habit of praying daily to the God of heaven, they proposed to the old superstitious king the passage of a decree, that any person who, within thirty days, should offer a petition to any god or man, except himself, should be cast into the den of lions. So the king passed the decree—a decree which, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, could not be changed. Although Daniel knew that such a decree had been passed, and that it was intended for his destruction, yet he did not cease to pray. With his windows open, “he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks to God as he did aforetime.” His enemies found him, as they expected to, in the very act of prayer. They reported his case to the king; and the king felt constrained, though with great reluctance, to consign him to the den of lions,—but the God in whom he trusted, was there before him; the lions’ mouths were shut; and no evil was done to him. But when, on the following day, his persecutors were thrown to the lions, they seized them and “brake all their bones in pieces, before they came to the bottom of the den.”

S.—Had Daniel any prophetic visions or revelations during the reign of Darius?

F.—He had; but his revelations henceforward were made to him, not, as before, by symbolic visions, but by the ministry of angels. In the first year of Darius, while Daniel was praying and confessing his sins, and the sins of his people, the angel Gabriel was sent to assure him of the coming of the Messiah, at the end of seventy prophetic weeks, or of 490 years—a prediction which was literally and wonderfully accomplished. Again, in the third

year of Cyrus, when Darius was dead, and when Daniel had been mourning and fasting three whole weeks, an angel came to him, and had a long conversation with him. He told him how many kings would yet stand up in Persia; and how the last of them would be overthrown by the king of Grecia; and how the vast empire of the king of Grecia would be broken and divided towards the four winds. Yet not to his posterity. He then predicts the long wars between the kings of the north and the kings of the south—the kings of Syria and of Egypt—down to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, and probably further, even unto the end of the world. The prediction as to the wars between the kings of the north and the kings of the south, in the eleventh chapter, is one of the most remarkable that ever was uttered, and was most remarkably fulfilled, as any one, by consulting the histories of these old monarchs, will see.

S.—Do we hear anything of Daniel later than the third year of Cyrus?

F.—We do not. There are many traditions, but nothing is certainly known. He was now a venerable man,—not less than ninety, and the probability is that he died in Persia. He is the only one of the prophets who enjoyed any great degree of worldly favor. From his early promotion by Nebuchadnezzar, to the day of his death, he seems to have been in the courts of princes, and to have been in their employ. And yet he never swerved, so far as we know, from the right ways of the Lord. He could go into the lion's den, but he could not omit the duty of prayer. Neither frowns nor favors, promises nor threats, had any influence with him to turn him aside from what he conceived to be the path of his duty.

S.—Has the authenticity of the book of Daniel been called in question?

F.—It has been often, from the days of Porphyry, in the third century, to the present time. The principal argument against the book is the obvious fulfillment of its predictions, indicating that it

must be history, and not prophecy; a fair example this of the inconsistency of unbelievers. If the predictions of Scripture are not directly and obviously fulfilled, then they are no predictions at all, and nothing can be proved by them. But if their fulfillment is too plain to be denied, then they must have been written after the events. The authenticity of no one of our sacred books rests on surer evidence than that of Daniel.

S.—How happens it that, in our Hebrew Bibles, the book of Daniel does not stand with the other prophets, but is thrust away among the Proverbs and Psalms?

F.—The probable reason is, that Daniel's prediction of the Messiah, with the precise time of his coming, was one which the modern Jews wished to keep out of sight. It is certain that the book of Daniel was *originally* in its place among the prophets, that it was so until after the coming of Christ, and that its displacement in our common Hebrew Bibles is a late occurrence.

S.—Who wrote the book of Daniel?

F.—Probably Daniel himself. In repeated instances the writer speaks of himself as "I Daniel." It is not poetry, like most of the other prophets, but is written in prose.

S.—Is the book of Daniel referred to, as a part of Scripture, by our Savior?

F.—It is (see Matt. xxiv. 15).

S.—Why was not the book of Daniel written in Hebrew, like the other books of the Old Testament?

F.—About half of it is written in Hebrew; the other part is in Chaldee, which differs slightly from the Hebrew. Nor is this to be wondered at, when we consider that the book was written in the East, by one who had long used the Chaldean language, and for the use of a people to whom the Chaldee had become familiar. The book of Ezra also has several chapters in Chaldee.

S.—What book of the New Testament does Daniel most resemble?

F.—Perhaps the Apocalypse. The symbols employed are like those of the Apocalypse, and it looks forward to many of the same

events. The two books should be studied together, and critically compared the one with the other.

S.—How was Daniel regarded in the ancient eastern world?

F.—His name was widely known, and greatly respected, as it deserved to be. A man who could pass through prosperity and adversity, as he did, unscathed—who preferred to lay down the highest offices which kings could confer, and subject himself to shame and a horrid death, rather than shrink, in the slightest degree, from what he conceived to be his religious duty, is certainly entitled to the respect and admiration of the world.

CONVERSATION V.

PROPHETS DURING THE CAPTIVITY.—Ezekiel.—Cotemporary with Jeremiah.—Called to the prophetic office.—Death of his wife.—Forbidden to mourn for her.—His character and reputation among the Jews.—His regard for Daniel.—His probable death in Chaldea at an old age.

Sen.—When was Ezekiel carried to Babylon?

Father.—He was in the second company of exiles, among whom was Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, one of the Jewish kings. This was eight years after the first deportation, when Daniel was carried away, and eleven years previous to the destruction of Jerusalem.

S.—How old was Ezekiel, when he went into captivity?

F.—Probably, about twenty-five. Five years after this, he was called to the prophetic office; and this, I think, is what he means in the first verse of his prophecy, where he says that he was called “in the thirtieth year,” *i. e.*, in the thirtieth year of his age. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was a priest, and could not enter on his priestly duties until his thirtieth year (see Numb. Chap. iv). He seems, therefore, to have assumed the prophetic office, and the priestly office, at the same time.

S.—Was Ezekiel cotemporary with Jeremiah?

F.—He was; but did not enter on his prophetic work so soon. He prophesied also in a different place,—Jeremiah at Jerusalem, and Ezekiel among the captives in Chaldea. Ezekiel was also cotemporary with Daniel, and like him among the captives; and yet it does not seem that they were personally acquainted. Daniel was at the capital, and belonged to the king’s court; Ezekiel was by the river Chebar, two hundred miles away. Daniel was much employed “in the king’s business;” Ezekiel was a simple prophet, in private life. Ezekiel knew of Daniel, and had a great veneration for him. He classes him with Noah and Job (Chap. xiv. 14). But the probability is, that they never met.

S.—Where was the river Chebar, where Ezekiel lived?

F.—It was the same as the river Chaboras, flowing into the

Euphrates in upper Mesopotamia, two hundred miles north of the city of Babylon. It would seem that many of the captive Jews,—perhaps most of those who came with Ezekiel,—were settled here.

S.—How was Ezekiel called to the prophetic office?

F.—The manner of it was sublime and wonderful, and is fully described in the first chapter of his prophecy. The living creatures whom he saw were cherubim, often spoken of in other parts of the Scripture. They are, as it seems to me, a high order of angelic beings,—the personal guards and servants, so to speak, of the eternal throne. They are here, in the first chapter of Ezekiel, represented as in a peculiar attitude of service—bearing up the throne of God, and constituting the chariot of his glory. “Above the firmament that was over the heads of the cherubim was the likeness of a throne; and upon the likeness of the throne was the appearance of a man above upon it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face” (Chap. i. 26, 28).

S.—How was Ezekiel regarded by the people among whom he prophesied?

F.—He was respected and honored by them. They regarded him as a teacher sent from God. Accordingly we hear, in repeated instances, of the elders coming and sitting before him, to inquire of the Lord. But though they heard his warnings respectfully, they were often slow to regard them. And God speaks of them after this manner: “They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them. For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Chap. xxxiii. 21).

S.—Had the prophet Ezekiel a family?

F.—We know that he had a wife; for we read of her sudden death, on the day that Jerusalem was taken. And he was forbidden to mourn for her, that he might be a sign unto his people (Chap. xxiv. 16).

S.—In what ways were the predictions of Ezekiel delivered?

F.—They were variously delivered,—sometimes in visions; sometimes in symbolical actions; sometimes in similitudes, parables and proverbs; sometimes in poems, and direct predictions. The extent of his subjects and the marvelous nature of his revelations made him occasionally obscure.

S.—Into how many sections may this book be divided?

F.—Into as many as four. First, we have his remarkable call and commission to be a prophet to his people. This occupies the three first chapters, and comes up again in chapter thirty-third. The second contains his reproofs and warnings, sometimes intended for the Jews at Jerusalem; at other times, for the captives in Babylon. These run on from the fourth chapter to the twenty-fourth,—which announces the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In the third division, we have the prophet's denunciations against the surrounding nations,—Moab, Tyre, Assyria, Egypt, and especially the spiteful Edomites. These predictions were all fulfilled in the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar. The last division contains predictions, highly symbolical, of the restoration of Israel, and of the church's triumphs and glories in the latter days. In this section, I include the last eight chapters, containing Ezekiel's vision of the city and temple to be rebuilt, which is to be taken, not literally, but symbolically, as setting forth the future glories and peace of Zion.

S.—How are we to account for the restiveness and obstinacy of the Jews in Babylon, and for their strong expectations of a speedy return to Jerusalem?

F.—Under the reign of Zedekiah, which lasted eleven years, the Jews at Jerusalem and at Babylon began to take courage. They thought that the Chaldeans had done their worst, that they would not again invade Judea, or if they did, that Pharaoh would come forth with an army and conquer them. They were inclined to go on with their idolatries, and put their trust in Egypt. It was this feeling which led Zedekiah to throw off the yoke of Babylon, and

form an alliance with Egypt, which ended in his destruction. This feeling, and the sins growing out of it, were sternly rebuked both by Jeremiah at Jerusalem, and by Ezekiel in Babylon—both lifting up their voices together, and pleading in vain. The people were bent upon their delusions, and would not be dissuaded, until the destruction came.

S.—What have you to say as to the style of Ezekiel?

F.—It has been variously represented by critics. Except where it is obscured by symbols and allegories, it strikes me as very plain and forcible. Ezekiel speaks strongly, like a man in earnest, and when he has an unwelcome message to deliver, he does it tenderly but faithfully. He was bound to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men would hear, or forbear (Chap. ii. 5).

S.—Do we know anything of Ezekiel's death?

F.—If he was alive, he must have been an old man, when the decree of Cyrus for the restoration of Israel was promulged, and could not have returned with the exiles to Jerusalem. The probability is, that his bones, like those of Daniel, were laid in Babylon.

CONVERSATION VI.

PROPHETS IN JUDEA AFTER THE RESTORATION.—Haggai.—What is known concerning him.—Returns from captivity.—Zechariah.—Latter part of his book called in question.—His peculiarities.—Malachi.—Last of the prophets.—Date of his labors.—General character of this book of prophecy.

HAGGAI.

Son.—How much do we know of the prophet Haggai?

Father.—No more than what may be gathered from the circumstances in which he was placed, and the book which bears his name. In consequence of the decree of Cyrus, given in the first year of his reign, permitting the Jews and Israelites to return to their own land, and rebuild their temple, and re-establish the worship of God, according to the laws and usages of their fathers, more than forty thousand of this people, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and of Joshua the high priest, went up together from Babylon to Jerusalem. Among this number, in all probability, were Haggai and Zechariah. The people entered at once upon their work, builded an altar, and laid the foundations of the new temple. But they were soon interrupted by the death of Cyrus, and by the interference and complaints of the Samaritans, so that for the next sixteen years, under the reigns of Cambyses and Smerdis, almost nothing was done. But when Darius Hystaspis came to the throne, he renewed the decree of Cyrus, and proffered to the Jews at Jerusalem his powerful assistance in carrying forward the work of the temple. At the same time Haggai and Zechariah came forward, in the name of the Lord, to rebuke the people for their backwardness in this work, and urge them forward in their duty. “Is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house be waste? Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord God” (Hag. i. 4, 8).

S.—How long did Haggai continue in the prophetical office?

F.—We do not know. All that we have from him was delivered in about three months. His first message is dated “in the second year of Hystaspis, in the sixth month, and the first day of the month” (Chap. i. 1). His second message is dated “in the seventh month, and the twenty-first day of the month” (Chap. ii. 1). His third message bears date “the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month” (Chap. ii. 10). His fourth message has the same date (Chap. ii. 20). All these messages were delivered directly to Zerubbabel, but were intended for the ears and the benefit of the whole people.

S.—And what was the result of all these encouragements?

F.—Ezra hath told us: “The elders of the Jews builded and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded the temple, and they finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. And the house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius Hystaspis” (Ezra vi. 14). Without doubt, Haggai was earnest and active in all these efforts, but we hear nothing further directly from him. He probably lived to see the new temple dedicated, and died there in the land of his forefathers.

ZECHARIAH.

S.—Is this prophet the Zechariah referred to by our Savior (Mat. xxiii. 35), as having been “slain between the temple and the altar?”

F.—Probably not. There is no evidence that the prophet of whom we speak was slain in this way. Besides, there is another Zechariah spoken of in the Old Testament, “who was slain between the temple and the altar” (see 2 Chron. xxiv. 21).

S.—But the Zechariah spoken of in the Chronicles was the son of Jehoiada, and not of Barachiah.

F.—True; but Jehoiada, like many other Jews, may have had

two names. Thus Matthew was also called Levi, and Lebbeus, Thaddeus, and Simon, Cephas. So good old Jehoiada may have acquired the honorable name of Barachiah—"one who blesses God." We must make this supposition, or admit an error on the part of some old transcriber of Matthew's gospel.

S.—But the declaration of our Savior implies that the Zechariah of whom he spake was one of the last of the prophets, or, at least, that his name stood among the last in the Jewish Bible.

F.—And so it did. The second book of the Chronicles was the last book in the Bible that our Savior used, and is still last in our Hebrew Bibles. It was natural, therefore, for our Savior to contrast the blood of righteous Abel, spoken of at the beginning of his Bible, with the blood of Zechariah spoken of at the end of it.

S.—In the first verse of Zechariah, he is said to be the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo the prophet. Whereas, in Ezra v. 1, he is spoken of as the son of Iddo.

F.—It was common for the Jews, you know, in making out their genealogies, to substitute the name of the grandfather for that of the father, and the name of the grandchild for that of the child.

S.—It seems that Zechariah and Haggai were united in their endeavors to urge forward the building of the temple. Did not Zechariah continue his prophetic labors longer than Haggai?

F.—He did; but how much longer we do not know; since the latter part of Zechariah's prophecies are without dates.

S.—Has not the authenticity of the latter part of Zechariah's prophecy been called in question?

F.—It has; but I think without any sufficient reason.

S.—Into how many parts may the prophecy of Zechariah be divided?

F.—Into four. The first part—the introduction—is embraced in the first six verses. The second part contains the visions of Zechariah, interpreted, in every case, by a ministering angel. These extend from the introduction to the end of chapter sixth. These interpretations are, for the most part, encouraging and comforting



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to the restored Jews. The third part is included in chapters seven and eight. It seems that the Jews, during their exile in Babylon, had been in the habit of observing certain fasts, commemorative of sad events in the desolation of their city and country. But now,—as they had been restored to their own land, and the temple was being rebuilt, it was doubtful whether these fasts should be continued. They consulted their prophets and priests on the subject; and we have the answer of Zechariah in chapters seven and eight. By the mouth of his prophets God directs that the fasts be discontinued; but with this answer are mingled various instructions and reproofs. The fourth part of the book consists of the remaining chapters which are without date. They contain denunciations upon some of the surrounding nations, as Syria, Tyre and the Philistines, and numerous promises of prosperity to Zion, to be accomplished in the latter days. We have, in these chapters, manifest predictions of the sufferings of Christ (Chap. xiii. 7), of the price to be paid for him (Chap. xi. 12, 13), and of his final coming, kingdom and glory (Chap. xiv).

S.—Do we know anything further as to the personal history of Zechariah?

F.—He undoubtedly came from Babylon to Jerusalem, with his parents, in the first company of returned Jews, at the same time with Zerubbabel, Joshua, and Haggai. And as he is spoken of in his prophecy as a “young man” (Chap. ii. 4), he could have been little more than a child, at the time of the journey. We have no reliable account of his death.

MALACHI.

F.—The prophet Malachi—the last of the Hebrew prophets—resembles, in some respects, Elijah the Tishbite. He comes before us with his burden suddenly, we know not whence; delivers his message with solemn earnestness; reproves the hypocrisies and inconsistencies of the people; points forward to the glorious, yet in some respects dreadful, future; and disappears as suddenly as he came.

S.—Do we know definitely the time of his prophecy?

F.—We infer it with a good degree of certainty by comparing his prophecy with cotemporary history. The temple had now been built, which places Malachi subsequent to Haggai and Zechariah. The Jews had now a governor (Chap. i. 8), which places him before the death of Nehemiah. For after Nehemiah they had no governor sent from Persia. Then the crimes rebuked by Malachi are precisely those which Nehemiah was laboring to correct. This prophet does not, like Haggai, reprove the people for neglecting to build the fallen temple, but for neglecting what appertained to the worship of God in it. They did not bring in their tithes to the priests; they offered the blind and the lame for sacrifice; they had contracted foreign marriages; in short, the offences which Malachi charges upon the Jews were precisely those which Nehemiah was laboring to correct; which shows that they lived and wrought together.

S.—Why then does not Nehemiah make mention of Malachi?

F.—This was hardly to be expected; since, though they were both aiming at the same object, they were laboring in different fields, and by entirely different methods. Nehemiah was doing his work as a magistrate, and Malachi as a simple prophet of God. Besides, the book of Nehemiah does not profess to be a complete history of the times, but only a personal narrative of the acts of the author.

S.—How long after Haggai and Zechariah may it be supposed that Malachi prophesied?

F.—Haggai commenced his labors about 520 years before Christ; and if Malachi lived in the later times of Nehemiah, he was before Christ 420 years, making a difference of about one hundred years between them.

S.—What is the general purport of this last prophecy of the Old Testament?

F.—In his first two chapters, Malachi is very severe upon the priests, who dishonored God, and disgraced themselves, by their

negligence and hypocrisy. He reproveth also the prevailing sins of the times, and the abuses which had crept in among the people. In the last two chapters he predicts the coming of the forerunner of Christ, and also of Christ himself. "The Lord whom ye seek shall come suddenly to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in. But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?" (Chap. iii. 2.) The great Messenger of the covenant is coming, not to destroy the church of the Old Testament, but to purify it. "He will thoroughly *purge* his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner" (Matt. iii. 12). As though conscious that he was to have no successors, Malachi closes his message with an exhortation and a promise. "Remember the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and the judgments. Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

S.—Who reigned, at this time, over the Persian empire?

F.—Artaxerxes Longimanus, the husband of Esther. The supporter of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the liberal patron and helper of the Jews, was now dead, and the throne was occupied by Darius Nothus, his son. By him, Nehemiah was retained in office at Jerusalem, perhaps as long as he lived. The good governor, and Ezra, the learned scribe and priest, and Malachi, the last prophet, disappear from the sacred page together; and with them (with the exception of a few names in the genealogies) the canon of the Old Testament is sealed up.

CONVERSATION VII.

SKETCH OF JEWISH HISTORY BETWEEN THE TWO TESTAMENTS.—Dark period of the church's history—Fall of the Persian Empire.—Alexander the Great.—His treatment of the Jews.—His remarkable dream.—Its results.—The request of the Jews.—Alexander's death.—Origin of the Septuagint.—The famous Alexandrian library.—The founder.—The revolt of the Maccabees.—Who they were.—The Roman sway commenced.—Herod's shocking cruelty.—Origin of the Pharisees and Sadducees.—Their belief.—Coming of Christ.

Father.—We have now come to the close of the Old Testament. We have spoken of its history, and other sacred writings; also of the prophets which lived both before and after the captivity. From this point, we might appropriately pass over to the New Testament; but I have thought it might interest you, and the better prepare us for the times of Christ, to give a brief sketch of the intervening history, or so much of it as relates to the Jews.

Son.—Nothing could better please me than to follow you through this dark period of the church's history. At the close of the Old Testament, you told me that Darius Nothus,—son of the Artaxerxes, who married Esther, and commissioned Ezra and Nehemiah to be governors of Judea,—was on the throne. How many more kings reigned in Persia, and when was the empire overthrown?

F.—Darius Nothus had four successors on the throne of Persia, the last of whom was Darius Codomanus. He was conquered by Alexander the Great, in the year before Christ, 331. With him the Persian empire ended, and the government of all central and western Asia fell into the hands of Alexander.

S.—How did Alexander treat the Jews?

F.—In general, with great kindness. He was induced to this by a remarkable occurrence which took place at Jerusalem, and which it may be proper to relate. While Alexander was besieging Tyre, he suspected the Jews of favoring the Tyrians. So after the destruction of Tyre, his intention was to perish or destroy Jerusalem. But God interposed, in a most remarkable manner for its deliverance. In a vision of the night, he directed Jaddua, the high priest,



not to fight with Alexander, but to go out to him in his pontifical robes, with the priests following in their proper attire, and all the people in white garments. Accordingly, Jaddua prepared to do as he was directed. The next day he went out of the city, attended by the priests and people in a long and sacred procession, and waited, in the most solemn manner, the coming of the king. As soon as Alexander saw him, he was struck with a profound astonishment and awe. He leaped from his chariot, and rushing forward, bowed down before the high priest and did him reverence, to the great surprise of his generals and of all who attended him. And when inquired of as to the reason of what he had done, he said that he did not so much honor the priest, as that Divine Being whose priest he was; for, says he, "when I was at Dio, in Macedonia, and was there deliberating with myself how I should carry on this war against the Persians, and was much in doubt as to the issue of the undertaking, this very person, and in this very habit, appeared to me in a dream, encouraged me to lay aside all distrust about the matter, and pass boldly over into Asia, promising me that God would be my guide in the expedition, and give me the empire of the Persians. Wherefore, seeing this sacred personage, and knowing him to be the same that appeared to me in my own country, I feel assured that this present war is under the direction of the Almighty, and he will conduct it to a happy issue." Having thus said, Alexander kindly embraced the high priest, went with him into Jerusalem, and offered sacrifices in the temple.* It was on this occasion that Jaddua read to him those portions of the book of Daniel, in which it was predicted that the Persian empire should be overthrown by a Grecian king. By these Alexander was still further assured that he should succeed in his conflict with Persia; and, at his departure, he encouraged the Jews to ask any favor of him which they desired. Whereupon they requested that they might enjoy the freedom of their own country, their laws, and

*Josephus Anti'q. Book ii, Chap. 8.

religion, and might be exempted, every seventh year, from paying tribute; because, in that year, according to their law, they neither sow nor reap. This favor Alexander readily granted, and treated them, ever afterwards, with distinguished favor.

S.—How long did Alexander live after this?

F.—Only about six years. He died from excessive drinking, in Babylon, in the year 323 before Christ, when his vast empire was divided into four parts, and four of his more distinguished generals reigned over them. Ptolemy had Egypt, Arabia, and Palestine; Cassander had Macedon and Greece; Lysimachus had Thrace, Bythinia, and some other provinces in North-western Asia; and Seleucus, had all the rest. And herein was fulfilled several of Daniel's most remarkable predictions respecting "the king of Grecia" and his successors.*

S.—With which of these four kings did the Jews come most frequently in contact.

F.—With Seleucus and Ptolemy and their successors; or, in other words, with the kings of Syria and Egypt. Jerusalem lay between their dominions, and in their frequent assaults upon each other, the Jews suffered greatly from both. Sometimes they were subject to the king of Syria, and then to the king of Egypt, and were often the prize of victory one way or the other.

S.—Under which of the kings of Egypt was the Old Testament translated into Greek?

F.—Under the second of the Ptolemies—Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 250 years before Christ. This translation is commonly called the Septuagint. It was generally used among the Jews, wherever the Greek language was spoken. It was much used in Palestine in the days of our Savior, and is frequently quoted by him and the Apostles.

S.—Under which of the Ptolemies was the famous Alexandrian Library commenced.

See Dan. viii. 8, 21. Chap. xi. 3, 4.

F.—Under the first and best of them, Ptolemy Soter; but was greatly increased by his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, and his successors.

S.—Who were the Maccabees, and what induced them to revolt against the Syrians?

F.—The Maccabees were the seven sons of a venerable priest, Matthias, all of them valiant men, and zealous, like their father, for the law of their God. Their revolt was brought about by the intolerable persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the vilest and most degraded of the Syrian kings. In addition to all his other abominations, he had published what may be called, in modern phrase, an *act of uniformity*. He had commanded all the people throughout his dominions, under the severest penalties, to renounce their former religious rites and usages, and to conform, in this respect, to the religion of the state. This decree, though couched in general terms, was aimed particularly at the Jews, and the king was determined to execute it upon them. He was resolved, either to convert them to his religion, or to cut them all off.

It was in opposition to this murderous decree, that Matthias and his sons raised the standard of revolt. They retired, at first, into the mountains, where they were followed by many others. Having collected around them a little army, they came out of their fastnesses, and went round the cities of Judah, pulling down heathen altars, demolishing images, circumcising the children, and destroying persecutors and apostates wherever they could be found; and having obtained copies of the law, they set up the worship of the synagogue as it was before. Antiochus was soon apprised of what they were doing, and sent a great army into Palestine to put down the revolt, and destroy its leaders. This army Judas Maccabeus met and conquered, and took much spoil. And thus it was with army after army which was sent from Antioch to disperse and vanquish the rebellious Jews. They were destroyed by Judas, or driven back, and his cause was strengthened from day to day.

Having made themselves masters of the country, Judas and his followers resolved to go up to Jerusalem, purify the temple, and consecrate it anew to the service of the Lord. And when everything had been set in order there, they appointed a day in which the purified temple should be dedicated. This dedication occurred about the time of the winter solstice. It was observed ever afterwards in Judah; and one of these festivals,—perhaps more than one, was honored, by our Savior, with his presence (John x. 22).

S.—What was the character of Judas Maccabeus?

F.—That he was wise in council, and powerful—all but invincible—in action, his unparalleled successes and achievements declare. But he possessed, we think, something better than all this. He had a steady faith and trust in God; a zeal like that of Phineas, his great progenitor; a feeling, all the while, that he was doing the Lord's work, and that the God of Israel was with him. It was this which nerved his arm for the deadly conflict, and led him on from victory to victory. It will be said, perhaps, that he was a man of blood; and so he was. But then his wars were, all of them, strictly defensive. He was placed in circumstances where he must fight, or die; and if he died, to all human appearance, the cause which he supported must die with him. His battles were all of them begun with prayer, and ended with thanksgiving. The glory of his achievements, he felt and acknowledged, were due only to the Lord. In the success of his battles, in the number of his victories against overwhelming odds, Judas Maccabeus was never exceeded by any warrior. His history belongs not merely to the Jews, but like that of Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Nehemiah, is the property of the whole church of God.

S.—How came this family of warriors and conquerors to be called Maccabees?

F.—Upon their standard was written this inspiring motto, *Mi Canoka Baalim Jehovah*—"Who is like unto thee among the gods, Jehovah?" (Ex. xv. 11). The first letters of these four Hebrew

words, *Mem, Kaph, Beth, Yod*, being conjoined into one word, make *Macabi*. Hence, those who fought under this sacred standard were called *Maccabees*.

S.—How long did the Maccabees govern the Jews?

F.—For several generations. They were often troubled and sometimes severely threatened by the Syrian kings. To avoid disturbances of this kind, they were induced, at length, to place themselves and their country under the protection of the Romans. It was the Maccabees who introduced the Roman power into Palestine; and when once introduced, it continued to increase, here as elsewhere, until it became supreme. Herod was made a tributary king by the Romans, and he reigned over Judea nearly forty years, even unto the coming of Christ.

S.—Who was Herod? and what was his character?

F.—He was an Idumean by birth, but had made a profession of the Jew's religion. He loved power, and was altogether unscrupulous as to the means of securing it. He was suspicious, jealous, fond of magnificence and display, blood-thirsty and cruel to the last degree. The murders which he committed in his own family,—to say nothing of the thousands whom he sacrificed out of it,—are full proof of this. And yet he may be said, in the common acceptation of the terms,—to have been a lucky man. In repeated instances, he seemed to be on the very brink of ruin; and then he escaped and rose to power, when he had the least reason to expect it. Nor was he without some redeeming qualities. He knew how to show kindness to his people, and he often did it, when he could do it with safety and advantage to himself.

His cruelty and selfishness were unabated to the last. This is evident from his murder of the children at Bethlehem. It is still more evident in the orders which he issued respecting his own death. Well knowing how much the Jews hated him, and how glad they would be to be rid of him, he summoned together some of the principal men of the nation, just before his death, confined them in the hippodrome, and gave strict orders to his attendants to

massacre them all, so soon as he had breathed his last,—that so there might be a mourning when he was gone. But this cruel order was not executed.

S.—Were there any pious people in Israel in these degenerate days, immediately preceding the coming of Christ?

F.—Undoubtedly there were. As in the days of Ahab, God reserved to himself seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal, so, in these times, there was undoubtedly a remnant. Down in the humbler walks of life, away from the tumult and the strife of kings, we may hope there were many who loved the God of Israel, and served him in sincerity and truth. Here were good Zechariah and Elizabeth, the father and mother of John the Baptist. Here, too, were Simeon and Anna, who were present in the temple when the infant Savior was brought there, “to do for him after the custom of the law” (Luke ii. 25–38). Without doubt, there were many others who served God according to the light and privileges which they enjoyed; and though their names are not known to us, they are securely written in the Lamb’s book of life.

S.—There were sects among the Jews in the time of Christ, which must have originated before his birth; can you tell us when and where they had their origin?

F.—The principal sects were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees were an ancient sect, dating back almost to the time of Alexander the Great. They were not called Pharisees, however, until the time of the Maccabees. They are supposed to have derived their name from the Hebrew word *Pharos*, which signifies to *separate*; because they separated themselves from others, who did not receive their doctrines, and come up to their standard of life. Many of them were in the Maccabean armies and fought valiantly for the God of Israel. The Pharisees were a popular sect, who carried with them, not only the scribes and men learned in the law, but the great mass of the common people. They received as of Divine authority, not only the books of the law, but all the books of the Old Testament, and with them the traditions of the

elders. They held to the doctrine of the resurrection, and to a future state of rewards and punishments. In practice, they were strict formalists, who tithed their mint, and anise, and cummin; talked much about religion, and made extraordinary pretensions to sanctity.

The Sadducees originated at about the same time with the Pharisees, and were their opposites in most particulars. They took their name from Sadoc, their founder. He taught that there are no future rewards and punishments, and no future life. The Sadducees discarded not only a future life, but all tradition, and all the sacred books except those of Moses. These men were the liberalists of their times. They were never numerous, but embraced many of the higher and wealthier families among the Jews.

S.—Was there not a general expectation of the coming of Christ at the time of his appearance?

F.—Undoubtedly there was, and some of the surrounding nations participated in the same hope. The learned Jews knew that the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel were about to close, and that the great Leader and Light of Israel would soon come.

God had long been preparing the way for the coming of Christ, and he made his appearance in the best, the appointed time. The world was now ready for him, and were expecting him. Other experiments had been tried for the recovery of lost men, but had failed. In all that sages had taught, and poets sung, and priests disclosed, and oracles muttered, there was no relief. Foreign religions had been introduced, magicians and astrologers had been multiplied; still the darkness and misery increased. It was just in this crisis of the world's history, when all experiments had been tried and failed, and hope was giving place to black despair, that the Light of the world commenced his shining; the "Desire of all nations" came.

THIRD BOOK.

FROM THE COMING OF CHRIST TO THE END.

CONVERSATION I.

LIFE OF CHRIST.—Year of birth uncertain.—Singular tradition of the Jews.—The seven thousand years.—The wise men.—The star in the east.—What it was.—Jesus among the doctors.—John the Baptist.—Place where Christ was baptized.—First miracle.—The sermon on the Mount.—John beheaded to please the daughter of Herod's wife.

Son.—Do we know the time of our Savior's birth?

Father.—We do not know the precise year,—much less the day in the year. According to the common reckoning,—which was fixed by Dionysius Exiguus and one of the Popes in the sixth century,—he was born in the year of the world 4004; but his birth was several years earlier than this. He was certainly born before the death of Herod; and Herod died in the year of the world, 4001. Also Jesus was about thirty years of age, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar (Luke iii. 1); and this would fix his birth in the four thousandth year of the world. And the same conclusion is reached by another fact mentioned in the Scriptures: The enrollment or taxing, spoken of by Luke (Chap. ii. 1-5), was made when Cyrenius was first governor of Syria,—at which time our Savior was born; but this again was the four thousandth year of the world. The probability therefore is, that our Savior was born in the year of the world 4000; and this agrees with an old tradition of the Jews, that the world was to stand seven thousand years; two thousand of which were to be before the law; two thousand under the law, and two thousand under the Messiah,—after which was to follow the Sabbatical millennium, or the thousand years of rest. Respecting the month and day of our Savior's birth, we are left wholly to conjecture. The disagreement of the

early fathers shows that the day was not celebrated in the Apostolic age.

S.—What religious rites were performed for our Savior soon after his birth?

F.—On the eighth day after his birth, our Savior was circumcised and received his name—the same that had before been given him by the angel. Thirty-three days subsequent to this, when his mother's purification was accomplished according to the law (Lev. xii. 3), he was taken by his parents to Jerusalem, and presented in the temple before the Lord. A sacrifice was offered for him—"a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons"—which was all that the straitened circumstances of his parents enabled them to bring. It was at this time that good old Simeon took him into his arms and blessed God on his account. Pious Anna was also present to give thanks because of him, and to speak of him to all those who dwelt at Jerusalem.

S.—Where was Jesus and his parents, when visited by the wise men of the East?

F.—They were at Bethlehem, to which place they had returned after their visit to Jerusalem. These wise men were probably magicians from northern Arabia, or from Persia. The star which guided them was a meteor providentially, perhaps miraculously, prepared and sent. Their visit to the holy family was opportune every way. It was not only an honor to the Savior, and a testimony to his Messiahship, but it furnished the means of his subsistence, at least for a time. Without the rich presents which they brought, his parents might not have been able to carry him into Egypt, and support him there, and thus elude the blood-thirsty Herod.

S.—How long did the holy family remain in Egypt?

F.—We are not informed; but certainly until they heard of the death of Herod, which occurred, probably, the following year. When admonished to return into the land of Israel, their first thought was to go and reside at Bethlehem. But when they found

that Archelaus, who inherited all the cruelty of his father Herod, reigned in Judea, they were afraid to go there, and concluded to return to their old home at Nazareth. And here they dwelt, probably, as long as Joseph lived,—until near the commencement of our Savior's public ministry.

S.—When do we next hear of Jesus?

F.—When he went up to Jerusalem, with his parents, at the age of twelve years. The males in Israel were required to go up to Jerusalem, to the great festivals, three times in a year. The more devout women, though exempt by law from regular attendance, usually accompanied their husbands on these occasions. Doubtless the parents of Jesus had been often to Jerusalem, during his younger years; but at the age of twelve they took him with them; for such was the custom of the feast. In the Jewish church, children were not allowed to go to the Passover earlier than this. But at the age of twelve, they were brought to the temple, where a sacrifice was offered, and some other initiatory rites were performed; after which they were allowed to eat of the Passover, and to participate in the other festivals of the church.

S.—What took place on the journey back from Jerusalem?

F.—When the feast was ended, and Joseph and Mary commenced their journey homeward, Jesus was not with them. He tarried behind at Jerusalem. And when they returned for him, to their astonishment they found him among the doctors in the temple, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

From Jerusalem, Jesus returned with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, and labored with them to procure a subsistence. He was not only the son of a carpenter, but in one instance is called a carpenter (Mark vi. 3); which implies that he labored with his reputed father.

S.—How much do we know of the character and conduct of Jesus, for the next eighteen years?

F.—Very little. Without doubt, his life was blameless, dutiful, holy, perfect. Luke tells us that “he was strong in spirit, filled

with wisdom, and that the grace of God was upon him." He increased, not only in stature, but in wisdom, and in favor with God and with men.

S.—Where was John, the forerunner of Christ, at this time?

F.—He was leading a solitary, contemplative life in the deserts of Judea. His parents, who were old at his birth, were probably dead. When John had arrived at the age of thirty—the time for entering upon the more public services of religion—he commenced preaching and baptizing, first in the hill country of Judea, but afterwards in the neighborhood of the Jordan. His preaching produced a great sensation, and multitudes of all ages and classes flocked to hear him, and to receive his baptism. Among those who came, was Jesus of Nazareth. He had now arrived at the age of thirty, being six months younger than John. He was about to enter upon his public labors; and though he had no need of baptism in token of repentance, or of spiritual purification, yet, as Moses had enjoined a lustration for the priests before entering upon their public duties, he chose to follow them in this, and thus “fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. iii. 15).

S.—Had Jesus and John been previously acquainted?

F.—It seems they had not. Though relatives on their mothers' side, they had rarely, if ever, met. John says of Jesus expressly: “I knew him not.” But though John had no previous acquaintance with Jesus, his true character was soon revealed. When John saw the heavens open to him at his baptism, and saw the Spirit descending on him like a dove, and heard that memorable voice: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” he could not doubt. He knew that he had seen and baptized the promised Messiah—the Lamb of God.

S.—Where did the baptism of our Lord occur?

F.—At Bethabara, on the east bank of the Jordan. It was a common fording-place, near Jericho, about twenty miles east of Jerusalem,—near the spot where the Israelites passed over the Jordan, when they entered Canaan.

S.—Where did our Savior go, immediately after his baptism?

F.—He retired into the desert, west of the Jordan, where he remained, fasting, praying, communing with God and his own spirit, forty days. It was here that he was tempted of the devil.

S.—On leaving the desert, did Jesus return to John?

F.—He did; at which time John again bore testimony, in the most solemn terms, to his Messiahship. He here made the acquaintance of several persons, who were afterwards his Apostles; such as Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathaniel, and the two sons of Zebedee.

S.—Where did Jesus now go?

F.—He went into Galilee to meet his mother. His reputed father, it is likely, was no longer living. In company with his mother, he attended a wedding at Cana in Galilee, where he turned water into wine. This is spoken of as the first of his miracles. After this, he went to Capernaum; and soon went up to Jerusalem to the Passover.

S.—How long was our Savior's public ministry, and how many Passovers did it include?

F.—It included four Passovers, and continued between three and four years. The one at which we have arrived was the first; besides this, he attended the second and the fourth, but not the third.

S.—What did our Savior do at Jerusalem at this first Passover?

F.—He undertook and accomplished the difficult work of purging the temple. He did the same again, as we shall see, near the close of his public ministry. He drove out those from the courts of the temple who sold oxen, sheep, and doves for sacrifice. He poured out the changers' money, overthrew their tables, and told them not to make his Father's house a house of merchandise.

S.—Who visited our Savior, at this time, for the purpose of inquiry and conversation?

F.—Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrim, and a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said unto him, "We know

that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Our Savior seized the opportunity to converse with Nicodemus, and delivered to him a most important discourse. Perhaps he never gave utterance to so much solemn gospel truth, in so few words, as on this occasion. Nor were his instructions lost upon the mind of the ruler. We find Nicodemus afterwards interposing his good offices in favor of Jesus; and when he had expired on the cross, Nicodemus assisted in taking down the body, and brought a hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes for the purpose of embalming it.

S.—Did our Savior remain long in Jerusalem after the Passover?

F.—He continued in the towns and villages of Judea for a time, where he preached and his disciples baptized; these baptisms seem to have been of the same nature as those of John—not a proper Christian ordinance, but an impressive rite, designed to prepare the way for the full introduction of the Messiah's kingdom.

S.—Where was John at this time?

F.—He had removed from Bethabara, and was baptizing at Enon, a place on the west side of the Jordan, about twenty miles south of the sea of Galilee. He here bore a new testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus, and exhorted his followers to put their trust in him: "He must increase, but I must decrease. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John was now in the dominions of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Persia and Galilee. Herod, for a time, was deeply interested in him, went often to hear him, and was led to attempt some reformation of life. But when John had reproved him for his adultery and incest in cohabiting with his brother's wife, the king's pride was wounded, his anger was kindled, and he shut up the reformer in prison; and here John remained, in the dungeons of Machærus unto the day of his death.

S.—On leaving Judea, where did our Savior go?

F.—When Jesus heard of the imprisonment of John, he left

Judea and retired into Galilee. On his way, he passed through Samaria, and had that interesting conversation with the Samaritan woman, recorded in the fourth chapter of John. While in Galilee, our Savior visited Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and where he had spent the greater portion of his life. He went into the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day, and there read and expounded the Scriptures. At first, the people heard him with admiration, but as he proceeded to apply the truth more particularly to their case, their admiration was turned into wrath, and they madly attempted to take his life.

S.—How was our Savior occupied, during this visit to Galilee?

F.—He preached in their synagogues, healed the sick, procured the miraculous draught of fishes, and summoned Andrew and Peter, James and John, and Matthew the publican to leave their customary employments, and become his ministers. The fame of him was at this time so great, that multitudes continually thronged him, and sometimes hindered him in his work. To avoid them, he left Capernaum and went into the country, preaching in the synagogues throughout all Galilee. It was during this tour, that he delivered that most remarkable of all Divine or human productions—*the Sermon on the Mount*. In labors such as have been described,—teaching, preaching, performing miracles, going about doing good,—our Savior had filled up the year. The time had come for another Passover, when he went up to Jerusalem (John v. 1).

S.—Has there not been some dispute on the question, whether the feast spoken of by John was the Passover?

F.—There has; and this is really a very important question. For on the decision of it depends, whether our Savior's public ministry included four Passovers, or only two; whether it continued three years and a half, or only one and a half. I agree with the most approved commentators, that this feast was the Passover, and that his ministry included four Passovers. I find it impossible to harmonize all the events of his public life, and crowd them into the short space of a year and a half.

S.—Our Savior, then, went up to Jerusalem to the feast; what miracle was performed by him soon after he arrived there?

F.—The healing of the poor man at the pool of Bethesda. This man had been bowed down with infirmity thirty-eight years. Jesus had compassion on him in his helpless condition, and said: “Rise, take up thy bed and walk,” and immediately he was made whole, took up his bed, and went his way. As it was the Sabbath when this was done, the Jews were greatly excited, and charged both the healed man and Jesus with violating the Sabbath. This led to a long discourse from our Savior, in which he asserts his Divine authority, and vindicates himself from the charge which had been urged against him.

S.—How long did our Savior remain at Jerusalem?

F.—But a short time. On his return towards Galilee, he had repeated discussions with the Jews, who continued to accuse him of violating the Sabbath. Unable to meet him in argument, they took counsel together to destroy his life. But he withdrew himself from them, and we soon find him, where he had so often been, by the sea of Galilee.

S.—This was a long visit to Galilee. How was our Savior occupied?

F.—In Galilee and parts adjacent, sometimes on one side of the sea, and sometimes on the other, and sometimes sailing and even walking upon its surface, our Savior filled up the next year of his public ministry. It was a busy and most important year. He was everywhere surrounded by wondering multitudes, whom he carefully instructed, whom he miraculously fed, and whose sick he healed. He raised the dead son of the widow of Nain; cast out many devils; uttered some of his most interesting parables, as that of the sower, and of the tares in the field; and performed other preaching tours through the cities and villages of Galilee. It was during this year that he appointed his twelve Apostles, and sent them forth with the glad news of salvation to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. When our Savior had come down

from the mountain,—where he had spent the whole previous night in prayer, and where he had appointed his twelve Apostles,—he found a vast multitude waiting for him, to whom he repeated, with some variations, a considerable part of the Sermon on the Mount.

S.—Do not some interpreters make this the *identical Sermon on the Mount*? (Luke vi. 20–40.)

F.—They do; but I cannot be of this opinion; and for the following reasons: 1. The sermon in Matthew was delivered on a mountain, but this on a plain. 2. The sermon in Matthew was delivered the year previous to the calling and commissioning of the Apostles, but this in Luke immediately after their call. 3. The two discourses, though containing many similar passages, are very unlike. The one in Matthew is four times as long as that in Luke, and yet the one in Luke has several expressions which do not occur in Matthew. The structure of the sentences, and the connections in which they stand, are also different. In short, the discourse in Luke is just what it purports to be,—a repetition in part, with occasional omissions and alterations, of the sermon in Matthew. And those who know the excellence of this sermon, will not wonder or regret that our Savior thought proper to repeat some parts of it. When ministers preach as well as this, we will consent that they repeat their sermons as often as they please.

S.—To what did the Pharisees ascribe some of the miracles which Christ now performed?

F.—To diabolical influence. “He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.” Our Lord refuted the objection, and solemnly warned them against such language. It constituted the sin against the Holy Ghost—a sin for which there was no forgiveness.

S.—What message did our Savior receive at this time from John the Baptist, who was still in prison?

F.—John sent two of his disciples to Jesus, saying, “Art thou

he that should come, or look we for another?" Without directly answering the question, our Savior said to those who came, "Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he that shall not be offended," *stumbled*, "in me."

S.—What befell John shortly after this?

F.—He had been for months in close confinement, but his end was now come. To gratify his adulterous wife and her wicked daughter, Herod sent and beheaded him in prison. But the conscience of the tyrant seems not to have been satisfied; for when he heard of the miracles of Jesus, he was alarmed under the apprehension that John was risen from the dead, and might stand up to avenge his injuries and wrongs.

CONVERSATION II.

LIFE OF CHRIST CONTINUED.—Miracles of Jesus.—His journeys.—His approaching end.—His transfiguration.—Paying tribute.—Seventy preachers sent out.—Raising the dead.—Endeavors to entrap the Savior.—The rich man and Lazarus.—Incidents in the ministry of Jesus.

Son.—We have now arrived at another Passover—the third which occurred during our Savior’s ministry. Why did not Jesus go up to Jerusalem to celebrate it?

Father.—The reason is assigned by John. “He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him” (John vii. 1). Instead of going southward to Jerusalem, he took the opportunity to travel in the north country, and proceeded even to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And here he found a Syro-Phœnician woman whose daughter was possessed with a devil; and having conversed with the afflicted mother, and sufficiently tried and tested her faith, he healed her daughter. This is the only miracle, of which we have any knowledge, which our Savior performed upon a Gentile.

S.—On his return from Syria to Galilee, how was our Lord occupied?

F.—He was surrounded, as usual, by a great multitude, whom he miraculously fed, a second time, with a few loaves and fishes. He tarried in Galilee but a short time, when he took a journey to Cæsarea Philippi, in the north-easterly part of Palestine. He had here a season of retirement with his disciples. He prayed with them, and entered into conversation with them saying: “Whom do men say that I am?” They answered and said, “Some say that you are John the Baptist; some that you are Elias; and some that you are Jeremias, or one of the old prophets risen from the dead.” “But whom,” said Jesus, “do *ye* say that I am?” Peter answered, “Thou art *the Christ*, the Son of the living God.” For this noble confession, our Savior blessed Peter and said, “Thou art Peter,

and on this rock"—this foundation truth which you have uttered—"I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Our Savior next proceeded to instruct his disciples in regard to his approaching sufferings and death; when Peter discovered how little he understood, as yet, the nature of the gospel. He took his master aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord. This suffering and death shall not be unto thee." Our Savior now rebuked Peter with as much earnestness as before he had commended him: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me; thou relisheth not the things that be of God, but such as be of men."

S.—Where did our Savior's transfiguration take place?

F.—It was during this retirement in the northern part of Galilee. He took Peter and James and John, and went up into a mountain with them for prayer; and as he prayed, he was transfigured before them. The form of his countenance and of his whole appearance was suddenly and gloriously changed; and there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with Jesus, in regard to his approaching sufferings and death. They heard also a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." This whole scene was calculated, and, without doubt, designed to impress upon the disciples that great cardinal truth which they were so slow to learn, *that Christ must suffer and die for sinners.*

S.—From northern Galilee, our Savior and his disciples returned to Capernaum: What took place there?

F.—It was here that the collectors of tribute came to Peter and said, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" Peter answered that he did. When our Savior met Peter, he showed him that the collectors had no right to exact tribute of him. "Nevertheless," said he, "that we may not offend them, go to the sea, and cast in thy hook; and in the mouth of the fish that first cometh up, thou shalt find a piece of money," a *thaler*; "that take and pay your tribute and mine."

S.—When were the seventy preachers sent out ?

F.—It was during this visit to Capernaum. Intending soon to leave Galilee, our Lord appointed other seventy, besides the twelve apostles, and sent them forth, two and two, into all the cities and villages where he expected soon to come. He gave them instructions very similar to those which he had given to the twelve; and concluded by saying, “He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and him that sent me.” It is not likely, however, that these seventy, like the apostles, were intended to be a permanent body of missionaries. They were appointed for a particular purpose, which they soon accomplished, and we hear no more of them in the Scriptures.

S.—The feast of tabernacles was now at hand: Did our Savior attend it ?

F.—He did. He repaired to Jerusalem rather privately; but as soon as he arrived, he went boldly into the temple and taught. He soon came in conflict with the prejudices and the hostility of the Jews. They charged him with having a devil; and he charged them with plotting against his life. The Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take him; but they returned without him, saying, “Never man spake like this man.”

It was at this time that the Jews brought before him an adulterous woman for judgment, thinking that, whether he cleared or condemned her, they should find an accusation against him. But he managed to convict *them* rather than the woman, and they slunk away confounded from his presence (John viii. 11).

It was at this time, also, that our Lord made that visit to his friends at Bethany, of which we have an account in the tenth chapter of Luke. Martha “was cumbered about much serving;” but “Mary sat at the feet of Jesus to hear his words.” For this, Martha was slightly reproved, but Mary was commended. “Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her.”

Our Savior continued to teach in the temple, holding up the light of truth, and having frequent altercation with those that rejected

it, till the Jews became so much exasperated, that they took up stones to stone him. But he went out of the temple, and escaped their hands.

S.—Our Savior was now to make his last visit to Galilee: What took place on the way?

F.—He had much interesting conversation with his disciples. He instructed and encouraged them in the duty of prayer, and gave them an abbreviated form of the Lord's prayer (Luke xi. 3). He cautioned them against hypocrisy, and strengthened them against the fear of man by the promise of the Holy Spirit. He exhorted them to continual watchfulness in expectation of his coming, and of the account they must render, at the last, for all their privileges.

At this time, one came to Christ, and told him of the slaughter of the Galileans at Jerusalem, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Perhaps this was said in hope that he would denounce either the cruelty of Pilate, or the weakness of the Galileans, in either of which cases they might bring him into trouble. But he made the fact which had been reported to him the occasion of a most solemn call to repentance. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

S.—On his arrival in Galilee, what miracle of healing was performed.

F.—As he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day, he saw there a poor woman who had been bowed down with an infirmity eighteen years, and could not lift up herself; and Jesus said unto her, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." And immediately she rose up and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue was filled with indignation, and said, "There are six days in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." To him our Savior replied with unwonted severity, "Thou hypocrite, doth not each of you, on the Sabbath day, loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years, to be

loosened from her bond on the Sabbath day?" And all his adversaries were ashamed.

During this visit to Galilee, our Savior was invited, by one of the chief Pharisees, to dine with him. And while they sat at meat, one of the company said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." This led our Lord to utter the parable of the great supper from which those who were first bidden excused themselves, but which was furnished with guests from the highways and hedges,—a parable which the Pharisees themselves must have interpreted as against themselves.

S.—What led to the utterance of several other important parables at this time?

F.—As our Lord came out of the Pharisees' house, he was quickly surrounded by a class of persons who could not have been admitted there—publicans and such as were accounted great sinners. At this, the Pharisees took offense; and to justify himself our Savior uttered the parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and of the prodigal son (Luke 15). He uttered also the parable of the unjust steward, and took occasion from it to reprove the Pharisees for their covetousness and hypocrisy. Still further to show the vanity of earthly riches in comparison with true piety, he narrated the story of the rich man and Lazarus.*

S.—Our Savior had now finished his work in Galilee, and was about to go to Jerusalem to the feast of dedication: What events of interest took place on the way?

F.—Desiring to go through Samaria, he sent messengers forward to prepare the way for him; but the Samaritans, finding that he was going to Jerusalem, refused to receive him. Whereupon the disciples James and John were highly indignant, and requested that they might call down fire from heaven to consume the Samari-

*This is frequently but improperly called a parable. It is not a parable, has none of the requisites of a parable, and is never called one in Scriptures. It is a simple *narrative* of occurrences, partly in this world, and partly in the next. Our Savior was as competent to speak of occurrences in one world, as in the other.

tans, as Elijah did. But our Savior rebuked them, saying "Ye know not what spirit ye are of."

As they went on their way, they came to a village inhabited by lepers—who were obliged to live by themselves; and no less than ten lepers came out to meet him, crying with a loud voice, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us." And Jesus said, "Go show yourselves to the priests;" and as they went, they were all cleansed. And one of them, a Samaritan, when he saw that he was cleansed, turned back, and glorified the God of Israel.

S.—Arrived at Jerusalem, what miracle was performed?

F.—As he was walking the street, he met a man who had been blind from his birth. And he spat on the ground, made soft clay with the spittle, rubbed it on his eyes, and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; and when he had washed, he came back restored. This miracle excited more attention among the Jews than any which Jesus had performed. They resolved to investigate the matter to the bottom, hoping to find some clue to the secret of these mighty works; but they were obliged to give it up, and could only say to the restored man, "Give God the glory" (John ix).

S.—Why did Jesus leave Jerusalem? And where did he go?

F.—He left the city, because his life was in danger there. The place to which he retired was Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where he had been baptized by John. And here great multitudes resorted to him, to whom he preached the gospel, and healed their sick.

S.—While Jesus lingered here, what intelligence came to him from his friends at Bethany?

F.—He heard that his friend Lazarus was sick. On hearing this, he did not at once hasten to Bethany, but tarried two days in the place where he was. He then told his disciples that Lazarus was dead; and proposed that they should go at once to the afflicted family. But the disciples discouraged him, saying, "The Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" He insisted, however, upon going, and his disciples went with him.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he found Martha and Mary in great affliction; for their brother had been dead four days. He repaired with them to the sepulchre, commanded that the stone which closed it should be removed, and having offered up a short prayer, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. And Jesus said unto them, "Loose him, and let him go."

S.—What effect had this miracle on the Jews at Jerusalem?

F.—Many, in consequence of it, were led to believe in Christ; and this alarmed the Jewish rulers the more, who came at once to the conclusion that Jesus must be put to death.

S.—To avoid his enemies, where did Jesus now retire?

F.—To a little city called Ephraim, lying north of Jerusalem, at the distance of ten or twelve miles. But the Passover was at hand, and he soon left his retreat to return to Jerusalem. On the way, he spoke further to his disciples of his approaching sufferings and death; but they could not understand him. Their minds were still intent upon a temporal kingdom, and they were even plotting among themselves, as they passed along, who should be the greatest in that kingdom.

S.—Did Jesus and his disciples go directly to Jerusalem?

F.—Not directly; they took a circuitous route through Jericho. And as they went out of Jericho, they passed two blind men who sat by the wayside begging. One of them,—and the only one spoken of by Mark and Luke,—was Bartimeus, who seems to have been more importunate, and to have attracted more notice, than the other. He persisted in crying aloud, and would not be silenced: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on us!" And Jesus called them to him, and kindly inquired what they desired of him; and they said, "Lord, that we may receive our sight." And Jesus touched their eyes and said, "Receive your sight;" and their eyes were opened, and they followed him in the way.

S.—What were some of the incidents of the journey from Jericho to Jerusalem?

F.—It was on this journey that our Lord met and converted Zaccheus the publican (Luke xix. 1). It was at this time, also, that he uttered the parable of the ten pounds, designed to set forth the reward of his faithful servants, and the destruction that was to overwhelm his enemies.

S.—As Jesus and his disciples drew near to Jerusalem, by whom were they received and entertained?

F.—By his faithful friends, Martha and Mary, at Bethany. Here they made him a supper, and Martha served; while the raised Lazarus sat with him at the table. He was also received by Simon, who had been a leper, but whom, in all probability, Jesus had healed. It was while sitting at meat in his house, that Mary came with her box of spikenard and poured it on his head; which gave occasion to the spiteful remark of Judas: “Why was not this ointment sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor?”

S.—On the day following, what remarkable occurrence took place?

F.—In fulfillment of an ancient prophecy (Zech. ix. 9), Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an ass’s colt—the only instance recorded of his riding, except on the sea, during his whole public ministry. And now he rode in a sort of triumph; some of his friends spreading their garments in the way, and others strewing it with green boughs, and all shouting together: “Hosannah to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosannah in the highest!” They seem to have anticipated that the temporal kingdom, so long desired, was now to be set up.

S.—Arrived in Jerusalem, what did our Savior do?

F.—He went into the temple, and saw with sorrow what was done there. He undertook to accomplish,—what he had done once before,—a *purgation* of the temple. He cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and would not that any should carry any vessel through the temple (Mark xi. 15, 16).

The Scribes and Pharisees were not slow to demand of him, "By what authority doest thou these things?" But instead of answering them directly, our Savior put to them a question: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" This question they did not care to answer either way; and so our Lord declined answering their question.

From this time our Lord continued his discourses in the temple for several days, in a way to arouse and exasperate the chief priests, the Pharisees, and Scribes. He delivered the parable of the vineyard let out to unfaithful husbandmen, which they could not but interpret against themselves; also the parable of the marriage feast, to which those who were first invited would not come. He confounded the Pharisees and Herodians, who came to him with an artful question about paying tribute to Cæsar. He met the Sadducees, and answered their foolish objection against the resurrection of the dead. He reproved the Scribes and Pharisees for their manifold hypocrisy, oppression, and wickedness, and denounced woe after woe upon them, till it seemed as though their measure of woe must be full. Christ knew that he was delivering his last message to them, and he meant that it should be one of searching plainness, of terror, and of power.

S.—On leaving the temple, what did the disciples do?

F.—They took Jesus to show him the stones and buildings of the temple. This was Herod's temple, which he had commenced building several years before his death, and which was not yet completed. Jesus said unto them, "See ye not these great buildings? The days are coming when there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." This prediction was astounding to the disciples, and they followed it with another question: "Master, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" In answer to these inquiries, our Savior was led to speak very particularly of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and of the signs which should precede this terrible catastrophe.

And then, passing over from the type to the antitype, and following out the inquiry of the Apostles, he was led to speak of the final judgment and the end of the world; interspersing with the prediction the parables of the ten virgins, and of the talents, designed to impress upon the disciples the necessity of constant watchfulness, and a diligent preparation for his coming and kingdom.

S.—As we have now come to the evening of our Savior's last Passover, and the journeyings of his weary life are over, will you please to sum them up, recount them, that we may get a connected view of them?

F.—From early infancy until about the thirtieth year of his life, he spent his time chiefly at Nazareth, an obscure village of Galilee, subject to his reputed father, and laboring with him as a carpenter. In his thirtieth year, he left Galilee, and came to John at Bethabara, where he was baptized. After his baptism, he retired into the wilderness of Judea, where he tarried forty days, and was tempted of the devil. Thence he returned to John, and soon after went into Galilee to meet his mother. From Galilee he went up to Jerusalem to his first Passover, and spent several months teaching and preaching in Judea. After the imprisonment of John, he went into Galilee, where he remained till the second Passover. He went up to the feast, but tarried in Jerusalem but a short time. He returned to Galilee, and there continued through the year. He did not go to the third Passover, but took a journey into Syria, almost to the confines of Tyre and Sidon. Returned from this excursion, he took another into the north-easterly part of Palestine, going as far as Cæsarea Philippi. He came back to Capernaum, and soon set forward to Jerusalem to attend the feast of Tabernacles. From Jerusalem he returned to Galilee for the last time, and having finished his work there, he went again to Jerusalem to the feast of the Dedication. Here the Jews sought his life, and he retired, for a season, to Bethabara, where he was baptized. From this place, he was summoned to Bethany, by the sickness and death of Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead. When the Jews again sought to

kill him, he retired to the little village of Ephraim, some ten or twelve miles north of Jerusalem. Here he remained until a short time before the Passover, when he returned, by the way of Jericho, to Jerusalem, where he ate the Passover, was betrayed, and crucified.

S.—A busy and laborious life! we must all say.

F.—Yes, a busy and laborious life! In something less than four years, our Savior made four journeys from Galilee into Judea, and back again, in addition to the last, from which he did not return. This would carry him over the ground nine times, besides his excursions to the north of Galilee, and in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and his repeated preaching tours in both countries. All these journeys he accomplished on foot, surrounded generally by thronging multitudes, whom he carefully instructed, and repeatedly fed, and for whose benefit he performed continual miracles. Who will say that our Savior's public life was not a beneficent and a weary one? What Christian will complain of labors, after this?

CONVERSATION III.

LIFE OF CHRIST CONTINUED.—Contract to betray Christ.—The price less than twenty dollars.—An astounding revelation.—The garden of Gethsemane.—Crucifixion a Roman mode of punishing criminals.—The message of Pilate's wife concerning Jesus.—The death on the cross.—Burial in Joseph's new tomb.—The resurrection.—Scenes after.—The ascension.

Son.—When did Judas contract with the chief priests to betray his Master?

Father.—Two days before the Passover, he went to them privately and said, “What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver”—less than twenty dollars of our money.

S.—What preparation was made for the Passover?

F.—On the fifth day of the Jewish week—answering to our Thursday—Jesus dispatched Peter and John to the city, to make ready the Passover,—giving them particular directions where to go, and with whom to find the necessary accommodations. They went, and found all things as their Master had described.

S.—How were the other disciples employed meanwhile?

F.—They were having one of those strange disputes of which we hear so much,—who of them should be the greatest. So to reprove them, after they had sat down to the paschal supper, Jesus rose from the table, laid aside his outward garments, girded himself with a towel, and began to wash his disciples' feet. This he did, to set them an example of humility and condescension: “If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, so ought ye to wash one another's feet.” Instead of striving as to which of you shall be the greatest, be ready, at all times, to perform one for another every needed act of condescension and love.

S.—When Jesus and his disciples were eating the Passover, what astounding revelation did he make to them?

F.—He testified and said, “Behold one of you shall betray me.” This led to instant personal inquiry; when our Savior indicated,

though not in a way to be generally understood, that the traitor was no other than Judas Iscariot. Shortly after this, Judas left them, and went out to carry into effect his traitorous design.

S.—When was the Lord's supper instituted?

F.—After the departure of Judas, our Savior had a long and affecting conversation with the eleven disciples, in which he exhorted them to mutual love, told them what was to come, and urged them to be prepared for it. After this he took bread, and blessed and brake it, and instituted the sacred supper, to take the place of the Passover, and to be a standing memorial, in all coming time, of his sufferings and death.

Nor did our Savior immediately leave the chamber, when the supper was ended. He sat long time there with his disciples, and delivered those most instructive and comforting discourses, and offered up that remarkable intercessory prayer, which we find recorded from the fourteenth to the seventeenth chapters of John.

S.—On leaving the Passover chamber, where did Jesus and his disciples go?

F.—They went out of Jerusalem on the way to the mount of Olives. As they passed along, Jesus continued his conversation with his disciples, repeating his warnings as to what was coming, and its effects upon them: "All ye shall be offended"—stumbled—"because of me this night." But Peter replied with his usual self-confidence, "Though all shall be offended, yet will not I." Our Savior turned to him and said: "This very night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice."

S.—On their way to Olivet, where did our Savior stop, with his disciples?

F.—In the garden of Gethsemane—a secluded spot, where Jesus often went with his disciples. Here he fell into an intense and indescribable agony, under which his human nature seemed ready to sink. He prayed repeatedly, though with the most entire submission to the Divine will, that the cup of suffering might pass from him. So intense was his agony, that his sweat was, as it were,

great drops of blood falling down to the ground. He had exhorted his disciples to watch with him in his extremity, but, by some strange fatuity, they had fallen asleep.

S.—What event occurred, to arouse them from their slumbers?

F.—It was at this time, and under these circumstances, that Judas, with his ruffian band, came upon them to take Jesus. He voluntarily surrendered himself to his persecutors, and consented to be bound, and led away as a captive criminal to the high priest's palace. Here he was first examined. It was here that Peter denied him, but soon and bitterly repented of his denial.

S.—Where was he next taken for examination?

F.—At break of day, he was removed to the hall of the Sanhedrim, where he was still further examined; and on his confessing himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God and future judge of the world, he was charged with blasphemy, and pronounced guilty of death.

S.—Why was not Jesus stoned, as a blasphemer?

F.—Had the Jews been permitted to execute their sentence, he would undoubtedly have been stoned; for this was the form of death prescribed by the Jewish law for the blasphemer. But our Savior was not to die in this manner. He was to “be lifted up,” to “be hanged on a tree,” or, in other words, to be crucified. Hence it was necessary that he should be put to death by the Romans; for crucifixion was not a Jewish, but a Roman mode of executing criminals.

S.—Where was our Savior next brought for trial?

F.—Before Pilate, the Roman governor. And here the accusation against him was entirely changed. Before, he had been accused of blasphemy; but now he is charged with setting himself up to be a king, and thus conspiring against the Roman government. This, it was thought, was a charge in which Pilate would feel some interest; whereas he would care little for a charge of blasphemy against the God of the Jews. Pilate examined our Savior closely on the charge presented, and was about to release

him ; but hearing incidentally that he was a Galilean, he resolved to pass him over to Herod, who was at this time at Jerusalem. But Herod, with his men of war, set him at nought, mocked him, arrayed him in a purple robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

S.—What did Pilate now do ?

F.—He made another effort to release him ; but was overborne by the clamor of the Jews. He repeatedly declared that he found no fault in him ; but the enemies of Christ would listen to nothing but his crucifixion. The governor, therefore, was compelled to yield. He first took the blessed Jesus and scourged him. Then the soldiers took off his garments, arrayed him in purple, platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head ; and still further to ridicule his pretensions to royalty, they put a reed into his right hand, to represent a sceptre, and bowed the knee before him, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews.” They also spit upon him, and took the reed out of his right hand, and smote him on the head.

S.—While this profane mockery and cruelty were going on, what occurred ?

F.—Pilate received a message from his wife, charging him to have nothing to do with that just man. This, with some other things, caused the governor still further to hesitate. He went again into the judgment hall, examined anew his bleeding victim, and was more earnest than before to release him. But the more he wavered, the more fierce and clamorous were the Jews. “If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend. Crucify him, crucify him.” When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just man.” Then the Jews answered and said, “His blood be on us, and on our children”—an imprecation which has been most terribly fulfilled.

S.—When the Jews had received their victim, what did they do with him ?

F.—They took off from him the purple in which the soldiers had

arrayed him, put his own clothes upon him, and led him forth to the place of crucifixion. On the way, he was attended by his faithful female friends, who bewailed and lamented him, and to whom he administered words of instruction: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children."

S.—How was Judas Iscariot affected, by what had taken place?

F.—When he saw that Jesus had been condemned, he was distressed for what he had done. So he brought back the thirty pieces of silver, threw them down in the temple, and, in his desperation, went out and hanged himself.

S.—Where was our Savior crucified?

F.—The place is called Golgotha, and Calvary; but the precise locality is uncertain. We only know that it was without the walls of the ancient city, and probably on the north-western border. Here Jesus was led, bearing his cross (so long as he was able to bear it), and attended by two thieves who were to suffer with him. And here, the Lord of life and glory was crucified! His hands and feet were nailed to the fatal wood; the cross was erected, and here he hung in shame and agony—a monument at once of the justice and grace of God, and of the insatiate cruelty of man. It was while the nails were driving through his flesh, and every nerve within him must have twinged with the keenest torture, that he prayed for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

S.—How long did our Savior live, after he came to the cross?

F.—About six hours, *i. e.* from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon. During the first three hours, he was continually insulted and reproached by those who stood by. They wagged their heads, saying, "Ah! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, if thou be the Son of God. He saved others; himself he cannot save." It was during these first three hours, that he commended his mother to the care of John, and pardoned and assured the penitent thief. At the end of three hours there came a supernatural darkness over all the land until the ninth:

hour—fit emblem of the darkness and horror which seem to have pervaded the pure mind of the Savior during this period. At the ninth hour, when the sufferer could endure no longer, he uttered that loud and bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” Shortly after, when he had sucked some vinegar from a sponge that was put to his lips, and thus fulfilled the last prediction in regard to his sufferings, he said, “It is finished;” and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. Thus died the immaculate Son of God, and made expiation for the sins of the world. Thus ended, in a moment, all his sufferings, and his pure soul took its flight to the Paradise of God. No indignity was offered to his lifeless body, except that, to make sure of his death, it was pierced, shortly after, with a soldier’s spear.

S.—Did the powers of nature seem to sympathize with the dying Savior at this moment?

F.—They did, most fearfully and wonderfully; for, in addition to the appalling darkness which brooded over the whole land, there was now a terrible earthquake, which rent the rocks asunder, and burst open the tombs. The thick veil of the temple, which separated the holy from the most holy place, was also rent in pieces,—thus indicating that the dispensation of types and shadows was ended, and that the way into the holy of holies was made manifest by the blood of Christ. The earthquake and the darkness put an end to the profane mockeries which had been indulged in around the cross. Every one quaked and shuddered with fear. They smote upon their breasts and said, “Certainly this was a righteous man. He was the Son of God.”

S.—What was done, the same evening, about entombing the Savior?

F.—Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrim, but who had not consented to their vile proceedings, came boldly to Pilate, and asked that he might have the body of Jesus. And when Pilate had ascertained that the body was truly dead, he gave it to Joseph. Then Joseph, assisted by other friends, took down the body and

wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. Nicodemus also came to his assistance, bringing a hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes, to prepare the body for its burial. And having swathed it with the spices, they laid it in a new tomb which had been hewed out of a rock near by, in which no person had ever yet been laid; and they rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

S.—Where, all this while, were the female friends of Christ?

F.—They never deserted him for a moment. They saw him die, saw him taken down from the cross, followed him to the tomb, and saw where he was laid.

S.—And how were the Jews employed?

F.—They too were on the alert. To make sure against any attempt to remove the body privately, they procured an order from Pilate that the door of the tomb should be sealed, and a watch set to guard it, at least until after the third day. When all this was done, the tomb was left in charge of the guards; and friends and enemies departed to keep the Passover Sabbath, which by the Jews was regarded as a great day. And, in truth, it was a great day. Never before had such a Sabbath been kept in Jerusalem. The chief priests and Pharisees were in high exultation, though not altogether without anxieties and fears. The terrible portents attending the death of Jesus, together with his known prediction that he should rise on the third day, were enough to fill them with apprehension.

S.—And what were the feelings of the disciples and friends of Christ, on this memorable day?

F.—To them it was a time of deep distress. They knew not how to understand the trying scenes through which they had passed, or what to think of them. They trusted that they had found the long promised Messiah who was to deliver Israel; but he was dead and buried, and all their hopes were buried with him.

But the Sabbath passed quietly away, and the night following, and the first day of the week began to dawn. And now we come to a new chapter in our Savior's history,—his triumphant resurrec-

tion, his occasional appearance for the next forty days, and his final and glorious ascension into heaven.

S.—Some persons have thought it impossible to harmonize the different accounts of the Evangelists in regard to our Savior's resurrection and subsequent appearances: Will you please to detail the several events in the order in which you think they took place?

F.—Towards morning, on the first day of the week, while the guard was keeping watch about the sepulchre, suddenly there was a great earthquake. One of the chiefest of the angels of light descended from heaven, rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. For fear of him, the keepers trembled, swooned away, and became as dead men; so that they were no longer able to see or tell what was passing around them. At this time, Jesus awoke from the dead, threw aside his grave-clothes, and left the sepulchre. At the same time, also, many bodies of the old saints, which had been buried round about Jerusalem, and whose tombs had been broken open by the earthquakes, arose from the dead, went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

While these things were passing at the sepulchre, and among the dead, the female friends of Christ were awake, and preparing to go to the sepulchre, that they might more formally and perfectly embalm the body of Jesus. And as they passed along to the sepulchre, they had some anxiety and conversation about the stone at the mouth of it. It was very great, and who should assist them in rolling it away? But as they approached the sepulchre, they saw that the stone was rolled away. As soon as the women saw that the tomb had been opened, they stopped and turned back, and Mary Magdalene ran into the city to inform the disciples. Peter and John arose, at once, and ran to the sepulchre. They went down into it, and found the grave-clothes carefully laid away; but the body was not there. They returned in doubt and wonder to the city, leaving Mary Magdalene, who had followed them, alone at

the sepulchre. As she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. And there she saw two angels sitting,—the one at the head, and the other at the feet,—where the body of Jesus had been laid. They seem to have been in the form of men; so that she was not frightened at all by the apparition. And one of them said to her, “Why weepest thou?” She answered, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” And having said this, she turned round, and saw Jesus standing near her; and supposing him to be the gardener, she said: “Sir, if you have removed the body of my Lord, please tell me where you have laid it, and I will take it away.” Then Jesus said unto her in his usual voice and manner, “Mary!” Instantly she knew him, and was about to fall at his feet and embrace him; but he told her, “No, not now. Run quickly and tell my disciples what you have seen.”

While Mary was gone with her message to the disciples, the other women, from whom she had been separated, came to the sepulchre, at the rising of the sun. They even ventured to go down into it; and there—instead of the body of Jesus—they saw two angels in the form of men—probably the same which had before appeared to Mary Magdalene—sitting, in shining garments, on the right side of the sepulchre. The angels spoke kindly to them, told them not to be affrighted, and no longer to seek the living among the dead. “Your Lord is not here; he is risen; come see the place where they laid him. And now go quickly and tell his disciples that he is indeed risen from the dead.”

And as they went to tell the disciples, Jesus met them, and said unto them, “All hail!” And they fell together at his feet and worshiped him. But he hastened their departure, as he had before done in the case of Mary Magdalene: “Go tell my brethren that I am alive, and that, ere long, they shall see me.” So they ran and united their testimony with that of Mary, that they had seen the Lord. But the disciples were slow of heart to believe; they thought the women had been deluded, and their words seemed to

them as idle tales. Some time in the course of the day our Savior appeared to Peter, but under what circumstances we are not informed (Luke xxiv. 34). In the afternoon of the same day, he appeared to the two disciples, as they went to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13-31), and made himself known to them in the breaking of bread. These disciples returned, at once, to Jerusalem, and found the apostles and other disciples assembled with closed doors; and no sooner had they commenced telling their story, than Jesus himself appeared there in their midst, and said, "Peace be unto you!" They were all terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit; but Jesus soon satisfied them that he was something more than a spirit: "Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." He kindly reproved them for their unbelief, in not receiving the testimony of those who had seen him, and left them with the comforting benediction, "Peace be unto you; as my father hath sent me, so send I you."

Thus closed the transactions of this important day—the first Lord's day under the new dispensation. Christ appeared visibly during the day no less than five times: first to Mary Magdalene; secondly, to the other females; third, to Peter; fourth, to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus; and fifth, to the assembled Apostles and disciples at Jerusalem.

S.—There are some mysteries about the properties of our Savior's raised body. It could enter and leave a room with closed doors; it could go from place to place otherwise than by the ordinary processes of locomotion; it could appear in other than its natural form; it could make itself visible or invisible at pleasure and yet it seems not to have parted with all its grossness. It had "flesh and bones;" and in repeated instances, after the resurrection, our Savior partook of material food.

F.—I know not how to account for all the phenomena in the case before us, but by supposing that the change from the natural to the spiritual body *commenced* at the resurrection, but was not consummated until our Savior's ascension. As he was to remain

on the earth forty days, and furnish “infallible proofs” meanwhile of his resurrection from the dead, it was necessary that his body should retain at least *some* of its natural properties; else how could these “infallible proofs” be given. But when they had been adequately furnished, and his work on earth was done, and he was about to ascend to the right hand of God in heaven; then these remaining natural properties were laid aside, and the entire spiritual body, in all its fullness and glory was assumed.

S.—Our Savior is spoken of as “the first fruits from the dead,” and “the first that should rise from the dead” (Acts xxvi. 23); and yet several persons had been raised before him—some of them by himself.

F.—I suppose that he was the first that ever rose with a proper resurrection body—rose to die no more.

S.—Did our Savior make any visible appearances between the first Lord’s day and the second?

F.—Not that we know of; nor do we know how the disciples were employed. But when they had assembled on the second Lord’s day, Christ appeared in the midst of them, as before. He appeared now to convince the incredulous Thomas that he was indeed alive. “Reach hither thy fingers, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.”

S.—Where was our Lord’s next appearance?

F.—It was in Galilee, where the disciples had gone in expectation of meeting him. They had been fishing all the night and had taken nothing. In the morning their Lord appeared to them on the shore. As soon as they knew him, they rushed forward to meet him, and had a most interesting season of communion with him. It was at this time that he thrice demanded of Peter, “Lovest thou me?” and received the thrice repeated protestations of Peter’s love. It was here that our Lord predicted Peter’s martyrdom, and intimated that John might long survive him.

S.—Did not our Savior meet his disciples again in Galilee?

F.—Yes; he met them on a mountain, where “he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles” (1 Cor. xv. 6). Our Lord repeatedly met his disciples at Jerusalem, and instructed them in things pertaining to his kingdom. He instituted Christian baptism—baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and made it one of the standing ordinances of his kingdom. And whereas he had formerly restricted them in their ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he now greatly enlarged their commission: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” He promised to aid them by miraculous powers and gifts as long as these should be needed, and to be with them by his gracious Spirit even unto the end of the world.

S.—When the forty days of our Lord’s continuance on the earth were ended, and the time of his ascension had come, where did he meet his disciples?

F.—He met them in Jerusalem, and led them out over the brook Kedron, by the same path in which they went the night before the crucifixion. And when they came to Bethany, on the eastern slope of the mount of Olives, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, that he was separated from them, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, suddenly two angels stood beside them and said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing towards heaven? This same Jesus, which has been taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” And the disciples worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They spent most of the time, for the next eight or ten days, in united prayer, waiting for the promised descent of the Holy Spirit.

S.—It seems that our Savior’s appearances, after his resurrection, were confined to his disciples and friends. Why did he not appear to the unbelieving Jews, and convince them all at once of his resurrection, and consequent Messiahship?

F.—I may answer this question by asking another: Why does not Christ appear now in celestial glory, and substantiate his Divinity and his Messiahship at once and forever? I can conceive of two reasons why Christ did not appear to his enemies after his resurrection. In the first place, they were not in a state of mind to be convinced by any amount of evidence which he could consistently afford them. They had perverted all the evidence which had been given them during his life; had charged him with blasphemy; had ascribed his miracles to Beelzebub; had procured his murder; had imprecated his blood upon themselves and their children; and in these ways had proved themselves to be incorrigible. If Christ had appeared to them after his resurrection, they would have called him a spectre, an illusion, a demon, anything rather than the risen Messiah. Hence, secondly, these Jews had reached the point, or many of them had,—of *judicial abandonment*. God had said of them, *Let them alone*. They had been given over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind, and no further means of instruction or conviction were to be wasted upon them.

I have now presented you with a brief sketch of the life of Christ—the briefest possible that should contain a connected account of the facts of his history—and what will you say of it?

S.—I trust we are all ready to say, in review, A wonderful life! a Divine life! fully attesting his high claims to be the Son of God, and the Savior of the world! I trust it may be our daily and constant study. Most certainly it can never grow old to us. It can never be pondered but with interest and profit. The Lord help us thus to study it; and so doing, may we drink deep of the spirit of Christ, grow into his image and likeness, and thus be preparing for his everlasting kingdom.

CONVERSATION IV.

THE NEW DISPENSATION.—The old and the new.—The church under each.—Different dispensations.—Commencement of the new.—Who comprised the church at the time of Christ's death.—The Pentecost.—Changing the day of rest or Sabbath.—Reasons of the change.—The form of admitting new members into the church.—Acts of the Apostles.

Son.—Has the church of God been the same body under the several dispensations?

Father.—It has. “My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother.” Pious persons in every age have not only possessed, but professed, the same true religion, and have been members of the same church of the living God. Righteous Abel belonged to the same church with Abraham, and Abraham to the same with Moses, and Moses to the same with Peter, John, and Paul, and they to the same with Christians now. The dispensations have changed, but the church has remained the same.

S.—Under what dispensations has the church of God existed?

F.—The earliest dispensation was the *Patriarchal*. This was succeeded by the *Mosaic* dispensation, which commenced at Sinai, at the giving of the law; and continued till the gospel dispensation was ushered in. Yet, under all, as I said, the church has remained one and the same. Christ came to *purge* his floor, not to destroy it. According to his own prediction (Matt. viii. 11), the Gentiles were gathered into the same kingdom or church from which the unbelieving Jews were ejected. They were grafted into the same olive tree, from which the Jews were broken off (Rom. xi. 17).

S.—Did the gospel dispensation commence at the coming of Christ, or at his death?

F.—It commenced at his death. Our Savior observed all the rites of the Mosaic dispensation, and enjoined them upon others. “Go thy way,” said he to the cleansed leper, “show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testi-

mony unto them" (Matt. viii. 4). Then the bloody rites of the Mosaic dispensation lost none of their significance, until the death of Christ. They were as significant and as necessary, the year, the month, the day before the crucifixion, as they had been in the days of Moses or of Samuel. Hence we find it expressly stated by the Apostle Paul, that the ordinances of the Mosaic dispensation terminated, not at the birth of Christ, nor at the commencement of his public ministry, but at his death. "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, *nailing it to his cross*" (Col. ii. 14). It was *on the cross*, then, that the rites of the old dispensation were taken out of the way. It was the sacrifice of the cross which removed their significancy and necessity; and when these were gone, and there was no farther use for them, they ceased to be binding, and ere long ceased to be observed.

S.—Who constituted the visible church which, at the death of Christ, passed over from the old dispensation to the new?

F.—Not the whole body of the Jewish nation which had constituted the visible church up to this time. For their unbelief and rejection of Christ, this people, or the mass of them, were cut *off*. As the idolatrous world was abandoned at the calling of Abraham, and the visible church thenceforth was confined to his family, so the great body of Abraham's descendants were now rejected, and the visible church was confined to the faithful few, who had followed Christ in the regeneration, and adhered to him through the dark period of his sufferings and death. The hour of Christ's death, then, was the time of the great *excision*, when the floor of the visible church was purged, when the stock of the good olive was pruned almost to utter nakedness, preparatory to the reception of new and better branches. The faithful few who adhered to Christ through the period of his trial, and thus proved themselves to be his disciples in deed and in truth,—these were they who bridged the gulf of separation; who passed over from the old dispensation to the new; and who, subsequent to the resurrection, constituted

the church of God on earth. Here were the eleven apostles; here were Christ's faithful female friends—"last at the cross, and first at the sepulchre." The whole number of names, we read in one place, was a hundred and twenty. On another occasion, there seem to have been five hundred. We nowhere read of a larger number than this. These, then, at the first, constituted the church of the new dispensation. They were the nucleus, about which the Christian world was now to gather, and into which converted Jews and Gentiles were about to be received.

S.—Why were not these five hundred Christian brethren and sisters, more or less, baptized with Christian baptism, and formally admitted to the church of Christ?

F.—They were members of the church already. They had never been excinded. They were church-members under the former dispensation; and when all the rest were cut off for their unbelief, these alone remained. Of course, they did not need to be taken into the church, they were never out of it. They had received the seal of the church-covenant under the former dispensation, and needed not to have it repeated under the new. But when the unbelieving, excinded Jews began to be converted, they, being out of the church, must be taken into it, and must receive the initiatory rite of baptism. The Apostles understood this matter and baptized all those who were received at the Pentecost, and on subsequent occasions. And though many of these, undoubtedly, had been baptized by John, this made no difference. John's baptism was a mere preparatory rite; it was not Christian baptism; and when any were received to the Christian church, whether Jews or Gentiles, they must be baptized.

S.—How long was it from the Passover, when Christ was crucified, to the Pentecost?

F.—It was fifty days. Hence the name *Pentecost*, from the Latin *Pentecosta*, fifty.

S.—How much of this time remained, after the ascension of Christ?

F.—Between the ascension and the Pentecost, there must have been some seven or eight days. This time the disciples spent in earnest and united prayer, imploring, with one accord, the descent of the blessed Comforter, which their Divine Master had promised to bestow.

S.—How was the Pentecost ushered in?

F.—When the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the disciples were assembled in their usual place of meeting (which I suppose was one of the porches or chambers about the temple), suddenly the Holy Spirit came upon them like a rushing, mighty wind, filling all the place where they were sitting, and filling each of their hearts with light and love. It was attended, also, with miraculous appearances and gifts; for there appeared in the room pointed, glittering, lambent flames, in shape like tongues of fire, and they settled on the heads of each of the Apostles; and immediately they began to speak with other tongues—in languages which they had never learned—as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Jerusalem was at this time filled with people—Jews speaking different languages from the surrounding countries, who had come together to celebrate the Pentecost; so when the strange occurrences in the Apostles' meeting came to be known, many rushed in there to see and hear for themselves; and they were all amazed and confounded to hear these unlettered Galileans speaking the languages of the nations round about, and publishing forth, in all, the wonderful works of God.

S.—How did the unbelieving Jews undertake to explain these strange appearances?

F.—Not knowing what else to make of them, and determined to turn them, if possible, to the discredit of the Apostles, some insisted that they must be intoxicated. But Peter, standing up in the midst, refuted this slander in few words. He then went on to preach to the people a long and pointed discourse, in which he explained to them the nature and cause of the strange appearances they had witnessed. This was no other than an outpouring of the

Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of an ancient prediction of the prophet Joel. It was a fulfillment also of an express promise of Christ, who had been crucified and slain, but whom God had raised from the dead, and taken up visibly into heaven; of which, said he, "we all are witnesses." He proceeded to show that this same Jesus was the promised Messiah, and that they had been guilty of crucifying the Lord from heaven.

S.—How were the hearers of Peter affected by his sermon?

F.—They were "pricked to the heart." Their hearts began to bleed and melt under a sense of guilt, and they cried out in bitterness of soul, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" To this inquiry Peter made answer: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The people complied with this direction on the spot; and the same day there were added to the little company of disciples no less than three thousand souls.

S.—On what day of the week did this great outpouring of the Spirit occur?

F.—It occurred on the first day of the week—that which was afterwards called *the Lord's day*. The Pentecost always occurred on the first day of the Jewish week. Our Savior honored and set apart the first day of the week by his resurrection from the dead; he further honored it by his repeated appearances on this day subsequent to his resurrection; and now he put, if possible, a still higher honor upon it, by pouring out his Spirit on this day, and gathering in the first fruits of the Christian harvest.

S.—It is said of the disciples at this time that "they sold their possessions, and parted to all men as every one had need." They "had all things common." Why was this?

F.—This measure was partly one of necessity, showing, at the same time, their abounding liberality. Many of these new disciples were strangers in Jerusalem, drawn together to celebrate the feast. Probably the greater part of them were not residents in the city. They were thrown together in providence, and drawn together by

the cord of Christian love. They felt as though they could not be separated, at least for the present. But how were they to subsist? How are they to be supported? These questions were readily answered. Let us put all our property into a common stock, and live upon it as long as it lasts; when it is gone, the Lord will provide. It is very certain that this mode of living was never designed to be perpetuated in the church. It came in, for a time, as a measure of necessity; and when the necessity ceased, it passed away.

S.—What was the most noticeable event in their history at this time?

F.—It was the healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple. This excited much attention, and led to many inquiries among the people; in replying to which Peter was led to deliver another of his stirring discourses. He charged home upon the Jews, as he did before, the guilt of rejecting and murdering the Lord, and concluded by solemnly calling them to repentance. “Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” The result was, another large addition to the church. The whole number had now come to be five thousand.

S.—How were the Jewish rulers affected by this large accession to the number of the disciples?

F.—They were aroused to new methods of opposition. They had hoped that the death of Jesus would effectually scatter and discomfit his followers; but they were preaching, working miracles, and making many proselytes; and something must be done to stop them. So they arrested Peter and John, put them in prison, and brought them before the council for examination. At their examination, Peter addressed the rulers of his nation in the boldest, plainest manner. He asserted the resurrection and ascension of Christ, together with his Divine authority and power, and proclaimed him the only Savior of lost men. The rulers were puzzled to know what to do with their prisoners. They had committed no offense against the laws, and they were in great favor with the people. They concluded, therefore, to threaten them, and let them go.

S.—In the midst of their great prosperity, what heavy trial came upon the apostolic church?

F.—It was the detected hypocrisy and death of two of their own number. Ananias and Sapphira had drifted into the church on the high tide of the Pentecost revival, without having the selfishness of their hearts subdued; and yet they wished to stand well with the disciples, and keep up the appearance of being as liberal as any of them. So when they saw others selling their land, and laying the price of it at the Apostles' feet, they concluded to do the same. They sold their land, and brought a *part* of the proceeds to the Apostles, pretending, at the same time, to have brought it all. And here was their error and their sin. They were not obliged to sell their land, unless they chose; and when they had sold it, they might have retained the whole price of it, or any part of the price, in their own hands, if they pleased. But they deceived and lied about it. They wished to have the credit of giving up all, when, in fact, they kept back a part. But the lie was instantly detected, and they were struck down dead for their sin. An awful example to the infant church of the guilt and danger of hypocrisy! An awful warning to those who saw it then, who have since read of it, or ever will read of it to the end of the world, to be afraid of sinning against the Holy Ghost, and tempting the Almighty, in similar ways!

CONVERSATION V.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.—How it was formed.—Deacons appointed and their duties.—Vision of Stephen.—His cruel death.—Persecution of the Christians.—Saul of Tarsus.—Scattering abroad.—Spread of the gospel.—Laying on of hands.—Saul's conversion.—Peter raises Lydia from the dead.—Peter in prison.

Son.—The Apostles had been once called to an account and cast into prison by the Jewish rulers: Were they imprisoned again?

Father.—They were; but the angel of the Lord opened their prison doors by night, brought them out, and said unto them, “Go, stand in the temple and preach to the people all the words of this life.” They did so; and when the rulers called for them the next day, instead of finding them in prison, they found them engaged in their old work of preaching the gospel. They summoned them to a trial, and perhaps might have punished them; but Gamaliel, a celebrated doctor of the Jewish law, dissuaded them from it: “Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight even against God.” This good advice was heeded by the rulers; and so, with another charge to stop their preaching, the Apostles were dismissed.

S.—Please tell us under what circumstances the first deacons were appointed.

F.—The Apostles had much to do in distributing supplies from the common stock, and in caring for the poor; and after all their efforts, entire satisfaction was not given. There was a murmuring of the foreign Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Wherefore the Apostles called the church together, and said: “It is not meet that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Choose you, therefore, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves to prayer, and to the ministering of the

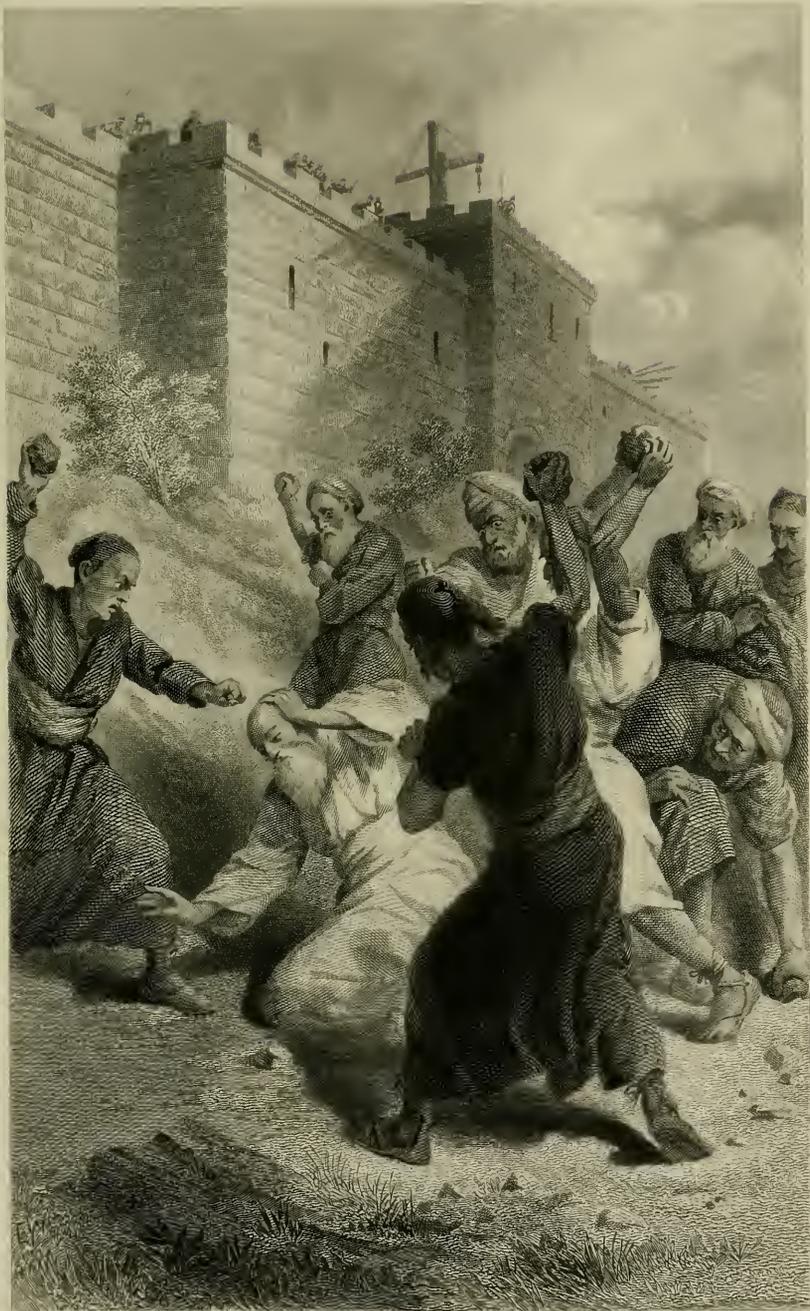
word." This suggestion was accepted, the seven deacons were appointed, and solemnly consecrated to their work by the imposition of hands and prayer.

S.—The most distinguished of these deacons was Stephen: Please give us some account of him.

F.—Stephen was a foreign Jew, and had frequent disputes with unbelievers in the synagogue of the foreign Jews. And they, being unable to withstand him in argument, undertook to destroy his life. They arraigned him before the Sanhedrim on the charge of having spoken blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. In his defense, Stephen delivered a long and eloquent discourse, sketching the history of God's dealings with the Israelitish nation in ancient times, that he might overcome prejudice, and better introduce his testimony in favor of Christ. The Jewish rulers heard him for a time, but at length, becoming impatient, they interrupted him, and brought his address to a sudden close: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." Hearing this, the Jews were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon Stephen with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Then the Jews cried out "Blasphemy!" with a loud voice, and ran upon him with one accord, and thrust him out of the city, and stoned him. So Stephen died, like his Divine Master, with the language of forgiveness and supplication on his lips, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

S.—Where was Pilate at this time, and what authority had the Jews to put any one to death, without his consent?

F.—I answer, that Stephen may have died in a popular tumult, without the regular forms of law; or Pilate may have been, at the time, absent from Jerusalem; or (what is more probable) he may have given a general license to persecute and destroy the Christians. Having put their master to death, he may have given



E. J. Whitney

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THE STONING OF STEPHEN.

Drawn and Engraved expressly for this occasion.

a general license to the Jewish rulers to treat his followers as they pleased.

S.—Were any other of the disciples put to death, at this time, except Stephen?

F.—Yes, there was a great and general persecution, in which Saul of Tarsus was particularly active. The witnesses who accused Stephen, and afterwards stoned him, laid down their clothes at the feet of Saul. It is said that “he made havoc of the church,” entering into the houses of Christians, and committing many of them to prison, and when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them. But this persecution, though most maliciously intended, and wickedly executed, was over-ruled for the furtherance of the gospel. Up to this time, the Christian community had clung together at Jerusalem. They were unwilling to be separated. But God designed that they *should* be separated; and he over-ruled this bitter persecution for this very purpose. The apostles still resided for the most part at Jerusalem; but the members of the church were scattered abroad. And wherever they went, they carried the gospel with them. “They went forth everywhere preaching the word.”

S.—And what was the effect of their preaching?

F.—Their labors, we know, were greatly blessed. Almost immediately, we begin to hear of little communities of Christians in all the principal cities of Palestine and Syria. The success of one of these first missionaries was so considerable that inspiration has recorded it. Philip, one of the seven deacons, but who soon became an evangelist, went down to Samaria and preached Christ there. The Samaritans were at this time greatly interested in the performances of one Simon, a magician, who pretended to work miracles, and to be the great power of God. But when Philip came among them, and preached the gospel, and performed, not magical tricks, but *real miracles*, they all forsook Simon, and gathered round the Evangelist. Soon, there was a great revival of religion, and many were baptized. Even Simon himself professed

to be a believer, received baptism, and continued with Philip, beholding the signs and miracles which were done.

S.—When the Apostles heard of this revival at Samaria, what did they do?

F.—They sent Peter and John to assist Philip, and to do for the new converts, what Philip could not do,—to lay their hands on them, and impart the miraculous influences of the Holy Ghost. This gift could be imparted by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, and in no other way. Others wrought miracles in the Apostolic age, but none except the Apostles could impart the gift. And this was that which Simon the sorcerer wanted to buy,—not the power of working miracles, but the apostolical power of imparting the gift. “Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.” His preferring such a request as this, accompanied with the offer of money, was what revealed the secret of his character, and led Peter to say, with mingled emotions of indignation and scorn, “Thy money perish with thee! Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”

S.—When a church had been established at Samaria, what was Philip directed to do?

F.—He must go and meet the Ethiopian eunuch, and preach the gospel of salvation to him. The eunuch was soon convinced, converted and baptized, and returned to the court of his royal mistress rejoicing. Philip turned his feet northward, and preached in all the cities till he came to Cæsarea.

S.—Was the persecution still in progress at Jerusalem?

F.—It was; Saul was still pursuing his bloody work there. Nor was he satisfied to confine his efforts to the holy city; but hearing that there were Christians at Damascus, he went to the high priest, and desired of him letters to the synagogues at Damascus, that, if any of the hated sect were secreted there, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

S.—What was Saul's experience on his journey to Damascus?

F.—As he approached the city, suddenly there shone about him a light from heaven, before which he was instantly struck blind and prostrated. And then he heard a voice crying in his ear, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” And Saul astonished asked, “Who art thou, Lord?” And the Lord said, “*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*” And now if a thunderbolt had struck the prostrate persecutor, he could not have been more confounded. He saw, at once, what he had been doing. He saw that this Jesus was really, what he claimed to be, the Messiah of the Scriptures, whom he had been madly persecuting in his followers. He saw his fearful guilt, his danger, his ruin, and he seems to have submitted to his Redeemer at once. And so turning to him the eye of faith (for his natural eye was for the time extinguished) he said to him in accents of love: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” As much as to say, “I am now your servant. I am ready to do anything. Lord, wilt thou accept me. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

S.—Where was Peter at this time?

F.—He was on a missionary tour, in different parts of Palestine. In the course of it he visited Lydda, a town lying between Jerusalem and *Joppa*, about a dozen miles from the latter place. Here he healed Eneas of a palsy which had confined him in his bed eight years. This miracle arrested attention, and great numbers in Lydda and the surrounding country were converted.

S.—What painful event occurred at this time in *Joppa*?

F.—A beloved female disciple, whose name was Dorcas, was taken sick and died. And as Lydda was nigh to *Joppa*, and the bereaved friends had heard that Peter was there, they sent messengers unto him, entreating that he would come to them. So Peter went with them to *Joppa*, and visited the family of the deceased woman; and in answer to his prayer, she was raised from the dead. This great miracle extended still farther the fame of the Apostle, and many in *Joppa* turned to the Lord.

S.—While Peter remained at *Joppa*, what new revelation was made to him?

F.—That the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles. The revelation was on this wise: He saw in vision a great sheet let down from heaven, on which were all manner of beasts, clean and unclean, and creeping things, and fowls of the air; and Peter was astonished to hear himself commanded to eat of them promiscuously—a thing which he had never done, and which he was forbidden to do by the Jewish law. While Peter was revolving this strange command, he received a message from Cæsarea which threw some light upon it, and helped him to understand it aright. There resided at Cæsarea, about thirty miles off, a pious military officer, whose name was Cornelius. Though still a Gentile, he had come to the knowledge of the true God, and was a devout and spiritual worshiper. In answer to his prayers, an angel had appeared to him, who directed him to send to *Joppa* for Peter, who would come and instruct him in the gospel. Accordingly he sent; and his messengers arrived at Joppa, just as Peter had recovered from his vision. Putting the two revelations together, Peter could not doubt as to the import of the call, or as to his duty. He must go to Cornelius, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles, though in so doing, he might contravene some of the precepts of the Jewish law. Accordingly he went with the messengers of Cornelius, met him and his family, and preached to them the gospel; and as he was speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as it did on the disciples on the day of Pentecost, enabling them to speak with tongues, and to perform other miraculous works. Then Peter said, “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Such was the entrance of the gospel among the Gentiles—a work which shortly spread, under the auspices of the converted Saul of Tarsus, into all parts of the Roman world. Peter was soon called to an account for what he had done by his Jewish brethren at Jerusalem; but when he had expounded the whole matter to them, they



Charles Burt.

CHRIST AND THE PHARISEES.

Engraved expressly for the "Conversations."

joyfully acquiesced, saying, "Then hath God granted also unto the Gentiles repentance unto life."

S.—Where was the gospel next preached to the Gentiles?

F.—In the great city of Antioch, where many believed and turned unto the Lord. When the brethren at Jerusalem heard of the revival at Antioch, they sent thither Barnabas, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, that he should go and assist his brethren. He did so, and had great encouragement in his labors; but finding the work too great for him, he went to Tarsus, and secured an efficient helper in Saul—afterwards the great Apostle of the Gentiles. These men now spent a whole year at Antioch, where they gathered a flourishing church, and taught much people; and the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

S.—While these things were going on in Syria, what was the condition of the church at Jerusalem?

F.—Jerusalem was threatened with another persecution. Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the great, had come into favor with the emperor Claudius, who gave him the entire kingdom of his grandfather. It was during his short reign that "he stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church, and slew James the brother of John with the sword." And finding that this act of cruelty pleased the Jews, he next proceeded to take Peter also. And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison under charge of no less than sixteen soldiers, intending, after the Passover, to bring him forth unto the people. But prayer was made without ceasing of the church for him; and the prayers of God's people prevailed. For while Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with chains, and the keepers of the prison were guarding the door, an angel from God appeared in the prison, awoke the Apostle, knocked off his chains, and said to him, "gird on thy sandals and follow me." So the angel led him forth through the barred gates, and guarded wards, till he was quite at liberty in the streets of Jerusalem. Being thus miraculously delivered, Peter wended his way to the house of one of the sisters of the church, where many were assembled for

the purpose of prayer. He gained access to the meeting, rehearsed the story of his deliverance, commanded them to go and tell it to the other Apostles, and then retired to a place of safety.

We shall have more to say of Peter in our next conversation.

CONVERSATION VI.

LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.—Peter.—Doctrines of the Roman church.—His labors.—His death and last request.—Andrew.—Brother to Peter.—His character and labors.—Origin of St. Andrew's Cross.—James the elder.—Brother of John.—First to suffer martyrdom.—Roman Traditions.—Philip.—First called by Christ.—Supposed field of labor and death.—Nathanael.—Special friend of Peter.—What tradition says of him.—Matthew wealthy.—Author of one of the books of the New Testament.—Thomas.—His character.—Goes to Egypt and establishes a church in India.

I. PETER.

Son.—You have already sketched the life of Peter, until his miraculous deliverance from prison and from death. What do we hear of him after this?

Father.—Very little in the sacred history. For several years he seems to have resided mostly at Jerusalem. Here Paul met him when he went from Antioch to Jerusalem, on the question of circumcising the Gentile converts. This was about the year 49—fourteen years subsequent to the conversion of Paul (Gal. ii. 11). It was at this time that Paul received from Peter, James and John the right hand of fellowship, that he should go to the heathen, while they continued to labor chiefly among the Jews.

Not long after this, we find Peter at Antioch, where he dissembled, through fear of the Jews, refused to associate with the Gentile converts, and acted contrary to the decree which had been passed at Jerusalem. For this he was rebuked by his brother Paul,—which rebuke he received in a Christian manner, being convinced, no doubt, that it was deserved.

After this, he spent some time at Corinth; for when this church became divided respecting its ministers, some claimed that they were of Paul, and some of Apollos, and some of *Cephas*—*Peter*, and some of Christ (1 Cor. i. 12). Still later in life, we find him at Babylon—probably New Babylon in Assyria, in the neighborhood of which many Jews had resided, ever since the captivity. It is from this place that Peter dates his first epistle.

S.—Have the fathers aught to say of the later labors of Peter ?

F.—According to Origen, Peter's last missionary labors were chiefly with the dispersed Jews "in the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Bythinia, Cappadocia and Asia." And this agrees with the representation of Paul, that while he was commissioned to go to the heathen, Peter was the Apostle of the circumcision. It agrees, also, with the representation of Peter himself, who addresses his first Epistle "to the strangers," *i. e.* foreign Jews, "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bythinia."

S.—What do the Roman Catholics teach, respecting Peter ?

F.—They insist that he resided long at Rome, and was the first bishop of Rome ; but the Scriptures, instead of favoring this supposition, give their testimony against it. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans about the year 57—long after Peter, according to the Papists, had become bishop of that church ; yet there is not a word in it about Peter, nor so much as an intimation that he, or any other Apostle, had ever been there. In the last chapter of this Epistle, Paul sends salutations to beloved Christian friends at Rome, mentioning them by name, and stating a variety of circumstances respecting them ; but not a word do we find respecting Peter. Two or three years later, Paul himself arrived, a prisoner, at Rome, and was received with great favor by the church ; but still no mention is made of Peter. Paul dwelt two whole years in his hired house at Rome, whence he wrote several of his Epistles to the churches ; but in none of these Epistles do we find the slightest allusion to Peter. In view of all these representations, who can believe that up to Paul's writing of his last Epistle from Rome, Peter had ever resided there,—much less that he had long been bishop of that church ?

S.—Was Peter ever a bishop anywhere ?

F.—No ; he was an Apostle, not a bishop. Not only are these two offices not the same, they are incompatible one with the other. An Apostle is a missionary, a minister at large, one who has,—what Paul tells us he had,—“the care of all the churches.” A

bishop has, or should have, a pastoral charge. He is the overseer of a particular flock; he is confined, in his attentions, to some particular field of labor. But to what particular fields of labor were the Apostles severally confined? They were appointed, expressly, that they might be witnesses for Christ, "in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and *to the uttermost parts of the earth.*" Peter is degraded by the supposition that, from being a distinguished Apostle, he became the bishop of a single city, even though that city were Rome.

S.—Was Peter ever at Rome?

F.—We have no certain evidence that he was; though the probability is that he came there, or was carried there, a little while before his death. The testimony of the ancient church is, that he was crucified at Rome in the persecution under Nero, about the year 65. At his own request, he was crucified head downwards.

II. ANDREW.

S.—The Apostle Peter had a brother Andrew, who was also an Apostle. How much do we know respecting him?

F.—Andrew became a follower of Christ sooner than Peter. They were born at Bethsaida, on the northern shore of the sea of Galilee; were by profession fishermen; and were both of them disciples of John the Baptist. When John had designated Jesus as the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world, Andrew at once commenced following him. Shortly after, he found his brother Simon, and brought him to Christ; and henceforward they followed the Lamb of God together. During the personal ministry of Christ, though Andrew was, so far as we know, a consistent and faithful disciple, still we hear but little of him. While his brother Peter was naturally forward, talkative, impulsive, Andrew was a very different character. He was a silent witness of our Savior's miracles, and listener to his instructions, and received no special tokens of his Master's affection and regard.

S.—Where was he after the ascension of Christ?

F.—He doubtless remained for a time at Jerusalem, as all the other Apostles did. He then went forth to publish the gospel; but the ancients are not agreed as to the field of his labors. Some think that he went into Scythia;—others, with more probability, assign him to different points in Greece. The modern Greeks regard him as the founder of the church at Constantinople; but of this there is no certain proof. The story is, that after long labor and great success in his chosen work of preaching the gospel to the nations, he was crucified at Patræ, a city of Achaia, by Ægeas, the proconsul. He is said to have been crucified on a cross in the form of an X; which, from this circumstance, was called St. Andrew's cross.

III. JAMES, THE ELDER.

S.—There were two Jameses in the family of our Lord, the elder and the junior, or the greater and the less. What can you tell us of the elder James?

F.—The elder James, who was the son of Zebedee and brother of John, was the first of the Apostles who suffered martyrdom. He was slain at Jerusalem, as before stated, by Herod Agrippa, about the year 44.

S.—Of what country were the sons of Zebedee?

F.—They were native Galileans, born at Capernaum, or Bethsaida. Like Andrew and Peter, they were fishermen, and seem to have inherited more worldly substance than the rest of the Apostles. John had a home at Jerusalem, to which, after the crucifixion, he took the mother of our Lord, and nourished her as long as she lived. James and John, together with Peter, were among the more favored disciples of Christ, whom he called "sons of thunder," and whom he admitted to a peculiar intimacy and privileges. These alone were allowed to go with him when he raised the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, when he went into the mount of transfiguration, and when he fell into that dreadful agony in the garden of Gethsemane. These sons of Zebedee, though true and loving disciples, were not wholly divested of a worldly spirit;

witness the request of their mother for them,—made, no doubt, with their concurrence,—that they might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom; witness also their unchristian proposal to call down fire from heaven upon the inhospitable Samaritans.

S.—What has the church of Rome to say of James the elder?

F.—She has many traditions as to his missionary labors, after the ascension of Christ; but we have no proof that any of them are true. The Apostles lingered about Jerusalem for several years after the crucifixion, and probably James was with them. It is not likely that he ever traveled, as a missionary, out of Palestine. He died early, as I said, and was buried at or near Jerusalem. The Romanists pretend that, after several hundred years, his remains were disinterred and carried into Spain; but this is as improbable as most of their other legends.

IV. PHILIP.

S.—There were two Philips among the early followers of Christ, the one an Apostle, and the other a deacon—afterwards an evangelist: How much is known of Philip the Apostle?

F.—He was born at Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, and had the honor to be the first who was expressly called to become a disciple of Christ. Very soon he finds Nathaniel, and invites him to become a fellow disciple. From this time, Philip was a steady and consistent follower of Christ, though not much is said of him in the gospels. It was to Philip that our Lord propounded the question, when surrounded by famishing multitudes, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” (John vi. 5). It was to him that the Grecian Jews, or proselytes, who came up to Jerusalem to the Passover, addressed themselves, when desiring to see Jesus (John xii. 21). It was with him that our Lord had a discourse, when about to enter on his scene of suffering: “Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet

hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 8).

S.—After the resurrection of Christ, what do we learn respecting Philip?

F.—The probability is, that he remained several years at Jerusalem with the other Apostles. And when he departed, we have no reliable information as to the region of country to which he withdrew. It is generally thought that he visited the northern parts of Asia Minor, and died at Hierapolis, in Phrygia. Fables we have in abundance respecting his labors, sufferings, and martyrdom; but they were got up at too late a period, and contain too many silly stories, to be worth repeating.

V. NATHANAEL.

S.—Nathanael was early invited to become a follower of Christ: How did he treat the invitation?

F.—He immediately consented. And when Jesus saw him coming, he said: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Nathanael, like most of the other Apostles, was a Galilean. His home, we are told, was at Cana of Galilee (John xxi. 2). Nathanael is also called Bartholomew, *i. e.* the son of Tholomew, and is always mentioned in connection with Philip, indicating that they were special friends. We hear little of this Apostle in the sacred history, and have not the means of tracing him, with certainty, after the dispersion of the Apostles from Jerusalem. Tradition says that he traveled as far as the hither India, and left there a copy of Matthew's Gospel, which was found long after by a missionary. From India he returned, and joined his friend Philip, at Hierapolis in Phrygia. After the death of Philip, he passed into Armenia, where he laid down his life.

VI. MATTHEW, ALSO CALLED LEVI.

S.—Where was the home of Matthew?

F.—It was at, or near Capernaum in Galilee. He was the son of

Alpheus, though not the Alpheus who was the father of James and Jude (Matt. ii. 14). He was a publican or tax-gatherer, whose business it was to collect and pay over the tribute-money to the governor. These publicans were peculiarly odious to the Jews, first, because they were, in general, rapacious and oppressive; then the tribute itself, being a token of subjection, was an offense to the Jew; and, thirdly, their office brought them so much in contact with Gentiles, that a strict Jew would hardly own them as belonging to his people. Hence, to the ears of the Jew, "publicans and sinners" were synonymous terms, and they were regarded as the vilest of mankind. Yet Matthew, though a native Jew, was a publican. His office was lucrative, and he was rich. At an early period in his public ministry, as Jesus walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Matthew sitting in his office, receiving the tribute money; and he said unto him, "*Follow me.*" And Matthew rose up at once, left his office, his money-changing, his worldly business, the grand source of his wealth and honor, and became a follower of Christ. We have hardly an instance of more prompt obedience, and of apparently greater self-denial, in the Bible. To do honor to the Savior, and show that he was not dissatisfied with the decision to which he had come, he invited our Lord and his disciples to dine with him, in company with several of his own profession. At this, the Pharisees were offended, and gave vent to their pride and scorn by saying, "How is it that he eateth with publicans and sinners?"

S.—Do we hear much of Matthew during our Savior's public ministry?

F.—We do not. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, he remained for a time, with the other Apostles, in the vicinity of Jerusalem. It was here that he wrote his Gospel—the first that was written. The tradition is, that he wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, and that it was early translated into Greek. I cannot go into this question here, nor do I think it one of great importance. If our Greek copies are a translation, it is certain that the translation was made under the eye of the Apostles, and under the inspiration of

the Holy Ghost. There was a Hebrew copy of Matthew's Gospel among the early Christians; but this, falling into the hands of the Ebionites, and being by them garbled and interpolated, lost all credit in the church.

S.—Do we know where Matthew traveled after leaving Judea, and where he ended his days?

F.—We do not. Amidst a crowd of legendary tales, the truth is irrecoverably lost.

VII. THOMAS.

S.—Among the Apostles of Christ was Thomas, also called Didymus, or the twin: What can you say of him?

F.—He was probably a Galilean and a fisherman, like most of the other Apostles, though of this we are not certified in the Scriptures. During the ministry of Christ, Thomas was rather a listener than an active speaker. We have but few notices of him in the Gospels. When our Savior would not be dissuaded by any considerations of personal danger from going into the vicinity of Jerusalem to raise Lazarus from the dead, Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him,"—intimating not only his fears for the safety of his Master, but that he was willing to stand by him to the end. In his parting address to his disciples, our Lord assured them that he was going to prepare a place for them; and then added, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Thomas said unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" To this Jesus answered, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

S.—After the resurrection, what do we hear of Thomas?

F.—He was slow to believe in the resurrection of Christ, even after he had been seen by the other Apostles. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." So at our Lord's next appearance to his disciples, he furnished Thomas the very test which he had required. He caused him to put his finger into the print of the nails, and to thrust his hand into

his side. The incredulity of Thomas was overcome, and he could only exclaim, "My Lord and my God!"

S.—Upon the dispersion of the Apostles from Jerusalem, where did Thomas go?

F.—He is said to have gone into the East, as far as India. There is this evidence that Thomas did preach the gospel in India, that there is still a large body of Christians there which bear his name. They were found by the Portuguese, and were visited by Dr. Buchanan early in the present century. He received from them a copy of the Syrian Scriptures, and was gratified to find that it agreed almost entirely with our own.*

*Buchanan's Researches, p. 186.

CONVERSATION VII.

LIVES OF THE APOSTLES CONTINUED.—Simon Zelotes.—His supposed mission.—Jude.—His labors and work among the Gentiles.—Matthias.—Taken in place of Judas.—James the Less.—Claimed to be a brother of Christ.—Objections to this.—John.—His labors and travels.—Traditions.—Interesting incident in his life.

VIII. SIMON ZELOTES.

Son.—Why was Simon called *Zelotes*, or the *Zealot*?

Father.—It may have been to distinguish him from Simon Peter; or he may have belonged, before conversion, to the sect of Zealots—a sect which became very troublesome in the last days of the Jewish state. He is also called *the Cananite* (*not Canaanite*), a word of Hebrew origin, synonymous with Zealot. He was undoubtedly a Jew, though we know not the place of his birth. Being invested with the apostolical office, no further mention is made of him in the apostolical history. Nor do we know what parts of the world he visited after the dispersion of the Apostles. Some think he went into Africa, and afterwards to Britain and the Western Islands; others tell us that he went to Mesopotamia. That he was a faithful, useful man we have no reason to doubt; but the latter part of his life, so far as reliable history is concerned, is a blank.

IX. JUDE.

S.—With whom was the Apostle Jude connected?

F.—The Apostle Jude,—also called Lebbeus and Thaddeus,—was the brother of James the Less; and both were the sons of Alpheus, sometimes called Cleopas, and of Mary, a sister of our Lord's mother. Cleopas, according to Eusebius, was a brother of Joseph. They had three sons whose names are given in the gospels, *viz.*, James, Joses and Jude. Tradition has given them another son, Simeon, who was the first pastor or bishop of Jerusalem. These sons were cousins of our Lord—perhaps double cousins.

S.—Do we hear much of Jude in the gospels?

F.—We do not. The following is the only question proposed by Jude to his Master: “How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?” Jesus answered him, “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.”

S.—Upon the dispersion of the Apostles, where did Jude go?

F.—He is said to have been sent to Agbarus, king of Edessa, where he wrought miracles, preached the gospel, and converted Agbarus and his people to the faith. For this, the king offered him a large reward, which he refused, saying, that he had no occasion to receive from others what he had long before relinquished on his own behalf. Jude seems to have had a family; for near the close of the first century, two of his grandsons were brought before Domitian, as being of the lineage of David, from which stock the emperor feared that some one would arise claiming to be king of the Jews. But when he saw that they were poor, humble, laboring men, he dismissed his fears on their account, and sent them back to their own country.

S.—Is Jude the author of the Epistle which bears his name?

F.—He is. The genuineness of this Epistle was doubted by some in the ancient church, but we see no good reason for it. Its principal design is to expose certain enemies of the truth,—“ungodly men, who had crept into the churches unawares, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

X. MATTHIAS.

S.—Matthias was not an original Apostle, but was divinely designated to take the place of Judas Iscariot: Please give us some account of that transaction.

F.—His appointment was one of the first acts of the assembled Apostles, after their return from the ascension of Christ. We have a succinct account of the whole transaction, with the reasons and the manner of it, in the first chapter of the Acts. It

appears that Matthias, though not before an Apostle, was one of those who had companied with the disciples during the whole public ministry of Christ, and consequently was a most suitable person to be ordained, with the other Apostles, to be a witness for him. He was designated to this high office by lot, and afterwards was numbered with the eleven Apostles.

S.—Have we any knowledge of his labors after his appointment?

F.—We have not. He is commonly thought to have received the crown of martyrdom about the year 64; but it is not certain that he was a martyr at all. As we hear no evil of him, we may hope that he fulfilled as a hireling his day, and has long since gone to his reward.

XI. JAMES THE LESS.

S.—We have seen that James the Less was the brother of Jude, and the son of Cleopas and Mary: Do we hear much of him in the Gospels?

F.—We frequently hear of the other James, but not of James the Less.

S.—Where did he reside subsequent to Christ's ascension?

F.—Chiefly at Jerusalem, and seems to have had the oversight of that mother church. To him Peter sent the news of his deliverance from prison. "Go, show these things unto James, and to the brethren" (Acts xii. 17). He was at Jerusalem at the time of the conference respecting the circumcision of Gentile converts, and delivered the final decision concerning it (Acts xv. 19). He was there, when Paul went up to Jerusalem for the last time before he was sent to Rome (Acts xxi. 18). Indeed, he seems not to have left Jerusalem, but was barbarously murdered there, in extreme old age, by the Scribes and Pharisees. He was thrown from the temple, and then stoned, and his brains were beat out by a fuller's club. Josephus thinks that the miseries which afterwards befell the Jewish nation were brought upon them in retribution for their treatment of James. "These things happened

unto them by way of avenging the death of James the Just; for the Jews slew him, though a very just man.”*

S.—It has been thought by some that, while James and Jude, the sons of Cleopas and Mary, were Apostles of Christ, the James who resided so long at Jerusalem, who wrote the Epistle, and of whom we hear so much in the Acts and the Epistles of Paul, was not the Apostle James, but James a son of Joseph, if not of Mary, and a literal brother of our Lord: What is your opinion on this question?

F.—I dissent from the views to which you refer, and for the following reasons:

1. It is said of Christ’s literal brothers,—and at a late period in his public ministry, that they did not believe on him (John vii. 5). They may have become believers afterwards; but the fact that Jesus did not commit his mother to them, but to John, is evidence that, at the time of the crucifixion, they and their mother were not in full sympathy on the subject of religion. And,

2. The manner in which the James who dwelt at Jerusalem is spoken of in the Acts, and in the Epistles of Paul, shows that he *must* have been an Apostle. It was he who presided, as I just said, at the convention at Jerusalem, and pronounced the decision on the question of circumcising the Gentiles. Then when Paul went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, he says, “Other of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord’s brother.” This shows that the James whom he did see was an Apostle. At his next visit to Jerusalem, Paul saw there “James, Cephas, and John, who *seemed to be pillars*,”—a proof again that James was not only an Apostle, but a distinguished Apostle,—as much so as Peter and John. I conclude, therefore, that the James who resided at Jerusalem, and wrote the Epistle, was no other than the Apostle James. He was not a literal brother of our Lord, but a cousin, and on this account is sometimes called the Lord’s brother. Several instances occur in the Scriptures of this use of the term brother, among the Jews.

*Antiq., Book xx. Chap. 9.

XII. JOHN.

S.—We have heard something of John already. He was a Galilean, the son of Zebedee and Salome, and a younger brother of the first James, with whom he was trained to be a fisherman. He was called to be a disciple at the same time with James, and in the gospels they are usually mentioned together: How was he regarded by his Lord and Master?

F.—He seems to have been peculiarly dear to Christ. He is spoken of as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” He was not only one of the three whom our Savior admitted to the more private passages of his life, but, in some instances, a special kindness was shown him. He lay on the Savior’s breast at the paschal supper; and when Peter wished to know which of the disciples was to be the traitor, instead of asking the question himself, he beckoned to John to put it for him. John was more constant to his Master than any of the disciples at the time of his trial and crucifixion; for, though he fled from him at the first, he soon recovered himself and returned. He boldly entered the high priest’s palace; followed his Master through the several parts of his trial; and was the only Apostle, so far as we know, who stood by him through the terrible scene of his crucifixion. Here it was that his suffering Lord committed to him his blessed mother: “Woman, behold thy son; disciple, behold thy mother.” And from that hour, John took her to his own home, and made her, to the end of life, the special object of his charge and care.

S.—Where was John on the morning of the resurrection?

F.—He and Peter were the first of the Apostles to run to the empty sepulchre. He recognized his risen Lord even sooner than Peter, at the sea of Galilee. After the ascension of Christ, he was with Peter when he went up to the temple, and healed the poor cripple. They were apprehended and imprisoned together, and the next day were brought out to plead their cause before the Sanhedrim. These were the two disciples who went to Samaria to assist Philip, in the great revival which had sprung up there. It

was to Peter, James, and John,—still residing at Jerusalem, and seeming to be pillars, that Paul, many years later, addressed himself; and they, seeing the grace which God had imparted unto him, gave him the right hand of fellowship.

S.—Where did John reside, chiefly, after the ascension?

F.—He lived at Jerusalem, till the death of the Lord's mother—some fifteen to twenty years—when he migrated into Asia Minor, and exercised his ministry there. Several churches were formed by him, but his principal residence was at Ephesus. He seems not to have been molested during the Neronian persecution, in which Peter and Paul were put to death; but in the subsequent persecution, under Domitian,—which occurred about the year 96,—he was arrested, brought to Rome, and thence banished to Patmos, a desolate island in the Ægean sea. The story told by Tertullian, of his having been previously thrown into a caldron of boiling oil and coming out unharmed, is now generally discarded.

S.—What was John's experience on the isle of Patmos?

F.—It was here that he had those remarkable visions and revelations recorded in the Apocalypse.

S.—Some tell us that John was banished, not under Domitian near the close of the first century, but under Nero, some thirty years earlier: What is your opinion on this subject?

F.—That John was banished under Domitian, and not under Nero, is an important fact in the interpretation of the Apocalypse; for in the time of Domitian, Jerusalem had long been destroyed; and, consequently, none of John's predictions could have looked forward, as some pretend, to its destruction. They must portend other calamities about to fall on the enemies of the church.

That John was really banished under Domitian is proved by the almost uniform testimony of the early Christians. It is also proved from the Apocalypse itself, as has been shown by numerous commentators.

S.—Was John released from banishment and restored to the churches before his death?

F.—He was. Domitian was assassinated at Rome in the year 96, and Nerva succeeded him. He rescinded the cruel edicts of his predecessor, and recalled those from banishment whom Domitian had driven away. Taking advantage of this liberty, John left the isle of Patmos, and returned to Ephesus. Here he wrote his Gospel, which was designed to refute the errors of the times, and to supply what the other Evangelists had omitted. The Apocalypse he is supposed to have written on the island. He also left three Epistles, which are thought to have been written before his banishment.

S.—How long did John live?

F.—He lived to the time of Trajan, near the close of the first century, and was almost a hundred years old at his death. As to the manner of his death, the fathers are not agreed. Some tell us that he died a martyr; while others think that he did not die at all. He was either translated, like Enoch and Elijah, or concealed himself for a time, to be again manifested.

S.—Do the fathers relate any incidents respecting John, after his return from banishment, which are likely to be true?

F.—Yes; Eusebius relates that, before his banishment, he had committed a beloved young man to the bishop of Ephesus, with a charge to train him up for him. On his return, he found that the bishop had neglected his charge, and that the young man had become a robber in the mountains. The venerable Apostle went in pursuit of him, found him, brought him to repentance, and restored him to the church.

Irenæus tells us that, as John was going one day to the bath, he learned that the heretic Cerinthus was in the building. “Let us flee from this place,” said the aged Apostle, “lest the bath in which there is such an enemy of the truth should fall upon us, and crush us together.”

In his last days, when the venerable man could no longer preach, or even walk to the place of meeting, he used to be carried there, and would repeat from time to time, “Little children, love

one another." When asked why he always gave the same exhortation, he replied: "Such is the command of Christ; and this duty, if faithfully performed, is enough."

Thus lovingly and peacefully passed away the last of the twelve original Apostles,—a noble, venerable band of men, honored by the Savior's selection and personal instructions while he was yet with them, and left as the depositaries of his truth, and founders of the churches of the new dispensation, when he was removed to his throne in heaven.

CONVERSATION VIII.

LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.—A Jew and also a Roman citizen.—His education.—His persecution of Christians.—His conversion.—Enters immediately upon the work of the Christian ministry.—Miracles and cures performed.—Astonishment of the people.—Stoned by the mob—An important question settled.—First great controversy in the Christian church.—Peter rebuked by Paul.

Son.—There was yet another Apostle, called as it were out of due time, and commissioned to preach the gospel to the Gentiles,—I mean Paul. You will not fail to give us some account of him.

Father.—Paul was, as he tells us, “a Hebrew of the Hebrews,” and was born at Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia. Tarsus had been made by Augustus a free city, which constituted its native inhabitants citizens of Rome. This privilege Paul pleaded more than once in times of persecution, and thus escaped inflictions which otherwise he might have suffered.

S.—What was the education of Paul?

F.—He was instructed at Tarsus in Grecian and classic learning. Like every other Jew, he had a mechanical trade. He was a *tent-maker*, and often followed his trade, and by it supplied his own personal wants, during his Apostolical ministry. Having passed through the prescribed courses of learning at Tarsus, Paul was sent by his parents to Jerusalem, and placed under the instruction of Gamaliel, to be perfected in the study of the Jewish law. He early attached himself to the Pharisees—the strictest and most illiberal of the Jewish sects. He was regarded by them as a youth of great promise, and seemed fairly entitled to the highest honors which his nation had it in their power to bestow.

S.—We have heard already of Paul’s persecutions at Jerusalem, of his bloody commission to Damascus, of his miraculous conversion by the way, and of his becoming a professed follower of Christ. Is it likely that Paul was conscientious in his early persecutions?

F.—I suppose that he was, in a loose sense of the term, consci-

entious. He was as conscientious as persecutors generally are,—perhaps more so. He “verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” But it does not follow from this that he was justified in persecuting the church. He certainly did not think so himself afterwards. A warped, misguided, prejudiced conscience is one of the most dangerous guides which a man can follow.

S.—After Paul had been baptized, what did he assay to do?

F.—He began to preach the gospel in the synagogues at Damascus, alleging and proving that the same Jesus, whom he had so lately persecuted, was the Christ of God. Amazed and confounded at the change which had taken place in him, and not being able to refute his words, the Jews at Damascus sought to destroy him. But he, being aware of their design, left the city, and retired into the northern part of Arabia, where he remained almost three years (Gal. i. 12).

S.—How did Paul pass his time during this long retirement in Arabia?

F.—We do not know. Doubtless, a considerable portion of it was spent in meditation and devotion, in communion with Christ, and receiving revelations from him. It was during this period, that he was caught up into the third heavens—into “the Paradise of God, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor. xii. 4). It was during this period that he was supernaturally instructed in regard to the truths and facts of the gospel, which, he tells us expressly he “did not receive from man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

S.—On his return from Arabia, where did Paul go?

F.—He returned to Damascus, and commenced anew his appropriate work of preaching, in the synagogues and other public places, the gospel of Christ. But instead of receiving his testimony, the Jews again sought his life; and the more surely to effect their purpose, they complained of him to the governor, who placed a guard at the gates of the city to prevent all possibility

of escape. Nevertheless, he did escape; for, watching their opportunity, his friends let him down through a window, in a basket, by the wall, and thus effected his deliverance (1 Cor. xi. 32).

S.—Where did Paul now go?

F.—He went to Jerusalem,—the first time that he had been there since his conversion. But when he assayed to join himself to the disciples, many were afraid of him; they did not believe he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them the fact of his conversion, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of the Lord Jesus. After this, he was received joyfully by the whole church, and began to preach Christ in the synagogues, laboring more especially among the foreign Jews. But instead of being convinced, they were enraged, and sought to kill him. He had a revelation, also, from his Lord and Master, warning him to depart quickly out of Jerusalem, and directing him to go and preach to the Gentiles. Accordingly, being assisted by the brethren, Paul departed, first to Cæsarea, and afterwards to Tarsus.

S.—Where do we next find the new Apostle?

F.—It was while Paul was stopping at Tarsus, his native city, that Barnabas came for him to go and preach at Antioch,—where he remained a full year. This must have been a delightful year to Paul. He was associated with a choice company of ministers, whose names are given in Acts xiii. 1. Through their instrumentality, the work of the Lord prospered greatly, and a large and flourishing church was established.

S.—This was a year of famine in some parts of the East, and the disciples at Antioch resolved to send relief to their brethren at Jerusalem: By whom did they send it?

F.—By the hands of Barnabas and Paul. This was Paul's second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion.

S.—Soon after their return from Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas had a call of a different kind: What was it?

F.—They were called of the Holy Ghost to go on their first

mission to the heathen. So, when their brethren at Antioch had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands upon them, they sent them away.

S.—Where did they go?

F.—Going down to Seleucia, the port of Antioch, they sailed over to Cyprus, which was the home of Barnabas. They first visited Salamis, a large city in the south-eastern part of the island, preaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath, and visiting from house to house. Thence crossing to the western side of the island, they came to Paphos, which was the residence of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of the country. And here they found a sorcerer, Elymas by name, who was with the proconsul, and exerted an unfavorable influence upon him. Nevertheless, the proconsul sent for Barnabas and Paul, and desired to hear from them the word of God; but Elymas withstood them, hoping to turn away the proconsul from the faith. Whereupon Paul, fixing his eyes upon him, said: “O full of all subtlety and mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” And immediately the sorcerer was smitten with blindness, and groped about, seeking some one to lead him by the hand. This miracle had a great effect upon the mind of the proconsul. He became a believer at once, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

S.—Leaving Cyprus, our missionaries now sailed over to Perga, the chief city of Pamphylia: What occurred here, and afterwards?

F.—Here Mark left them to return to Jerusalem, and Titus, a converted Greek, took his place. From Perga they traveled in a northerly direction some seventy or eighty miles, until they came to Antioch in Pisidia. Here they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and Paul preached a long discourse, affirming some of the principal facts of the gospel history, proving incontestably the messiahship of Jesus, and solemnly warning his Jewish brethren of the danger of rejecting him: “Beware, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets! Behold, ye despisers, and wonder,

and perish ; for I work a work in your day which ye shall in no wise believe, though one declare it unto you" (Acts xiii. 40). This sermon produced a great effect. Many Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who exhorted them to continue in the grace of God. Great numbers of the Gentiles, also, requested that the same word might be preached unto them ; and the next Sabbath, almost the whole city came together to hear the gospel. But when the Jews saw the interest which was excited, they were filled with envy, raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them away. So they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and, journeying some thirty miles in a south-easterly direction, came to Iconium.

S.—How did they commence their labors at Iconium ?

F.—Just as they did at Antioch, and in other places. They went first into the synagogue, and so spake that a great multitude of the Jews and proselytes believed. They abode here many days, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord, and signs and miracles were wrought by their hands. But at length the people became divided respecting them, and a conspiracy was formed to assault and stone them. Aware of this, they took warning and fled ; and going still further in a south-easterly direction, they came to Derbe and Lystra, cities of Lycaonia.

S.—What remarkable occurrences took place at Lystra ?

F.—Paul healed a lame man who had never walked, which so astonished the people, that they declared the strangers to be gods in the likeness of men, and were about to worship them. But Paul and Barnabas forbade them, saying, "Why do ye these things? We are not gods, but men of like passions with yourselves, and preach unto you that ye should turn from all these vanities unto the living God, who made the heavens and the earth." This gust of popular favor at Lystra soon passed away ; for certain Jews from Iconium and Antioch came down there, and so excited the people against the missionaries that they stoned Paul, and drew him out of the city as one dead, but he soon revived, and the next day they

departed unto Derbe. Here also they preached the gospel, and instructed many.

S.—On leaving Derbe, what course did the missionaries pursue?

F.—They turned back through Lystra and Iconium unto Antioch in Pisidia, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue steadfast in the faith. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and prayed and fasted with them, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed. From Antioch in Pisidia, the missionaries returned to Perga, where they first landed when they came from Cyprus; and soon after they sailed to Antioch in Syria—to the great church which had sent them forth on this mission of mercy. And when they had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them and by them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles; and here they tarried with their burden and labored for a considerable time.

S.—What controversy arose at Antioch during this interval?

F.—That respecting the circumcision of converted Gentiles. Certain Jewish believers came down from Jerusalem, and insisted that the Gentile converts must all of them be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, or they could not be saved. This demand Paul and Barnabas strenuously resisted; but as there seemed to be no prospect of settling the question there, it was determined that Paul and Barnabas, with Titus and certain other brethren, should go up to Jerusalem, and lay the case before the Apostles and the elders of that mother church. This was Paul's third journey to Jerusalem after his conversion; in accomplishing which he and his brethren passed down the Mediterranean as far as Tyre, thence across the country to Samaria, and thence to the holy city; declaring wherever they went the conversion of the Gentiles, which gave great joy to all the brethren. Arrived at Jerusalem, they gathered the Apostles and elders and the whole church together, and submitted the very important question with which they were charged. After much discussion, in which Peter and James largely participated, it was

decided *not* to enforce the yoke of circumcision and the Jewish law upon the Gentile converts; and a letter was prepared and sent to Antioch, announcing this decision.

S.—Did this decision end the controversy?

F.—It did not. The Judaizing teachers continued to agitate. They persisted in their demands, and were indefatigable in urging them. They followed Paul in his future labors, and were resolved to give him no peace.

S.—This was the first great controversy in the Christian church. Was the subject of it of much importance?

F.—Yes; it related not to the practice of circumcision as a mere ceremony, but to the enforcing of it as *essential to salvation*. This Paul could not admit; and we can never be sufficiently thankful to the great Apostle of the Gentiles for the stand which he took on this occasion.

S.—What other important object did Paul accomplish by this visit to Jerusalem?

F.—He had more intercourse with the original Apostles,—with Peter, James, and John, than he had had before. He compared notes with them, and found that he preached the same gospel as they: “In conference, they added nothing to me” (Gal. ii. 6). “And when they perceived the grace which was given unto me, they gave to me and to Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.”

S.—Their mission to Jerusalem being accomplished, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch: Whom did they bring with them?

F.—Judas and Silas, otherwise called Silvanus. They took also with them the decision of the church at Jerusalem, which gave great satisfaction to the Gentile brethren.

S.—Not long after this, Peter came to Antioch; and what did he do?

F.—Falling in with some of the zealous Judaizers, he separated himself from the Gentile converts, and refused to eat with them. And so great was his influence, that even Barnabas was led into the same inconsistency. Again, then, are we indebted to the firmness

of Paul, for withstanding the threatening evil. He calmly but firmly rebuked Peter and the other dissemblers, and maintained the position which had been taken at Jerusalem.

S.—To what conclusion did Paul and Barnabas come, shortly after this ?

F.—They resolved to visit the churches which they had planted among the Gentiles, and look after their state. Barnabas wished to take Mark with them again ; but Paul would not consent to it, since Mark deserted them on their former mission, and went not with them to the work. On this ground, the two friends now separated : Barnabas took Mark, and sailed over to Cyprus ; but Paul took Silas, a brother who had recently come with them from Jerusalem, and entered on his second and far more important mission to the heathen.

S.—What countries did they first visit ?

F.—They went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches, and delivering unto them copies of the late decision at Jerusalem. At Lystra, Paul found Timothy, a young brother in Christ, whose mother was a Jewish convert, but whose father was a Greek. Him Paul invited to accompany him on his mission ; and that he might encounter less prejudice among the Jews, he first circumcised him. From Lystra, they passed through Phrygia and Galatia, where Paul met with great acceptance, and established many churches. From Galatia, Paul intended to pass into Asia Minor, and there preach the gospel, but he was directed by the Spirit to cross the Ægean into Macedonia. So sailing from Troas, he came to Philippi, one of the chief cities of Macedonia, and a colony. This was Paul's first entrance into Europe. At Philippi, he baptized Lydia and the jailer with their households, and established a flourishing church. But being persecuted without cause, he departed from Philippi and came to Thessalonica, another large city in Macedonia. Here Paul went into the synagogue, and for three successive Sabbaths, reasoned with the Jews out of their own Scriptures, opening and alleging "that Christ must suffer, and rise from the dead, and that Jesus

of Nazareth is the Christ." And many, both Jews and Gentiles, believed, and the materials of a church were soon gathered. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the people, set the city in an uproar, and constrained the missionaries to depart.

They next went to Berea, a neighboring city, and commenced preaching the gospel there. And the Berean Jews were more liberal than those of Thessalonica; for they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so. The consequence was, that many were converted, both Jews and Greeks. But when the Thessalonian Jews heard that the Bereans had embraced the truth, they came down there, and created a tumult, and made it necessary for Paul to depart. So, leaving Silas and Timothy at Berea, he went on to Athens, the great seat and center of Grecian art and wisdom.

S.—How did Paul busy himself at Athens?

F.—He took a survey of the city, preached in the synagogue, and conversed with the philosophers; and as he was found to hold some novel opinions, they took him to the Areopagus,—an Athenian court designed to look into such matters. And here he delivered his celebrated speech on Mars Hill—one of the finest specimens of popular oratory to be found in all antiquity. His success in Athens, however, was small. These proud philosophers were not in a mood to receive instruction from a traveling Jew. A few only adhered to him, among whom were Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a noble lady named Damaris.

S.—Where do we next find Paul and his companions?

F.—Leaving Athens, Paul went to Corinth, the metropolis of Greece proper, and the residence of the proconsul of Achaia. Here he found Priscilla and Aquila, lately come from Italy, because that Claudius Cæsar had banished all the Jews from Rome. With them Paul resided, and wrought with them in the business of tent-making. He assembled with the Jews every Sabbath in the synagogue, and testified to them that Jesus is the Christ. And though some few of them received his testimony,

the multitude rejected it, opposing and blaspheming the doctrine of the Lord. Wherefore Paul shook his raiment, forsook the synagogue, and commenced preaching to the Gentiles. At the same time, he was encouraged by a vision of Christ, who said to him: "Be not afraid; hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." So Paul continued at Corinth a year and six months, teaching and publishing the word of the Lord. In this time, a large church was established, which continued to flourish for a long period. The Jews endeavored to excite against him the displeasure of Gallio, the proconsul; but Gallio would not listen to them, and the work of the Lord continued to prosper.

After leaving Corinth, Paul sailed into Asia, that he might be present at the coming Passover in Jerusalem. This was his fourth visit to the holy city, after his conversion; and here we leave his history for the present, to be resumed in our next conversation.

CONVERSATION IX.

LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL CONTINUED.—Riot of the silver-smiths. — Their business of idol-making in danger.—Farewell to Ephesus.—Return to Jerusalem.— Visit to the house of James.—Paul's artifice and the evil results.—Rescued from danger by Roman soldiers.—Paul before Felix and Agrippa.—A noble speech.—Shipwreck.— Paul at Rome.—His death.

Son.—In our last conversation, we followed Paul through his second long and perilous missionary tour, in which he not only visited the churches before planted by him, but passed over into Macedonia and Greece. On his return to Asia, he landed at Cæsarea, in Palestine, and hastened forward to Jerusalem, to be present at the Passover. Did he spend much time at Jerusalem on this visit?

Father.—He did not; for we soon find him at Antioch in Syria, and among the churches he had before planted in Phrygia and Galatia. From there,—in fulfillment of a promise previously made,—he went to Ephesus. And here he found disciples, who seem not to have heard of the coming of Christ, or the descent of the Holy Ghost, knowing only the doctrine and baptism of John. These Paul took under his special charge, instructed them, baptized them, laid his hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost in his miraculous influences.

S.—How did Paul conduct his labors at Ephesus, and how long was he there?

F.—In his public labors at Ephesus, Paul pursued his usual course. He went into the synagogue every Sabbath for three months, endeavoring to convince and persuade the Jews; but the most of them becoming hardened and obstinate, he departed from them, and went to the Gentiles. He taught two full years in the school-room of one Tyrannus; so that all those of lesser Asia heard the word of the Lord. And not only did he teach, but he wrought the most astounding miracles; for if only a handkerchief from his hand were carried to a sick person, or to one possessed with a devil, immediately he was healed.

There was a great revival of religion at Ephesus. Many believed on the Lord Jesus, and made an open confession of their sins; and many of those who used magical arts, brought their books together and burned them. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. But the devil could not be easy to see his kingdom thus rudely assailed. So he stirred up the silver-smiths which made shrines for Diana, insisting that the new religion would ruin their business. And they got up a mob and an uproar, from which Paul and his companions thought it prudent to retire.

S.—On leaving Ephesus, where did Paul and his assistants go?

F.—They crossed over the sea to Macedonia, leaving Timothy behind to attend to some matters which, in the hurry of their departure, they had not time to finish.

S.—How was Paul employed while in Macedonia?

F.—He not only visited the cities where he had before preached, but he went beyond them, even unto the borders of Illyricum and Thraee (Rom. xv. 19).

S.—From Macedonia where did Paul go?

F.—He visited Corinth, and abode there three months. He was now urging forward his collections for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

S.—Having finished his collections, and got in readiness to leave for the holy city, what course did Paul take?

F.—It had been his intention to pass directly over from Corinth into Syria; but when he learned that the Jews were lying in wait for him,—perhaps to rob him of his money,—he resolved to turn back through Macedonia.

S.—Who accompanied the Apostle in these journeyings?

F.—He was attended by several young men, who waited upon him, executed his orders, and aided him in the work of the ministry. They were, in most instances, his pupils and evangelists, whom he was training for usefulness in the church, when his own labors should cease. Among those who were with him at this

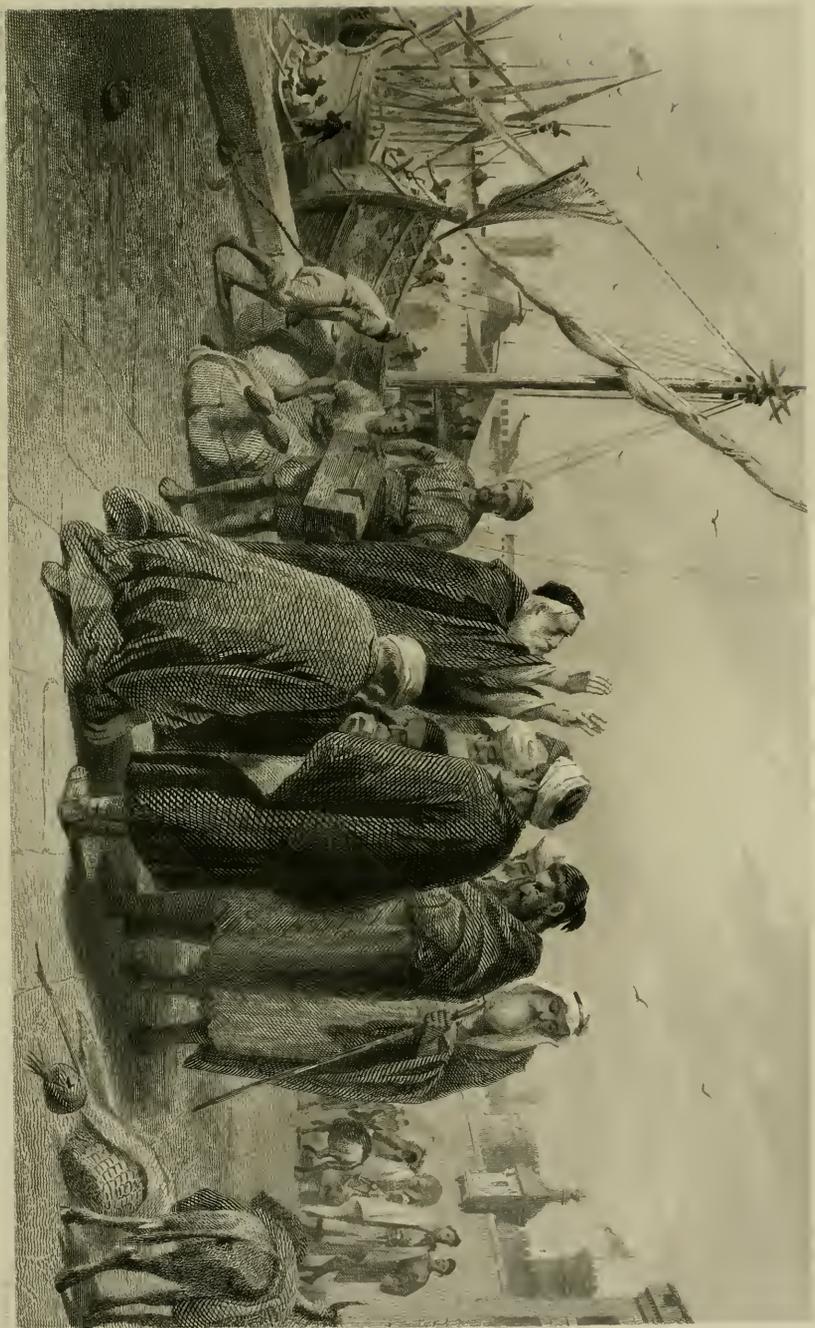
time, were Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timotheus, Trophimus, Tychicus, and Luke, the beloved physician.

S.—On leaving Macedonia, where did Paul and his company go?

F.—They sailed over to Troas, making the voyage in five days. At Troas they tarried seven days. It was here that Paul preached until midnight, when a young man in his sleep fell from the third loft, and was taken up for dead. He was not dead, however, but was presently restored through the instrumentality of Paul. The next day, Paul and his companions sailed down the coast and came to Miletus. Not having time to stop at Ephesus, Paul sent for the elders of the Ephesian church to meet him at Miletus. They did so; and it was here that he delivered to them that touching farewell address and charge, which is recorded in the twentieth chapter of the Acts. Leaving Miletus, Paul came to Tyre, and thence to Cæsarea in Palestine, where they lodged in the house of Philip the evangelist, who was originally one of the seven deacons. Philip had four daughters endowed with the gift of prophecy, who warned Paul of the danger of going to Jerusalem. But he would not be dissuaded. To him the point of duty was clear, and his resolution was fixed. So he went forward to the holy city, and was kindly received by brethren there. Indeed, he ought to be kindly received; for this was his second visit to Jerusalem, bringing presents from the Gentile churches for the relief of the poor.

S.—On coming to Jerusalem, whom did Paul first visit?

F.—He went to the house of James, where he found the elders of the church assembled. He gave them an account of his missionary labors and successes, in which they were greatly interested. But the question at once arose, “How is Paul to be disposed of here at Jerusalem? How are we to satisfy the thousands of Jewish believers, who are all zealous of the law, that he is not, as he is charged, a disorderly walker, and a despiser of the institutions of Moses?” To meet this difficulty, the following expedient was proposed: “We have four men which have a vow



PAUL'S FAREWELL AT MILETUS.

upon them; purify thyself with them, and be at charges, and shave thy beard, that all may know that the things reported of thee are false, but that thou walkest orderly, and keepest the law." To this proposition Paul consented. He purified himself with the men under a vow, and entered into the temple with them to accomplish the seven days of purification, that an offering might be made for each of them.

S.—Did Paul do right in this instance?

F.—With all due deference, I must be allowed to say, that I think the Apostle, for once, mistook the line of duty. Instead of keeping about his business, and putting his trust in God, he descended, at the suggestion of others, to what looks like a specious artifice, a trick, with a view to satisfy the Jews that he was a more strict observer of the law than he really was. And soon the event proved that this very artifice, which was resorted to, to save him from trouble, was the means of plunging him into it. For, when the days of his purification were almost ended, certain Jews from Asia Minor, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel help! This is the man who preaches everywhere against this holy place and the law." And the whole city was moved, and the people ran together. They dragged Paul out of the temple, fell to beating him, and would have killed him, had he not been rescued by the chief captain of the temple—a Roman Military officer—and his soldiers. The chief captain took Paul, bound him, and was in the act of carrying him into the castle Antonia, which stood near the temple; but when he came upon the stairs, Paul asked and obtained permission to address the people. And here he delivered to the excited multitude, in the Hebrew tongue, one of his most eloquent and powerful speeches, recorded in the twenty-second chapter of Acts. He spoke of his birth, of his education at the feet of Gamaliel, of his zeal in persecuting the church, of his sudden and surprising conversion, and of the commission he had received to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. They heard him

patiently till he came to this point—the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles—when they broke out upon him with great violence, crying, “Away with this fellow from the earth; for it is not meet that he should live!”

S.—What did the chief captain do in this emergency?

F.—He took Paul into the castle, and was about to examine him by scourging; but Paul pleaded his Roman citizenship, and so escaped the infliction. The next day, the chief captain brought Paul before the Jewish rulers, that he might know what were their charges against him; but the assembly broke up in confusion, without coming to any decision. The next night, Paul was favored with a vision of his ascended Lord, who stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me at Jerusalem, so thou must bear witness at Rome.”

When the captain of the temple learned the next morning that the Jews were lying in wait for Paul, and that more than forty of them had bound themselves, with an oath, not to eat or drink till they had killed him, he resolved, at once, that he would send him away, under a strong military guard, to Felix, the Roman governor, who dwelt at Cæsarea. And all this was successfully accomplished. Paul was safely lodged in Herod’s judgment hall at Cæsarea, waiting for his accusers to come and implead him.

S.—Did they come?

F.—Yes; and Paul boldly confronted them, and refuted their false, and malicious charges. Here he preached so pointedly to Felix of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come, that the governor trembled. Still, Paul was not released. He was retained a prisoner in the expectation that he would ere long consent to purchase his liberty with a bribe.

S.—How long was Paul a prisoner here?

F.—Two years and more. At the end of two years, Felix was displaced by Nero, and Pontius Festus was made governor in his room. To him the Jewish rulers made an earnest appeal, entreating that Paul might be sent back to Jerusalem, to be tried accord-

ing to the Jewish law. When the governor laid this proposition before Paul, he firmly replied: "I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. I have done nothing against the Jews worthy of death or of bonds; and I will not be delivered into their hands. *I appeal unto Cæsar.* Then Festus answered, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? Unto Cæsar shalt thou go."

S.—Before whom did Paul next plead his cause?

F.—Before King Agrippa, who had come down to Cæsarea to salute Festus. Festus brought before him the case of Paul, and the king expressed a desire to hear him. So Paul was brought before the king, the governor, and all the nobility of the province, and there made a speech—an apology for himself. This speech is given entire in the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts, and has been justly regarded as one of the finest specimens of popular eloquence. The result was, that King Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian; and all were agreed that Paul might be set at liberty, had he not appealed unto Cæsar.

S.—We come now to Paul's voyage into Italy: Please state some of the leading incidents of it.

F.—He was accompanied by Luke and other Christian friends; also by other prisoners. The prisoners, among whom was Paul, were entrusted to the charge of a centurion whose name was Justus. They embarked early in September, and, sailing northerly, touched at Sidon, where Paul was permitted to go ashore, and visit his friends. Thence they passed by the eastern end of Cyprus, not far from Antioch in Syria; then turning their course westward, they sailed along the borders of Cilicia and Pamphylia to Myra, a city of Lycia. Here they were put aboard of another vessel; and, coasting along the shores of Asia, they came as far as Cnidus, opposite the island of Rhodes. A contrary wind now arose, which drove them, in a south-westerly direction, upon the isle of Crete. They touched at Fairhaven, on the eastern shore of Crete, and Paul advised them to winter there; but, as the harbor was not commodious, it was resolved to sail a hundred miles further, to Phenice,

on the south-western shore of the island. But no sooner had they embarked, than they encountered a tempestuous wind which rendered the ship wholly unmanageable; and so they were tossed about, without sun or stars, not knowing which way they were drifting, for a long time. After about fourteen days, they were wrecked on the island of Melita, now Malta, having been driven, in a westerly direction, across the entire Adriatic sea.

S.—How long were the ship's company detained at Malta?

F.—About three months, in which time Paul healed many that were sick, and did all in his power to inculcate and commend the gospel. They at length embarked in a ship of Alexandria; and having touched at Syracuse, and then at Rhegium, they left the ship at Puteoli, where they tarried with Christian brethren seven days. Thence they pursued their journey by land, and were met and cordially greeted by brethren from Rome, some fifty miles from the city. Cheered and encouraged by these tokens of regard, Paul and his company were conducted in a kind of triumph into the city. The prisoners were delivered by the centurion to the captain of the guard; but instead of being lodged, with the rest, in the common prison, Paul was permitted to live in his own hired house. He was, to be sure, encumbered with a chain, but he had a degree of liberty, and received all who came unto him.

S.—How was Paul occupied during his long imprisonment at Rome?

F.—The first thing he did was to call the chief men of the Jews together, acquaint them with the cause of his being sent there a prisoner, and assured them that he had no charge to prefer against his nation. As they expressed a wish to hear him concerning the faith in Christ, he appointed them a day, when they came in great numbers to his lodgings; and he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures from morning till night. Some listened to him and believed the things that were spoken, while others rejected them.

S.—How was Paul occupied during his imprisonment?

F.—While a prisoner at Rome, Paul wrote several of his Epistles

to individuals and to the churches. We might never have had these excellent Epistles but for his long confinement. He continued to teach and preach the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, laboring as best he could with the incumbrance of a chain. Many were converted through his instrumentality, among whom were some of Cæsar's household.

The Christians at Philippi, hearing of Paul's imprisonment, and fearing that he might be in want, got up a contribution for him, and sent it by Epaphroditus, one of their ministers. Epaphroditus fell sick at Rome; but after his recovery, he returned to his charge, carrying with him the Epistle to the Philippians.

S.—By what means did the Apostle obtain his liberty?

F.—We are not informed. It may have been through the intercession of some of Cæsar's household who had been converted through his means.

S.—Do we know what course Paul pursued, and where he labored, after his enlargement?

F.—Not certainly. My own opinion is, that he first traveled eastward, visiting many of the churches in Macedonia, Greece, Asia Minor, and Syria. He may have carried out his expressed design of visiting Palestine (Heb. xiii. 23). It was during this tour, that he left his cloak and his parchments at Troas (2 Tim. iv. 13). This was also the time of his mission to Crete, where he left Titus to organize and regulate the churches after his departure. Returning from the East, Paul may have accomplished his long cherished purpose of visiting Spain and Gaul. We have no notice of this in the Scriptures, but it accords well with the enterprising spirit of the Apostle, and also with the testimony of the Roman Clement, a companion of Paul, who perfectly knew his personal history. He tells us that Paul did publish the gospel "to the uttermost regions of the west."

S.—Was Paul imprisoned a second time?

F.—He was. He returned to Rome about the year 64, when the Neronian persecution was about to commence. He was imprisoned

soon after, but not as before. He was placed in close confinement—so close that good Onesiphorus was under the necessity of searching diligently for him in order to find him (2 Tim. i. 17).

S.—During this terrible confinement, did Paul's brethren at Rome stand by him and encourage him?

F.—I fear not. It was a time of dreadful persecution, and his more timid brethren were concealed. "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (2 Tim. ix. 10).

S.—Was Peter at this time at Rome?

F.—The Scriptures give no intimation of it. The tradition is that he *was* there, and that the two Apostles suffered martyrdom together. Peter was crucified, but Paul, on account of his being a Roman citizen, was not exposed upon the cross: He was beheaded. He is said to have been buried about two miles from the city, and over his grave a splendid church was raised by Constantine, about the year 318.

S.—What accounts have come down to us as to the personal appearance of Paul?

F.—The ancients represent him as a man of small stature, and somewhat stooping; his complexion was fair, his eyes bright and intelligent, his nose aquiline, his brows thick and shaggy, and his hair and beard, during the latter part of his life, sprinkled with gray. His age cannot be certainly ascertained. He must have been more than sixty at his death, having been born only a few months later than Christ.

S.—What have you to say as to the character of Paul?

F.—We can judge of his character only by his writings and works. That he had a vigorous intellect, well sharpened by early training and culture, no one can doubt. His emotional nature was impulsive, strong, and deeply sanctified. He had a great and a good heart. Though, for the gospel's sake, he would not suffer his apostolical claims to be called in question, he was a truly *humble* man. He spoke the feelings of his heart when he said, "I

am the least of the Apostles, and am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

His kindness and charity were admirable, even towards those who were his personal enemies. “I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for my brethren, my kinsfolk, according to the flesh.”

The zeal and enterprise of the Apostle, his activity in publishing the gospel and gathering sinners into the fold of Christ, were unparalleled. By night and by day, on the land and on the deep, he was instant in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking, exhorting every man, that he might present them faultless before the judgment seat. For more than thirty years after his conversion, he was seldom long in one place. From Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, and then to Rome, and “to the utmost boundaries of the west,” he fully preached the gospel of Christ; “running,” says Jerome, “like the sun in the heavens; sooner wanting ground to tread upon, than a desire to propagate the faith of Christ.” While the other Apostles were laborious men, Paul says truly, though not boastfully: “I labored more abundantly than they all.”

S.—And what shall be said of his *patience* and *fortitude* in meeting and overcoming trials?

F.—He was an eminent example of these cardinal graces. His perils and sufferings were perpetual. A thousand times his life was at stake. Everywhere he manifested that he counted not his life dear unto himself, that he might accomplish the ministry he had received, and finish his course with joy.

Though Paul has long been dead, his influence can never die. It still lives in his example, his writings and his works, and will continue to live on earth, and in heavenly places forever. Of all the mere men that have ever dwelt upon the earth, to no two is the world so much indebted as to Moses and Paul. Nor can we ever sufficiently admire the providence and grace of God, in

making a thorough-bred and bigoted Jew the principal means of deliverance from Jewish rites ; and making the earliest and most violent persecutor of Christianity such an eminent instrument in spreading Christianity throughout the earth.

CONVERSATION X.

COMPANIONS OF THE APOSTLES.—Mark.—His connection with the Apostles.—Manner of his cruel death.—Luke.—The beloved physician.—His association with Paul.—Barnabas.—Born in Cyprus.—His early acquaintance with Paul.—Their separation.—Timothy.—Early piety.—Paul his teacher in Christianity.—Accompanies him.—Titus.—Another of Paul's Evangelists.—Supposed to have been bishop of Crete.

Son.—Who were the companions of the Apostles?

Father.—The companions of the Apostles were that corps of evangelists who generally attended them, and labored under their direction. Prominent among them were Mark, Luke, Barnabas, Timothy, and Titus.

I. MARK.

S.—Were there not two men among the Evangelists by the name of Mark?

F.—There were two. The first was a relative and assistant of the Apostle Peter; the second was John Mark, a sister's son of Barnabas. Eusebius tells us that the first Mark was early sent by Peter into Egypt, and there planted the great church of Alexandria. He was instrumental in leading many in that city to embrace the Christian faith. When Peter came, or was carried to Rome, near the close of life, Mark is supposed to have been with him, and there,—at the request of the Roman church, and under the direction of Peter,—to have written his gospel. It is virtually Peter's gospel—the account of our Lord's life, labors, sufferings, and death, which Peter was accustomed to relate in his discourses,—although it bears the name of Mark.

S.—After the martyrdom of Peter, what became of Mark?

F.—He is supposed to have returned to Alexandria, where he was greatly instrumental in guiding and building up the church which he had before planted. And here he, at length, obtained the crown of martyrdom. The idolaters of the city broke in upon him, while engaged in the solemnities of Divine worship, bound his feet with chords, and dragged him through the streets

of the city, until his flesh was literally torn from his body, and he expired. This is supposed to have taken place about the year 70.

S.—What can you tell us of John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas?

F.—His home was at Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Mary. It was at her house that the disciples were assembled when Peter, having been rescued from prison by an angel, came and knocked at the door for admittance (Acts xii. 12). When Paul and Barnabas set forth on their first mission to the heathen, they took Mark with them as an assistant; but when they reached Perga in Pamphylia, he became discouraged and turned back to Jerusalem. When they were about to enter upon their second mission, Barnabas was minded to try Mark again; but "Paul thought it not good to take him with them, who departed from them in Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." It was on this account that the two missionaries separated, Paul taking Silas and going one way, and Barnabas and Mark another.

S.—At a later period, did not Paul think better of John Mark?

F.—Yes; he seems to have recovered the good opinion of Paul; for he mentions him to the Colossians as "a fellow worker unto the kingdom of Christ, who has been a comfort unto me;" and in his last letter to Timothy, Paul says, "Take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (Col. iv. 11, 2 Tim. iv. 11). We hear nothing further of John Mark in the New Testament, but may hope, from the favorable mention of him by Paul, that he proved a faithful minister of Christ, and finished his course with joy.

II. LUKE.

S.—Of Luke's history, how much can you give us?

F.—Luke is supposed to have been a proselyte of Antioch, and to have been converted to Christ under the searching ministry of Barnabas and Paul. That he was an adept in Grecian learning, as well as a "beloved physician," his works declare. He became

a companion and follower of Paul during his second mission to the heathen. From this period, he seems to have generally attended the Apostle almost to the close of his earthly labors. Paul gratefully acknowledges him as his "fellow-laborer"—as "the brother whose praise is in all the churches." He frequently mentions him in his Epistles, and uniformly speaks of him with affection and confidence.

S.—When did Luke write his gospel?

F.—It is impossible to say when. He had had abundant opportunities for information from those who, "from the beginning, were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," and "had a perfect understanding of all things from the very first;" add to this, he wrote under the inspection of Paul, and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Both his Gospel, and the Acts, Luke addresses "to the most excellent Theophilus," who was probably some distinguished Christian brother and patron at Antioch.

S.—In the Acts of the Apostles, how far is the history of the church continued?

F.—To the close of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. Why the writer did not pursue the narrative further, I am unable to say. I should conclude that he died about that time, but that we find him still associated with Paul, when the second Epistle to Timothy was written, which was during Paul's second imprisonment, and a little while before his death. Whether Luke survived Paul, and if so, where he labored afterwards, we have no means of knowing. We know that he was a learned and faithful man, and a devoted Christian, whose writings will be read and pondered, and whose memory will be honored, to the end of time.

III. BARNABAS.

S.—How much do we know of Barnabas?

F.—Though he has left us no writings which are of Divine authority, he was an honored minister and missionary of the Apostolic age. He was a Levite, born and brought up in Cyprus, a

large island in the north-easterly part of the Mediterranean sea. We first hear of him at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, or a little later. He was then a decided self-sacrificing believer, who sold his property for the common weal, brought out the proceeds, and laid them at the disciples' feet.

S.—For what is Barnabas chiefly celebrated?

F.—For his early and intimate acquaintance with the Apostle Paul. They may have been students together at the feet of Gamaliel, before either of them was converted. Upon Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, when the disciples generally were afraid of him, Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles, and satisfied them as to the reality of his change. When news of the great revival at Antioch reached Jerusalem, the Apostles sent forth Barnabas that he should go and labor there; but finding the work beyond his strength, he went to Tarsus to secure the assistance of Paul. When they had labored together a whole year at Antioch, they were summoned to go forth on their first mission to the heathen. This being accomplished, they returned to Antioch, and reported to their brethren all that God had done to them and by them.

S.—What important question came up during their stay at Antioch?

F.—That respecting the circumcision of the Gentile converts. Being unable to settle this question among themselves, Paul and Barnabas went up with it to the Apostles and elders, and the church at Jerusalem. The decision of the Apostles was against the circumcision of the Gentile converts.

S.—On what account did Barnabas separate from Paul?

F.—On their return from the conference at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas projected another mission to the heathen; but as they could not agree in regard to the person to be taken with them as an assistant, they separated one from the other; and we hear little of Barnabas in sacred story afterwards. We know that "he was a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and that he wore

out his life in the service of the gospel; but where he labored, and when and how he died, we cannot tell. There is extant an Epistle bearing his name; but, though a very ancient writing, I could never persuade myself that Barnabas wrote it. It is addressed chiefly to Jews, with the design of drawing them off from the letter of the law to a more spiritual understanding of it. It is full of allegorical interpretations, and is unworthy of the name of Barnabas.

IV. TIMOTHY.

S.—When do we first hear of Timothy?

F.—It was at Derbe or Lystra, during Paul's second missionary tour in Asia. He was probably converted at the time of Paul's first visit. His father was a Gentile; but his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice were of Jewish descent, and both had been converted to the faith of the gospel. They had taken much pains in the education of Timothy who, "from a child, had known the holy Scriptures." When Paul came to Lystra the second time, he was struck with the attainments and gifts of young Timothy; and, hearing him well reported of by all the brethren, he resolved to take him with him as a helper in the missionary work. And the better to prepare him for such an undertaking, he circumcised him; not that he laid any stress upon this Jewish rite, but that Timothy might labor with less prejudice among the Jews. He was subsequently ordained to the work of the ministry, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. From this time, we find him almost continually with Paul, or laboring under his direction. The Apostle calls him his own son, his brother, his yoke-fellow; and declares that he has no one so much united with him in mind and heart as Timothy.

S.—Can you mention more particularly Timothy's labors and travels, in connection with Paul?

F.—Timothy accompanied the Apostle on his first visit to Macedonia—to Philippi, to Thessalonica, and to Berea; and when Paul departed from Berea to go into Greece, he left Silas and Timothy behind, to strengthen and establish the new converts. At Athens,

Paul sent for them to come to him; and when they had come, and had given him an account of the distressed condition of the churches in Macedonia, Paul sent Timothy back to them; whence he afterwards returned, and came to Paul at Corinth (1 Thess. iii. 2). Here he remained with the Apostles more than a year; and Paul mentions both him and Silas in the inscriptions of the two Epistles which he sent from Corinth to the Thessalonians.

When Paul left Corinth, he came back into Asia, and hurried forward to Jerusalem, that he might be present at the Passover. From Jerusalem, he came back to Antioch, and thence to Ephesus, where he remained more than two years. From Ephesus Paul was at length driven by a mob, got up by the silversmiths; and leaving Timothy behind him, he passed over into Macedonia. It was at this time that he wrote his first Epistle to Timothy. Timothy soon followed his great leader into Macedonia; for in the inscription to the second Epistle to the Corinthians, written at this time, we find his name associated with that of Paul. In company with Timothy, Paul now visited Corinth, taking up contributions for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Paul was now projecting a journey to Jerusalem, taking with him the money which he had collected. He went back through Macedon, sailed over to Troas, and touched at Miletus, where he sent for the elders of the Ephesian church, and delivered unto them his parting words. Thence he went forward, by easy stages, to Jerusalem,—whence he was sent a prisoner to Cæsarea, and afterwards to Rome.

S.—Is it likely that Timothy accompanied Paul in all these journeys, and in his long confinements at Cæsarea and at Rome?

F.—The probability is that he did; as we know that he was with the Apostle at Rome. Indeed, he was himself a prisoner at Rome during a part of the two years that Paul was there; for in the conclusion of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer says: “Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty?”

S.—Can we be certain as to the movements of Paul and Timothy, after their liberation at Rome?

F.—We cannot. The probability is that they journeyed eastward, through Macedonia, Greece, Asia Minor, and perhaps Palestine, visiting and strengthening the churches they had planted. Then they may have visited Crete; for I cannot find that Paul was at Crete, to make any stop there, at an earlier period. Thence they may have passed over into Gaul and Spain, and came back to Rome about the year 64 or 65. The Neronian persecution was now raging, and Paul was made a close prisoner. It was during this imprisonment that he wrote his second Epistle to Timothy—the last that he ever wrote. Timothy was now in Asia Minor—perhaps at Troas. He was urged to visit the Apostle quickly, and to bring with him his master's cloak, his books, and his parchments. If Timothy complied with this injunction,—as he certainly would, if it were possible,—he may have witnessed the martyrdom of Paul.

S.—Much is said, in certain quarters, about Timothy as the first bishop of Ephesus. Is this likely to be true?

F.—The supposition has no foundation in the Scriptures. Indeed, it is contradicted by the entire history of Timothy, as given in the Bible. Timothy was not a bishop anywhere. He never had, so far as we know, the supervision of any particular church or flock. He is expressly called an *evangelist*; but an evangelist in the primitive church was an itinerant, a missionary, who labored, usually, in connection with some one of the Apostles, and under his direction.

Of the life of Timothy, after the death of Paul, we have no certain information. He was a faithful man, a devoted servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and no doubt died triumphantly; but whether he died a natural death, or fell by martyrdom, we cannot decide.

V. TITUS.

S.—Titus, we know, was one of Paul's evangelists. What can you tell us of his personal history?

F.—He was a Gentile, and was converted through the instrumentality of Paul, who calls him his son. (Tit. i. 4.) Paul took

him with him when he went up to Jerusalem on the question of circumcising the Gentile converts. Some would then have constrained him to circumcise Titus, but neither he nor Titus would consent.

S.—After this, do we know much of the history of Titus?

F.—We do not, at least for several years; but after Paul's release from his first imprisonment at Rome, when he undertook his mission to Crete, we find Titus with him; and when Paul was called away from Crete, he left Titus there, "to set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city."

S.—Was Titus bishop of Crete?

F.—This has been often affirmed; but the truth is, he was not a bishop anywhere. Like Philip, and Timothy, and a great many others, he was an evangelist. His residence at Crete, when left there by Paul, was very short; for only a little while after, Paul writes to Timothy, "Titus is gone to Dalmatia," a great way from Crete. As to the remainder of Titus' life, and the manner of his death, we have no information.

CONVERSATION XI.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.—Epistle to the Thessalonians.—Location of the church.—Object of the first and second Epistles to the Thessalonians.—The letter to the Galatians.—Great need of this letter.—Galatia and why so called.—Paul's defense of his apostleship.—Proof of his commission.—His apostleship called in question.

Son.—How many of Paul's Epistles have we in our Bible?

Father.—Fourteen in all,—including the Epistle to the Hebrews, which I cannot doubt was written by Paul. I propose to give you some account of these Epistles, and in the order in which they were written.

I. FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

S.—Where was Thessalonica?

F.—It was a sea-port of Macedonia, situated on the gulf of Thessalonica, and was a place of much commercial importance. It is still a large city called Saloniki. At the time of Paul's visit, it was subject to the Romans, and was inhabited by Greeks, Italians, and Jews.

S.—By whom was the gospel first preached in this city?

F.—It was first preached here, so far as we know, by Paul and Silas. After their release from prison at Philippi, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you *is Christ*. And some of them believed and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few" (Acts. xvii. 2-4).

S.—Who were the "devout Greeks" here spoken of?

F.—I suppose they were either proselytes to the Jews' religion, or Greeks who were so far convinced of the truth of the Jews'

religion as to have renounced idolatry, and were permitted to worship in the synagogue. It was from these converts, made in the synagogue, that the Thessalonian church seems to have been gathered.

S.—How long did Paul remain at Thessalonica?

F.—We do not certainly know,—long enough for him to receive repeated supplies from Philippi (Phil. iv. 16),—long enough to excite a great tumult and mob, from which he deemed it prudent to retire (Acts. xvii. 5).

S.—On leaving Thessalonica, where did Paul go?

F.—First, to Berea, then to Athens, and then to Corinth. It was from Corinth that the first Epistle to the Thessalonians was written, about the year 52.

S.—What was there in the circumstances of the Thessalonian converts which made it necessary for the Apostle to write them at this time?

F.—They were made up of diverse materials; they had been but recently converted; their great teacher had been rudely and suddenly driven from them; they were exposed to much opposition and to many trials; and they needed special instruction and encouragement, that they might be kept from apostasy, and live and be a blessing to those around them.

S.—Were they in error on any point of Christian doctrine?

F.—They had received erroneous impressions respecting the resurrection and the coming of Christ. They looked for his coming as a near event, and they seem to have supposed that those who were alive on the earth when Christ came, would have great advantages over those of their number who had died; that the living would be allowed to behold his glory, and participate in the splendors of his personal reign, while those who were in their graves would slumber through these magnificent scenes. To correct these views seems to have been one design of the Epistle before us. The Apostle assures the Thessalonian converts that, at the coming of Christ, *all* the redeemed, whether living or dead, would

participate alike in his glory. They who were alive would not *anticipate* those who were in their graves. So far from this, those who were dead would rise *first, i. e.* before the change would take place in the living, which was to fit them to dwell forever with the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 15-18).

S.—Were there any disorders prevailing in this infant church?

F.—There were probably some who had not a due respect for their religious teachers; and this may have led the Apostle to say to them, “We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake” (Chap. v. 12).

In short, these new converts from Judaism and heathenism needed instruction in regard to the Christian temper and walk in general; and more appropriate instruction than that contained in the closing verses of this Epistle, cannot be conceived of: “Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient unto all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil; and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

II. SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

S.—When and where was this Epistle written?

F.—It seems to have been written soon after the first, and from the same place—Corinth, about the year 53 or 54. There is indeed, no positive proof of this, but the internal evidence all favors the supposition, and such has been the opinion of the most judicious commentators.

S.—Why should the Apostle so soon address a second Epistle to the same church?

F.—Chiefly, I think, to correct an erroneous impression which the Thessalonians had received from the first. They had gathered from what Paul had written, that the Son of God was about to appear, and that the end of the world was near at hand. And this impression was producing the same results at Thessalonica that it has done in all periods since. Some were alarmed, and were suffering under serious apprehensions; while others concluded that labor was of no value, that worldly property was useless, and had given up all attention to their secular concerns. It was of the utmost importance, therefore, that the error should be corrected, and corrected speedily. Accordingly, the watchful Apostle wrote to them: “We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that while I was yet with you, I told you these things” (2 Thess. ii. 1-5).

S.—Certainly this declaration was of great importance at the time when it was written: Is it not of equal importance now?

F.—Undoubtedly it is. There have been crazy adventists all along, from the age of the Apostles until now. There are such still. And not only so, it has been the perpetual cry of infidelity: “The Apostles believed in the speedy coming of Christ to judgment, and were mistaken. Their inspiration failed them in this instance; why not in others? And who can trust to their writings as the standard of truth?” Now the declaration of Paul above quoted, is a sufficient reply to all such objections. No stronger expressions

can be cited from any writing of the Apostles, to prove the speedy coming of Christ, than can be found in Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians. They were so strong that the Thessalonians themselves, or at least some of them, were deceived by them. And yet the Apostle writes forthwith to assure them that they had misinterpreted him. He had intended to convey no such impression. He refers to many things which he had said while yet with them, that were inconsistent with such a doctrine. And may not Paul be safely left to explain his own words? And who will dare insist, in these days, in opposition to his own declarations, that he did teach the speedy coming of Christ, and was mistaken?

S.—In the views you have given, this second Epistle to the Thessalonians is one of great importance to the church, not only in the age of the Apostles, but at all subsequent periods.

F.—It is an important Scripture in another respect. It is a standing rebuke of all those interpretations which attempt to fix the time when our Lord will come, and to make it appear that the end is near at hand. Our Savior told his disciples after his resurrection, that the time of his coming was not known to mortals, and never would be particularly disclosed to them. "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts. i. 7). Hence all attempts to fix the precise time of his coming are to be regarded as profane—as an unwarrantable prying into those secret things which belong only to God.

III. EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

S.—What was Galatia, and where was it?

F.—Galatia was not a city, but a province of Asia Minor, having Pontus on the East, and Cappadocia and Phrygia on the South and West. It was, probably, about two hundred miles long from East to West, and from twenty to one hundred and fifty miles in width.

S.—From what did this province derive its name?

F.—From the Gauls, by whom it had been conquered and settled, about two hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ.

These Gauls were celebrated warriors, who were frequently employed by the surrounding chiefs to assist them in their warlike encounters. Galatia became a Roman province in the time of Augustus Cæsar, and was subject to a governor sent from Rome.

S.—Of what religion were the Galatians originally?

F.—They were heathen idolaters, interspersed with companies of wandering Jews. There were no large cities in Galatia; the people resided in villages and towns. And this accounts for it, that our Epistle is directed, not to the *church* of Galatia, but to the *churches*.

S.—By whom was the gospel first preached in this province?

F.—Undoubtedly by Paul. He probably visited it during his first mission from Antioch. This, indeed, is not expressly mentioned; but it is said that he visited Lycaonia, and the region round about (Acts xiv. 6), which would include portions of Galatia. We know that he visited Galatia when on his second mission (Acts xvi. 6).

S.—When was the Epistle to the Galatians written?

F.—On this question, interpreters have decided variously. My own opinion is, that it was written at Corinth, shortly after the Epistles to the Thessalonians. The main subject of the Epistle—the question of circumcising the Gentile converts—shows that it was written during the controversy on that exciting topic. At a later period in Paul's ministry, this question had in great measure subsided. Then we have an expression near the beginning of the Epistle, which implies that it was written shortly after Paul's last visit to the Galatians: "I marvel that ye are *so soon* removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel" (i. 6). My own impression is that this Epistle was written about the year 52 or 53, while Paul was fulfilling his long mission at Corinth. It was written, not like Paul's other Epistles, by an amanuensis, but with his own hand (vi. 11).

S.—What was the occasion of Paul's addressing the Galatians at this time?

F.—This is very obvious from the Epistle itself. While Paul was at Corinth, he received intelligence from Galatia that his old enemies, the Judaizing teachers, had been there, subverting the faith of his spiritual children, and turning them aside to another gospel. These teachers insisted that Paul was an Apostle only at second hand; that he was inferior, in point of authority, to the Apostles at Jerusalem; that circumcision and the Jewish law were still binding, and were essential to salvation; and by these, and other like persuasions, they had induced many of the Galatians to be circumcised, to attend the Jewish festivals, and to commence the observance of the law. The Apostle saw at once that something must be done; and as he could not visit his Galatian brethren at this time, he must write them a letter. He commences by vindicating his own Apostleship. He assures the Galatians that he had received his commission and his doctrine, not from man, but from God; that what he had taught them was of Divine authority, and that they were bound to believe him. He instructs them as to the nature of spiritual justification, and the impossibility of securing it by works of the law. It must be by the faith of Jesus Christ. He shows them that even Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works; and that all his spiritual children must be saved in the same way. The design of the whole Epistle is to state and defend the true doctrine of justification, and it closes with an earnest exhortation to his Galatian brethren to avoid the evils which had been engendered by their disputes, and to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.” “In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

The ground which Paul took in this, and in his other Epistles, against the imposition of circumcision and the law upon the Gentile converts, was one of vast importance. It saved Christianity, at least for a time, from becoming a religion of rites and forms; and, as I have remarked on a former occasion, we can never sufficiently admire the providence and grace of God, in making a thorough-

bred and bigoted Jew the principal means of deliverance from Jewish rites, and in making the earliest and most violent persecutor of Christianity such an eminent instrument in spreading Christianity throughout the earth.

CONVERSATION XII.

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.—Beauty of Corinth.—Great commercial importance.—Distinguished for wealth, luxury and dissipation.—Circumstances connected with Paul's first visit to Corinth.—Becomes the Apostle to the Gentiles.—Brought before Gallio.—Reproofs and instructions.—Falsity of the concluding inscriptions of this and other Epistles.—First and second Epistles to Timothy.

IV. FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Son.—Where was Corinth situated?

Father.—It was situated on an isthmus, about six miles across, which separated the ancient Peloponnesus from the rest of Greece. This was the natural portage or carrying place from the Ionian sea on the west, to the Ægean on the east. The situation of Corinth gave it great commercial advantages. It became the mart of Asia and Europe, covered the sea with its ships, and had a navy of its own to protect its commerce. Its population increased rapidly by the influx of foreigners, and it was long distinguished for its wealth, its luxury, and its dissipation. The principal divinity worshiped at Corinth was Venus,—as Diana was at Ephesus, and Minerva at Athens.

S.—When was Corinth captured by the Romans?

F.—It was captured and destroyed by the consul Lucius Mummius, 147 years before Christ. The riches found there were immense. A vast amount of coin was melted down in the conflagration of the city. The place, however, was soon rebuilt. It was colonized by Julius Cæsar, and ere long resumed something of its former magnificence.

S.—How was Greece divided by the Romans?

F.—Into the two provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. Of the latter, Corinth was the capital. Such was its situation, when first visited by Paul.

S.—At what time, and under what circumstances, did Paul make his first visit to Corinth?

F.—He came here about the year 52. He had spent some time

at Athens, where he had preached without much success. From Athens he came alone to Corinth; but he found there Aquila and Priscilla, lately come from Rome, with whom he lodged and labored at his trade of tent-making. He may have been the means of the conversion of these excellent friends.

When Silas and Timotheus had come to him from Berea, he commenced preaching the gospel in this great and wicked city. He began, as usual, with the Jews; but when they rejected him, he shook his raiment and said, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles." He began his labors, as he tells us, "in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling;" but his Divine Master encouraged him in a vision, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." And he continued preaching the gospel there a year and six months. It was during this period, as we have seen, that he wrote his Epistles to the Thessalonians and to the Galatians.

S.—In what manner was Paul's successful labors at Corinth interrupted?

F.—The unbelieving Jews, enraged at his success, caught him and brought him before Gallio, the governor of Achaia; but Gallio refused to listen to them and Paul was dismissed. After this it is said that "he tarried there a good while," "and sailed thence into Syria, taking Priscilla and Aquila with him." He came first to Ephesus and left his friends there, promising to return to them after a short visit to Jerusalem. This promise he fulfilled; and now commenced his three and a half years' mission at Ephesus—the longest that he had at any place, after entering upon his public labors.

S.—Had he no intercourse, during all this time, with any of his former fields of labor?

F.—He had undoubtedly. He kept a watchful eye upon all the churches, more especially those which he had planted, and lost no opportunity to do them good. This was particularly the case with

regard to the church which he had left at Corinth. The intercourse by sea between Ephesus and Corinth was direct and frequent. He heard often from his Corinthian brethren, and seems to have sent a letter to them which is lost. For he says in the Epistle before us—called the first: “I wrote unto you in an Epistle not to keep company with fornicators,” etc. (Chap. v. 9). Hearing of their disorders, and their lack of discipline, he seems also to have made a short visit to them, of which no mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles. At the time of writing his Epistles to the Corinthians, Paul had made but one visit to them of which we have any knowledge. Yet he says repeatedly in his second Epistle, “This is the *third* time I am coming to you.” Of course, there must have been a second visit between the first and the third; and this must have been made during his long residence at Ephesus. Nor is it to be wondered at, that in his anxiety for the Corinthians, he should sail over the Ægean in some one of the hundred ships that were continually crossing, and make them a passing visit.

S.—When and where was the Epistle before us written?

F.—As the Apostle continued to hear unfavorable reports from the Corinthians, and had received a letter and a deputation from them (see Chap. xvi. 19), he determined to write them a long Epistle—that which is now before us. It was undoubtedly written from Ephesus, and near the close of his long residence there. “I will tarry at Ephesus,” he says, “until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me” (Chap. xvi. 8). The place and the date of the writing are here fixed. It must have been written at Ephesus in the year 56 or 57.

The Apostle, however, did not remain at Ephesus so long as he intended. The uproar raised against him by the silver-smiths hastened his departure. He had previously sent into Macedonia Timothy and Erastus, and when the uproar had ceased, he followed them (Chap. xx. 1). The Epistle was written, it has been thought, between the sending away of Timothy and Erastus, and the tumult by the silver-smiths.

S.—You have not yet informed us of the particular occasion of writing this Epistle.

F.—This is sufficiently obvious from the Epistle itself. The Apostle had received a letter from the Corinthian church, and he must answer it. He had also heard various reports of disorders there, which required correction. “It hath been declared unto me by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you,” some claiming to be of Paul, and others of Apollos, and others of Cephas, and others of Christ. This matter is reproved, rebuked, and variously discussed, from the eleventh verse of the first chapter to the end of the fourth.

Another report which had reached the Apostle had respect to a case of incest which had occurred, which he severely rebukes, and directs that the offender, and all like offenders, should be excluded from the church.

Another report, unfavorable to the Corinthians was, that instead of settling their mutual differences among themselves, they had been carrying them into the heathen courts. “Ye go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints.” The Apostle closes his rebukes on this subject with a stern reproof of the sin of unchastity, to which the Corinthians were much addicted.

Having considered those things, of which he had been incidentally informed, Paul proceeds to notice others, about which they had consulted him by letter. And first he gives his advice concerning marriage and divorce (Chap. vii). Next, he counsels his brethren about going to heathen festivals, and eating meat which had been offered to idols. The discussion of this and some kindred topics, occupies the next three chapters. In the eleventh chapter, Paul speaks of the relation of the sexes one to the other, of the orderly conducting of public worship, and especially of the Lord’s supper. It seems that great disorders had crept into the church in regard to this matter, which he rebukes and corrects.

Another subject which had probably been submitted to him in the letter, was that of spiritual gifts, more especially the gift of

tongues. This had been imparted to many of the Corinthians, and they had misused it, making their meetings disorderly and unprofitable. This whole subject the Apostle discusses in chapters twelve and thirteen,—enlarging on the grace of charity, or holy love, as being vastly superior to supernatural utterances.

S.—Do we find any errors in doctrine reproved in this Epistle?

F.—The Gnostic errors had infected some of the Corinthians, and they were led to deny the resurrection of the dead. “There is none but a spiritual resurrection, and that, in respect to believers, is past already. A resurrection of the vile, corrupting body is not to be expected, or desired.” A knowledge of this error, as prevailing at Corinth, led the Apostle into that noble and eloquent vindication of the resurrection, which we have in the fifteenth chapter—a chapter not exceeded in point of interest by any in the Bible.

S.—In what spirit is this searching, humbling Epistle written?

F.—It is, indeed, in most parts of it, a message of unsparing reproof. It could not be otherwise. And yet it is delivered, throughout, in the kindest spirit, in the most tender and touching manner, in a way to give the least possible offense. Witness the Apostle’s introduction: He begins by praising the Corinthians—by saying everything in their favor which could be said with truth. “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God, which is given unto you by Jesus Christ. That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is like our Savior’s introductions to his messages of reproof to the seven churches of Asia. After such an introduction, and in such a spirit, the Apostle could say anything which the occasion required.

S.—By whom was this Epistle sent to the Corinthians?

F.—The Apostle had already sent Timothy into Macedonia, with instructions to proceed as far as Corinth, (Chap. xvi. 10). And now he sends Titus with the Epistle, accompanied, probably,

by the messengers who had come from Corinth to Paul with the letter of inquiry. He very soon follows them into Macedonia, and anxiously waits the result of his Epistle.

S.—And what was the result?

F.—Every thing that Paul could desire. The divisions and strifes among the Corinthians were healed, their disorders were corrected, the incestuous person was ejected from the church, and deep repentance and a disposition to reform were every where manifested. And not only so, the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, which Paul had projected and was urging forward, was taken up with exemplary liberality. Of all this, Paul was speedily informed by Titus, much to his satisfaction and joy.

S.—What is to be said of the concluding inscription to this Epistle?

F.—It is of no authority, and is false in several particulars, and the same may be said of the concluding inscriptions to the Epistles generally. It is to be regretted that they are published in our Bibles.

V. PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

F.—The next of Paul's Epistles, in point of time, was the first Epistle to Timothy. We have heard much of Timothy in our previous discussions. He was found at Lystra; by Paul, during his second mission from Antioch; and, being a pious, promising youth, he was selected by the Apostle to travel with him as his companion and assistant evangelist. And from this period, he seems to have followed Paul, or to have labored under his direction to the end of the Apostle's life. He was with him during his long mission at Ephesus; but near the close of it, he was sent away.

S.—Where was he sent?

F.—Hearing of some disorders among the Corinthians, Paul directed Timothy and Erastus to make them a visit. This involved a voyage across the Ægean, which they could make in a few days. After their departure Paul writes his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he speaks of himself as still at Ephesus, and of Timothy

as in Greece (1 Cor. xvi. 8, iv. 17). After a time, Timothy returns to Ephesus, and is there at the time of the disturbance with the silver-smiths. Paul now leaves suddenly for Macedonia; but entreats Timothy to remain at Ephesus for a time, "that he might charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. i. 3). And here we have the date of Paul's first Epistle to Timothy. It was written from Macedonia, probably from Philippi, about the year 58.

S.—But are there not serious objections to this date of the Epistle? Are we sure that Timothy returned from Greece to Ephesus, previous to Paul's sudden departure?

F.—We have no positive proof of this; but we know that he might easily have done so, and that Paul expected him to return. "I look for him with the brethren" (1 Cor. xvi. 11).

S.—It is further objected to your date of the Epistle, that Timothy, instead of being left at Ephesus, was with Paul in Macedonia, when he wrote his second Epistle to the Corinthians, and his name is joined with that of Paul in the introduction.

F.—All this is true; but before Paul was prepared to write his second Epistle to the Corinthians, Timothy might have finished his work at Ephesus, and followed Paul to Macedonia. He had time enough to do all this, and I have no doubt that he did it. And if he actually *was* in Macedonia when Paul commenced writing his second Epistle to the Corinthians, it was the most natural thing in the world,—since Timothy had so lately been at Corinth,—that Paul should join his name with his own in the introduction.

S.—It is still further objected to the commonly received date of this Epistle, that, instead of expecting Timothy in Macedonia, Paul was expecting soon to return to Ephesus. "These things I write unto thee, hoping to return unto thee shortly" (1 Tim. iii. 14).

F.—Paul did entertain this hope on his first arrival in Macedonia; but being occupied there much longer than he expected, it seems that Timothy came to him. Vessels were continually passing

one way and the other, and the voyage, as I have before said, could be accomplished in a few days.

S.—As the true date of this Epistle has long been, and still, is a matter in dispute, will you sum up, briefly, the reasons for the date which you have given?

F.—My reasons are, that this date agrees, as no other one does, with all the circumstances of the case. We know, from the Epistle itself, that it was written soon after Paul's sudden departure from Ephesus, leaving Timothy behind to finish up certain things which he had left unaccomplished. Now we have no account in the Bible, or anywhere else, of Paul's leaving Ephesus for Macedonia, except in the instance above referred to. Bishop Pearson thinks that this might have been done after Paul's release from his first imprisonment at Rome, and that his first Epistle dates only a little previous to the second. But all this is mere assumption, without one particle of proof. Indeed, collateral circumstances are against it. For example, when Paul wrote this Epistle, Timothy was a young man. "Let no man despise thy youth" (1 Tim. iv. 12). If the Epistle was written at the time we suppose, Timothy *was* a young man; but seven or eight years later, this could hardly be said of him. Then, after leaving Ephesus at the time we suppose, there is no reason to think that Paul ever was there again. When he returned from Greece on his way to Jerusalem, he sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, and there he took his final leave of them. He told them, and for aught I see prophetically, that they should see his face no more (Acts xx. 25). And yet, according to Bishop Pearson's theory, he was there again, and left Timothy behind him at his departure. On the whole, I feel satisfied with the date of the Epistle which has been given about the year 58.

S.—Will you now state the occasion and design of the Epistle?

F.—These may be learned from the circumstances already mentioned, and from the Epistle itself. Driven away from Ephesus by the violence of the silver-smiths before his work was done, Paul left

Timothy behind to complete it; and particularly that he might “charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” The errors to which the Apostle here refers, I think, were of two kinds. 1. There were the Judaizers, who “desired to be teachers of the law.” 2. There were the advocates of a “science falsely so called, which, some professing, have erred from the faith” (vi. 20,21). This *Γνωσις*, “science falsely so called,” was undoubtedly *gnosticism*, which was becoming popular, and had begun to corrupt the churches before the death of the Apostles. It had already made its appearance at Ephesus; and was more prominently there near the close of the first century, during the ministry of the Apostle John.

The church also needed instruction in regard to the right of the female members, and the place which they ought to occupy; also in regard to the proper treatment of widows. It is probable, also, that at the time when Paul was driven away from Ephesus, he had not completed the organization of church officers, or defined their duties so fully as he desired; and this led him to charge Timothy, as he does in chapter third. In short, many things required to be done, which Paul left Timothy behind to do, and his instructions in regard to these make up the body of the Epistle.

S.—Are not the pastoral Epistles, as they are called—the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, to be regarded as highly important parts of the inspired volume?

F.—They are undoubtedly; and specially so as they bear on the character and work of the ministry. “The office of the ministry is God’s great appointment for the propagation of true religion, and for spreading it through the world. The church adheres to the truth, is built up in faith, and is distinguished for love, purity and zeal, in proportion as the ministry is honored, and shows itself qualified for its work. So important is this office to the welfare of the church and the world, that it was desirable that full instruction should be furnished in the volume of revelation, in regard to its nature and design. Such instruction we have in these pastoral Epistles; and there is scarcely any portion of the New Testament which the

church could not better afford to part with, than these Epistles. Had the ministry always been such as these Epistles contemplate, had they who have filled the sacred office always possessed the character and qualifications here described, the church would have been saved from the strifes that have so often rent it, and the pure gospel, long ere this, would have been spread through the world."

VI. SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

F.—We have already given an account of the location, character and history of ancient Corinth; of Paul's first visit and long residence there; of the establishment of a flourishing Christian church; of the disorders into which it fell after he left it; of his efforts to correct these disorders; and particularly of his long Epistle to them. This was preceded by a visit of Timothy, and the Epistle was sent by the hand of Titus. Soon after this, Paul left Ephesus to go into Macedonia, but stopped at Troas, expecting there to meet Titus, and learn from him the reception of the Epistle.

S.—Had Paul some anxiety in regard to this matter?

F.—He was exceedingly anxious, as he well might be; and he tells us of his disappointment in not meeting Titus at Troas. "When I came to Troas, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus, my brother." Paul immediately left Troas, and sailed over into Macedonia, where he did meet Titus, and learned from him, with inexpressible satisfaction, that his Epistle had accomplished all that he could desire. The act of discipline which he had directed, had been performed, the abuses had been in great measure corrected, the Corinthians had been brought to a deep repentance, and were earnestly endeavoring to effect a reformation. Of the feelings of Paul on this occasion, he has fully informed us. "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Without were fightings, and within were fears. Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those who are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he

was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more" (Chap. vii. 5-7).

S.—In these circumstances, what did Paul do?

F.—In the fullness of his heart, he sat down, and wrote this second Epistle. Such was the occasion of it, and it followed his first Epistle in less than a year.

S.—Where was he when he wrote it?

F.—In Macedonia—probably at Philippi.

S.—What is the character of this Epistle, and how does it compare with the first.

F.—Timothy and Titus had spent some time in Corinth, and had fully informed themselves as to the state of things, both before and after the reception of Paul's Epistle. Of course, they told everything to the Apostle; and he adapts his second Epistle to existing circumstances. The consequence is, that this Epistle is more various, and has less of plan and method than perhaps any of his writings.

S.—What are some of the principal topics on which the writer touches?

F.—He begins by referring to his own sufferings, and particularly to his late trials at Ephesus. He vindicates himself from a charge which his enemies had urged against him, *viz.*, that of insincerity and fickleness—of saying "yea and nay," to suit his own convenience. He commiserates the case of the sorrowing penitent who had been ejected from the church, and directs that he be restored and comforted. He consoles himself and his friends, in the midst of all their trials, with the prospect of heavenly glory and blessedness; not only that succeeding the resurrection of the body, but that occurring immediately after death: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Hence, "we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"

(Chap. v. 1, 8). Paul exhorts the Corinthians to avoid matrimonial alliances which would endanger their piety, and were inconsistent with the gospel: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (Chap. vi. 14, 15.) In chapters eight and nine, Paul introduces the subject, on which his heart was so much set—the collection for the poor saints in Judea, and urges the Corinthians to liberality by the example of their brethren in Macedonia.

In the remainder of the Epistle, Paul vindicates his apostolical authority against the clamors of his enemies, interspersing various instructions and cautions, as these were suggested. He closes with Christian greetings and salutations, and with Apostolical benediction.

S.—Who carried this second Epistle?

F.—Probably Titus; and Paul himself went to Corinth shortly after, and tarried there for a season.

S.—Do we hear aught from Corinth in the succeeding part of the New Testament?

F.—Nothing; the divisions there we may hope were healed, and the disorders corrected, through the efforts of the great Apostle, and that henceforward the church was a comfort to him and an honor to Christ.

CONVERSATION XIII.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.—When written.—Peter not the founder of the church at Rome.—Doctrines taught by this book.—Discussions aroused by this Epistle.—Its several sub-divisions.—Practical directions for Christians.—Beauty and value of the instruction.

VII. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Son.—In what language was this Epistle written?

Father.—In the Greek language; for though Paul was writing to a Latin city, the Greek was commonly spoken there; it was the language with which the Apostle was most familiar; and besides, this language would adapt the Epistle to a more general circulation.

S.—When and where was the Epistle to the Romans written?

F.—It was written during Paul's last visit to Corinth, when about to leave there to go to Jerusalem, to carry up the collection to the saints (Rom. xv. 25). It must have been written about the year 57. That the Epistle was written at Corinth is evident from two considerations; 1. It was sent by Phebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea; and Cenchrea was the port of Corinth. 2. In Chap. xvi. 23, Gaius is spoken of as Paul's host; but Gaius resided at Corinth, and was baptized by Paul (Chap. i. 14).

S.—Had Paul ever been at Rome when this Epistle was written?

F.—He had not, but was intending to go shortly. He did go after a time,—not as he expected, but as a prisoner.

S.—At what time was the gospel first preached at Rome?

F.—We cannot tell. Among those who were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, were “strangers from Rome.” If any of these were converted, they may have carried the gospel home with them. In the continual flux of foreigners from all parts of the empire into Rome, it is likely that Christians reached there at a very early period. Of one thing we may be certain, that Peter did not plant the church at Rome, as Romanists pretend; for he was not there for more than thirty years after the death of Christ, if he ever was. And we may be certain of another thing, that there was a large

and flourishing church at Rome, when Paul wrote this Epistle—one “whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world” (Chap. i. 8).

S.—Of what materials was the church of Rome at this period composed?

F.—It consisted of both Jewish and Gentile believers, and disputes about circumcision and the Jewish law had already reached the imperial city. Perhaps Paul’s knowledge of this may have been one occasion of his writing. Jews were numerous at Rome before the birth of Christ. Some of these may have been early converted; or converted Jews may have reached there, among the immigrants, who were constantly arriving.

S.—For ages, this Epistle has been the great battle-ground of the church. More controversies have been raised over it, than over any other part of the Bible. Can you tell us the reason of this?

F.—One reason doubtless is, the nature of the doctrines here inculcated. They are high and mysterious. They relate to subjects on which the profoundest minds, in all ages, have been exercised. Difficulties have been found, too, from an unwillingness, on the part of critics, to receive the plain truths which the Apostle teaches. The natural heart is averse to them, and will not receive them. A converted caviler once said to me: “When my proud heart was humbled, and I was willing to be in the hands of a sovereign God, my objections to the Epistle to the Romans all vanished.” Yet another reason why so much difficulty has been found with this Epistle is, that men are unwilling to stop where the Apostle stops. When Paul states a simple fact, men must get up a theory to account for that fact. The fact may be clear and plain; but the theory is obscure or absurd, and becomes a matter of debate and controversy. The most essential requisite to a right understanding of this Epistle is an humble, docile, prayerful spirit—a readiness to *do* the will of God, that so we may know of the doctrine.

S.—Can you furnish us with a brief analysis of this Epistle?

F.—It consists, I should say, of three parts. The first, which

includes the first eight chapters, is occupied in the discussion of the doctrine of justification and its consequences. The second part, embracing chapters nine to eleven, treats of the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection and future conversion of the Jews. The third part consists of practical exhortations, and salutations of Christians at Rome.

After the usual salutations, Paul begins by showing the entire sinfulness and ruin of the Gentile world (i. 18-32). He next shows that the Jews are alike guilty and undone; that "both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin" (ii. 1-29). The Jew now objects: "What advantage then hath the Jew, and what profit is there of circumcision?" To this the Apostle answers, insisting, at the same time, that the advantage does *not* consist in this, that the Jew can be justified by the works of the law. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God;" but every one, whether Jew or Gentile, if justified at all, "must be justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

"What shall we say then," replies the Jew, "that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" Not this, answers Paul, that Abraham was justified by works. For it is said, "Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." And all this was done before he was circumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also (Chap. iv. 11). The method by which God saves sinners, Paul goes on to say, "is analogous to that by which they were first brought under condemnation." "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Chap. v. 18).

"What shall we say then," the Jew retorts? "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" "By no means," Paul answers "How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? Sin

shall not have dominion over us ; for we are not under the law, but under grace ” (Chap. vi. 15).

“What then,” the Jew persists ; “Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace ?” The Apostle proceeds still further to contradict and refute these Antinomian objections, through the remainder of the sixth chapter.

In the seventh chapter, Paul shows, that the use of the law is to convict and not to save. It condemns, but cannot deliver. Deliverance must come, if it comes at all, through faith that is in Christ Jesus. And those who have part in this redemption are perfectly safe. They are free from the condemning sentence of the law. They have the in-dwelling, life-giving Spirit. They are the chosen, the called, the justified, according to God’s gracious purpose ; and will soon be among the glorified children of God.

S.—Thus closes the analysis of what you call the first part of the Epistle to the Romans. Please set before us the leading topics of the second part.

F.—This relates to the Divine purpose respecting the Jews—to their rejection and future conversion. The Apostle commences the ninth chapter with a strong expression of his regard for the Jews. “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Still, God has nowhere bound himself to consider them *only* as his children. “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy ; and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion.” And when the objection comes up, “Why doth he yet find fault ; for who hath resisted his will ?” the Apostle replies, not by a metaphysical explanation, but by an assertion of the rights and the sovereignty of God. “Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God ?” The rejection of the Jews, the writer goes on to say, is not total ; and so far as it extends, is entirely on account of their unbelief. Neither is their rejection final. They are yet to be gathered into the fold of Christ, “and so all Israel shall be saved ” (Chapters ix.—xi).

S.—How will you characterize the third or practical part of the Epistle?

F.—This extends from the twelfth chapter to the end. It consists of directions as to the feelings and duties of Christians towards God, to one another, to their fellow-creatures, and themselves; and for directness, plainness, fullness, conciseness, it is without a parallel. I know not where so much sound, ethical, spiritual, practical instruction, in so few words, can be found in our own language, or in any other. If Paul had written nothing but the Epistle to the Romans, he might justly be regarded as the prince, not only of theological and religious teachers, but of moral and ethical philosophers.

S.—Are not the salutations in the last chapter remarkable, seeing that the writer had never been at Rome?

F.—They are indeed. They show the intimate acquaintance which the Apostle kept up with distinguished Christians in other parts of the world, even those whom he had never seen with eyes of flesh. They show the interest which he felt in them, the love he had for them, and their essential unity in Christ their head. These holy brethren and sisters are no longer sundered. They have long been together in that blessed world to which their Savior went before them, and where all the ransomed will shortly follow. May we all be of the happy number.

CONVERSATION XIV.

EPISTLES OF PAUL CONTINUED.—Paul's first voyage to Rome.—His writings while there.—Epistle to the Ephesians.—Christianity introduced there by Paul.—Analysis of this letter.—The Epistle to the Colossians.—The first church established by Paul and Silas.

Father.—While Paul was in Macedonia and Greece, he seems to have written three Epistles; the first to Timothy, the second to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans. When he had finished taking up collections for the poor at Jerusalem, he passed from Corinth, through Macedonia, into Asia. He did not stop at Ephesus, but saw the elders of the church at Miletus, and hastened on to Jerusalem to the Passover. At Jerusalem he was apprehended and sent a prisoner to Cæsarea, where he was detained two years.

Son.—Did he write no letters during this interval?

F.—None that we know of. Perhaps he could not, the circumstances of his confinement forbidding it. At the end of two years, he made his voyage to Rome, arriving there in the year 61. Here he had more liberty. He resided in his own hired house, and received all that came to him. Here he wrote five of his Epistles that have come to us, *viz.*, those to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Hebrews; for I cannot doubt that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that it was written at Rome. Let us consider these in the order in which they are supposed to have been written. We begin with

VIII. THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

S.—Where was Ephesus, and for what was it chiefly celebrated?

F.—Ephesus was a distinguished city in Asia Minor, situated about forty miles south of Smyrna, near the mouth of the river Cayster. It was not, like Smyrna, a commercial city, and was remarkable, chiefly, for its idolatry. Here was the celebrated temple of Diana,—the most magnificent of any temple in Asia.

S.—When, and by whom, was the gospel first preached here?

F.—Undoubtedly by the Apostle Paul, about the year 54. On his journey from Corinth to Jerusalem, in this year, he came to Ephesus; but as he intended no more than a passing visit, he preached only to the Jews. He was requested to tarry longer, but he could not. He promised, however, to return after his visit to Jerusalem;—which promise he fulfilled, and continued at Ephesus about three years.* It was during this period that the church was founded, to which the Epistle before us was addressed.

S.—Have not some critics doubted whether this Epistle was originally addressed to the church at Ephesus.

F.—They have; but I think without sufficient reason. The principal thing urged against the common direction of the Epistle is, that it contains no allusion to events which occurred during Paul's residence at Ephesus, and no salutations of his numerous friends there. Perhaps the reason for the latter omission was, that his friends were *so* numerous. He could not particularly mention them all, and did not wish to make invidious distinctions. Some have regarded the Epistle as a circular, designed to be read in all the churches; and, in a sense, this is true. Paul did design it to be read by other churches; and the same is true of his other Epistles. To the Colossians he says: "When this Epistle is read among you, cause it to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the Epistle from Laodicea" (Col. iv. 16). But the evidence is decisive that the Epistle before us was originally addressed to the Ephesians. Rosenmüller says that "most of the ancient codices, and all the ancient versions," so represent it.

S.—Please give us a brief analysis of this Epistle.

F.—The Epistle obviously consists of two parts, the *doctrinal* and the *practical*; the former occupying the three first chapters, and the latter the last three. The doctrines specially taught and illustrated are, 1. that of native and entire depravity—"dead in

*See Acts xviii. 3, and xix. 1.

trespasses and sins" (ii. 1-3). 2. The doctrine of regeneration: "You hath he *quicken*ed who were dead in trespasses and sins" (ii. 1-5). 3. The doctrine of salvation by grace alone, without regard to our own works (ii. 8, 9). 4. The doctrine of *election* or predestination. "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (i. 11).

The practical part of the Epistle consists chiefly in exhortations to unity and love; to a holy life, in general, avoiding all sinful practices; and to a strict observance of all relative duties—those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants.

S.—How do you regard the style of this Epistle?

F.—It is exceedingly animated. The Apostle loves to dwell on the *eternal purposes* of Divine mercy. Into that subject he entered with a full heart. In none of his writings is there evinced more ardor and elevation of soul than in this Epistle. The great doctrine of predestination he approaches as one of vital interest and importance, urging it as the basis of Christian hope, and the foundation of eternal gratitude and praise.

IX. EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

S.—Why do we take up the Epistle to the Colossians before that to the Philippians?

F.—Because there is internal evidence that it was written first. There is a striking similarity between the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, which indicates that they were written at about the same time. Besides, they were both sent by Tychicus, who was returning from Rome to Asia, where he belonged. The Epistle to the Philippians was evidently written later, near the close of Paul's first imprisonment. In Chapter ii. 25, Paul says to the Philippians: "I trust in the Lord that I myself shall come to you shortly,"—implying that he expected soon to be released.

S.—Where was Colosse, and what can you tell us of its history?

F.—Colosse was a celebrated city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, a

little way east from Ephesus,—subject, like all the surrounding region, to the Romans.

S.—Who first preached the gospel there?

F.—Paul and Silas, accompanied by young Timothy, who was just commencing his work as an evangelist. This was during Paul's second mission from Antioch. At a later period, Paul visited Phrygia and Colosse again (Acts xviii. 23).

S.—What do you think of the Epistle to Laodicea, spoken of in this Epistle? (iv. 16.)

F.—My opinion is that there was such an Epistle, which has not been preserved. Laodicea was near Colosse, and was the chief city of Phrygia. In his tours through Phrygia, Paul must have visited it, and planted a church there. And when he was writing to Ephesus and Colosse, he could hardly have failed to remember Laodicea. Besides, the language of the Apostle in the Epistle before us is explicit: "When this Epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that you also read the Epistle from Laodicea" (ii. 16). Nor do I think it any objection to the Bible, that some of the inspired writings may have been lost. Their inspiration no more insures them against loss, than it does against various readings or mistranslations. If some of the inspired writings have been lost, let us love what remains to us the more, and cling to it with a firmer grasp.

S.—Is there not a writing extant claiming to be the lost Epistle to the Laodiceans?

F.—There is; but it has no authority. It is universally regarded as a forgery.

S.—What was the occasion and design of this Epistle to the Colossians?

F.—There were errors threatening, and to some extent prevailing, at Colosse, which the Apostle hoped to correct. Some of these errors were of a philosophical cast, growing out of the spreading influence of Gnosticism. This led the Apostle to say: "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain

deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." In another place, he says: "Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind." Still another class of errors arose from the influence of Judaizing teachers, which led the watchful Apostle to say: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath day" (Chap. ii. 8, 16, 18).

S.—Does not this last passage prove that the weekly Sabbath had been abolished, together with other Jewish observances?

F.—I think not. The Sabbath days here spoken of were probably Jewish festal days, which were days of rest, and were frequently called Sabbaths. Or if the weekly was referred to, it must have been the Seventh-day, Jewish Sabbath, which was already giving place to "the Lord's day"—the first day of the week. It was on this day that the churches generally, and especially those among the Gentiles, assembled for worship (see 1 Cor. xvi. 2).

S.—Were there not errors in practice, as well as in doctrine, against which the Apostle protests?

F.—There is no mention of any disorders, like those which prevailed in the church at Corinth, or of any sins, except such as were common to all the heathen before conversion. Paul does indeed say to his brethren: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; in the which ye also walked, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man, with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him" (Chap. iii. 5-10).

S.—Were there any *special* reasons why an Epistle was sent by Paul to the Colossians at this time?

F.—There were. Philemon, to whom Onesimus, his converted servant, was at this time sent back with a letter, was a member of the church at Colosse. This may have been one reason why a letter was also sent to that church. Another reason was, that Epaphras, a much beloved member of the Colossian church, was at that time a fellow prisoner with Paul at Rome, and he wished to inform them respecting their brother. “Epaphras, my fellow prisoner, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Chap. iv. 12.)

This Epistle so closely resembles that to the Ephesians, that any remarks as to the style and manner of it are needless.

CONVERSATION XV.

EPISTLES OF PAUL CONTINUED.—Epistle to Philemon.—Who Philemon was.—The servant of Philemon.—The question of human slavery.—Did Paul countenance it.—Epistle to the Philippians.—Description of Philippi.—Paul and Silas co-laborers here.—Miraculous deliverance from prison.—Character of this Epistle.

X. EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

Sen.—Who was Philemon?

Father.—He was a member of the church at Colosse, and a man of wealth and influence in the church; for the Apostle, expecting ere long to return there, asks him to provide him a lodging (v. 22).

S.—And who was Onesimus?

F.—He was a servant of Philemon,—whether such by purchase, or indenture, or hire, we cannot say,—who had run away from his master at Colosse, and had come to Rome. Here he found Paul, a prisoner at large, with whom he may have had some acquaintance at Colosse. Through the influence of the Apostle, Onesimus was converted. He may have been a wild and intractable youth before, but he is now a new creature—in his right mind—prepared to sit at the feet of Christ, and to do him service. He wishes to return to his master at Colosse, and Paul wishes to have him. He does not wish to harbor or encourage a fugitive, without the consent of his master. And so Paul writes a letter to Philemon—the very letter which we have before us—and sends it by the hand of Onesimus, who goes with Tychicus, carrying letters to the Colosians and the Ephesians.

S.—Was it the design of Paul, in returning Onesimus, to consign him back to slavery? And may his example be referred to, in our day, in justification of returning fugitive slaves?

F.—I think not. There is a mighty difference in the two cases. We do not know, in the first place, that Onesimus was a proper slave. He may have been a hired servant, or an indented apprentice. But supposing he was a proper slave, bought with money, and

legally held to service for life, Paul did not consign him to perpetual slavery, but encouraged him to go back with a letter, which he knew would be likely to effect his freedom,—as undoubtedly it did. The hunter of slaves, in our day, does consign them to perpetual slavery, and often to punishment. This is what he expects and intends to do, and is paid for doing. But Paul sends Onesimus back under circumstances which he expects and intends shall secure his freedom, preferring that the young man should be legally free, rather than bear the reproach and the hazards of a fugitive.

S.—What arguments does Paul use, to induce Philemon to release his servant?

F.—None directly; but indirectly and most skillfully he makes suggestions and entreaties, all tending to that result. “Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet, for love’s sake, I rather beseech thee, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ,—I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds, who, in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me, whom I have sent again. Thou, therefore, receive him, *i. e.*, mine own bowels; whom I would have retained with me, that, in thy stead, he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel. But without thy mind I would do nothing, that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him forever, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account. I, Paul, have written it with my own hand, I will repay it; albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord. Refresh my bowels in the Lord. Having confidence in thy obedience, I have written unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do more than I say”

(verses 8–21). Was ever anything more adroitly touching, melting, and irresistibly persuasive than this? No wonder that the result was in accordance with the Apostle's wishes.

S.—How has this short Epistle been regarded by the best interpreters?

F.—They have spoken of it with unmeasured praise. One calls it “a bright and beautiful gem in the volume of inspiration.” Another says, “It is exquisitely beautiful and delicate, a model of courtesy and politeness. It presents the character of the author in a most amiable light, and shows what true religion will produce, in causing genuine refinement of thought and language.” Dr. Doddridge says: “It is impossible to read over this admirable Epistle, without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, and the masterly address, that appear in every part of it. If this letter were to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed to be a masterpiece in its kind.”

XI. EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

S.—We have heard much of Philippi in these Conversations, but should like to have a more particular description of the place.

F.—Philippi received its name from Philip, the father of Alexander the great. When the Romans took possession of it, the advantages of its situation induced them to send a colony there, and it became one of the most flourishing cities of the empire.

S.—Who first preached the gospel here?

F.—Paul and Silas, and the young men who accompanied them. We have a full account of their first visit to Philippi in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. Here it was that “the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she should attend to the things that were spoken of Paul.” Here it was that the jailor was converted, and Paul and Silas were miraculously delivered from prison. Philippi was the first place in Europe which Paul visited, and this fact invests it with more of interest and honor than any other connected with its history.

S.—Did Paul make more than one visit to Philippi?

F.—Yes; in his passages between Europe and Asia, he was repeatedly here. It was here that he wrote his first Epistle to Timothy, and his second to the Corinthians. It was a place which he loved to visit, and where he was ever cordially entertained.

S.—Where was Paul when he wrote his Epistle to the Philippians?

F.—He was undoubtedly at Rome; and it seems to have been near the close of his first imprisonment. This is evident from several considerations. He had now been so long at Rome that “his bonds were talked of in all the palace,” and “in all other places,” and some of Cæsar’s household were numbered among his converts (Chap. i. 13, and iv. 22). His good conduct as a prisoner had become so well known, that it contributed not a little to the success of the gospel. “Many of the brethren, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear” (Chap. i. 14). Then at the time when this Epistle was written, Paul regarded the decision of his case as near at hand. “I hope to send Timothy presently, so soon as I see how it will go with me. I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly” (Chap. ii. 22, 23). It was while Paul was deliberating on the near prospect of a release, or an execution, that he speaks of the comparative desirableness of life and of death. “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Chap. i. 23).

S.—What was the immediate occasion of this Epistle?

F.—The Philippians had sent Epaphroditus, one of their brethren, to Rome, to carry supplies to the Apostle during his confinement. Epaphroditus had been dangerously sick there. On his recovery Paul deemed it desirable that he should return at once to Philippi, carrying his thanks for their timely assistance, and a letter giving them information as to his condition and prospects. This letter is the one before us.

S.—What have you to say as to the character of this Epistle?

F.—No one of Paul's Epistles is so tender, and abounds so much with expressions of kindness, as this. In the case of other churches, the Apostle was often under the necessity of administering reproof; but in the church at Philippi, there was very little that required censure, while there was much that demanded commendation and gratitude. The conduct of these brethren towards the Apostle had been generous and noble, and he could but thank and bless them for it. His language to them throughout is of the most affectionate character, such as a benevolent heart always wishes to employ, and such as must have been most grateful to them.

It is interesting, too, to regard the circumstances of Paul, and to look at the Epistle as growing right out of them. He had long been a prisoner, under heavy accusations; and although there was some expectation of a speedy release, yet his situation was such as constrained him to look death in the face. His language, at such a time, we might expect would be solemn, confident, tender and affectionate, and such we find it through the whole Epistle. It is the language of a father, rather than that of a teacher and Apostle; the tender entreaties of a friend, rather than the injunctions of one having authority. To all ages, it will be a model of affectionate suggestion and advice.

CONVERSATION XVI.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.—The Jews to whom this was written.—Disputed authorship.—The leading idea of this Epistle.—Bishop Clement of Rome.—Paul's friend.—Paul's authorship established.—The importance of the authorship of this Epistle.—One of the most valued parts of the New Testament.

Son.—Who were the Hebrews to whom this Epistle was addressed?

Father.—They were certainly Jews; for this name was never applied to any other people. They were also converted Jews. This is evident from the Epistle itself. The writer is not addressing unbelieving, blaspheming Jews, but those who had adopted the Christian faith. It is likely that the Epistle was addressed, primarily, to the Jews in Palestine. Foreign Jews were not commonly called Hebrews, but Hellenists, strangers, the dispersed, etc.

S.—Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews?

F.—This has long been, and still is, a disputed question. My own opinion is that Paul wrote this Epistle; but some learned men think differently.

S.—What considerations are urged to show that Paul did not write it?

F.—One is, that his name is not prefixed to it as it is to his other Epistles. But I think this omission may be satisfactorily explained. There was a strong prejudice among the Jews, even Christian Jews, against Paul. This prejudice was so strong that many of them, during the life of Paul, were led to deny his Apostleship, which circumstance imposed on him the disagreeable necessity of vindicating it. At a later period these Judaizing Christians rejected all the Epistles of Paul, and regarded them as of no authority. Paul was perfectly aware of this feeling of hostility among his Jewish brethren. Still, he felt a deep interest in them, and an earnest desire to do them good. It was in the hope of doing them good that he wrote them this Epistle; and, as a wise

man, he would not bar the effort and preclude the possibility of a good result by prefixing his name to it.

S.—Is there any other argument of importance against the Pauline origin of this Epistle?

F.—It is said to contain many words and phrases which are not found in the other Epistles of Paul. But this argument is of little weight. There are peculiar words and phrases in Paul's other Epistles. In writing on different occasions, to different persons or churches, and on different subjects, he was constrained to use different words and phrases. The peculiarities in this respect, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, are not more numerous or various than the subjects of which he was called to treat.

S.—Please give us a succinct account of the arguments which satisfy you that Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

F.—I would cite, in the first place, the standing *title of the Epistle* in our Bibles: "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." This title, though not written by the author of the Epistle, and having no Divine authority, was very early prefixed to it. It is found, not only in the Greek manuscripts, but in all the early versions, as the Syriac and the Itala, and expresses, without doubt, the current belief at the time. It is scarcely possible that a mistake should be so early made on this point; and unless we have strong evidence to the contrary, the fact here adduced ought to determine the question.

Then the *character* and the *circumstances* of the writer of this Epistle all agree to the Apostle Paul and to no one else. For example, the writer must have been a Jew, a learned Jew, one perfectly acquainted with Jewish institutions and rites. And yet he was a converted Jew, a firm believer in the Messiahship of Jesus, and admirably qualified to unfold the spiritual significance of the Hebrew ritual. Now all this agrees perfectly to the Apostle Paul, and not in an equal degree to any other Christian of that age. Again: this Epistle must have been written while the Jewish temple was standing and its rites were performed, *i. e.*, previous to the

year 70, when Jerusalem and the temple were both destroyed (see Heb. viii. 4-5). At the same time it was written pretty far down in the Apostolic age, when the persons addressed are exhorted to "call to remembrance the former days, when they were first illuminated, and were called to endure a great fight of affliction." They are reminded, too, that, considering the time and privileges which they had enjoyed, they "ought now to be teachers, and not need that one should teach them again what be the first principles of the oracles of God." No time can be fixed upon as better conforming to both these intimations, than about the year 63, when Paul is supposed to have written the Epistle. Still again: the author of this Epistle was, at the time of writing, a resident in Italy, and a companion and friend of Timothy. "They of Italy salute you." "Our brother Timothy is set at liberty," or, as it may better be rendered, is *sent away* (Chap. xiii. 23, 24). The writer had also been a prisoner, perhaps was so still, but was expecting soon to be released: "Ye had compassion on me in my bonds." "Pray for us, that I may be restored to you the sooner" (Chap. x. 34; xiii. 19). Now all these circumstances agree to Paul exactly, and so far as we can learn to no one else. I mention but another particular in which the writer of this Epistle agrees with Paul. He had not been a hearer or follower of Christ, during his public ministry: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us *by them that heard him*" (Chap. ii. 3). Now Paul, although he had enjoyed much communion with Christ, had not been, as far as we know, a personal hearer of him.

I remark again; the *doctrines* of this Epistle agree entirely with those of Paul. In all his Epistles, the death of Christ is set forth as the great propitiatory sacrifice for sin, of which the bloody sacrifices of the former dispensation were but the type. I need not say that such is the leading, crowning doctrine of the Epistle before us. Some of the great doctrines of the gospel are more clearly presented, and more fully explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews,

than in any other part of the New Testament. Still, they are throughout the doctrines of Paul.

Still again; the *form* and *method* of the Epistle to the Hebrews are the same as in the acknowledged Epistles of Paul. Under this head, I will notice but one particular. The first part of the other Epistles is usually doctrinal and argumentative, while the latter part is practical and hortatory. And just so we find it in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer begins to apply and enforce his reasonings at about the middle of the tenth chapter, and so continues to the end.

S.—The style of this Epistle is continually urged to disprove its Pauline origin. How does this matter seem to you?

F.—I insist that the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in its general characteristics, is very like to that of the Epistles of Paul. In both, there is a flow and fullness of style which can hardly be restrained. The mind of the writer is filled to overflowing; so that if, in the midst of a discussion, an important thought strikes him, he is obliged to go off in a long parenthesis before he can finish the point in hand. I need not refer to instances of this kind in the acknowledged Epistles of Paul. But we find the same in the Epistle to the Hebrews. As examples of this kind, see Chap. iv. 7-9, vii. 21, ix. 9,10, xii. 20, 21. In numerous instances, too, we have expressions in the Epistle to the Hebrews precisely similar to some in the other Epistles of Paul. Also the salutations and benedictions at the close of the Epistle to the Hebrews are very like to those of Paul. "Salute them which have the rule over you; they of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen."

S.—What is the testimony of history on this question?

F.—It is certain that the Epistle before us was received among the canonical books of the Christians, both in the East and the West, at the close of the first century, or in the very beginning of the second. It is contained in the Peshito, an old Syrian version of the New Testament, and also in the old Latin version, both made at a very early period. And what is, if possible, more conclusive, it

is quoted repeatedly by Clement of Rome, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and quoted as having scriptural authority. Now this Clement was one of the first bishops or pastors of the church at Rome, and a personal friend of Paul, of whom the Apostle says that "his name is in the book of life" (Phil. iv. 3). Living at the very time and in the place where this Epistle was written, Clement must have known who wrote it. Pantæmus was the most learned man of his time, the founder of the celebrated school at Alexandria, who lived within less than a hundred years of the Apostles. In a passage preserved by Eusebius, he says expressly that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews.* The successor of Pantæmus in the school which he had founded was Clement of Alexandria. In an extract from him preserved also by Eusebius he affirms that Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.† Origen, who succeeded Clement in the school at Alexandria, who was born about the year 185, and was the most learned of the ancient fathers, refers repeatedly and expressly to the Apostle Paul as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Thus, "in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the same Paul says;" and again, "Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews says;" and yet again, "Paul, the greatest of the Apostles, writing to the Hebrews, says," etc.‡ Eusebius, the great historian of the ancient church, says, "Fourteen Epistles are clearly and certainly Paul's." Of course, he includes the Epistle to the Hebrews; since, without it, there would be but thirteen Epistles. This Epistle is often quoted by Eusebius as Scripture, and as belonging to Paul.

S.—Your authorities, thus far, are from the eastern church. How was it in the western?

F.—In the western church we have seen that this Epistle was received and quoted as Scripture by Clement of Rome, before the close of the first century. It is also found in the oldest Latin ver-

*Lib. vi. Cap. 14.

†Lib. vi. Cap. 25.

‡In Students' Com. Vol. i. pp. 109, 110.

sions of the New Testament. Circumstances occurred, however, about the commencement of the third century and onward, tending to bring the Epistle to the Hebrews into disrepute, and cause its canonical authority to be doubted of by some of the Latin fathers. It was received, however, by Ambrose, bishop of Milan, and by Jerome and Augustine. And their authority seems to have been effectual in re-establishing the credit of the Epistle in the western churches. We hear of no more doubts respecting it subsequent to their time.

S.—Is there not a clear intimation in 2 Peter iii. 15, that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews?

F.—There certainly is; and I am glad to notice it. In the early division of apostolical labor, it was arranged that Paul should go to the Gentiles, and Peter to the circumcision (see Gal. ii. 9). Hence, during the latter part of his public life, Peter seems to have confined his ministry chiefly to the Jews. His first Epistle was addressed, not to the native inhabitants of the countries where they dwelt, but to the “strangers scattered throughout” those countries, *i. e.*, to the dispersed converted Hebrews or Jews. And the second was addressed to the same people. “This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto *you*”—the same people to whom the first Epistle was addressed. But in his second Epistle, Peter tells these converted Hebrews that his beloved brother Paul had written *them a letter*—a letter addressed to them particularly, in distinction from his other Epistles. “Even as our beloved brother Paul hath written *unto you*, as also in all his Epistles, speaking of these things.” It seems, then, that Paul had actually written a letter to the converted Hebrews or Jews—the same people to whom Peter was writing. But where shall we look for this Epistle of Paul? Where shall we find it, if it be not our Epistle to the Hebrews?

S.—What was Professor Stuart’s opinion on this question?

F.—After a most thorough and exhaustive examination of the whole subject, he adds: “I cannot hesitate to believe that the weight of evidence from tradition is altogether preponderant in favor of the opinion that Paul was the author of our Epistle.”

S.—Of how much importance is it to establish the Pauline origin of this Epistle?

F.—It is of very great importance; since otherwise we cannot vindicate its canonical authority. The early Christians admitted nothing into the canon but what they knew was written by an Apostle, or written under his immediate direction. “This,” says Professor Stuart, “is an *articulus stantis vel cadentis auctoritatis* in respect to the New Testament canon.” To be sure, Mark and Luke were not Apostles, but then we have it from the Christian fathers that the gospel of Mark was written under the direction of Peter, and the writings of Luke under the oversight of Paul. Eusebius says: “All things in Mark are but memoirs of Peter’s discourses;” and Irenæus testifies that “Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book, the gospel preached by him.” The Epistle to the Hebrews could never have been received into the canon, at the close of the first century, or for the next hundred years, unless it were known to have been the work of an Apostle. But if it was the work of an Apostle, can its author have been any other than the Apostle Paul?

S.—If Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, when and where did he write it?

F.—It was written in Italy, and probably at Rome: “They of Italy salute you.” I have before shown that it must have been written pretty far down in the Apostolic age,—probably near the close of Paul’s first imprisonment,—near the time of the writing of the Epistle to the Philippians. The writer speaks of himself as not yet at liberty, but hopes to be shortly (Chap. xiii. 19, 23).

S.—In what language was this Epistle written?

F.—In the Greek, undoubtedly. The Greek language was now commonly spoken among the Jews in Palestine. If there ever was a Hebrew original, none of the fathers ever saw it or speak of it.

S.—What was the obvious design of the Epistle?

F.—It was to strengthen the faith of the Hebrew Christians, and keep them from relapsing into Judaism or infidelity. The Apostle

begins by showing that the author of the Christian religion was superior in rank to the old prophets, and even to the angels. He was over all things, and all things were subject unto him. Hence there were special reasons why we should listen to him and obey his commands.

Having shown that the great Founder of the Christian faith was superior to the prophets, to Moses, and to the angels, the writer proceeds to say that this religion has a high priest who is vastly higher than that of the Jews, of whom the Jewish high priest was but an emblem, a type. He shows that all the rites of the ancient religion, splendid as they were, were also but types, and were to vanish away. He further shows that the Christian's high priest had an origin more ancient and venerable than that of the Jews; for he went back to Melchizedek, who lived long before the birth of Aaron. The Jew's high priest entered once a year into the holy places made with hands; but the great High Priest of the Christian profession had gone into the Holy Place above, where he ever lived to make intercession for his people.

By considerations such as these, the Apostle endeavors to preserve his Jewish brethren from falling away. Why should they go back from the substance to the shadow? Why linger around the earthly tabernacle, and contemplate the high priest there, when they had such a perfect and glorious high priest, who had gone to be their Advocate in heaven? The Apostle proceeds to urge upon his Jewish brethren, that if they rejected the sacrifice of the Son of God, there was no hope for them. There remained no other sacrifice for sin. The Jewish rites were soon to pass away; and even if they did not, they could not cleanse the soul from sin. They must therefore hold fast their profession. They might be persecuted and opposed, yet they must cling to their hope; for this was their last hope, it was their all.

S.—Is not this Epistle to be regarded as a most important part of the sacred word?

F.—Most certainly it is. Without this Epistle the Book of God

would be incomplete and imperfect. We have enjoined in the Old Testament a great variety of religious rites and institutions—the ark of the covenant, the tabernacle, the altar, the sacrifices, the festivals, the priesthood; and without an interpreter, they would be regarded as little more than mere forms. In fact, by the great body of the Jews, they were so regarded at the coming of Christ. The world needs an interpreter of these institutions; and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have such an interpreter. We know the import now of these venerable institutions. The tabernacle, the temple, the ark of the covenant, the smoking altars and incense, the morning and evening sacrifice, the services of the great day of atonement, all are shown to be full of glorious meaning; and the ritual of the Old Testament, which otherwise would have had no significance, is exhibited as the richest portion of it—the very gospel of God's ancient church. Let us be thankful, then, for the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that it comes to us with so convincing evidence, as being of Pauline, apostolical origin and authority—a most important part of the Book of God.

CONVERSATION XVII.

EPISTLE TO TITUS.—One of Paul's evangelists.—His field of labor.—Introduction of the Gospel into Crete.—The commission of Titus to appoint elders.—Second Epistle to Timothy.—The last of Paul's Epistles.—Expectation of death.—In prison.—Beautiful sentiments.

XIII. THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

Son.—What can you tell us about Titus?

Father.—He was one of Paul's evangelists, who was with him in his missionary labors, and executed his commands. He was a Greek by birth, had not been circumcised, and would not consent to be (Gal. ii. 3). He was converted under the ministry of Paul, who calls him "his own son in the faith."

S.—Where do we first hear of him in connection with Paul?

F.—He went with Paul and Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem, on the question of circumcising the Gentile converts (Gal. ii. 1). Perhaps Paul took him as a fair specimen of a Gentile convert who had not been circumcised.

S.—Where do we next hear of Titus as laboring under Paul's direction?

F.—He probably returned with Paul from Jerusalem to Antioch, and may have been with him generally on his second mission. He certainly was with Paul during his long stay at Ephesus, and was the bearer of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul anxiously waited his return, and was overjoyed on meeting him in Macedonia, and hearing from him the good results of the Epistle. We hear nothing of Titus after this, until we meet him in Crete, in the Epistle before us.

S.—Where is Crete?

F.—It is a large island in the Mediterranean, lying at some distance south of the Grecian islands. The character of the Cretans, in their heathen state, was very bad (Chap. i. 12). At the time of the Apostles, Crete was a Roman province.

S.—When was the gospel introduced into Crete?

F.—We cannot tell. Among the persons who were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, are mentioned *Cretans*. If any of these were converted, they may have carried home with them some knowledge of the gospel. We have no account in the New Testament of the visit of any Apostle to Crete, except that Paul merely touched there on his voyage to Rome (see Acts xxvii. 6, 7). The probability therefore is, that Paul visited the island, in company with Titus, after his release from his first imprisonment, about the year 63. He preached the gospel extensively, and founded churches; but being called to depart sooner than he expected, he left Titus behind him to “set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city.”

S.—Such then was the occasion of this Epistle. Can you tell us where it was written?

F.—Not certainly. Perhaps at Nicopolis; since Paul directs Titus to meet him there (Chap. iii. 12). But this does not much help the matter; since there were several cities in and around Greece bearing the name of Nicopolis. It may have been Nicopolis in Macedonia, or it may have been Nicopolis in Epirus.

S.—What, in general, are the contents of this Epistle?

F.—These are indicated in the duties which Paul was left in Crete to discharge: He was to “ordain elders in every city.” Consequently, some space is occupied in describing the qualifications of the persons to be ordained (Chap. i. 6–9). Paul cautions Titus to be on his guard against “unruly talkers,” and Judaizing teachers; for those disturbers of the peace had already found their way into Crete. He directs Titus as to the instruction he was to impart to different classes of persons—to the aged and the young, to masters and servants. He directs him as to his own deportment and doctrine; and the discipline of the churches. In short, as Dr. Paley remarks in his *Horace Paulinæ*, “Here is a striking resemblance between the circumstances which induced Paul to leave Titus in Crete, and those which existed at Ephesus, when he left Timothy there (see 1 Tim. i. 3, 4). We know that Paul was

driven away from Ephesus before he had finished his work there ; and it is not at all improbable that some such disturbance might have hastened his departure from Crete.

S.—Is there any reason to think that Titus was constituted bishop of Crete ?

F.—There is not, but much reason to the contrary. When Titus had set in order what remained to be done in Crete, he was to meet the Apostle at Nicopolis. At a later period, we hear of him as having gone to Dalmatia (2 Tim. iv. 10).

XIV. SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

S.—Is this the last of Paul's Epistles ?

F.—It is the last of which we have any knowledge. It was evidently written from Rome while Paul was a prisoner there. Some think that it was written during his first imprisonment ; or, as they would say, during his *only* imprisonment. But I cannot be of this opinion. Paul's circumstances, when he wrote this Epistle, were very different from what they were during his first imprisonment. Then he was what may be called a prisoner at large. "He dwelt in his own hired house, and received all who came unto him." But now he was in close confinement—so close that his friends could scarcely find him (Chap. i. 17). During his first imprisonment, especially in the latter part of it, Paul expected a speedy release. "Prepare me a lodging ; for I trust that, through your prayers, I shall be given unto you" (Phil. v. 22). But when he wrote the Epistle before us, he had no such expectations. So far from this, he expected a speedy death. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (Chap. iv. 6).

S.—Is there not an intimation in this Epistle, that Paul had been previously imprisoned, and had been delivered ?

F.—So I understand it : "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me ; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." And why delivered ? "That by me the preaching might

be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear." In other words, "that *I might again preach Christ to the Gentiles.*" Accordingly, several of the early fathers testify, that Paul *was* released from his first imprisonment; that he visited several of the churches which he had before planted; that he preached more widely among the Gentiles than he had ever done; that he was finally brought to Rome during the persecution under Nero, imprisoned a second time, and put to death. It was during this last imprisonment, that the Epistle before us was written,—about the year 65.

S.—Where was Timothy at this time?

F.—Probably at Ephesus. For he was directed to salute the household of good Onesiphorus, who we know was an Ephesian (see Chap. i. 18, iv. 19). He was also warned to beware of "Alexander the coppersmith"—another Ephesian (see Chap. iv. 15, 1 Tim. i. 20). Timothy had been with Paul at Rome,—not literally imprisoned, perhaps, but confined, as it were, by the necessities of Paul's situation; but the Apostle had released him, and sent him to Ephesus.* He now recalls him, and sends Tychicus to take his place (Chap. iv. 12).

S.—Can anything be learned from the Scriptures as to Paul's missionary labors and travels, after the close of his first imprisonment?

F.—I think there may. He undoubtedly visited many of the churches in Asia Minor and in Greece, which he had formerly planted. He had been at Corinth; for Erastus chose to remain there. He had been at Miletus; for there he left Trophimus sick (Chap. iv. 20). He had been at Troas; for there he left his cloak and his parchments. He had also been at Crete; for there he had conducted a successful mission, and had left Titus to complete what he was obliged to leave unfinished. Whether he accomplished his projected journey into Spain, the Scriptures do not inform us. We infer from a passage in Clement that he did; for he says that Paul traveled "to the utmost boundaries of the West." We may be

*This I take to be the meaning of Heb. xiii. 23.

sure that he was busy, so long as he had his liberty. And his enemies were busy also; for they seized him and brought him to Rome during the terrible persecution under Nero, and there he was, a close prisoner, when this Epistle was written.

S.—As to the occasion of the Epistle we need not further inquire; but you will please give us your opinion as to the interest and importance of it.

F.—From what has been said, it will be seen that the Epistle must be one of very great interest. Who would not wish to hear the last words of such a man as the Apostle Paul—what he said, wrote, and did in the last days of his life—when in the near and certain prospect of death? Who would not wish to read what he wrote to a favorite young minister, his dearest personal friend, under these trying and awful circumstances? Here are no shrinkings, no misgivings, no regrets at the sacrifices he had made, the labors he had performed, and the sufferings he had endured in the service of Christ, but all is confidence, earnestness, victory, and praise. “My outward man may perish, but my inner man is full of life. My enemies may kill this poor body; but my Redeemer lives, and his cause shall live and triumph in the earth. I go from the scaffold to a throne and a crown—from the executioner’s block to a kingdom in the heavens—to a seat at the right hand of my Redeemer and Judge.” Yes, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.”

Watts’s versification of this dying declaration of the great Apostle is so sublime and beautiful that I cannot help repeating it.

“Death may dissolve my body now,
And bear my spirit home;
Why do my minutes move so slow,
Nor my salvation come?”

With heavenly weapons I have fought
The battles of the Lord,
Finished my course, and kept the faith,
And wait the sure reward.
God has laid up in heaven for me
A crown which cannot fade ;
The righteous Judge, at that great day,
Shall place it on my head.
God is my everlasting aid,
And hell shall rage in vain ;
To him be highest glory paid,
And endless praise, Amen ”

CONVERSATION XVIII.

THE EPISTLE TO JAMES.—Authorship of this Epistle.—Unbelief of the Lord's brothers and kin in his Messiahship.—James the bishop of Jerusalem.—The scattered Tribes.—Who they were.—A question.—Are the Ten tribes still in existence as a distinct people.—Epistle to Jude.—Character of this letter.

I. THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Son.—Who was the author of this Epistle ?

Father.—Some have thought that it was James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John ; but this cannot be true, since James, the brother of John, was put to death by Herod, long before this Epistle was written (see Acts xii. 2). Others have thought that it was written, not by the other Apostle James, but by still another James, the literal brother of our Lord, who was early made bishop of Jerusalem. But I cannot be of this opinion. It is said of Christ's literal brothers, at a late period in his public ministry, that they did not believe on him (John vii. 5). They may have become believers about the time of his ascension ; but the fact that Jesus did not commit his mother to them, but to John, shows that, at that time, they and their mother were not in full sympathy on the subject of religion. Besides, the manner in which the James who dwelt at Jerusalem is spoken of in the Acts, and in the Epistles of Paul, shows that he must have been an Apostle. It was he who presided in the great church meeting at Jerusalem, and pronounced the decision on the question of circumcising the Gentile converts (Acts xv. 19). Then, when Paul went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, he says: "Other of the Apostles saw I none, *save James, the Lord's brother*" (Gal. i. 19). This proves that the James whom he saw was an Apostle. At his next visit to Jerusalem, Paul saw there "James, Cephas, and John, who *seemed to be pillars,*"—proof again that James was not only an Apostle, but a distinguished Apostle, as much so as Peter or John (Gal. ii. 9). I conclude, therefore, that the James who resided at Jerusalem, and

wrote the Epistle, was no other than the Apostle James. He was not a literal brother of our Lord, but a cousin, and on this account is sometimes called the Lord's brother. Several instances occur in the Scriptures of this use of the term brother among the Jews. Of the life of the Apostle James we have spoken in a previous conversation.

S.—This James is sometimes spoken of as bishop of Jerusalem: Was he a bishop, as well as an Apostle?

F.—I think not. Not only are the two offices not the same, they are incompatible with each other. An Apostle is a missionary—a minister at large—one who has, what Paul tells us he had, “the care of all the churches.” A bishop has, or should have, a pastoral charge. He is the overseer of a particular flock. His attentions are confined to some particular field of labor. That James was an Apostle, we certainly know; but that he was ever, in the proper sense of the term, a bishop, the Scriptures nowhere intimate. This was the fiction of a later age. That, with the consent of his brother Apostles, James for the most part resided at Jerusalem, and that,—in connection with a corps of elders,—he had some care of the great mother church there established, is indubitable; but his care also extended to other churches. This is evident from the interest which he took in the question of circumcising the Gentile converts. It is evident also from the inscription to the Epistle before us: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to *the twelve tribes scattered abroad*,—implying that his watch was over them all.

S.—Who were “the twelve tribes” to whom this Epistle was addressed?

F.—They were Jews and Israelites, who, in the course of ages, had come to be mixed together, were “scattered abroad” throughout the Roman empire, and went under the general name of Jews.

S.—But are not the ten tribes still in existence somewhere, as a separate people?

F.—I think not. Many of the original ten tribes, who were

carried captive, apostatized to the heathen among whom they dwelt. Other many got back to their own land, and settled there, and fell under the general appellation of Jews. Much search has been made for the lost ten tribes; but they have not been found, and never will be, a separate people, anywhere.

S.—Were all those whom James addresses in this Epistle *converted, Christian Jews*?

F.—The most of it was intended for believing Jews; but some parts of it are addressed to those who did not believe. “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts?” This, and the following verses of the fourth chapter, we cannot regard as applicable to Christian Jews of the Apostolic age, but are specially applicable to those murderous zealots with which the holy city was at that time infested.

S.—Has the Epistle of James been generally regarded as canonical?

F.—Its canonical authority was disputed by some in the ancient church, but by most of the fathers it was received. It is found in Peschito, the oldest version extant, and was accepted by the churches in Syria. Having passed the ordeal of ancient criticism, the Epistle was universally received as early as the fourth century. It is well known that Luther, in the early stages of the reformation, rejected the Epistle of James, calling it “an Epistle of straw.” This he did, because he supposed it conflicted with his favorite doctrine of justification by faith. At a later period, he changed his opinion, and received the Epistle as canonical Scripture.

S.—When and where was this Epistle written?

F.—It was written, undoubtedly, at Jerusalem, and not long before the Apostle’s death,—about the year 62 or 63. It has been thought, by some, that the scorching reproofs of James excited the Jews to put him to death.

S.—What seems to have been the general design and object of the Epistle?

F.—It was to refute the errors and correct the vices at that time

prevalent among the Jews,—to some extent among the believing Jews. Among the errors which had made their appearance were those of an Antinomian character—a being saved by faith without the deeds of the law. In refuting these, James has been thought by some to contradict directly the Apostle Paul. But it will be seen, on examination, that the contradiction is only apparent. Paul insists that sinners “are justified by faith, without the deeds of the law;” while James asserts that they “are justified by works, and not by faith only” (Rom. ii. 28, James ii. 24). Paul is reasoning here against the Judaizing teachers, who substituted works, moral and ceremonial, in place of the blood of Christ, as a ground of justification. But James was reasoning against Antinomians, who insisted that, where there was faith, good works were unnecessary. This led him to say that such a faith was dead and worthless, and could not be accepted as the condition of salvation. Against a faith such as this, Paul would have insisted as strenuously as James; while against works, in the sense that Paul abjured them, James would have insisted as strenuously as Paul. It is only necessary to understand the two Apostles,—to consider the circumstances under which they wrote, and the different errors at which they aimed, in order to see that there is no real discrepancy between them.

S.—What is there peculiar in the style of this Epistle?

F.—In some places, it is pointed, vehement; in others it is mild and gentle. In rebuking the vices of the Jewish people,—more especially, as I hope, the unbelieving Jews,—the Apostle uses words that burn. “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Behold the hire of your laborers which have reaped your fields, which is of you kept back, crieth, and the cry hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have

condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you” (Chap. v. 1-6).

In conclusion, the writer exhorts his humble, faithful Christian brethren to wait patiently upon God: “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient, establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (Chap. v. 7, 8).

II. THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

F.—In the first verse of this short Epistle, the writer tells us who he is, and to whom he is writing: “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” This must be Jude the Apostle; and, as he and James were brothers, I have concluded to connect their Epistles in the same conversation.

S.—Is it likely that Jude wrote this Epistle?

F.—I think it is. Its authenticity was called in question for a time, until the churches could become satisfied that Jude was its real author. Since that period, it has been universally received.

S.—Does it not contain some questionable quotations?

F.—Perhaps so. In exposing and denouncing seductive teachers, Jude quotes from an unknown Jewish prophet—the same that Peter quotes from in his second Epistle. He also quotes from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who was translated that he should not see death. How he came by this last quotation, we are not informed. It may have been a tradition among the Jews. Or it may have been taken from the apocryphal book of Enoch. In either case, its being adopted by an inspired Apostle is a sufficient sanction for its truth. Let us be thankful that we have so noble a fragment from the venerable antediluvian patriarch.

S.—Do we know when and where the Epistle of Jude was written?

F.—As to the place where it originated we know nothing. It bears marks of having been written late in the Apostolic age—later, I apprehend, than the second Epistle of Peter, which it so much resembles.

S.—Was it written to any particular church or people?

F.—It was not. It is called the “*General Epistle of Jude* ;” and it is so. It was intended for all Christians—all those “who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.”

S.—And what may be regarded as the design or occasion of it?

F.—This is obvious from the Epistle itself. Like some other of the Epistles, it was intended as a warning against false teachers. The writer commences by saying, “When I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before, of old, ordained to this condemnation—ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jude warns his brethren of the destruction which would follow an apostasy, by telling them of the fate of the unbelieving Israelites who came out of Egypt, but fell in the wilderness; of the ruin of the Apostate angels; and of the destruction of the Sodomites. He cites the fate of the Sodomites as one of *exemplary* punishment. They are “set forth as *examples*, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” In short, this Epistle, though a brief one, is full of solemn warning and instruction; and we are thankful that we have so acceptable an offering from this modest and amiable Apostle.

CONVERSATION XIX.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.—The strangers mentioned in this letter.—Who they were.—The Jewish school at Babylon.—Its distinguished character.—The Babylon as it was at that time.—Second Epistle of Peter.—Its design.—Important doctrine disclosed.

I. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

Son.—Of the life and history of the Apostle Peter we have heard in a previous conversation. Is the Epistle before us unquestionably his. Have there been no doubts as to its authenticity?

Father.—None of any importance. The second Epistle of Peter was doubted of by some in the early age of the church; but the first never.

S.—To whom was it written?

F.—It is addressed “to the strangers scattered abroad, throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythina. The word strangers here denotes that the persons addressed were Jews—dispersed, converted Jews. This is one of the terms by which the scattered Jews were commonly indicated. They were not native inhabitants of the countries where they resided; but were foreigners, residents, strangers. Peter was emphatically the Apostle of the circumcision. It was his assignment to labor chiefly for the Jews, as it was Paul’s to go to the Gentiles. Accordingly; through all the latter part of his public ministry, we find Peter laboring for the Jews. It was natural, therefore, that he should address his Epistle to the dispersed Christian Jews.

S.—Have we indications in the Epistle itself that it was addressed primarily to Jews?

F.—We certainly have. I will cite but one example: “Having your conversation honest among the *Gentiles*; that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (Chap. ii. 12). Obviously, the persons here addressed were not Gentiles, but Jews.

S.—Can we decide positively when this Epistle was written?

F.—We cannot. We know it must have been written late in the Apostolic age—perhaps as late as the year 61. The gospel could not have been sufficiently established in the provinces mentioned in the introduction to require such an Epistle at a much earlier period.

S.—Where was Peter when he wrote this Epistle?

F.—He says near the close of it: “The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you” (Chap. v. 13). The writer must have been at this time at Babylon,—not Babylon in Egypt, nor at Rome (which is sometimes mystically called Babylon), but at Babylon in Assyria. The old Babylon, which Nebuchadnezzar built, had indeed been destroyed; but a new Babylon had been built, about forty miles north of the old city, where, I have no doubt, the Epistle was written. The Jews had been numerous, in all this section of country, from the time of the captivity until long after the coming of Christ. This new Babylon was the seat of a distinguished school of Jewish learning, from which the largest and most elaborate of the Talmuds was issued. This great body of his own nation the Apostle of the circumcision thought it incumbent on him to visit. He had established a church here; and from this place he sent his Epistle, by Sylvanus, one of Paul’s evangelists, to “the strangers scattered abroad.”

S.—What may we suppose was the principal design and object of the Epistle?

F.—The design obviously was, to encourage and strengthen his brethren to persevere in their Christian course, and by an eminently holy, circumspect behavior, to silence their opposers and persecutors, and win them over to the obedience of faith. The enemies of the Christians, in those times, were accustomed to reproach and vilify them, and accuse them of the foulest crimes; and the Apostle exhorts them, “by well-doing, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” He exhorts them also to the faithful performance of all relative and social duties—those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. He urges the faithful discharge

of these duties, not from mere worldly considerations, but from the love of Christ, and their obligations to him, and from the certainty that they must, ere long, stand before him in the judgment, and give an account of all their deeds.

S.—Are there any new disclosures of truth in this Epistle ?

F.—We find truths here which are not so clearly revealed elsewhere in the Bible ; as, for example, that it was the *Spirit of Christ*, which spake by the ancient prophets, and by Noah (Chap. iii. 19) ; that the ungodly men to whom Noah preached were not annihilated, but are “spirits in prison,” reserved unto the final judgment ; that the waters of the flood, which bore up Noah and his family, were a type of the water of baptism ; that “the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (Chap. v. 8).

S.—What is the spirit manifested in this Epistle ?

F.—It is eminently Christian,—very different from that sometimes manifested by Peter during the personal ministry of Christ. We see nothing here of that forward, positive, dogmatical spirit, so often exhibited during the life of Christ ; but the whole man appears softened, tender, gentle, subdued,—full proof that he had grown in knowledge, as well as in grace ; that he had learned lessons in the school of experience, which he failed to learn from the lips even of the Son of God. The Epistle before us is one of great beauty and excellence, not only in its design, but its execution. Ostervald says “it is one of the finest books in the New Testament ;” and Erasmus, a Roman Catholic, says, “It is worthy of the Prince of the Apostles, and full of apostolical dignity and authority.”

II. THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

S.—You have said that the authenticity of this Epistle was called in question by some in the ancient church. Were the doubts then entertained well founded ?

F.—These doubts prove nothing, unless it be the extreme caution with which the early fathers accepted any writing, as coming from the Apostles. As soon as they became satisfied that Peter

wrote this Epistle (and that was at a very early period) it was thankfully received as a part of the book of God.

The Epistle affirms, in the most positive manner, that Peter wrote it. "Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them which have obtained like precious faith with us," etc. Is this declaration true? Or is this holy Epistle the production of a downright forger and liar? Besides, this Epistle contains passages which could have been written by no one except Peter. "This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance" (Chap. iii. 1). "I think it meet, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the most excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven *we heard*, when we were with him in the holy mount" (Chap. i. 13-18). Who that had not seen and walked and conversed with Christ, and witnessed his transfiguration, could have given utterance to language such as this?

S.—What was the principal objection to the authenticity of this Epistle?

F.—A supposed difference of style. But this can apply to only a portion of the second chapter, in which,—describing certain false teachers and denouncing their doom,—the Apostle seems to quote the language of some Jewish prophet, to us unknown: "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls" (Chap. iii. 13, 14). The Apostle Jude refers, as we have seen, to the same unknown writer, though in somewhat different terms.

S.—Do such quotations by an inspired writer become thereby authoritative inspiration?

F.—I think so. The Holy Spirit would not lead an Apostle to make such a quotation, if he did not mean to sanction it as the word of God.

S.—Do we know when this Epistle was written?

F.—Not certainly. It must have been written after the Epistles of Paul, for the writer refers to them (Chap. iii. 15, 16). It was written, too, near the close of the Apostle's life, when he was expecting, in a short time, to be removed: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as the Lord hath showed me."

S.—Where was the Apostle when he wrote this Epistle?

F.—We do not know. He may have been at Rome, awaiting his martyrdom.

S.—To whom is the Epistle addressed?

F.—To the same class of persons as his former Epistle: "This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto *you*"—to dispersed Jewish converts in the Roman empire, and everywhere else—"those who have obtained like precious faith with us."

S.—Why did the Apostle write a second Epistle to them? What was the more immediate design of it?

F.—He foresaw that false teachers were about to pour in upon them, and draw them away from the faith of the gospel, and he wrote a message of warning, to strengthen and establish them. "There will be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them" (Chap. ii. 1). To denounce these troublesome, pernicious teachers, and secure his brethren against their influence, was the main design, undoubtedly, of this Epistle.

S.—Does it contain any new developments of doctrine?

F.—Like the first Epistle, it discloses some important doctrines more fully than we find them in other parts of the Bible. We are here informed expressly of the fall of the rebel angels; of the final

conflagration ; and of the new heavens and the new earth. “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth, also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Nevertheless, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness” (Chap iii. 10-13).

On the whole, we should be devoutly thankful for this second Epistle of the great Apostle. It contains his last words of which we have any knowledge ; and certainly they are words fitly spoken—warnings, predictions brought faithfully before us, to which we should give diligent heed. “Seeing we look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness !”

CONVERSATION XX.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.—Design of this Epistle.—The literal body of Christ denied.—John's description of Anti-Christ.—The doctrine of the atonement.—The unpardonable sin.—The second and third Epistles of St. John.

I. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

Son.—As the Apostle John does not attach his name to this Epistle, how do we know that he wrote it?

Father.—It is universally ascribed to him by the ancient fathers. Its authenticity was never disputed. The Apostle John scarcely needs to affix his name to any of his writings; they are known by their style.

S.—Is there any marked peculiarity about the style of John?

F.—There certainly is. “His sentences,” says Doddridge, “considered separately, are clear and intelligible; but when we look for their connection, we frequently meet with greater difficulties than we do in the Epistles of Paul. The principal characteristic of his manner is an artless simplicity, and a singular modesty and candor, joined with a wonderful sublimity of sentiment. His conceptions are not the result of reasoning and investigation, but rather of insight. They are delivered to us as they arose in his own mind.” In short, John was the mystic in the college of the Apostles, as Paul was the scholastic.

S.—What appears to have been the design of this first Epistle?

F.—It was to expose and denounce Gnosticism, particularly in its bearing upon the person of Christ; and to inculcate and enforce that spirit of love of which he was himself so eminent an example.

S.—What was the leading principle of the Gnostic philosophy, which was threatening the churches, before the death of the Apostle John?

F.—It was this,—that matter is inherently and essentially corrupting,—the source of all evil, and of all vice. This led those under the influence of it to a “neglecting of the body,” to a de-

nial of the resurrection of the body, and (what was particularly annoying to the Apostle John) to a denial of the literal body of the Savior. "He never had a material body. To suppose this would be corrupting and degrading to him. He seemed to those about him to have a body, but he had none. It was all an illusion. He was a mere specter, without any body of flesh and blood." Such was the teaching of the Gnostics,—or of that portion of them with whom John came in contact,—in regard to the person of Christ; and I hardly need say that John, without naming it, strenuously opposed it. For he saw in it a subversion of the gospel. It was this which led him to say, in the first verse of this Epistle, that he had not only seen, but *handled* the word of life." A specter may be seen, but not handled. It was this which led him to affirm so strenuously that Jesus Christ had come *in the flesh*, and to denounce as antichrist him who denied it." Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even already is it in the world" (Chap. iv. 1-3).

S.—Can we tell when and where this Epistle was written?

F.—Not certainly. I think that all John's Epistles were written at or near Ephesus, to which place he removed after the destruction of Jerusalem. The indications also are that they were written near the close of the first century,—perhaps as late as the years 91 or 92. The Gnostic errors had not prevailed in this region, at least in a degree to become formidable, at a much earlier period.

S.—Was this Epistle addressed to any particular church, or churches? Or was it intended for Christians generally?

F.—It was intended primarily, no doubt, for the churches of lesser Asia, of which the Apostle seems to have had special charge;

but ultimately for all the children of God,—as it is eminently appropriate and profitable to them all. In this respect it may well be called a *catholic* Epistle, *i. e.*, a writing designed for all men.

S.—Does John bring out prominently, in this Epistle, the great and leading doctrines of the gospel?

F.—Some of them he brings forward very prominently; as the true doctrine of Christ's person, together with that of his atonement and intercession. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (Chap. ii. 1, 2). We have here also the doctrine of the unpardonable sin. "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye shall pray for it" (Chap. v. 16). In short, the whole Epistle is remarkable for the purity and excellence of its teaching, for the kindness of its spirit, and for the beautiful example which it furnishes of a ripe and established Christian, befitting most worthily "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

II. THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

S.—Is it certain that these Epistles were written by John?

F.—For a time, their authenticity was called in question in the early church; and the reason is obvious. The fathers would receive nothing into their canon which they were not sure had been written by an Apostle, or written under his direction. And as these Epistles were short, were written to private persons, and circulated, perhaps, rather privately, it was a considerable time before the whole church could see them, and be satisfied as to their authenticity; as fast as the churches became satisfied that they were really written by the Apostle John, they were admitted to a place in the sacred canon. Dr. Lardner informs us that they were quoted by Irenæus, and referred to by Clement of Alexandria, both of them living in the second century. At a later period, they were received by Athanasius, by Cyril of Jerusalem, by the Council of Laodicea, by Epiphanius, by Jerome, and Augustine. In fact, they have all

John's peculiarities about them, and are evidently from the same hand which wrote the first Epistle.

S.—On what occasion were these short Epistles written?

F.—The first was sent to “the elect lady”—some distinguished Christian female in the East—to warn her and her children against the influence of false and seducing teachers—the same as those referred to in the first Epistle. “Many deceivers,” says John, “are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ has come *in the flesh*. This is a deceiver and an Anti-Christ.”

The second Epistle is addressed “to the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.” This I take to be the same Gaius whom Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Romans,—not merely because he has the same name, but because he is like him in character and liberality. Gaius was the host who entertained Paul during his long residence at Corinth (see Rom. xvi. 23), and the Gaius to whom John writes is engaged in the same benevolent work. “Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers, who have borne witness of thy charity before the church; whom, if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well” (v. 5, 6). The Apostle censures Diotrephes, “who loves to have the pre-eminence,” but commends Demetrius, “who hath a good report of all men, and of the truth itself.” These short Epistles give us a pleasing idea of the kind of intercourse which prevailed among the early Christians, and of the faithful, parental inspection which was exercised over them by the venerable Apostle.

CONVERSATION XXI.

THE REVELATION.—Doubts as to the authorship.—Reasons for those doubts.—When written.—Banishment of John.—State of the seven churches at this time.—The scheme of the Jesuits.—Different interpretations.

THE REVELATION.

Son.—This book is repeatedly ascribed to John: Are you sure that this was the Apostle John?

Father.—Such is the testimony of nearly all the fathers from Justin Martyr down to the fourth century.

S.—When and why was the authenticity of the book called in question? What led Caius of Rome, and Nepos of Alexandria, and others, to entertain doubts respecting it?

F.—These doubts were entertained, not at all on historical grounds, but for reasons purely doctrinal. The historical proof of the apostolical and canonical authority of the Apocalypse was ample; but the millenarians had laid hold of a passage in the twentieth chapter—that which speaks of the binding of Satan for a thousand years—and urged it in proof of their peculiar sentiments. And the fathers above mentioned thought that, perhaps, the best way to be rid of the troublesome passage was to discard the book which contained it. After the revolution under Constantine, the millenarianism of the primitive times fell into disrepute. And from that period the authority of the Apocalypse was fully restored, and, with few exceptions, has been maintained ever since.

S.—What has led so many of the German critics of the present day to doubt the authenticity of the Apocalypse?

F.—It is the style of the book—its peculiar words and phrases—an argument by which these men have shown themselves capable of proving or disproving almost anything. And yet the style of the Apocalypse is not more different from the other writings of John, than is the subject, the method, the object of the composition. How is it possible, in writing such a book as that before us, made

up, in great part, of visions, types, and symbolic representations,—that the style should not differ from that of a plain historic narrative, or a familiar loving Epistle. Any competent critic would decide beforehand, that there must be peculiar expressions, and a wide diversity of style.

S.—But if the Apostle John wrote the Apocalypse, when did he write it? What is the proper date of the book?

F.—On this question, modern interpreters are divided. That the book was written in a time of persecution, while John was banished to the isle of Patmos, or soon after his return, is on all sides admitted. But when was John banished to the isle of Patmos? What persecution was raging when the Apocalypse was written? Was it the persecution under Nero, about the year 66; or was it the persecution under Domitian, some thirty years later?

S.—Does not this question of time materially affect the interpretation of the book?

F.—It certainly does. Those who adopt the earlier date,—among whom are most of the German and some American critics,—believe that much of the prophetic part of the revelation was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the life and death of Nero; while those who fix upon the later date give to the prophetic part of the book a much wider range of signification. For myself, I have no doubt that John was banished to Patmos by Domitian, and that he wrote the Apocalypse, either on the island, or shortly after his return, near the close of the first century.

S.—What proof have you of this position?

F.—In the first place, we have the testimony of nearly all the Christian fathers. I refer, first of all, to Irenæus, who was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John. He must have been familiarly acquainted with the circumstances of John's banishment, with the time of it, and by whom it had been decreed. He could not have been mistaken on these points, nor is there any mistake or ambiguity in his testimony. "The Apocalypse," he tells us, "was seen, not long ago, but almost in our own generation, near the end

of the reign of Domitian.”* This testimony has never been set aside, and cannot be. It is enough of itself, considering the circumstances, to decide the question before us.

But this testimony does not stand alone. It is concurred in by nearly all the more distinguished fathers. Victorinus says repeatedly that John was banished by Domitian, and in his time saw the Revelation. Hippolytus speaks of John as having been exiled to Patmos under Domitian, where he saw the Apocalypse. Eusebius, speaking of the persecution, says, “In this persecution, John the Apostle, being still alive, was banished into the isle of Patmos.”† Jerome, in his book of illustrious men, says: “Domitian, in the fourteenth year of his reign, raised the next persecution after Nero, when John was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Revelation.” In another work, he says: “John was a prophet; he saw the Revelation in the isle of Patmos, where he was banished by Domitian.”‡ Sulpicius Severus says, that John the Apostle was banished by Domitian to the isle of Patmos, where he had visions, and where he wrote the Revelation.”

S.—Is this mass of external testimony supported by internal evidence?

F.—It is. A great variety of evidence drawn from the book itself goes to assure us that it could not have been written until near the close of the first century. It was not till this time, that the first day of the week began to be called “the Lord’s day”—as it is in the first chapter of the Revelation. It was not till near the close of the first century, that there was a presiding elder or “angel,” in each of the churches. Previous to this, the elders of the churches are always classed together on terms of equality. It is obvious that the seven churches of Asia were in a very different condition, when the Apocalypse was written, from what they were in the time of Nero and of Paul. The church at Ephesus had

**Contra Hæses*, v. 20.

†*Ecc. Hist. Lib. iii. Cap. 18.*

‡*Works*, Vol. vi. pp. 120, 446.

“lost its first love.” The church at Smyrna had those in its communion, who belonged to “the synagogue of Satan.” The church at Pergamos harbored not only the Nicolaitanes, but those who “held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel.” The church at Thyatira suffered “the woman Jezebel to teach, to seduce its members to commit fornication, and to eat things offered to idols.” The church at Sardis had only a few names left which had not defiled their garments; while the members of the church at Laodicea had become so lukewarm, and offensive to Christ, that he was ready to “spew them out of his mouth.” In short, these churches had all of them *declined*—*sally declined* from what they were when Paul wrote his Epistles to some of them; and *time must be allowed*—a *considerable time*, in which to account for such a declension. If we suppose the Apocalypse to have been written during the persecution under Nero, the requisite time is not furnished. But if the book was written thirty years later, in the persecution under Domitian, the declension can be accounted for, at least on the score of time.

S.—Who originated the idea, in modern times, that most of the predictions in the Apocalypse were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the tyranny and death of Nero?

F.—This scheme of interpretation was first invented by the Jesuits, with a view to rescue Popery from the blasting visions and denunciations of the Apocalypse. It was earnestly adopted by the Rationalists of Germany. It has found favor with a class of interpreters in England and in this country,—among whom I am sorry to include the late Professor Stuart of Andover, and Professor Cowles of Oberlin.

S.—What arguments do these men urge in favor of their interpretation?

F.—They urge that it is said of the things predicted in the Apocalypse, that they would be fulfilled *quickly*. And so it is said of the resurrection, and the general judgment, and the final state of the righteous and the wicked, in the closing chapter of

the Apocalypse, that *they must shortly be done*. And yet they are not done. They are still future. The language in question is not to be understood according to our estimation of time, but rather as God estimates it,—to whom “one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

It is assumed by these interpreters, that the *coming of Christ*, spoken of in Rev. i. 7, is his coming to destroy Jerusalem, because of the intimation that some who were actually concerned in his crucifixion would be present: “Every eye shall see him, and *they also which pierced him*. But in the sense in which the murderous Jews pierced the Savior, we all have pierced him by our sins. He was literally pierced by only one man, and he a Roman soldier. Also in the same sentence with that quoted above it is said, that “all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” But were all the kindreds of the earth present, with their wailing and lamentations, when Jerusalem was destroyed; or is this scene reserved to the final coming of Christ to judge the world?

It is still further urged that the Apocalypse must have been written as early as the time of Nero, since only seven churches are mentioned in it, which probably was the whole number existing at that time in Asia Minor. But it would be easy to show that there were many churches in Asia Minor, before the death of Peter and Paul. In addition to those addressed in the Apocalypse, there were churches, certainly, in Iconium, in Lystra, in Derbe, in the Pisidian Antioch, in Hierapolis, in Pontus, in Cappadocia, in Bythinia, in Cilicia, in Galatia, in Colosse, and probably in many other places.

In short, we find nothing, in the Apocalypse, or out of it, which should lead us to think that it was written during the persecution under Nero, and that the most of it relates to his death, to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to the fall of Pagan Rome. Hence we adopt the other supposition, that it was written during the persecution under Domitian, near the close of the first century, and that it takes a much wider range of signification than that referred to above.

CONVERSATION XXII.

THE REVELATION CONTINUED.—Location of Patmos.—Use of it by the Romans.—Vision of John.—Explanation of the symbols of the first two chapters.—The number seven.—Cherubim.—What it is.—The sea of glass.—The new song.—Universal salvation.—Is it universal?

Son.—Where is Patmos, the place of John's banishment?

Father.—It is a desolate island in the Ægean sea, lying between Icaria and the promontory of Miletus. It is some six or eight miles in length, but its average breadth is scarcely more than one mile. It has no trees or rivers, and very little land that is capable of cultivation. Owing to its isolated and desolate condition, it was frequently used by the Romans as a place of banishment for criminals.

S.—In this lonely and desolate island, was the Apostle entirely deserted?

F.—By no means. In the absence of earthly friends and comforts, he seems to have enjoyed the most precious communion with Christ, and the most glorious manifestations or visions of his presence. We have a glowing account of one of these visions—perhaps the first of them—in the first chapter of the Revelation. It occurred, like the Pentecost, on the first day of the week—"the Lord's day;" thus setting a new honor upon the Sabbath of the Christian dispensation. "I was in the spirit, on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. And I turned to see the voice which spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the

sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." Such was the appearance of the glorified Son of God, manifesting himself to his suffering disciple on this memorable occasion.

S.—What now occurred between John and his Divine Master?

F.—After the first surprise of his appearance had passed away, Christ proceeds to give to John his commission to write the book of Revelation—the very book now open before us. And in the commission itself a threefold division of the book is indicated. "Write," says he, "*the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*" According to the division here indicated, the first part of the book is comprised in the first chapter: For here is the record which John made of the resplendent and glorious vision which he had witnessed. The second part of the book—"the things which are"—is comprised in the second and third chapters. Here we have the messages of instruction and warning which were to be sent to the seven churches in Asia. This part of the book is not prophetic at all. It refers simply to things which *are*. The third part of the book—the *prophetic* part—commences properly with the sixth chapter. The fourth and fifth chapters, in which is presented a bright vision of heaven, may be regarded as introductory to the third or prophetic part.

S.—Please explain to us some of the symbols in these two introductory chapters—these visions of heaven.

F.—In the commencement of the fourth chapter, John tells us that he "looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was, as it were, of a trumpet talking with me, which said unto me, come up hither, and I will show thee things which shall be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And his appearance was like to that of a jasper, or as a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald."

The personage which John saw sitting on the throne was, undoubtedly, the Eternal Father—the grand executive head of the Divine administration, whose office-work it is to guard the honors of the eternal throne. The rainbow round about the throne was a bow of promise, indicating that the throne of the Eternal is one, not only of judgment, but of grace. John “saw seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” This I understand to be a symbolic representation of the Holy Spirit. The Hebrews regarded seven as a perfect number. Hence the seven lamps, or seven spirits, denote God’s perfect Holy Spirit.

John also “saw round about the throne four and twenty seats, and upon the seats four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and having on their heads crowns of gold. He saw, also, four living creatures—improperly translated beasts—full of eyes before and behind.”

S.—What is represented by these four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures?

F.—It is generally understood,—and I think correctly,—that the four and twenty elders represent the redeemed church in heaven. The living creatures may properly be called *cherubim*; as they are very like to the cherubim and seraphim which Isaiah and Ezekiel saw, in the commencement of their prophetic visions (Is. vi. 2. Ezek. i. 5).

S.—And what are chernbin?

F.—They are, I have no doubt, *personal beings*. Personal offices and acts are ascribed to them. They unite with other personal beings in singing songs of praise to God and the Lamb. And not only are they personal beings, but *heavenly* beings. Their home is in heaven. Their work and worship are near the eternal throne.

S.—Are they then a distinct *class* of heavenly beings? Or are they a distinct order of existing classes—holy angels and redeemed souls?

F.—I incline to the latter opinion. We know of but two dis-

tinct classes of heavenly beings—angels and glorified men. Yet among these, we read of different orders; some higher, and some lower; some near the throne, and others at greater distance from it. There are “principalities and powers in heavenly places.” There are angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim. And of those who have gone from earth to heaven, some are farther advanced than others; since every one is to be rewarded according to his works. The cherubim, I think, are among the highest orders of celestial beings, who stand nearest the Eternal, and are specially the servants of his throne. So they are represented in the Scriptures. In the Jewish tabernacle and temple, where were figures of cherubim, their place was near by the glorious Shekinah—the visible manifestation of the Divine presence. And when Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up, above it stood the seraphim, crying one to another, “holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts.” The cherubim which Ezekiel saw were in a still more obvious attitude of service. They are represented as bearing up the throne of God, and as constituting the chariot of his glory. The Psalmist represents the Almighty as riding upon a cherub—

“On cherub and on cherubim
Full royally he rode.”

In the Revelation, too, the living creatures, the cherubim, are represented as having their places in the midst of the throne and round about it.

S.—That this place of honor is occupied, and has been from the beginning, by a superior order of angels is indubitable. But is it occupied by the angels only? Or do a portion of the *ransomed* ones share with them in this service and honor?

E.—But for a single passage,—and that one in the chapters we are considering, we might feel constrained to answer this question in the negative. But in the vision before us, “the living creatures,” the cherubim, are represented as uniting with the four and twenty elders in singing the new song of redeeming mercy (Chap. ix. 10, 11). “And when the Lamb had taken the book out of the

hands of him who sat upon the throne, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, and they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Chap. v. 9). There is no evading the force of this passage. The living creatures, the cherubim, do here unite with the other representatives of the ransomed church, in singing the song of redeeming mercy—a song which none can ever learn but those who have been redeemed from among men.

S.—What is indicated by the faces and forms of the cherubim?

E.—Probably their characters, their properties, their powers. The first was like a lion, to indicate their courage and strength. The second was like a calf or young ox, to indicate their patience of labor. The third had the face of a man, to indicate their intelligence. The fourth was like a flying eagle, to indicate the rapidity of their motions in accomplishing the service of God. They were also furnished with wings, and had eyes before and behind, still further to indicate the properties we have ascribed to them.

S.—What further did John see in heaven?

E.—He saw "in the right hand of him that sat upon the throne a book, written within, and on the back side sealed with seven seals." And he saw "a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." This book which John saw was not enclosed in covers, like our books. It was a great roll of parchment, closely rolled up, and sealed on the back with seven seals; so that when one seal was broken, it could be unrolled a certain way to disclose what was behind it; and when another seal was broken, it could be unrolled farther, and disclose more. This was the book of prophecy—the book of God's inscrutable purposes, into which no created being in heaven, or on earth, or anywhere else, was able to look.

And John says: "I wept much, because no one was found able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders said unto me: Weep not; for behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Here, the Lord Jesus Christ—"the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David"—is first brought upon the heavenly scene. He comes forward in appearance as a lamb that had been slain, and takes the book out of the hands of him that sat upon the throne. He breaks the stubborn seals, unrolls the mystic scroll, and shows the prophetic symbols that were concealed behind it.

S.—What great truth of the gospel is here set forth?

F.—The proper Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. No created being in heaven, or earth, or anywhere else, could break one of these seals, or disclose what was concealed under it. In other words, no created being in the universe can look out into the distant, contingent future, and tell us what shall be hereafter. But Christ can do this easily, infallibly, thus proving his claim to a proper Divinity.

S.—What are we to understand by the sea of glass, like unto crystal, which John saw before the throne?

F.—Most interpreters have supposed a reference here to the molten sea which Solomon placed in the temple, intended for ablutions and purifications; but I doubt the fact of such a reference. The scenery in the vision is not that of the Jewish temple, but rather that of heaven itself, where was the throne of God and the Lamb, and the countless myriads of worshipers. I think that what seemed to the eye of the Apostle like a sea of polished crystal was rather the pavement round about the throne, where the worshipers presented themselves. And this accords with another vision in this wonderful book (Chap. xv.): "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and they that have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image *stand on the sea of glass*, having the harps of God." They do not bathe in the sea, or wash or purify

themselves in it. They need no ablutions in heaven. But they *stand upon it*, as upon a polished and glittering pavement.

S.—Why is the song of redeeming mercy, sung by the living creatures and the elders, here called a *new* song?

F.—This song may be called new, on account of its *surpassing interest*. It will always be new. It can never grow old, or (which is the same) become uninteresting. It may also be called new, because it *is* comparatively a new song in heaven. It has not been sung there always; nor for a very long period. Heaven had been inhabited by holy, happy creatures long ages before the new song had ever been chanted there. Bright angels of different orders had lifted up their hearts and voices in praise to their almighty Creator; but they had never sung the song of redeeming mercy. They had no idea of such a song, and no thought that it ever could or would be sung anywhere. The new song was sung on earth, before it was heard in heaven. It was not until redeemed souls had been gathered from the earth, and received up to heaven, that the living creatures and the elders commenced singing the new song before the throne.

S.—Near the close of the new song, the ransomed ones are represented as saying: “Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth” (Chap. v. 10). What does this imply? Are the redeemed in heaven to come back to earth, and literally reign upon it?

F.—I think not. The whole scene presented in this vision is symbolical. The living creatures and the elders symbolize the redeemed church. And their song implies, not that they are literally to descend to the earth, and have crowns and kingdoms here, but that God’s church is yet to reign upon the earth. It is to predominate over all other interests. In the words of Daniel: “The kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High” (Dan. vii. 27).

S.—In the grand chorus of the new song, “every creature which

is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea," are represented as singing, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." This language has often been quoted as proving the doctrine of universal restoration. However long the reign of sin may be, the time will come, when every creature that is in heaven, or on earth, or in the sea, or anywhere else, will be brought to Christ, and will unite in singing praises to God and the Lamb forever. What will you say to this argument?

F.—It is a sufficient refutation of this conceit to remember, that the language here used *is not prophecy*. It does not belong to the prophetic part of the Revelation. That commences, as I have said, with the sixth chapter. John is not predicting, in the verses before us, a universal restoration, to be accomplished far down in the cycles of time, but he is recording what he actually saw and heard at the time of the vision. And what did he see and hear? He heard every creature that was then in heaven, holy angels and the spirits of holy men,—some of whose bodies were still mouldering on the earth, or under the earth, or in the sea,—he heard them all singing with a loud voice: "Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." This is all the Universalism that this passage teaches; and it is, as you see, no Universalism at all. What can be inferred, as to the final destination of men, from the fact that, some eighteen hundred years ago, John heard all heaven uniting in a grand chorus of praise to Jehovah and the Lamb?

CONVERSATION XXIII.

THE REVELATION CONTINUED.—Predictions—To what they refer.—God's design in making the Revelation.—Symbols.—What they are.—The division of the Apocalypse.—Explanation of the White Horse.—The Seven Seals.—The Seven Trumpets.—The Mighty Angel with the rainbow about his head.—Adventism.

Son.—We come now to the third, the *prophetical* part of the Revelation—that relating to “things which shall be hereafter.” To what, in general, do these predictions refer?

Father.—They refer to leading events in the history of God's church, from the time when they were written, to the end of the world. Not that they furnish a syllabus, in minute detail, of the civil and ecclesiastical history of the world; but leading events, whether prosperous or adverse, pertaining to the history of God's church, and of the kingdoms of the world as connected with it, are here symbolically set forth.

S.—Are they presented in a strictly chronological order?

F.—I think not. Still, there is some regard paid to chronology; for the prediction commences with the early conquests of the gospel, and ends with its final triumph in this world, and its glorious consummation in heaven. But then we are not to look for regular chronological sequences from chapter to chapter, nor anything like it. The visions and revelations are mostly scenic, and great occurrences are represented frequently in successive scenes, that a more full and complete view of them may be exhibited. The course of the gospel through the ages, as set forth in these visions, is not one of quiet prevalence, but rather one of long and terrible conflict. Earth and hell are arrayed against it, and the contest is protracted and dreadful. The church is represented as struggling against its mortal enemies—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, and is sometimes, apparently, on the verge of destruction. All the way, however, it is sustained by the ministry of angels, and by frequent interpositions of the Son of God; and in the end, the conflict comes out gloriously. The mystic Babylon is with

violence thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. "The great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications," is brought to judgment and is condemned. The beasts, which had so long ravaged the church, are destroyed. The dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, is caught and imprisoned, to come out no more for a long period. A song goes up from all the host of heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power be unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments."

S.—What was the design of Christ, in making these revelations?

F.—It was to instruct and warn the people of God. It was to strengthen and comfort them, during their long conflict with earth and hell, setting before them its glorious termination, and the certainty of their final security and triumph. Confined in dark dungeons, and tortured in every form that a hellish ingenuity could invent; chained to the burning pile, or torn by savage beasts, or thrown from the tops of rocks, or drowned in the deep; who can tell how much God's suffering people have been comforted by reflecting on the glowing visions of this wonderful book? It was here that they gathered arms for the deadly fight, and strength to triumph over their last enemy.

S.—These revelations, you say, are imparted by means of symbols: What are symbols?

F.—They are not the same as types, or figures of speech, but are the setting forth of moral ideas by pictures, or natural objects. Thus a circle is a symbol of eternity, having neither beginning nor end; an eye is a symbol of wisdom; a lion of courage; a lamb of meekness and gentleness; and a dove of innocence. Not a few of the symbols employed in the Revelation are interpreted by the writer or speaker. Thus it is said in the first chapter: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches." And in the seventeenth chapter: "The seven heads are the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth;" and "the ten horns are ten kings" or kingdoms.

So the bread and wine in the sacrament are symbols of the body and blood of Christ. And where the symbol is not explained, it is not usually of difficult interpretation. The nature of it will suggest its import, with at least sufficient clearness to answer the purpose of the writer. The design of prophecy does not require that there should be an explicit statement of what is to take place, with a detail of names, dates, and circumstances; but only such a statement as will show that some future event was intended, and will so far indicate or describe the event, that when it comes to pass, it may be seen that it really was the event referred to. It is no part of the object of the prophetic Scriptures to enable the interpreter to prophesy, but rather to confirm his faith, and that of the whole church, when the event shall actually have occurred. And this may be done by appropriate symbols, as well as in any other way.

S.—In the prophetical part of the Apocalypse, do we find any obvious plan or method? Can any such be traced and pointed out?

F.—I think it can be. The prophetical portion of the Apocalypse is obviously divided into two parts. The first train of predictions terminates at the Millennium. The seven seals, including the trumpets, run on to this stage; for when the seventh angel sounded, there were great voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” In other words, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the millennium is ushered in. But as the latter part of this long period is but dimly indicated by the seals and trumpets, there is a fuller exhibition of it in successive symbols and visions, in order to make the view more complete. These commence with the rise of the Papal power, and extend onward to the millennium, through the 1260 years. The two first of these superadded symbols are the treading of the holy city, the church, under foot by the Gentiles for forty and two months; and the prophesying of the two witnesses in sackcloth, for the

same period (Chap. xi. 2, 3). The third is that of the woman fleeing into the wilderness, to be nourished and protected there for the same period (Rev. xii). And the fourth is that of the two beasts which were to continue their ravages for the same time (Chap. xiii. 5). These all spread over the same period—a period covered too by the seal, and trumpets—and terminate in the great conflict immediately preceding the millennium.

And, as though even these had not depicted events with sufficient fullness and clearness, they are supplemented by several other symbols and visions. Thus there is the vision of the great harlot, riding on the Roman beast; and of the seven angels pouring out their seven vials—the seven *last plagues*; and of the terrific fall of the mystical Babylon; and of the closing victory of the Son of God (Rev. xvi.–xiv). Thus ends the first train of Apocalyptic visions, terminating, as I said, with the millennium.

The second train of predictions included the millennium; the defection following it; the final overthrow of all God's enemies; the resurrection and general judgment; the end of the wicked in the lake of fire; and the eternal glories of God's church in heaven.

It will be seen that here is plan and method. The more complicated part of it is the 1260 years preceding the millennium, where several visions are recorded, not following each other chronologically, but spreading over the same period, for the purpose of a greater fullness and completeness of delineation.

S.—We will not ask you to explain all the symbols of the Apocalypse, but can you not indicate, in few words, what you think to be the import of some of the seals and the trumpets?

F.—The white horse, under the first seal, with the great Captain of our salvation seated upon it, going forth “conquering and to conquer,” obviously sets forth the rapid triumphs of the gospel in the second and third centuries. The red, the black, and the pale horses, under the next three seals, indicate the various calamities—wars, famine, and pestilence, which successively befell the Roman empire, down to the time of Constantine (Rev. vi. 3–8). On the

opening of the fifth seal, we behold clear indications of *persecution*—the last and most terrible of the Pagan persecutions—that under Diocletian (Rev. vi. 9–11). The great earthquake, under the sixth seal, denotes the mighty revolution under Constantine, which put down all the heathen magistrates and priests, removed the capital from Rome to Constantinople, and placed Christianity on the throne (Rev. xi. 12–17). On the opening of the seventh seal, the seven angels appear with their trumpets,—showing that the trumpets are all included under the seventh seal (Rev. xiii. 2). We shall not have done with the seals, therefore, until the seventh trumpet is sounded; and that will be sounded to usher in the millennium (Rev. xi. 15).

The four first trumpets, I think, indicate the successive enemies which wasted the western Roman empire after Constantine—the Goths, the Vandals, the Huns, the Ostrogoths,—and affected its overthrow, in the latter part of the fifth century (Rev. viii. 7–12). The fifth and sixth trumpets refer to the eastern empire, and to events resulting in its destruction. The fifth trumpet introduces the rise of Mahometanism, and its rapid prevalence under the Saracens, threatening to overrun the whole Christian world (Rev. ix. 1–11). The sixth trumpet presents the rise and triumphs of the Turks, who conquered the Saracens, captured Constantinople, and utterly destroyed the Eastern Roman empire (Rev. ix. 13–21). The blast of this trumpet is not yet ended, though its sound is feeble, and is destined ere long, we hope, to cease.

S.—We have now reached the end of the ninth chapter. In the beginning of the tenth, “a mighty angel comes down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow about his head, his face as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.” Who is this mighty angel?

E.—After considering the various opinions which have been expressed in answer to this question, I agree with Hengstenberg, that this angel is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who is often, in Scripture, called an angel. The little book which he holds

in his hand I understand to be the remaining unfulfilled part of the sealed book of prophecy which he took out of the hand of him that sat upon the throne, in the early part of the Revelation (Chap. v. 7). The seals of this book had all been opened, but the portents of the seventh seal, which included the seven trumpets, were not yet entirely fulfilled. The seventh trumpet had not been blown, nor had the blast of the sixth trumpet ceased to sound. The contents of the book which Christ had received from the Supreme Disposer had been chiefly but not entirely unfolded, and the small part which remained unaccomplished constituted the little book in the angel's hand.

S.—But why was this glorious vision interposed here? Why did the Son of God condescend to appear again as the angel of the covenant, and swear the solemn oath contained in this chapter?

F.—I can think of but one reason. As early as the close of the first century, many excellent Christians were pleasing themselves with the notion of the speedy coming of Christ. He was soon to come, and set up his kingdom in the world, and reign in glory with his saints. And this delusion has been revived, at different periods, all the way from the age of John to the present time. During the blast of the sixth trumpet some of the best people on the earth have been deceiving themselves in this way. This was the case with John Wickliffe and his followers—the Lollards, the Hussite, and many others. Under one name or another, these Adventists continued down to the Lutheran reformation. They were found in many of the reformed churches, and even among our New England fathers. They are found in almost every Protestant country at the present time. Some of them have been fanatical and heretical, but many of them have been excellent people, loving the Lord Jesus, and clinging to the hope of his speedy coming. Others have had their patience tried by delay. They have been ready to say, with the souls under the altar, “How long, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge the sufferings of thy people! How long shall it be to the end of these wonders!” In compassion to persons such as

these, and to cure them, if possible, of their impatience and their delusions, our Lord presents himself in this most remarkable vision. Standing in glory upon the land and the sea, he lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by him who liveth forever and ever, that THE TIME OF THE END IS NOT YET. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, *then shall the mystery of God be finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets.* Let him that heareth understand.

CONVERSATION XXIV.

THE REVELATION CONCLUDED.—The 1260 days.—Their significance and duration.—The Millennium.—Difficulties of ascertaining the time of its coming.—One valuable clue.—Some interesting deductions.—The first resurrection.—What we are to understand by it.—The beautiful City of God.—And the final end of the world.

Sen.—We now come to the commencement of the ante-millennial period of forty-two months, or 1260 days, during which the holy city, the church, is to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles, the two witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth, the woman is to flee into the wilderness, and the two beasts are to continue their ravages (Chap. xi.—xiii). The events here symbolized, if I understand you, are not successive, but simultaneous. They run over the same period. They begin and they end together. This period is literally 1260 days. Are there good reasons for supposing that these days indicate as many years?

F.—In the prophetic language of Scripture, a day is often—not always—reckoned for a year. This mode of reckoning began with Moses. When it was predicted of the Israelites that they should wander in the wilderness forty years, it was added: “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, *each day for a year* shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years” (Num. xiv. 34). So the prophet Ezekiel, when predicting the siege and capture of Jerusalem, was directed to lie on his right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah *forty days*,—“*I have appointed thee each day for a year*” (Ezek. iv. 6). Also in the prophecy of Daniel, this mode of prophetic expression is resorted to: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy” (Dan. ix. 24). This prediction refers undoubtedly to the Messiah, and to the time when he should appear to make expiation for sin. The commencement of the seventy weeks

was "from the going forth of the decree to restore and to build Jerusalem," which was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes Longimanus, in the twentieth year of his reign (Neh. ii. 1). And from this time to the death of Christ was 490 years—seventy weeks, counting a day for a year. From the prophets of the Old Testament, this mode of reckoning came down to John. He adopts it in several places in the Revelation, and specially in the period we are now considering. The 1260 days denote, undoubtedly, 1260 years.

S.—But if this mode of reckoning is adopted, not constantly, but only occasionally, by the prophets, how are we to determine when it is used, and when not?

F.—We are to be guided in these, as in other cases, by the connection and the sense. When it is said in Jeremiah, "These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years," the connection shows that literal years are intended. But when Daniel predicts, in the passage above considered, the death of the Messiah at the end of seventy weeks, both the connection and the fulfillment show that a much longer period is indicated.

S.—Who or what do you regard as the power which is to tyrannize over the church during the long period of 1260 years?

F.—It is, I cannot doubt, the Papal power. This has been the grand enemy of the church of God, treading it under foot, driving it into the wilderness, compelling it to prophesy in sackcloth, for more than a thousand years. And it will do so again, except so far as it is restrained, even unto the end of these wonders.

S.—And when will this be? When did this long period of Papal oppression and persecution commence, and when will it end?

F.—It ends, in every case, in what is technically called *the Millennium*. And if we knew accurately when it commenced, we might determine the date of the millennium. But this we do not know. When was the mystical temple measured, and the court of the Gentiles left out, and the holy city given up to be trodden under foot? When did the two witnesses commence giving their testimony in sackcloth? When did the woman flee into the wilder-

ness, to be sheltered and nourished there? We have not the means of answering definitely any of these questions. There is however one of the apocalyptic symbols, denoting the commencement of the 1260 years, which, as it seems to me, is quite definitely fixed. It is the rising of the beast out of the sea, in the thirteenth chapter. This beast, I cannot doubt, denotes Papal Rome, in its *secular, political* character; and it arose when the Pope received his temporal dominions, and became a king. This took place about the year 756; and the 1260 years, added to this, will make the millennium to commence about the year 2000; or in the six thousandth year of the world. Meanwhile, the way will be constantly preparing for it; revolutions will be taking place one after another; and the power of Rome will be steadily diminishing. But at the time above mentioned, the millennium, I trust, may be fully introduced, and the seven thousandth year of the world may be the great Sabatical period.

S.—You have told us that the seals and the trumpets reach down to the millennium; that the symbols during the 1260 years are supplementary to the seventh seal and the three last trumpets; and that, to make the representation during this period still more complete, still other supplementary symbols are added,—as the harlot riding on the Roman beast, the fall of great Babylon, and the seven vials. Will you please tell us what events you think are set forth under these last supplementary symbols?

F.—The beast, I have said, signifies Popery, in its civil, regal power; and the harlot denotes Popery, in its ecclesiastical power, which is supported, guided, and wielded by the regal power. The harlot, in the seventh chapter, is the same as the second beast in chapter 13th, which had two horns like a lamb, but spoke as a dragon. The seven angels, with their seven vials, in the sixteenth chapter, denote the seven *last plagues* which are to come upon the Roman earth, previous to the millennium. While the destruction of great Babylon, in the eighteenth chapter, sets forth the utter overthrow of the Papal power, and synchronized with the result

of the last great conflict, in the closing part of the nineteenth chapter.

S.—What parts of these symbolical predictions may now be in process of accomplishment?

E.—I would not speak positively on such a question as this. There can be no doubt, however, that we are living near the close of the sixth trumpet. And we are beginning to see fulfilled what is predicted in Rev. xvii. 16: “The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” It had been previously said of these ten horns,—which represent the ten kingdoms into which the western Roman empire was divided,—that “these have one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast.” For a long period, this was true of all these ten kingdoms. They were all of them Popish, in league with Popery, and doing all in their power to support it. But the opposite is true of nearly all of them now. They have turned against the whore, are eating her flesh and burning her with fire, and she is complaining of her oppression and miseries. I have no doubt, also, that the angel is already beginning his flight, having the everlasting gospel to preach to the nations; and that the great Son of God is again on the white horse, riding forth for the conquest of the world (Rev. xix. 11).

S.—Have any of the seven vials been as yet poured out?

E.—I think it likely that some of them were fulfilled in the wars of Napoleon, near the close of the last century and in the beginning of the present. Others may receive their fulfillment in the coming conflicts which are to usher in the millennium.

S.—Do you think that, previous to the millennium, all the inhabitants of the world are to be converted?

E.—I fear not. In preparation for the millennium, the gospel will be universally diffused. It will be preached, for a witness, to all nations. Those who embrace it, and enroll themselves among the servants of Christ, will be safe. But those who persist in re-

jecting it, and in opposing the triumphs of the Son of God, will be cut off. As much as this is indicated in many Scriptures, and especially in the Revelation. There is the mustering of the hosts of the wicked, and the gathering of them together at Armageddon, to the battle of the great day of God Almighty (Chap. xvi). There is the account of the last vintage, when the wicked of the earth are reaped, and cast together into "the great wine-press of the wrath of God." And when the wine-press was trodden without the city, "blood came out of the wine-press even unto the horses' bridles" (Chap. xiv. 20). And so in the closing verses of the nineteenth chapter, "All the fowls of heaven are summoned together to the supper of the great God, that they may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." Here certainly is a symbolic representation of a great and terrible destruction, immediately preceding the introduction of the Millennium.

S.—I have a few more questions to propose, and then I have done. What are we to understand by the "first resurrection" in Rev. xx. 5? Are the martyrs to be literally raised from the dead, and to live and reign with Christ on the earth?

F.—I think not. This whole representation is symbolical, and is to be so interpreted. Stripped of its symbolic dress, it merely sets forth the state of the world during the millennial period. Christ is to reign, not bodily, but spiritually, on the earth, and his people are to reign spiritually with him. The martyrs are to be raised *in spirit*, not in the body. In other words, the millennium is to be a time of pre-eminent holiness. The inhabitants of the world generally are to be as holy as the martyrs. This resurrection and prevalence of the martyr spirit is "the first resurrection." "Over such," of course, "the second death hath no power."

S.—How are we to account for the great defection at the close of the millennium. After a thousand years of universal holiness and peace, how is such a defection possible?

F.—It must be remembered that the millennium will not change the natures of men. Children will be born then, as they are now—depraved creatures—and will need, as we do, to be born again in order to see the kingdom of God. To be sure,—in the absence of Satanic temptations, and under the influence of the best means, and in the midst of continual outpourings of the Spirit,—they will be generally and early converted. They will also be deeply sanctified. Religion will predominate over all other interests. “The kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.” And this state of things will continue, generation after generation, for a thousand years.

But as this period draws to a close, Satan will be loosed again, and his seductions will begin to prevail. At the same time, Divine influences will be comparatively withdrawn. God permits this state of things, that he may show, in one more example, what sin and Satan are, and (if left to themselves) what they will do. A generation soon comes forward, haters of God, despisers of his truth, and the enemies of his people. They will be restive under the restraints of the gospel, and will resolve to throw them off. “We have been curbed and fettered by this religion long enough. The world must have more liberty. Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us.”

Knowing what human nature is, when exposed to new temptations, and free from spiritual restraints, we can easily conceive how this thing will work. Of course, no *good* reason can be assigned for the last great defection, but *actual* reasons may be readily supposed which will result in just such a relapse and ruin, as that described in Rev. xx. 7–9.

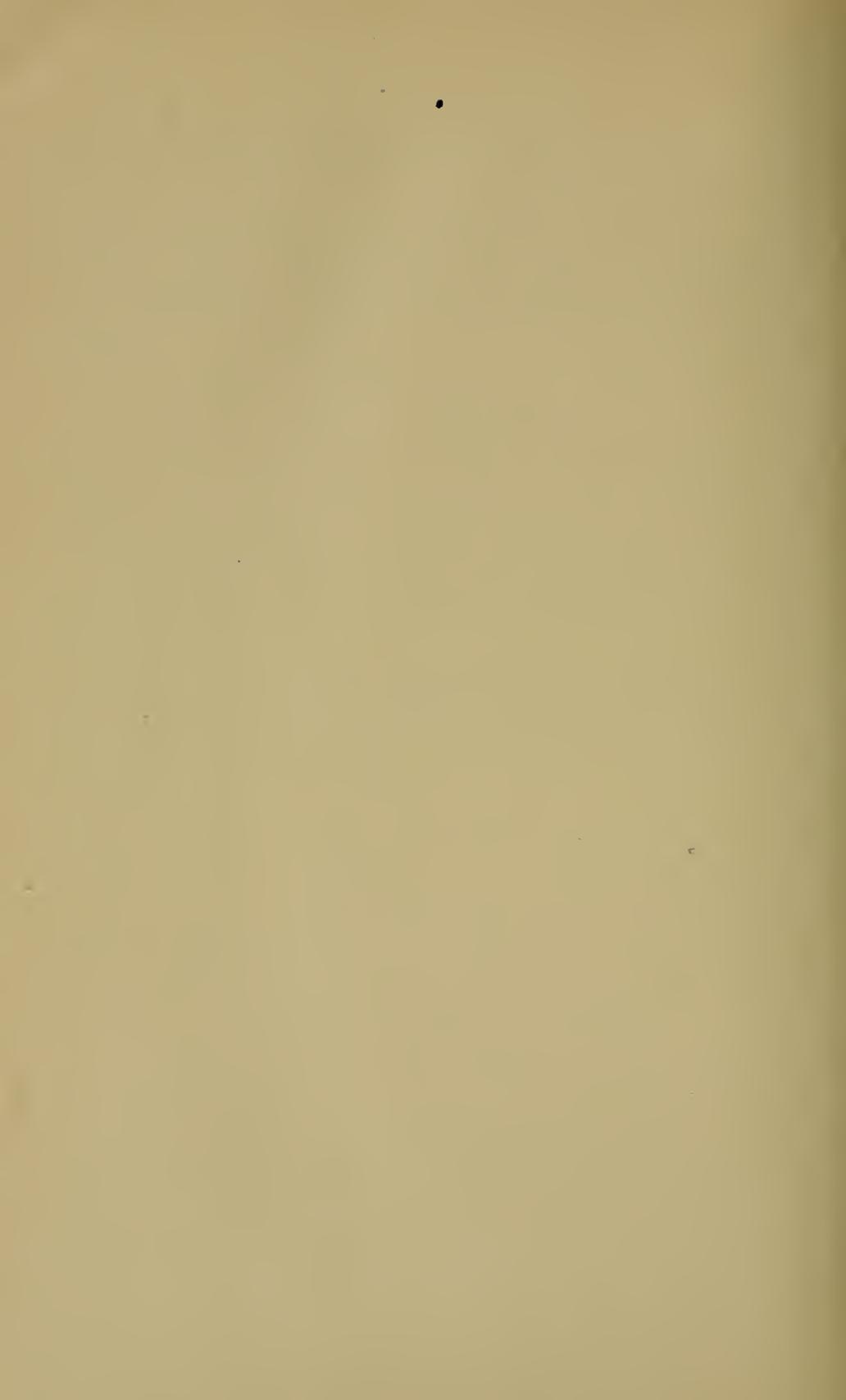
S.—Is that great and glorious city, which John saw descending out of heaven from God, to be regarded as the final residence of the redeemed church, or as a symbol of the church itself?

F.—Undoubtedly the latter. The church is often represented in Scripture as a building, a city. I believe there is such a place as

heaven. "I go to prepare a *place* for you" (John xiv. 2). But where this locality is, and what its structure, form, and extent, we have no knowledge. The city which John describes, like that which Ezekiel shows us in the close of his prophecy, is a splendid symbol of the glorified church. It is "the New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

The close of this wonderful book is inimitably beautiful, leaving as it were the music of heaven upon the listening ear. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

O thou Root and Offspring of David; thou bright and morning star; condescend to guide us through the remaining darkness of our pilgrimage, till we are ushered into the sunlight of immortal day!







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