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THE LITERARY HISTORY
OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

COMPRISING :

A CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO THE AUTHORSHIP, CHRONOLOGICAL
ORDER, CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES, INTERNAL EVIDENCE,
AND GENERAL SCOPE OF THE SACRED DOCUMENTS.

BY
JOSIAH CONDER.

"AS AROMATICS YIELD THEIR PERFUME SO MUCH THE MORE, THE MORE THEY ARE
BRUISED, SO DO THE SCRIPTURES GIVE UP THEIR HID TREASURE OF MEANING IN PRO-
PORTION AS THEY ARE CONSTANTLY HANDLED."—*Chrysostom's Homilies.*

Seeleys,
FLEET STREET, AND HANOVER STREET;
MDCCCL.

It may be proper to state, that the original Title-page of this volume did not disclose the name of the Author. It was hoped, that a work designed simply to promote the intelligent perusal and due appreciation of the New Testament might have made good its claim to popular favour, without other passport than the generous recommendations of the late universally-esteemed Edward Bickersteth and the venerable Dr. Pye Smith, prefixed to the early copies. The Author, however, no longer wishes to decline meeting, in his own name, any criticism which the work may fairly challenge.

Since the work was first published, the Author has learned that he had been anticipated in the hypothesis, that Silas or Silvanus was the Apostolic historian designated by tradition as the Evangelist Luke. While attaching no special importance to this conjectural solution of a critical difficulty, he has hitherto seen no reason to abandon the opinion.

The chapter on the Apocalypse would require no very material modifications to make it entirely accord with the Author's exposition of that wonderful book, the fruit of his subsequent biblical studies ; but, for a more complete illustration of the harmony of history with prophecy, he begs permission to refer the reader to his later and smaller work.*

Clapham Common.

Aug. 1850.

* The Harmony of History with Prophecy : an Exposition of the Apocalypse.
By Josiah Conder. 12mo., 7s. 6d. London : 1849.

INTRODUCTORY RECOMMENDATIONS.

THIS work contains a considerable amount of useful information, brought together from various sources, with discriminating judgment. It is calculated to make the Inspired Book more intelligently understood by those who read it, and to lead their minds to a more careful observation of its various parts. It is written by a well-informed and pious Christian, who, preferring to withhold his name, have, at the request of the Publishers, agreed to prefix a few introductory remarks.

Many of the views are original. On the Gospels, it may be compared with Greswell's Dissertations; and, on the Epistles, with Tate's Continuous History of St. Paul. His views generally will, I think, commend themselves to Biblical Students. It could not be expected that, on such a multitude of difficult questions as are here discussed, all readers should think with him: but orthodox and evangelical views have in this work an able friend. His attempt to identify Silas and Luke appears to me unsuccessful: it seems improbable that Luke should speak of himself, as he does in Acts xv. of Silas, if these names meant the same person.

In his views of the Apocalypse, it is gratifying to see that he does not take the futurist or the early fulfilment, but the general Protestant application, chiefly following Mr. Elliott: to whose interpretation of the seals I have, in the seventh edition of my Practical Guide to the Prophecies, stated my objections. I cannot also concur in the remarks made in the last chapter on the study of our unfulfilled prophecy.

Thus, without agreeing in all the conclusions of the Author of this work, I cheerfully commend it, as likely to be *generally* useful to all wishing to understand the literary history of incomparably the most needful and the most important book ever given to the world—the only volume discovering to us our precious Saviour, and containing a divine, a perfect, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice—a rule with which none can be too well acquainted.

EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

Watton Rectory, Herts,
May 15, 1845.

HAVING been favoured with opportunities for perusing considerable portions of this work, in its manuscript, and afterwards in the printed sheets, I feel it a duty and a pleasure to bear my glad testimony to the learning, in particular sacred and ecclesiastical, the indefatigable diligence, the wide research, the candour and impartiality, and the sound judgment, which characterize this welcome addition to our national literature. Regard and affection are especially drawn to the book and its author, though he chooses to remain unknown, on account of the spirit of piety and reverence to divine truth, which show themselves in an unostentatious and almost unconscious manner, marking the cordiality and simplicity of a true believer in Christianity. Ample as is the stock of religious works, in our language, such a book as this is especially needed in Great Britain, for the American States are more richly furnished. To students for the ministry, it will be of extensive usefulness, directly and indirectly: yet not to such persons only, but, on many accounts in a still higher measure, to the unlearned (technically but not justly so called) among our fellow-believers, who desire to “know

the certainty of those things wherein they have been instructed." We have also a noble body of Christians, especially young persons of both sexes, who are the glory of our families and schools and churches, and who, though they read not Latin, Greek, or Hebrew (yet many of them do,) are well versed in general as well as religious knowledge. To that happily increasing class this work will be eminently interesting and serviceable, by its manifold suggestions as well as by its absolute communications. To profess a perfect coincidence in every sentiment which a book, comprising almost innumerable details and difficult discussions, necessarily brings forward, would be absurd; but few indeed are the opinions here maintained, to the truth of which I could not heartily subscribe; and I feel myself happy in being permitted to recommend this invaluable volume.

J. PYE SMITH.

*Homerton College,
June 10, 1845.*

P R E F A C E.

ALTHOUGH numerous works have appeared, both in this country and in Germany, intended to serve as Introductions or Helps to the critical study of the New Testament, the Author of this Volume is not aware that there exists any Popular Manual, affording a condensed view of the literary history, chronology, internal evidence, and distinctive features of the Apostolic Writings. To supply this deficiency, the present work has been undertaken, in the hope that, while it may assist to guide the investigations of the Biblical student, it may also serve to interest general readers more extensively in the topics of inquiry connected with the historical and critical illustration of the New Testament.

The general design of the work is, to concentrate upon the sacred documents, as compositions, all the light which external history, ecclesiastical testimony, and a careful collation of their contents will supply. The Inspired Writers may possibly appear under somewhat new aspects, as the

reader is thus enabled to discern, more distinctly and vividly thrown out, those interesting personal traits, those indirect biographical allusions or historical references, those beauties of composition or touches of character, which at once attest the genuineness of the Writings, and tend to waken a deeper sympathy with the feelings and sentiments of the wonderful men to whose authority we bow as the Apostles of Christ.

No man is truly religious who does not love his religion, and love, as well as reverence, the Sacred Books in which that religion is comprised. Yet, the New Testament is recognized as the Rule of Faith by multitudes who never have given the Divine volume an intelligent perusal, much less have learned to appreciate the internal evidence of its Inspiration, in the matchless narratives of the Evangelists, or in the profound wisdom and sublime eloquence of the Epistles. There have been critics, it is true, who have admired the Books of the New Testament as compositions, and yet have not received the Apostolic doctrine. But that believer is the more inexcusable, who, while deferring to the authority of the Scriptures, can be satisfied without making himself familiar with all the treasures of wisdom which they contain, and with all the sources of interest which on a devout perusal they disclose.

The present work is the fruit of the Biblical studies of many years, during which the materials have been gradually accumulating in the Writer's hands. In throwing them into the present shape, he has availed himself of the additional illustrations afforded by recent publications, and has

interwoven the confirmatory results of renewed investigation with his previous conclusions. In composing the last chapter, he has derived important aid from Mr. Elliott's 'Horæ Apocalyptiæ,'—the ablest commentary that has yet appeared upon that mysterious portion of the sacred canon. To the erudite researches of Mr. Greswell, he has acknowledged his obligations, as well as to the works of Michaelis, Hug, Neander, and other Continental Critics. But, at a time when it is too much the fashion to exalt the Biblical scholars of Germany at the expense of our native literature, it may be pardonable to express the conviction, that, in his peculiar line of investigation, Dr. Lardner still claims to rank as *facile princeps*, the solidity of his judgment being equalled by the accuracy of his researches, the caution of his decisions, and the prodigious range of his learning. What has been added to the product of his stupendous labours by subsequent writers, has partaken of the character of speculation, more than of induction; and in many instances, his great work supplies the best refutation of the crude opinions of less sober and careful inquirers. To his volumes, there will be found, in the following pages, continual references; although the Writer has felt himself at full liberty to assert an independent judgment, and, in not a few instances, without aiming at originality, has arrived at different, and what may appear novel, conclusions.

Upon the analysis of the Apostolic Epistles, the utmost care and study have been bestowed, with a view to elicit the genuine scope of the Inspired Writer, and to present it

as free as possible from any tincture of polemical opinion. Should he, in the judgment of his readers, have succeeded in this, he will deem it the highest approval that could be awarded to him.

April 5, 1845.

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ERRATA.

Page 57, note, for ἀχλός read ἀχλύς.

— 317, side note, for ch. vi. 11, read ch. v. 11.

— 332, note †, line 2, for Christo read Chresto.

— 512, note *, line 2, and note †, line 8, for Δατεινος read Λατεινος.

— 517, line 10, read "which assigns the composition of the Apocalypse to a period immediately preceding the bright interval," &c.

— 550, line 12, for of read off.

— 573, line 15, for obsistet read obsistit.

LITERARY HISTORY

OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTORY.

SCANTINESS OF THE EXISTING INFORMATION RESPECTING THE WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—SPIRIT PROPER TO THE ENQUIRY—GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SEVERAL BOOKS—THE CANON DETERMINED BY HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

§ 1. **COPIOUS** and satisfactory as is the evidence of the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament, the materials for its literary history, apart from the information communicated by the sacred writers themselves, are exceedingly scanty. The inestimable value of the written document is strikingly illustrated by the extreme uncertainty which attaches to all traditional information concerning the Apostles or the events of the early ages. Where the sacred narrative terminates, we find ourselves without an historical guide,—like a traveller who, on passing out of a walled city, enters upon a desolated and pathless waste. We have no contemporary Christian writings. If

Scantiness
of existing
information.

Timothy, or Mark, or any other individual standing in their relation to the Apostles, wrote any continuation of the sacred annals, it has perished. The age that carefully preserved the inspired Scriptures, and vigorously scrutinized their apostolic authority, was either too busy, too incurious, or, in a certain sense, too illiterate, to collect any memorials illustrative of the wonderful volume confided to its custody. Thus, the very inscriptions appended to the Epistles are not merely apocryphal, but demonstrably erroneous.* In what language the Gospel of Matthew was originally written, is still a question with Biblical scholars. Upon the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, history or contemporary testimony throws no light. Whether St. Peter ever visited Rome, is the subject of an interminable controversy; and no dependence can be placed upon the scanty traditions preserved in the fourth century, respecting the latter labours and death of any one of the Apostles who survived St. Paul.† It would seem as if the silence which guards the precincts of the sacred volume, to what

* ‘Alas!’ says Dr. Cave, ‘they are of no just value or authority, not the same in all copies, different in the Syriac and Arabic versions, nay, wholly wanting in some ancient Greek copies of the New Testament, and were doubtless at first added at best upon probable conjectures. When at any time they truly represent the place whence, or the person by whom the epistle was sent, it is not that they are to be relied upon in it, but because the thing is either intimated or expressed in the body of the epistle.’—*Life of St. Paul*.

† ‘In short, it is an undeniable fact, that, from the earliest period, the deepest obscurity always did envelope, and must still continue to envelope, both the personal history, and the history of the writings, of the first propagators of Christianity.’—*Greswell’s Dissertations*, vol. i. p. 109.

cause soever assignable, were intended to repress curiosity as an idle intruder; and in answer to inquiries having no reference to faith or to religious duty, a voice seems to proceed from that silence— ‘What is that to thee? Follow thou me.’

It is well, however, that the fact should be distinctly understood, in order to prevent unreasonable disappointment, and to guard the inquirer against erroneous conclusions. The history of the inspired document forms no part of the evidence of Christianity. Bishop Marsh has gone so far as to affirm (in his Notes upon Michaelis), that, ‘could it be proved that the Books of the New Testament were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, it would be no necessary consequence, that the religion itself were a forgery.’ But, though Christianity might still be true, it would, on this hypothesis, as an acute critic has remarked, ‘come to us without any evidence of its truth, and could not be the object of rational belief.’ The inquiry into the authenticity and genuineness of the Scriptures of the New Testament, including, by necessary consequence, their inspiration and authority, is of the first importance. Not so, however, those critical and historical inquiries the chief aim of which is, to illustrate the literary character of the compositions, to explain the allusions, or to detect the historical and biographical marks to be found in them. To a lover of the Scriptures, such inquiries are a source of both pleasure and advantage. They are like deciphering the handwriting, tracing out the family history, or dwelling on the cherished peculiarities of a friend. But, to one

Dr. Cook's
Inquiry into
the Books of
the New
Testament,
p. 102.

who takes this line of examination to gratify a sceptical curiosity, or even as a means of establishing his faith, such inquiries are adapted to afford as little profit as satisfaction.

Spirit proper
to the in-
quiry.

§ 2. Christianity—and the same may be said of the Book of God—never reveals itself fully except to our love. Sympathy is the only key that will put us in possession of the true beauties and full import of the Sacred Writings. To an affectionate study of the Scriptures, a thousand minute indications of their divine spirit are intelligible, which criticism overlooks, and scepticism could not understand. The wise and the learned stumble over difficulties which the simplicity of a child can easily surmount. There is something absolutely revolting in the spirit of insolent cross-examination which has characterized the treatment of the sacred volume by some Christian critics and commentators; as if the veracity and authority of the inspired writers, rather than the faith, or intellectual satisfaction, or piety of the inquirer, were staked on the investigation. Let us remember, we are not to judge the Scripture: the Scripture is to judge us. Woe to him who comes to the New Testament in the spirit of an accuser, instead of a penitent; not to learn, but to impugn.

Receiving the volume of the New Testament as what it purports to be,—the writings of those who were Divinely commissioned to record the facts, and promulgate the doctrines of the Christian religion,—let us endeavour to ascertain and describe the general features of this wonderful and inestimable collection of documents.

§ 3. The New Testament comprises seven-and-twenty different compositions, of varying character, of unequal length, and of a date ranging between the year 44 and 94 or 5 of the Christian era. Five of these partake of the character of records or memoirs; a sixth is a prophetic history, bearing more than an analogy to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament; the remaining twenty-one are apostolic letters, addressed to the primitive churches. Some of these are encyclical or general; others primarily of an occasional nature, having reference to the peculiar circumstances of the persons addressed, yet evidently intended to serve as permanent and general directions to all the churches, the apostolic authority of the writers giving them this claim to universal reception and implicit deference. It is, indeed, remarkable that, in the earliest of St. Paul's Epistles, addressed to the church at Thessalonica, A.D. 52, he charges or adjures them in the Lord's name, that the epistle be publicly read — "read to all the holy brethren;" thus claiming a respect for his apostolic communications equal to that which was customarily paid to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Again, in writing to the church at Colosse, he directs that the epistle should not only be publicly read among them, but also be read in the church of the Laodiceans; and that another epistle, which they had received (or were to receive) from Laodicea, should also be so read. In the Second Epistle of St. Peter, supposed to have been written about A.D. 64, the aged Apostle refers to the Epistles of his fellow Apostle, Paul, as generally known and recognized, and as possessing the same authoritative and inspired cha-

General features of the several books.

Justin Martyr calls the gospels, ἀπομνημονεύματα, *memorabilia*.

acter as the other Scriptures. It is evident, therefore, that, from the first, these writings were intended for the general use of all Christian churches, and claimed the authority of Christ himself.

Of the twenty-one Epistles, thirteen bear the name of St. Paul, and a fourteenth, which is anonymous, is generally reckoned, in the ancient enumerations, as his; two are by St. Peter; three by St. John; one by St. James the Less; and one by St. Jude. The historical books are anonymous; but there is sufficient evidence of their being the works of the Evangelists to whom they are ascribed. Adding, therefore, St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. Mark to the five above enumerated, the writers of the New Testament are eight, five of whom belonged to the twelve Apostles originally chosen by our Lord. St. Paul claimed for his apostleship an equally direct appointment by Christ. St. Luke and St. Mark were companions and associates of the Apostles, and partook in some degree of their authority.

When we consider the condition of life from which the Apostles were taken, it can be no matter of surprise, that so few have left any writings behind them. The early martyrdom of James the son of Zebedee, and the defection and suicide of Iscariot, reduce the number of the original witnesses to ten, of whom John and Peter may unquestionably be regarded as the most distinguished. James, the son of Alphaeus, appears also to have had conceded to him a pre-eminence, whether on the ground of affinity to Our Lord, or from personal weight of character; and tradition assigns to him the presidency of the church at Jeru-

Gal. i. 19;
 ii. 9. 1 Cor.
 ix. 5. Acts
 xv. 13.

salem. Judas Thaddeus, who styles himself the brother of James, must have stood in the same honourable relationship to Our Lord. Matthew, surnamed Levi, was probably a person of some wealth and consideration, though his employment as a toll-gatherer under the Roman Government was looked upon as discreditable; and he would be especially qualified by habits of accuracy for the task of an evangelist. These five Apostles, then, might seem the most likely to have employed their pens for the edification of the Church in the manner which they have. We cannot wonder, however, that it should have been reserved for the ardent and well-skilled pupil of Gamaliel, to vindicate against false teachers the truth of the Gospel in compositions of a more argumentative character, and for the chosen companion of his apostolic labours to be the historian of the Church.

Luke v. 29.

The writings contained in the New Testament naturally divide themselves into two parts; the code or collection of memoirs called gospels, and that of apostolic epistles. This division is recognized by the early fathers. Ignatius (martyred A.D. 107) is supposed to refer to this twofold canon or collection in his Epistle to the Philadelphians, where he says, 'Fleeing to the gospel as the flesh of Jesus, and to the apostles as the presbytery of the church.' Justin Martyr (martyred A.D. 164) more distinctly refers to the 'memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets,' as read in the assemblies of public worship; and states, that a discourse was made upon them by the president. The Four Gospels must have been at a very early period generally received, and

The first part was styled the Evangelicon; the second, the Apostolicon.

Lardner, vol. v. p. 186.

Ib. p. 190.

distinguished from all the apocryphal memoirs, since Tatian, a Syrian, in the second century, composed a harmony, entitled ‘DIATESSARON,’ ‘of the Four.’ Clement of Alexandria specifically mentions the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, noticing their order; he likewise frequently quotes the Acts of the Apostles as written by St. Luke. He receives and quotes, frequently and expressly, the fourteen Epistles of St. Paul, excepting only that to Philemon; (owing, probably, to its brevity;) also, the first Epistle of St. Peter and the first of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Book of Revelation as St. John’s. ‘There is,’ he remarks, ‘a harmony between the law and the prophets, the apostles and the gospel.’ In short, as Lardner sums up his elaborate investigation, ‘from the quotations of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and other writers of the second century, of Origen in the third, and of Eusebius in the fourth century, it appears, that the greatest part of the books which are now received by us, and are called canonical, were universally acknowledged in their times, and had been so acknowledged by the elders and churches of former times. And the rest now received by us, though they were then doubted of or controverted by some, were well-known and approved by many. And Athanasius, who lived not long after Eusebius, (having flourished from the year 326 and afterwards,) received all the same books which are now received by us, and no other. This canon was not determined by the authority of councils; but the books of which it consists were known to be the genuine writings of the Apostles and

Evangelists, in the same way and manner that we know the works of Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus to be theirs. And the canon has been formed upon the ground of an unanimous or generally concurring testimony and tradition.'

Lardner,
vol. v. p.277.

§ 4. The notion, that any authoritative decision was requisite to settle the Canon of the New Testament, is not only erroneous, but of dangerous tendency, inasmuch as it requires what, in point of fact, cannot be adduced; for such decision, to be authoritative, must bear upon it the marks of infallibility, and must be that of an authority universally acknowledged.* It is sometimes alleged, that the council of Laodicea (about 363) first settled the Canon, because, appended to its last canon, directing that only the canonical books of the Old and New Testament should be read in the Church, is given a catalogue or enumeration of the books. But, how valuable soever the catalogue

The Canon
determined
by historical
evidence.

* Mosheim's loose and superficial remarks on the time when the Canon was fixed, have had a very mischievous tendency on the minds of sceptical inquirers. 'The opinions, or rather the conjectures of the learned concerning the time when the books of the New Testament were collected into one volume, as also about the authors of that collection, are extremely different. This important question is attended with great and almost insuperable difficulties to us in these later times. It is, however, sufficient for us to know that, before the middle of the second century, the greatest part of the books of the New Testament were read in every Christian society throughout the world, and received as a Divine rule of faith and manners. Hence it appears, that these sacred writings were carefully separated from several human compositions upon the same subject, either by some of the Apostles themselves who lived so long, or by their disciples and successors.' Of these important statements, the learned Historian adduces no evidence, but refers us merely to Eusebius, leaving the uninformed reader to conclude that the whole of our knowledge rests on mere supposition and conjecture.

may be, as evidence of what was the received opinion of that age, the authority of that council is too late to determine any thing that was not already established by sufficient evidence ; which happily renders its decision, in that respect, superfluous. The council of Laodicea was not, indeed, a general, but only a provincial council. If, then, in the time of Eusebius, of Augustine, of Cosmas of Alexandria, and of Casiodorius, (that is, from the beginning of the fourth to the middle of the sixth century,) there was no canon of the New Testament established by any authority universally acknowledged, yet, at the same time, a very general agreement among all Christian churches, (an agreement absolutely unanimous in respect to twenty books of the twenty-seven, viz. the four Gospels, the Acts, all the Epistles which bear the name of Paul, and two of the Catholic Epistles—such agreement being distinctly traceable in existing documents up to the apostolic age,) it is upon the evidence furnished by that agreement, not upon any posterior authoritative decision, that, apart from the internal evidence, the canonicity of the sacred books must be based. In fact, there is nothing to preclude differences in the present day respecting the Canon, any more than in the days of Eusebius or of Chrysostom, except the additional light which Biblical criticism has thrown upon the internal evidence, together with our knowledge of the slender reasons which led to the partial doubt or difference of opinion in respect to their Apostolic authority. The seven books not universally received were, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the second Epistle

of Peter, the second and third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation. With regard to some of these, the existing testimony to their genuineness can be traced higher than the doubts raised respecting them; doubts which showed, at the same time, the care manifested to discriminate the Apostolic writings from those which were either spurious or controverted, or not the undoubted composition of an Apostle. Thus, the doubt entertained as to the Epistle to the Hebrews, related to its authorship, as being anonymous; not to its genuineness as the production of an Apostle, or of a companion of the Apostles; for it was universally received as a genuine production of the Apostolic age, and probably the production of St. Paul.

And while there was this all but unanimous consent of testimony respecting the books now received as canonical, the unanimity in excluding all other books was still more complete. Upon this point, the remarks of the learned and judicious Lardner are highly deserving of attention. ‘The character of the authors or writers of the several books of the Sacred Scriptures, is observable: they are all Apostles or Apostolic men. Nor are there any writings of barely Apostolical men authentic and universally acknowledged, except those of Mark and Luke; which are only historical, not doctrinal or dogmatical. All the other books, which are epistolary or dogmatical, as the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Epistle of Clement, and the Shepherd of Hermas, as likewise the Epistles of James and Jude, and the Revelation of John, (which some were not fully satisfied to have

been written by Apostles, but by an Elder only, or other person of inferior rank to that of Apostles,) were controverted. . . This seems to show that it was a common and prevailing opinion among Christians in those times, that no book, doctrinal or preceptive, ought to be received as of authority, unless written by an Apostle; and that the credit of men not Apostles, though they were companions of the Apostles, was admitted no further than as historians or reporters of what they had seen or of what they had heard from Apostles, or eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.' Thus, the Epistle of Clement, though universally allowed to be genuine, was never admitted as part of the New Testament. Yet, had its author been unknown, it might have been ascribed by some to an Apostle, and, as such, have claimed to rank among canonical books. It is not less satisfactory, that no book received into the Canon, or cited as apostolical by any ancient writer, has been lost.

Lardner,
vol. iv. p. 103.

It is evident, then, that the New Testament is a collection of all the writings received by the Christian churches of the age immediately succeeding the Apostolic, as Holy Scripture, and that the sacred books were regarded as deriving their authority from the apostolical character and commission of the writers; an authority exclusive, and attaching to no other writings, how excellent or valuable soever, inasmuch as to the apostolic character and commission alone belonged the plenary inspiration upon the ground of which the Apostles wrote and spoke in the name of the Lord.* To the question, By whom the col-

* The proof of the inspiration of the apostolic writings rests upon

lection was made? the answer is, By various parties; by the several churches for their own use; by professional copyists, translators, and commentators; but there was no authorized edition, no dogmatic decision of the question as to the canonical books, by any binding authority; no attempt to bar inquiry, no suspicious collusion. The variations in the extant manuscript Codices of the New Testament, which have led Biblical critics to arrange them under two great classes or families, the Byzantine and the Alexandrian, show that there were, so to speak, different editions of the sacred text, forming a check upon each other.

There is a remarkable passage in the writings of Tertullian, (who flourished towards the close of the second century,) in which he appeals to the apostolical churches at Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, and Rome, as possessing the authentic Scriptures. Some have imagined that he intended, by the expression he employs, the apostolic autographs of the several Epistles sent to these churches; he more probably referred to the authentic Greek text; and, as the passage is more naturally explained by Dr. Lardner,*

the fact, that the Apostles were inspired teachers, Divinely commissioned, and their writings are part and parcel of their teaching. As they 'spoke,' so they wrote 'as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The objections raised against the plenary inspiration of the sacred writers of the New Testament, have been ably and satisfactorily met by M. Gaussen of Geneva, in his recent work, entitled '*Théopneustie*,' of which an English translation has appeared.

* This remarkable passage is thus translated by Lardner:—'If you be willing to exercise your curiosity profitably in the business of your salvation, visit the apostolical churches, in which the very chairs of the Apostles still preside, in which their very authentic letters (*ipsæ authenticæ literæ*) are recited, sounding forth the voice,

‘it is not an appeal to these churches for the genuineness of one or more Epistles of Paul, written to them in particular ; but it is an appeal to each one of these churches for the certainty, genuineness, and integrity of all the Scriptures of the New Testament, which they held sacred, and constantly read in their assemblies ; whether Gospels or Epistles, written by Paul or other Apostles, or by apostolic men. Though every church which had communion with apostolic churches, had copies of the several books of the New Testament that might be relied on as genuine and sincere ; yet he supposes it to be a satisfaction to know, at the first hand, what was read in the churches planted by Apostles, and that the labour of a visit to some of them was not unbecoming men of curiosity. Here lies the stress of the argument : the Scriptures received by apostolic churches are authentic ; the testimony given by those churches, according to Tertullian, is an authentic, original, certain testimony.’ In like manner, in his work against Marcion, Tertullian

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 287.

and representing the countenance, of each one of them. Is Achaia near you? you have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi, you have Thessalonica. If you can go to Asia, you have Ephesus. But if you are near to Italy, you have Rome, from whence we also may be easily satisfied.’ Mr. Faber (‘Difficulties of Romanism,’ p. 387) has laboured to prove, that the autographs of the Apostles must be intended by the expression ; and he gives the same interpretation to a subsequent phrase in the same passage : ‘*Habeo origines firmas ab ipsis auctoribus.*’ But it is far more probable, that, as the churches of Africa used a Latin version, Tertullian, by the term authentic, intended to denote the Greek text ; as he elsewhere uses the phrase, ‘authentic Greek’—‘*Sciamus plane non sic esse in GRECO AUTHENTICO.*’ And Jerome distinguishes by the same phrase the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. See Lardner, vol. ii. p. 284.

contends, that it was certain that had been delivered from the Apostles which was held sacred in the churches of the Apostles; and after affirming that, with all who had fellowship with them in the same faith, was that genuine Gospel of Luke received from its first publication, which they so zealously maintained, he adds: 'The same authority of the apostolical churches will support the other Gospels which we have from them, and according to them; I mean John's and Matthew's: although that likewise which Mark published may be said to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was. For Luke's digest also is often ascribed to Paul.'

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 275.

In another part of his writings, the same illustrious Apologist accuses the heretics of supporting their novel doctrines by tampering with the sacred text, and employing 'a knife instead of a style.' 'They who were resolved to teach otherwise, were under a necessity of new-modelling the records of the doctrine, that they might have some ground to go upon. As they could not succeed in corrupting the doctrine without corrupting the records of it, so, the true doctrine could not have been with us, nor could it have been delivered by us to others, if we had not the records entire in which it was taught. For what do we maintain contrary to them, what have we added of our own heads to the doctrine, that we should be obliged to alter anything in the Scriptures, by adding to them, or taking from them, or transposing any parts of them? What we are, that the Scriptures were from the beginning: we agree with them as they were before they were altered, before they were interpolated, by you.'

Ib. p. 296.

This early testimony is the more valuable as that of a writer in whose works the quotations from the New Testament are so numerous as to afford evidence of the integrity of the sacred text, to which he himself appeals. 'There are, perhaps,' remarks Dr. Lardner, 'more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author, than of all the works of Cicero, though of so uncommon excellence for thought and style, in the writers of all characters for several ages. And there is a like number of quotations of the New Testament in St. Irenæus and St. Clement of Alexandria, both writers of the second century.' To the cumulative evidence afforded by the separate and concurring testimony of the primitive churches as depositories of the inspired records, no synodical decree could have added anything. This evidence is historically preserved to us; while, in the early versions of the collected books, and in the vast body of citations comprised in the chain of ecclesiastical writers, there exists a demonstration, that we possess both the canon in its integrity and the sacred text in its uncorrupted genuineness. It is, therefore, a sheer fallacy, to contend, as the Romanists do, that the canon of Scripture depends upon Tradition, and that, by renouncing the authority of Tradition, we invalidate the authority of the canon. This depends, like the text itself, upon documentary evidence and historical proof, into which all that *was* tradition has merged. The apostolic churches, which were the primary depositories of the authentic Scriptures, the faithful keepers and transmitters of the inspired *depositum*, (though, alas! unfaithful to the heavenly doctrine it taught,) have for

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 306.

ages ceased to exist; and, with them, the sacred autographs have perished. But we have in our hands the authentic documents which they had received, and we possess the clearest evidence of their identity; evidence of a higher kind, moreover, than even history can supply.

It is remarkable, how completely, in the early days of Tertullian, Tradition had discovered its incompetency to preserve with certainty anything that was not the matter of written record. It was the same with the Jewish Church, which faithfully preserved the letter of Scripture, while invalidating its precepts and misinterpreting the Divine Oracles in which they gloried. It is, indeed, not an uncommon thing, to find documents faithfully transmitted from generation to generation, while all trace is lost of the circumstances connected with the original transactions or the characters of the parties to which they relate. A considerable quantity of Church music is said still to exist only in manuscript, which was expressly composed by the older masters for the several choirs of our cathedrals. Of these manuscript compositions, the authorship, the genuineness, the date, and the original design have probably been for the most part traditionally preserved; but who would expect to obtain any biographical information respecting the composers of the seventeenth century from oral tradition, locally preserved in the nineteenth? What would the prebends and choristers of Canterbury be able to tell, which has not been committed to record, of Orlando Gibbons, or those of Chichester, of Weelkes? What solitary trait has local tradition

preserved even of Milton or Shakespeare? But, in the case of the cathedral manuscripts, as in that of the apostolic writings committed to the primitive churches, there is a written *depositum* consigned to a company of men, and more or less faithfully preserved, while, yet, all oral tradition is speedily lost. We need not, then, feel surprised that, by the close of the second century, the oral traditions respecting the Apostles had become vague, confused, and contradictory, although there was so perfect an agreement, with so close an approach to certainty, as to the genuineness and authority of the inspired documents. Thus, Tertullian referring to the church at Rome among other apostolic churches, exclaims, (in immediate connection with a passage above cited,) ‘How happy is that church, to which the Apostles delivered the whole evangelical doctrine, together with their blood; where Peter suffered the same death which the Lord did; where Paul was crowned with the death of John (the Baptist); where the Apostle John, after he had been cast into a cauldron of burning oil, without suffering any harm, was banished into an island.’

Tertullian was born at Carthage about the middle of the second century, but probably received his education at Rome, being well versed in the Roman laws. At the time that he wrote, about a hundred and thirty years must have elapsed since the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, and nearly a century since the death of John. Could the true account of the fate of the three most eminent Apostles have already become blended with fiction? In the absence of any historic record, all experience shows this would be inevitable.

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 286.

The story respecting the Apostle John's being cast into a cauldron of oil, rests almost entirely upon the sole credit of Tertullian. Irenæus, Origen, and others who speak of the sufferings of the Apostles, and of the banishment of John to Patmos, say nothing of this extraordinary miracle; the punishment is not known to have been at that time in use; and, upon the whole, it is generally considered as a very suspicious legend. Yet, if, out of three traditions mentioned by this ancient writer as historic facts, one is pronounced a fiction, what dependence can be placed on his accuracy of information or ground of belief with respect to the other two? There is no reason to suppose that the Apostle John was ever at Rome: how can we lay any stress on the testimony of Tertullian, that Peter was crucified there? Various legends were then afloat relating to the Apostles, and Tertullian himself refers to an early forgery, 'The Travels of Paul and Thecla,' of which an Asiatic presbyter had confessed himself to be the author, alleging that he had composed it 'out of love to Paul;' for which he was deposed. The fact proves the vigilance and scrupulosity of the Christians respecting the *writings* which they received as apostolic; but it shows, also, how busy and prolific was the spirit of invention. Of the uncertainty of oral tradition, Tertullian supplies another striking illustration, in repeatedly citing the canonical Epistle to the Hebrews as the Epistle of Barnabas; which must have been, therefore, a common notion at that time, although without any solid foundation. Now, as the true authorship must have been originally known to the churches

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 304.

by which it was received, its having become uncertain in the time of Tertullian and of Origen, is as convincing a proof as can be needed, of the little dependence to be placed on mere traditional opinion. Tradition, in a word, is like a dumb porter left in charge of archives ; a faithful guard, but unable to answer our inquiries. To the historic record, to the inspired document, Tradition can add nothing.

CHAP. II.

THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW AND MARK.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF TRADITION NO GROUND FOR DISCOURAGEMENT IN THE PRESENT INDUCTIVE INVESTIGATION—WAS MATTHEW'S GOSPEL WRITTEN IN HEBREW?—DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF HIS GOSPEL—THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW THE TRUE PROTO-EVANGELION—SPECIFIC DESIGN AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK—BIOGRAPHY OF MARK.

§ 1. IF, with regard to what may be called the literary history of the New Testament, the date, order, and occasion of the several books, and the biography of the sacred writers, Tradition presents to us little more than ancient doubts, contradictory legends, and apocryphal subscriptions,—the expectation of attaining to anything like clear and certain information upon such points of critical and historical inquiry, may seem altogether visionary. And what may be thought to render the investigation the more hopeless, is, the additional perplexity created by the conflicting theories and interminable speculations of modern Biblical criticism. There are two considerations, however, which may serve to alleviate the painful embarrassment such a view of the field of

The uncertainty of Tradition no discouragement.

inquiry is adapted to produce. First, that, happily, the uncertainty attaches, not to the substance or contents of the sacred documents, so as to affect either their genuineness or their authority, but only to their *external* history. Secondly, that, so far as an examination of the New Testament itself can lead to certain or probable conclusions upon these points, we are placed under circumstances more advantageous than the critics and commentators of the third and fourth centuries; while we have much more to expect from careful and sober induction, than from profound erudition or ingenious hypothesis. How unlikely soever it may appear, that what was doubtful in the time of Eusebius, should be capable of being rendered tolerably certain now, yet, there are analogous cases, in which modern investigation has proved the unreasonableness of ancient scepticism. This has been most skilfully and felicitously illustrated by Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his ‘Process of Historical Proof Exemplified.’ Selecting the instance of Herodotus, (who, ‘more than any other respectable historian of antiquity, has shared the fate of the sacred writings, in sustaining, during a long succession of ages, the attacks of witless or malignant scepticism,’) the Author has shown how triumphantly his merits and substantial authenticity have been rescued from misrepresentation, in consequence of the more diligent, modest, and intelligent researches of modern scholars, and the discoveries of recent travellers, which have verified his suspected statements after a lapse of three and twenty centuries. Yet, the credibility and veracity of Herodotus were angrily assailed by Plu-

tarch, and have been impugned by other ancient writers, especially Ctesias, Manetho, Diodorus, Strabo, and Josephus. ‘It has been a kind of fashion,’ remarks Mr. Mitford, ‘to which Plutarch principally has given vogue, to sneer at the authority of Herodotus.’ Diodorus, Eusebius, and Chrysostom have, with little judgment, affected to prefer Ctesias to Herodotus. Nor have there been wanting modern detractors of the Father of History. But, of late years, his authority has been amply vindicated; and Major Rennell, in his learned illustrations of the Geography of Herodotus, remarks, that ‘it was ignorance and inattention that determined the opinion of his judges; a charge in which several of the ancients are implicated, as well as the moderns. The same want of attention has confounded together the descriptions of what he *saw*, with what he had only *heard*, and which he might think himself bound to relate.’ Such an instance as this may well encourage us to prosecute with modest diligence an investigation of points connected with the inspired records, which have for ages been considered as obscure and doubtful. ‘What submission is due to the doubts of antiquity,’ remarks Bishop Sherlock, in vindicating the authenticity of one of the disputed Epistles, ‘when we have only the doubt transmitted to us, without the reasons upon which it was grounded, I need not inquire; but surely, when we have the reasons of the doubt preserved, we have a very good right to judge and inquire for ourselves.’ In the case referred to, the whole doubt, the learned Prelate remarks, ‘is founded upon a piece of criticism, started at first, probably,

Dissertation
on the au-
thenticity of
2 Peter.

by some man of learning and figure, and followed implicitly by others.' The same remark will apply, as will be seen hereafter, to many other instances of ancient as well as modern scepticism, and to the grounds of rash assertion or credulous belief as well as to those of doubt, where the reasons have fortunately been transmitted together with the opinion.

Was Mat-
thew's Gos-
pel written
in Hebrew?

§ 2. At the very threshold of an inquiry into the external history of the Four Gospels, we are met with the question, whether, in the Greek text of Matthew, we have the original document or a translation from the vernacular Hebrew. Irenæus states, that Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language; and Eusebius, adopting the same tradition, adds, that he wrote it, being about to leave Jerusalem, to go into other countries. It was probably assumed that, if his Gospel was intended for the inhabitants of Palestine, it must of course have been written in the Aramæan dialect, for the tradition rests upon no direct evidence; and the judgment of Lardner, that it is to be rejected as erroneous, has been supported by the learned investigations of Professors Hug, Fritzsche of Leipsic, and other eminent Biblical critics. There can be no question, that, at the time of the Christian era, the Greek language had firmly rooted itself in Palestine. It was the court language of the Roman authorities, the medium of intercourse between the provincial prætors and procurators and the people of Syria and Egypt, and appears to have been, like the Italian in modern times, among the nations of the Levant, the language of commercial intercourse. Palestine was full of Greek cities.

A. D. 78.

Ashkalon, Gaza, Scythopolis, Gadara, and Cæsarea were among those which were inhabited chiefly by Greek colonists, or by Syrians who spoke that language. The policy of Herod led him to favour the interests of the Greek inhabitants. In fact, Professor Hug remarks, ‘Palestine had received into her bosom a second nation, not reckoning other swarms of various extraction, and divided herself between two languages—that of the country, and the Greek.’ From these circumstances, although the vernacular dialect had not been superseded, it could not but result, that the Greek would be very generally understood, especially by the mixed population of Galilee and the border. The higher classes among the Palestine Jews appear indeed to have prided themselves upon their ignorance, real or affected, of any foreign language. ‘Few of my countrymen,’ says Josephus, ‘would have been able to compose this book in the Greek language, on account of their deficiency in the grammatical knowledge of it, in which I can boast myself superior to others, although I do not speak it well myself, on account of the established manners of my country. For, with us, the knowledge of foreign languages, and the quickness and elegance of pronunciation, are accounted vulgar, since the free people of a low class could also acquire them, and even the domestics, if so inclined.’ This statement plainly implies, that the Greek was very generally spoken among the people; that correctness and fluency in speaking it were a vulgar attainment, although few could write it elegantly. The lawyers, however, must have been well acquainted with it, as that of the courts. A bill of

Hug, i. § 10.

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Mishnah,
cited by
Hug.

divorce might be written either in Greek or in Hebrew, or, if required, in both. It was a Rabbinical decision, that the Jews were not permitted to compose books in all languages, but only in the Greek. The supposition, that a Jew writing on religious subjects to Jews or Jewish Christians in Palestine, would necessarily choose either the sacred language or the vulgar Aramæan, is therefore opposed to historic evidence. It would have required a higher education in a Jew, to enable him to compose a work in the ancient Hebrew, than it would to write with tolerable correctness in either of the vernacular dialects. So, an uneducated Greek of the Levant would be able to write in the *lingua franca* more readily than in the classic Greek, of which his own vernacular is a corrupt dialect. Nor have we any reason to suppose, that a Gospel written in the pure Hebrew of the sacred writings would have been adapted for popular use. But, if written in the popular dialect, what ground is there for assuming that it would have been more acceptable to the learned and educated portion of the Jewish nation, or more intelligible to the mass of the mixed community? At all the great feasts, the concourse of Hellenistic Jews from all parts, (that is, Jews speaking Greek,) was probably as numerous as the resident Hebraistic population; and at a very early stage of the Church, the number of the Hellenistic disciples in Jerusalem had multiplied so as to require the arrangement to be made for the prevention of disputes, which is recorded in the sixth chapter of the Book of Acts. Now to this large portion of the Churches in Palestine itself, a Gospel in the vernacular Aramæan

would have been unacceptable, if not unintelligible ; whereas, if St. Matthew wrote in Greek, the mass of the Jewish Christians would understand him.

A question has even been raised as to the language in which Our Lord ordinarily delivered his instructions to the people.* In three instances, the words which he used are expressly recorded, and they are in the vernacular Hebrew ; but we cannot infer from this, that he always spoke in that language, and in no other. Professor Hug suggests an opposite inference as equally plausible : the very language would not have been recorded, had Jesus generally spoken Hebrew. Our Lord might, he remarks, have ordinarily spoken to the Jewish multitude in Hebrew, because they were predisposed to listen to it. But how did he speak to a mixed assembly collected from different parts and different cities ? How did he speak at Gadara, on the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and in Decapolis, which consisted of Greek cities ? When St. Paul, after his apprehension, obtained permission to address the excited populace, he spoke to them in the Hebrew tongue, and by this means obtained their attention at once : “ they kept the more silence.” This proves the predilection of the people for their own language ; but it is evident from the narrative, that they had expected him to address them in Greek ; and there is every reason to conclude that, by the greater part, if not by the whole, he would have been

* That our Lord and his Apostles habitually spoke Greek, has been maintained by a learned Neapolitan civilian, in a rare work recently republished, with a preface, by the Rev. O. T. Dobbin of Exeter : ‘ *D. Diodati de Christo Græce loquente Exercitatio.*’

understood, although he would not have been listened to with the same patience.

All things considered, it must then be deemed extremely improbable, that Matthew, in writing his Gospel, would prefer the vernacular Hebrew. The early disappearance of the supposed Hebrew or Aramæan original is moreover admitted to be, even by a learned critic who espouses the ill-supported tradition, *primâ facie*, an argument for doubting whether it ever existed. For this disappearance he attempts to account by considerations which strengthen the reasonableness of these doubts. 'A Hebrew Gospel composed in the native dialect of Palestine, and designed for the benefit of the native Church, would never travel into general circulation out of Palestine, and would probably never be multiplied by copies out of Jerusalem, even in Palestine itself. If, then, we consider the ruin and desolation which, within thirty years of the earliest date which can be assigned to this Gospel, overspread that country, and particularly the metropolis, it is very conceivable that few copies of St. Matthew's (Hebrew) Gospel would survive in the general destruction of property, both public and private, which then ensued.' But is it credible, that copies should not have been preserved by the Jewish Christians who were dispersed over the adjacent provinces? In the North-eastern part of Syria, where the Syrian dialect has maintained its hold upon the people, and where, even in the second century, Syriac literature was cultivated, such a book, written in the dialect of Palestine, could not fail of being acceptable, both for private use and for that of

the churches. But that they knew nothing of any such venerable document, is evident from the fact, that the Syriac version, which was executed in the second century, was made from the Greek text. Again, considering the constant intercourse between Alexandria and Palestine, it seems incredible, that a copy of the supposed Hebrew Gospel should not have been recoverable by the anxious researches of Origen, who could discover no trace of any such Hebrew text; and the Coptic version, like the Syriac, was made from the Greek. The tradition, that Pantænus of Alexandria, early in the third century, on visiting India, (by which Arabia is probably meant,) found a copy of Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew, which had been left there by the Apostle Bartholomew, is of suspicious authenticity. The book which he is said to have met with, may have been a Hebrew translation, and probably, as Dr. Burton suggests, 'not a genuine translation of the Gospel composed by Matthew, but a work which has often been confounded with it, and which has been called "the Gospel according to the Hebrews." It seems to have had the work of the Evangelist for its basis, but to have been intended to indicate the doctrines of the Ebionites, rather than those of genuine Christianity.'

The Gospel of Matthew, in its present shape and text, must have been, at all events, in existence at the time that Mark composed his work, in which he has frequently adhered with verbal exactness to the language of the Proto-Evangelist. To reconcile this fact with the notion of a Hebrew original, Mr. Greswell starts the strange hypothesis, that Mark translated the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, and wrote his

Burton's
Hist. of the
Christian
Church,
12mo. pp.
251-4. See
Lardner,
vol. v. p. 312.

own supplementary to it, both about the same time. The translator of Matthew's Hebrew Gospel must have been, he remarks, some one of equal authority with Matthew himself; otherwise his translation could never have superseded the original. But Mark's Gospel is not a supplement to that of Matthew; nor is it credible that he should have written it, if he had deemed it necessary to translate the elder document. He must, then, have had before him the Greek Gospel of Matthew, which, if it existed at that early period, must have been the original. In a word, all internal evidence, as well as historical probability, is opposed to the vague tradition of a Hebrew original, which appears to have had no other foundation than a fallacious conjecture.*

What gave rise to the idea, was the fact, which is sufficiently proved by the character of the document, that Matthew composed his Gospel for the benefit of the Christian churches in Judea; and if there is any foundation for the statement in Eusebius, that he wrote it, being about to leave Judea to go into other countries, we have an argument in favour of its early date. Another tradition, mentioned by Eusebius, relates, that Our Saviour commanded the Apostles not to depart from Jerusalem for twelve years; and it deserves to be noticed as a coincidence, if nothing more, that it was about that time the events took place, as recorded in the xith chapter of Acts, which

* 'Taking it for granted,' says Wetstein, 'that Matthew wrote for the Jews in Judea, they concluded that he wrote in Hebrew.' To the authority of this great critic, Lardner adds the judgment of Le Clerc, Jones, Basnage, and Jortin, with which his own coincides. Vol. v. pp. 310—313.

led to the sending forth of Barnabas to visit the church at Antioch. Hitherto, Samaria and Galilee had formed the limits of the Apostolic ministry; but the time was now come, when it was necessary that the Apostles should extend their missionary journeys; and accordingly, we find Peter shortly afterwards visiting Syria. If Matthew was among the Apostles who then left Judea, it may be assumed, that his Gospel could not have been written later than A.D. 44; and Mr. Greswell concludes that, if we place its composition between the time of the conversion of Cornelius, A.D. 41, and that of Paul's first circuit, A.D. 44, we may not be far from the truth. The internal marks of its early composition may be recognised in the features which distinguish it from the other Gospels.

§ 3. The Gospel of Matthew partakes much less of the character of a history or a biographical narrative, than of an authentic record of Our Lord's sayings and discourses, which illustrated his character as a divine teacher, and, together with the miracles he wrought, proved him to be the Christ. The main subject of the Evangelist is, the public ministry of Our Lord, from the time at which he was qualified to bear testimony to it as an eye-witness; and his object is to show, that all that Jesus did and taught, was characteristic of the Messiah. With this view, he prefixes to his narrative the legal genealogy which proved him to be the heir of David, and refers to those circumstances of his birth and early life which corresponded to the prophetic indications of the Hebrew Scriptures. This idea he carries with him through the whole of his narrative; whereas Mark and Luke

Distinctive
character of
Matthew's
Gospel.

seldom adduce passages from the Old Testament, or appeal to the evidence of prophecy. In some instances, the formula,* ‘That it might be fulfilled,’ cannot be connected with any distinct prediction, but may be considered as referring to parallel or analogous circumstances, or to a correspondence between the language of Scripture and the fact; and this, apparently, with a view to obviate Jewish prejudices or objections founded upon ominous or unlooked for circumstances in Our Lord’s history; such as the massacre of Bethlehem, his being driven into Egypt, and subsequently becoming an inhabitant of a frontier town of Galilee notorious for its impure dialect and rudeness of manners. In reference to the first, the citation seems to point, not to a prediction, but to a parallel; as if the Evangelist had said, It was not the first time that the bereaved mothers of Benjamin had wept for their little ones.† In the second instance, the language of the prophet Hosea is cited as indi-

* This formula is peculiar to Matthew in the New Testament, but customary with the Rabbinical writers. Its precise import is ably investigated and illustrated by Dr. S. Davidson, *Sac. Hermeneutics*, pp. 448—486.

† So Calvin, one of the most judicious of commentators, explains the reference: ‘Matthew does not mean that the prophet had predicted what Herod should do, but that, at the advent of Christ, that mourning was renewed which, many ages before, the women of Benjamin had made.’ Dr. S. Davidson, in his ‘*Sacred Hermeneutics*,’ (pp. 493, 4,) contends for the principle, that, upon the strength of the Evangelist’s words, we are warranted in regarding this and other events in the history of the Hebrews as symbolical or typical of future transactions. Yet, all that his argument requires, is, that we should recognize a *designed correspondence* in the words of the prophet, when speaking of the past event, to a transaction yet future, in which those words should be fully realized; not that the event was itself symbolical.

cating a striking coincidence between the history of the Jewish nation and the early life of Him who was in a higher sense 'the Son of God,' in being 'called out of Egypt.*' And the third circumstance, which we know to have been a stumbling-block, is shown to have been perfectly accordant with the tenor of those predictions which foretold that the Messiah should be despised and rejected, to which his being regarded as a Galilean or Nazarene so much contributed, that it furnished the very emphasis of opprobrium.†

The first three chapters of Matthew evidently form a sort of introduction to the account of Our Lord's public ministry, which the Evangelist commences at the point of time when Jesus, having heard that John was cast into prison, returned into Galilee, and, leaving Nazareth, his former residence, fixed his abode at Capernaum. It constitutes a proof that the introductory chapters always formed part of the Gospel, that the mention of his leaving Nazareth evidently looks back

Authenticity of the initial chapters.

Ch. iv. 12.

* The notion, that Israel, as a nation, was a type of Christ, or that the exodus was symbolical, as an event, of this circumstance in the life of Christ, cannot be safely propounded as an explanation of the citation. Yet, the form of expression in Hosea may have been adapted, prospectively, to its future application. In this view, the citation by the Evangelist is not an accommodation of the passage, but the development of a prophetic allusion.

† Other explanations have been proposed of this difficult passage. Chrysostom cuts the knot by supposing the reference made to prophecies no longer extant. Calvin approves of Bucer's idea, that Judg. xiii. 5, is pointed at,—“he shall be a Nazarite,”—i. e. separated; the etymology of Nazarene, though a patronymic, giving that meaning. Our Lord's residing there led to his being called what the prophets predicted the Messiah should be, one separated; like Joseph, who was '*Nazareus fratrum suorum,*' separated from his brethren. Gen. xlix. 26. Deut. xxxiii. 16.

to the statement at chap. ii. 22.* And, as it must have been while out of Galilee that Jesus heard of the imprisonment of his Forerunner, the statement of the Evangelist implies, what we learn more particularly from the Gospel of John, that Our Lord, subsequently to his baptism and the temptation, had been journeying or sojourning in other parts. That it was not this Evangelist's design to give a minute or regular narrative of Our Lord's proceedings, is evident from the general and summary terms in which he informs us, that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and healing all manner of diseases," and that "his fame went throughout Syria;" which supposes some considerable time to have been occupied with his ministry before his fame could thus have spread. After the concise mention of these facts, the Evangelist proceeds to give, in what is usually though improperly termed, "the Sermon on the Mount," a specimen of His doctrine and teaching who spake as never man spake. It is the opinion of the soundest commentators, sustained by the internal evidence, that Matthew has here collected into one view the main points or characteristic features of his Divine Master's teaching, from discourses or instructions delivered at different times. In a similar manner, he has thrown together in one collec-

Hug, part ii.
§ 4.

* So, ver. 13 of ch. iii. obviously connects with the same statement, and requires it. The external evidence of the genuineness of the first two chapters of this Gospel, is decisive. There have been, Bishop Marsh observes, not less than 355 Greek MSS. of the Gospels collated, every one of which contains them, with the exception of the imperfect Codex Ebnerianus, which begins with ver. 18 of ch. i. Marsh's Michaelis, vol. iii. pt. 2, p. 133.

tion the Parables of Our Lord, how different soever may have been the time and place at which they were delivered; that method of teaching corresponding, as the Evangelist remarks, to the intimation of prophecy. The copiousness of these records of the sayings of Christ, in contrast with the remarkable conciseness of the historical hints, or rather the compression of the narrative, while it marks the design of the Evangelist, and the character of the composition, as didactic, rather than narrative,—suggests also the idea, that these instructions must have been committed to writing either at the time or not long after they were delivered. That they might have been retained in the faithful recollection of the Apostles without the aid of written documents, is not incredible, more especially since it was promised that the Holy Spirit should bring to their remembrance all that Christ had spoken to them. Yet, it is not probable, that they would neglect to make some transcript of instructions upon which they set so high a value. Actions and events are not liable to escape from recollection; so that, while they are yet recent, the want of a record is not felt, and the idea of composing a narrative is not likely to suggest itself. But who that wished to preserve the very expressions which fell from a revered friend and instructor, would trust them to his memory? If any of the disciples were competent to perform the office of a scribe, there seems no room to doubt that every opportunity would be improved for taking down what their Master taught them. Such was the ancient practice, when a teacher dictated to his attendant scholars, for which purpose

John xiv.
26.

they were furnished with ink-horns in their girdles; a custom referred to in the Old Testament, and which is still the practice in Syria and other eastern countries. So Baruch, we are told, wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord which he had spoken to him, upon a roll of a book. Now who was so likely to be well qualified for this office as the Apostle who had been accustomed to the clerical employment and exact habits of a receiver of customs? He may not have been the only disciple who took notes of his Divine Master's aphorisms, allegories, and conversations: it is almost certain, that John, and perhaps others, also adopted the same method. But we may assume that Matthew would be particularly adroit and ready with his pen, and that he would possess the largest collection. And these notices would furnish him with ample materials for a regular document like that which he was afterwards led to undertake.

Matthew's
Gospel the
true Proto-
Evangelion.

§ 4. Admitting this natural explanation of the origin of Matthew's Gospel, its fragmentary character is at once accounted for. We may also suppose, that portions of what he had committed to writing, probably in the vernacular Hebrew, would be copied and circulated to some extent before they were embodied in the Greek Gospel. Thus explained, the hypothesis of an original Hebrew document, from which the several Evangelists derived materials for their narratives, and which has been deemed by some learned critics the only mode of accounting for the verbal coincidences, may be admitted without detracting from the originality or independent authority of the existing Gospels. That any such document, not itself

of apostolical origin, should have preceded the composition of Matthew's Gospel, is utterly incredible. Scarcely less improbable does it appear, that the Evangelist should have neglected or deferred committing to writing any of Our Lord's discourses for twelve years after the Ascension, and then have undertaken it simply because he was about to leave Judea. But, if we suppose that the materials were already in existence and known to his fellow Apostles, then, his undertaking to compose a regular work at the time to which the Tradition points, and not sooner, is perfectly natural; for, as a work of history, it could not, in Palestine, have been wanted at an earlier period. And upon the same supposition, all the irregularities of his Gospel, as well as the other circumstances which different hypotheses have been invented to account for, seem easily explained.

Objections have been urged, however, against the opinion which assigns to Matthew's Gospel so early a date; and it has been thought that, from hints scattered throughout the book, a longer time must have elapsed between the events and the period at which it was composed. For instance, the language of the Evangelist at ch. xxviii. 15, "This saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day," is urged as a proof that many years must have intervened. But surely such an observation would be as appropriate in a work written fourteen years after the Resurrection, as in one of later date by some ten or fifteen years. The parenthetical comment introduced in Our Lord's prediction of the overthrow of the Temple, ch. xxiv. 15, "Whoso readeth, let him under-

stand," is strangely imagined by Professor Hug to have been suggested by the state of affairs at the time he was writing his Gospel. Such a premonition to the Christians of Judea would then have been too late to answer its purpose. On the contrary, the passage supplies an argument for an earlier date, since, to the predictions contained in that chapter, it behoved the Apostles to give early publication as a warning to the Jewish nation, as well as more particularly for the instruction of the faithful. It seems very unlikely, therefore, that the first written Gospel should have been put forth so late as A.D. 64 or even 66, (the date required by Professor Hug's hypothesis,) only a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Date of
Mark's
Gospel.

§5. This argument for the early date of the Gospel of Matthew, applies, indeed, to that which, by the concurrent voice of antiquity, is allowed to have been the second in order of date; since the prediction, with the same parenthetical admonition, is given by Mark, notwithstanding that he is supposed not to have composed his Gospel for the Christians of Palestine. He has, however, followed Matthew so closely, that, in this instance, he may be thought merely to have copied him; yet, could he have done so, had the prediction been already fulfilled, or the time past at which the warning could be of any benefit? It was of importance that not only the Christians in Judea, but also those in the neighbouring countries who might have occasional intercourse with Jerusalem, should be informed of the signs of the approaching catastrophe of the city and nation.

There is reason to conclude that Mark's Gospel was not written till Matthew's had been for some years in circulation, as it is evidently modelled upon it, and may be regarded as an adaptation of the narrative portion of the First Gospel, with supplemental illustrations, for the use of other than Jewish readers. Hence we find him introducing explanatory remarks which, to persons conversant with Jewish customs, would be unnecessary. But, although we must assign to it a later date than that of Matthew's, there seems no reason to place between them a longer interval than some ten or twelve years; and it will be seen, that there is a concurrence of opinion, though upon different grounds, in favour of its comparatively early date; that is to say, not later than A.D. 60.

§ 6. The general design of all the Evangelists was the same, but each Gospel had its specific purpose. That of Matthew, as we have seen, was, to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of David, the promised Messiah. This is rather assumed by Mark, who announces his subject as "the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and proceeds at once to give an account of the miraculous attestation borne to him in this character, by a voice from heaven, when he presented himself to John to be baptized. This Evangelist neither aims at combating Jewish prejudices, nor appeals, like Matthew, to the language of the ancient prophets, but confines himself almost entirely to the recital of the leading facts.

Specific Design and Character of Mark's Gospel.

Brief and rapid as is the style of Mark's Gospel, considered as a history, it is more circumstantial in

the relation of striking incidents, and abounds in picturesque and interesting touches, such as could have been supplied only by a writer personally acquainted with the scenes described, and either himself an eye-witness of the occurrences, or deriving his information from an original source. For instance, in his account of Our Lord's cure of the paralytic, this Evangelist describes the crowds that thronged the door of the house, and states, that the sick man was borne by four, and that, being unable to come nigh to the door, they uncovered the roof of the house, and let him down on his couch. Again, in his account of the woman who was cured by touching the garments of Our Lord, Mark mentions several minute points in her history; that she had for twelve years sought in vain a cure from physicians, and had spent all her property without obtaining any relief; and the whole transaction is described with a graphic minuteness quite different from Matthew's concise and summary style. In the same chapter, he gives the name of the ruler of the synagogue whose daughter was restored to life; and states, that only Peter, James, and John were admitted as witnesses of the miracle. Where Matthew only states that the Pharisees went out and held a council against Our Lord, Mark adds, that they took counsel with the Herodians. As instances of his minute descriptive touches, we may refer to his describing Our Lord as being in the wilderness "*with the wild beasts*;"—his representing him, in the storm, "*asleep upon a pillow* in the hinder part of the ship;"—his vivid picture of the multitudes ranged in companies of hundreds and

Mark ii. 2.

Ch. v. 25.

Matt. xii.
14.
Mark iii. 6.

i. 13.

iv. 38.

fifties *on the green grass* ; (a circumstance not only picturesque, but indicating the season of the year ;)—the touching circumstance of the Syro-phenician mother finding her daughter cured and *laid upon the bed* ;—the particular and affecting account of the remarkable cure of a child possessed with a deaf and dumb spirit ;—his describing Our Lord as *much displeased* when his disciples would have kept away the little children from him, and as taking them *up into his arms*, and blessing them ;—his mentioning the graceful conduct of the young ruler, in running and *kneeling* to our Lord, and the love with which Christ beheld him ;—and his marking the spot where the colt was found tied, which the disciples were to bring to their Master—*a place where two ways met*. In all these instances, this Evangelist is found filling up Matthew's strong outline, precisely like one who had the original narrative before him, but was enabled by personal recollection, or by information otherwise obtained, to add those illustrative details which give colouring and greater distinctness to the picture. Some of the instances cited clearly denote that Mark, if not himself one of the attendants upon Our Lord's ministry, must have derived his knowledge of minute facts from one of the Apostles. Where Matthew states, that, on one occasion, the disciples had forgotten to take bread with them, Mark mentions that they had one loaf; a circumstance not known, perhaps, to all the Twelve. Again, after giving some specimens of Our Lord's parables, (one of which is peculiar to this Evangelist, iv. 26—29,) he adds, "And when they were alone, he expounded all things

Mark vi. 39.

vii. 30.

ix. 20.

x. 14.

x. 17, 21.

xi. 4.

Matt. xvi. 5.

Mark viii.
14.

to his disciples." It has been remarked, that this Evangelist discovers a particular interest in Peter, introducing his name on several occasions where it does not appear to be required; as at ch. i. 36. "And Simon followed after him;"—ch. xi. 21. "And Peter, calling to remembrance," &c. So, at ch. xiii. 3., Peter is introduced with James, John, and Andrew, as questioning our Lord privately; and, at ch. xvi. 7. "Go, tell his disciples *and Peter*." Yet, in some instances, where the occurrences in which Peter was personally concerned are circumstantially related by Matthew,—as, Peter's walking upon the sea to Christ (Matt. xiv. 28—32), Our Lord's declaration to him, "Thou art Peter," upon his confessing him to be the Christ (Matt. xvi. 17); Peter's rebuking his Master (Matt. xvi. 22); and the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii.),—Mark is more brief than the former Evangelist, and, in the first instance, is silent. On the other hand, in describing the fall of Peter, though more concise than Matthew, he mentions the cock's crowing twice, and states simply, that, when Peter thought of what Our Lord had predicted, "he wept." Matthew had said, "wept bitterly." These are slight indications, but they certainly harmonize with the traditional belief, (which derives probability from other circumstances,) that Mark's Gospel was written under the eye of Peter, or that the Evangelist was closely connected with that Apostle, and derived his minute information from him. Further, two miracles, the cure of a man deaf and dumb, and of a blind man at Bethsaida (Mark vii. 31—37; viii. 22—26), are mentioned only by this Evangelist. He also gives

the name of the blind man near Jericho, whom Our Lord restored to sight (x. 46—52); he mentions which of the disciples privately questioned Our Lord respecting the time when the predicted overthrow of the temple should take place (xiii. 3, 4); and he identifies Simon the Cyrenian (xv. 21) as the father of Alexander and Rufus. His explanation of the Jewish custom of washing before meals, and cleansing cups, pots, and tables (vii. 2—4); and his remark (xi. 13), in reference to the barren fig-tree, that “the time of figs,” that is the fig-harvest, “was not yet” come; indicate that he intended his Gospel for other than Jewish readers. Once more, he alone mentions one simple incident attending Our Lord’s apprehension. When all the disciples fled, a young man followed him, who appears, from his having thrown round him only a loose linen garment, to have been roused by the tumult, and to have come out of his house to inquire what was the matter. Being laid hold of by the guards, he left the loose cloth in their hands, and “fled from them naked.” How this circumstance became known to the Evangelist, does not appear, since the disciples had previously fled: Peter and John followed, indeed, but “afar off.” Was the young man known to Mark? Was he the Evangelist himself? * At all events, this is one of the numerous illustrative details which show that Mark is not a mere epitomizer of Matthew’s Gospel; that he had original sources of authentic information.

The most remarkable deviations in this Evangelist

* So Mr. Greswell supposes. Cave notices the ‘ancient’ conjecture, that it was the Evangelist John: an absurd supposition.

from the Gospel of Matthew, consist in his different arrangement of some of the incidents in Our Lord's public ministry. Thus, while Matthew mentions the choice of the Twelve and their being sent forth on their first mission in immediate connexion (ch. ix. 1, &c.), Mark separates them by a considerable interval, as if he intended to assign to the latter event its true place in the history in order of time. He also places differently Our Lord's excursion into the land of the Gadarenes, the raising of Jairus's daughter, and certain portions of Our Lord's discourses. For this he must have had some reason; and the most natural explanation is, that, whereas Matthew followed a didactic arrangement, bringing together facts and discourses related by their subject, Mark has paid more attention to the order in which the facts occurred, and the occasions upon which the sayings were delivered. Finally, Mark mentions three personal manifestations of Our Lord after his Resurrection, particularizing his appearing to Mary Magdalene first; and also, the Ascension, which is implied, but not recorded, in Matthew's concise statement.* In all these respects, while making such copious use of the materials in the First Gospel, Mark appears to have aimed at giving a more complete and regular history.

To represent the two Evangelists as at variance, is, however, as absurd as it is perverse; for it assumes that both aimed at chronological exactness, and ob-

Hug, ii.
§ 24, 25.

* Of these supplemental notices, the first appearance of Our Lord to Mary is particularly related by John. Mark xvi. 14. seemingly refers to the unbelief of Thomas, John xx. 24.; and ver. 12. to what is recorded, Luke xxiv. 13, &c.

served the same strict historical arrangement, which is contrary to the internal evidence. Equally gratuitous is the assumption, that, because one relates more circumstantially what the other has stated more concisely, the author of the concise account could not have seen the more copious narrative. It is certain that, in some places, Mark has abridged the Gospel of Matthew, while, for the most part, he has supplied supplemental details. And this is precisely what we might expect him to have done, if, not aiming to supersede the original Gospel,* he designed to render his own work sufficiently complete for independent use, in adaptation to a different class of readers. In every part, his Gospel pre-supposes the existence of St. Matthew's, and confirms it; while their different design accounts for the variations and the supplemental matter. In refuting the opposite hypothesis, maintained by some of the German critics, Professor Hug remarks, that it would be easy to prove by the same sort of reasoning, that neither of the two historians, Livy and Polybius, could have been acquainted with the work of the other. "The one is sometimes at variance with the other, respecting the circumstances of events. They also differ from each other respecting the chronology of some facts; they are embarrassed by differences which border on contradictions; the one also sometimes declares the contrary of the other; and, lastly, they have not always made proper use of the more extensive detail which they might severally

* His omission of the greater part of Our Lord's discourses, is a proof that he did not aim at superseding the original Gospel. See, on this subject, the judicious remarks of Greswell, vol. i. pp. 24—27.

have found in the works of each other;—therefore neither was acquainted with the other. Livy was not acquainted with Polybius, nor Polybius with Livy. Is this then true? Is it perfectly correct? On the contrary, Livy refers to Polybius by name in several books of his history. Why do we refuse to apply that to the composers of the Gospels, which is acknowledged to be true and valid in profane authors?"

The reply to this question would be, that we allow in profane authors for a difference of opinion, for uncertainty, and for error; which cannot be admitted in the case of two inspired writers. The parallel is not, therefore, complete; though the argument holds good to a certain extent, in opposition to the assumption that Mark could not have seen the Gospel from which his own differs. The variations are not such as import, in any instance, an impeachment of the veracity, accuracy, or authority of the Apostolic Evangelist, on the part of the later writer; but, on the contrary, they confirm, as being evidently intended to illustrate, the original document.

Hug, pt. ii.
§ 21.

Considering that Mark's Gospel was not written till probably twelve or fifteen years after Matthew's had been in circulation, it is quite incredible that a companion of the Apostles should not have been acquainted with the work of the proto-Evangelist; and equally so, that he should not have made that use of it which is so apparent in the verbal identity of many passages. According to the testimony of Irenæus (A.D. 178), Mark did not compose his Gospel till after the death of Peter and Paul; and if so, it could not have been written earlier than the year 65

or 66. No stress, however, can be laid upon the statement of a writer who tells us, in the same sentence, that Matthew published his work while Peter and Paul were laying the foundations of the church at Rome. Nor can the vague and contradictory traditions relating to Mark, recited by Eusebius, be deemed worthy of the slightest credit, since they all require us to believe, that his Gospel, which is obviously modelled upon Matthew's, was written at the dictation of Peter, at Rome, at a time when it is certain that Apostle could not have visited the imperial city, and when the Evangelist, if the same as the Marcus of the Epistles, was the companion, not of Peter, but of Paul.

§ 7. Whether Mark the Evangelist and John Mark, the kinsman of Barnabas, were the same individual, has, indeed, been a question in ancient as well as in modern times; and here, again, the uncertainty of Tradition is strikingly exemplified. The only reason for supposing them not to be the same, seems to have been the fact, that, in the Book of Acts and in the Epistles, Mark appears as the companion of Paul, whereas Tradition makes the Evangelist Mark to have been the disciple, interpreter, and companion of Peter.* The very first mention of John Mark, however,

Biography
of Mark.

* Among those who conclude that they were different persons, are Cave, Grotius, Du Pin, Tillemont, Greswell, and Burton. On the other side are Jer. Jones, Lightfoot, Wetstein, Lardner, and Hug. Mr. Greswell bases his positive decision upon three fallacious assumptions; viz.—that, at the date of Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, Mark must have been the companion of Peter,—that, at the date of the Second Epistle to Timothy, he was not alive or not in Asia,—and, that the Mark of the Acts had a proper Jewish name, which is not certain of the Evangelist.

assures us of Peter's intimacy with his family. On his deliverance from prison by the angel, Peter "came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying." Acts xii. 12. His mother, therefore, was an inhabitant of Jerusalem, and Mark was probably a native of that city, although his kinsman, Barnabas, was a Cypriote by birth. That Peter should first have repaired to the house of his mother, indicates that he expected to be received there with joy; we cannot, therefore, be at any loss to account for his referring to him, in his first Epistle, under the tender appellation, "Marcus my son." The cognomen was the usual and characteristic name; and hence, conformably to the general practice, John would be commonly known simply as Mark.* The deliverance of Peter took place in the year 44; and about the same time, Barnabas and Paul arrived at Jerusalem from Antioch, bearing contributions for the relief of the poorer brethren in Judea, who were suffering from the scarcity. On their return, John Mark accompanied them; which, as he was probably a stranger to Paul, proves his connexion with Barnabas, and identifies him with "Mark, sister's son to Barnabas," mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians. On their first apostolic mission, Mark was the attendant and travelling companion of Paul and Barnabas, as far as Perga in Pamphylia, where, declining to proceed further, he left them, and returned to Jerusalem. We find him, however, again at Antioch in the year 51,

* So, Simon Bar-Jonas, Lebbæus, and Joses, were known by their respective surnames as Peter, Thaddeus and Barnabas.

when Paul and Barnabas were proposing to set out on a second circuit. An interval of four or five years had elapsed, during which nothing is more probable than that he would be again associated with Peter; and it was about the same time, other circumstances lead us to conclude, that the First Epistle of Peter was composed at Babylon, in which the Apostle refers to Mark as being then with him. We may suppose that he had returned from Babylonia to Antioch in company with Peter; and thence, when Paul and Barnabas had disagreed on the subject of taking him with them a second time, he accompanied his kinsman to Cyprus. For the next ten years we lose sight of him, and his name occurs no more in the Evangelical history; but the Apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy from Rome, desires him to hasten thither, and to bring with him Mark, because he was profitable to him for the ministry. That Mark did accompany Timothy to Rome, is manifest from his being mentioned in the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. In the former, he is designated as the kinsman of Barnabas, whom the Colossians had previously received instructions to entertain with hospitality and respect. He appears to have left Rome before the Epistle to the Philippians was written, and may be supposed to have returned to Asia with Epaphras, as he is not mentioned in that Epistle. Nevertheless he might have remained at Rome, and have composed his Gospel there. Two circumstances, however, render this unlikely: first, it was just about this time that Luke was composing, or had recently completed, his two books, which must have rendered Mark's Gospel

2Tim.iv.11.

wholly unnecessary for the use of the Roman church ; and, secondly, there is nothing to connect him at Rome with Peter, except the mistaken idea, that the First Epistle of Peter was written at Rome, founded upon the strange notion that, by Babylon, Rome is mystically designated. By Chrysostom, Mark is stated to have written his Gospel in Egypt, at the request of the believers there ; although, he adds, ‘ in what place each one of the Evangelists wrote, cannot be said with certainty.’ Eusebius and Jerome both speak of Mark as going to Egypt, taking his Gospel with him ; and they state, that he died and was buried at Alexandria in the eighth year of Nero, answering to A.D. 61. This date, however, must be deemed erroneous, since, in that year, Mark was at Rome with Paul ; unless we suppose that, in the course of that same year, he proceeded from Rome to Alexandria, and died almost immediately after his arrival. In that case, the tradition which makes him to have composed or published his Gospel after the death of Peter and Paul, must be wholly without foundation. It rests, indeed, upon no authentic data ; and the late date assigned to Mark’s Gospel by Lardner and other learned critics, is a mere inference from the erroneous statement of Irenæus, echoed by other ancient writers, and traceable to the fiction that Paul and Peter *founded* the church at Rome.

Lardner,
vol. v. p. 335.

Many circumstances would lead us to adopt the conclusion, that Mark’s Gospel was written at an earlier period. In the first place, if we suppose, with Wetstein, Greswell, and others, that it was known to Luke, it must have been in circulation before

A.D. 61, several years before the martyrdom of Paul and Peter. Secondly, if it was written under the eye of Peter, it is more likely to have been undertaken when Mark was associated with that Apostle, either in the interval between his return from Pamphylia and his second journey with Barnabas to Cyprus, during which we find him in Babylonia with Peter; 1 Pet. v. 13. or else during the ten years which intervened between his setting out for Cyprus and his joining Paul at Rome. Thirdly, it is not likely that the city of Alexandria, which, according to Josephus, contained as many as 100,000 Jews*, remained long unvisited by some of the Apostles, since there was a constant intercourse between Palestine and Egypt, Lybia, and Cyrenaica, and Jews and proselytes from those countries attended the feast of Pentecost. Assuming that there was historical ground for the concurrent traditional belief, that Mark preached the Gospel at Alexandria, what is so likely as that he proceeded thither either with Barnabas from Cyprus, A.D. 51, or with Peter himself between A.D. 51 and 61?† Matthew's Gospel, if published in A.D. 44, would by that time have been from seven to ten years in circulation; but, for the sake of the churches out of Judea, after the extension of the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, a compendium might seem to be required,

* Egypt, according to Philo, contained more than a million of Jews. Greswell, vol. i. p. 130.

† Mr. Greswell, upon different ground, conjectures that Peter visited Egypt with Mark, between A.D. 56 and 66, and that Mark had composed his Gospel before A.D. 61, the year in which Tradition fixes his death at Alexandria. Gresw. vol. i. pp. 129—131.

more full and circumstantial as to the facts, explanatory of some things in the first Gospel, and yet not intended to take its place as an authoritative record of Our Lord's discourses, and an inspired testimony to his Divine claims as the Messiah of Israel. Alexandria was, at that time, a distinguished seat of both Oriental and Grecian literature. A host of librarians, grammarians, and scholiasts were there constantly employed upon all that was good or bad in philosophy. This city for a long time supplied the West with Greek transcripts of every learned work; and thence, also, the West obtained the MSS. of the New Testament. Where, then, was it so likely that Mark would be called upon to furnish a more exact account of Our Lord's ministry, adapted to other than Jewish readers? Or where would he possess so many facilities for executing the work? Where else would Alexander and Rufus be so well known as to induce the Evangelist to mention Simon of Cyrene as their father? But, if Mark's Gospel was written at Alexandria, (and the name of the Evangelist is connected with that city by stronger traditional evidence than supports almost any other biographical fact in the lives of the sacred writers,) we seem to have a strong reason for concluding that it was published long before the period to which its composition must be assigned, on the supposition that it was written at Rome, or after the decease of Peter and Paul. A German writer (Storr) has conjectured that it was composed for the Christians at Antioch; and we might certainly expect that a Gospel would be at a very early period required for the use of the numerous

Mark xv.21.

believers in that city. In that case, we should be led to fix its date still earlier, or about the year 50 or 51.

The only plausible argument adduced in support of the vague and unauthenticated tradition, that Mark's Gospel was written for the Roman Christians, rests upon the Latinisms which have been detected in the phraseology. Professor Hug instances that, in speaking of the *λεπτον*, a coin current in Judea, he does Mark xii. 42. not, like Josephus, give its value in Attic money, but according to that of Roman coins; and again, that, contrary to the custom of the other sacred writers, he employs the Roman expression, *centurio*, (*ὁ κεντυρίων*) Ch. xv. 39. for the commander of sixty or a hundred soldiers, instead of *ἐκατόνταρχος*, the term used by Josephus and by Luke; which must have been, he thinks, in accommodation to readers acquainted with the Latin technical term, but not with the Greek. But Mr. Greswell makes use of a similar argument to prove, that the Gospel of Matthew was translated into Greek at Rome; referring to various Latin terms* which occur in it, though not all peculiar to it. He admits, indeed, that they might have become current wherever the Roman empire had been established. It is obvious that this admission is fatal to the presumption that they were employed in accommodation to the peculiar ideas of the inhabitants of the Metropolis.

* *Ε. γ. κοδράντης; μίλιον; κουστωδία; πραιτώριον; λεγεων; μόδιος; δηνάριον; ασσάριον.* Greswell, vol. i. p. 124. But in the Acts (xix. 12) occur two remarkable terms borrowed from the Latin; *σουδαρία* and *συμκίνθια*.

CHAP. III.

THE GOSPELS OF LUKE AND JOHN.

ANCIENT ORDER OF THE FOUR GOSPELS—BIOGRAPHY OF LUKE—DATE OF HIS GOSPEL—TO WHAT PRIOR ACCOUNTS DOES THIS EVANGELIST REFER?—CHARACTER OF LUKE AS AN HISTORIAN—VARIATIONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW EXPLAINED—CHRONOLOGICAL DIFFICULTY RELATING TO THE TAXING, AND THE DEATH OF HEROD—SPECIFIC DESIGN AND CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN—REASONS FOR ASSIGNING TO IT AN EARLY DATE—INDEPENDENT SOURCE OF PAUL'S GOSPEL—APPARENT ALLUSIONS TO THE FOUR GOSPELS IN THE EPISTLES.

Ancient
Order of the
Four Gos-
pels.

§ 1.—It is asserted by Clement of Alexandria, that the Gospels which contain the genealogies, were first written; a statement which, if it could be deemed authentic, would require us to place the Gospel of Luke before that of Mark, in order of composition. And in some ancient Versions, the Evangelists are arranged in the following order: Matthew, John, Luke, Mark. This arrangement, however, is supposed to have reference to the rank of the sacred writers, the place of honour being assigned to the two Apostles. In the Greek manuscripts, and in all catalogues of the canonical books, the established order is observed, which may be presumed to be the

true chronological order. Among the various hypotheses started by the biblical critics of Germany, to account for the coincident passages in the several Gospels, one distinguished scholar (Griesbach) has maintained the position, that Mark compiled his Gospel from the writings of Matthew and Luke, and consequently wrote after them; while another German scholar (Vogel) accounts Luke the first of the Evangelists, basing his opinion chiefly upon the argument, that, if Matthew had written before him, Luke would not have presumed to compose another Gospel, or that, if he had, he would have omitted none of the materials furnished by Matthew. That Luke was acquainted with the Gospel of Matthew, there is, however, the clearest internal evidence; and according to the date which we have assigned to Mark's, it is highly probable that he had seen that also, since, for the Gospel of Luke, it will be shown, an earlier date cannot be fixed than A.D. 61.

§ 2. There is scarcely any point of Apostolic biography upon which Tradition is more completely at fault, and more palpably betrays its insufficiency as a guide, than the personal history of this Evangelist. Eusebius, in two places, refers to Luke as the author of the Acts of the Apostles, and of a Gospel; but all the information respecting him is comprised in the statement, that he was born at Antioch, and was, by profession, a physician. That he was a Syrian by birth, Lardner thinks a very questionable account, since it is not found in Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, or any other writer before Eusebius. Epiphanius, Origen, and others supposed

Biography
of Luke.

him to have been one of the Seventy Disciples ;* which is scarcely consistent with his being a native of Antioch, and proves that there was no prevailing or well attested tradition on the subject. Had he been a Gentile, converted by Paul, as some writers imagine, he would not have been fit to accompany the Apostle as his constant companion. Lardner, with Tillemont, Basnage, and others, inclines to the opinion, that he is the same as Lucius of Cyrene, mentioned Acts xiii. 1, and Rom. xvi. 20 ; a supposition as old as the time of Origen, but unsupported by a shadow of evidence. Lucius and Lucilius seem etymologically related to *lux*, light ; Lucas and Lucanus, to *lucus*, a grove or wood. Greswell pronounces the tradition which makes both Mark and Luke to have been disciples of Our Lord, and among the Seventy, absolutely childish and absurd ; contending that we know no more of Luke's antecedent history than what may be collected from Col. iv. 14,—that he was by profession a surgeon or physician, and therefore probably a Greek ; and he conjectures that he was a citizen of Philippi. We may, he thinks, take it for granted, that no Jew would have practised as a physician, except among Jews, whereas Luke must have so practised among Gentiles. These are gratuitous assumptions. Besides which, it is considered as doubtful by Calvin, Basnage, and others, whether the Evangelist Luke is intended, Col. iv. 14 ; the descriptive appellation, “ the physician,” being added, they infer, to distinguish him

Greswell, i.
p. 75.
Ib. i. 70.

* The only reason for this opinion seems to be, that Luke alone mentions the mission of the Seventy.

from the Evangelist.* From these conflicting traditions and learned conjectures it is manifest, that we have no historical evidence to guide us, and that all our information must be gathered from the sacred documents.

Now it is remarkable that it should have been entirely overlooked, that the same internal evidence upon which the authorship of the Book of Acts has been ascribed to Luke, enables us to identify Luke with Silas or Sylvanus, St. Paul's chosen companion after his separation from Barnabas. The first mention that is made of Silas, occurs in the xvth chapter of Acts, verse 22, as one of the two apostolic deputies chosen to accompany Paul and Barnabas on their return to Antioch. There, Silas chose to remain; and at ver. 40, we find him selected by Paul as his companion in his second visit to the cities of Lycaonia and other parts of the Asiatic Peninsula. In this same journey, St. Paul was first accompanied by the Writer of the Acts; and at ver. 10 of the following chapter, the Historian first associates himself with the Apostle, not simply as his companion, but as his colleague in preaching the Gospel: "After he had seen the vision, *we* immediately endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called *us* to preach the Gospel unto them." The vision appeared to Paul at Troas; and, accordingly, it has been assumed, that he was there joined by the Writer of the history; but there is nothing to warrant

* Lardner, vol. v. p. 361. Hug fancifully detects traces of the physician in the use of the technical word ἀχλος for blindness, Acts xiii. 2, and in the distinction implied by the phrase, *πυρετῶ μεγάλῳ*. Luke iv. 38.

the supposition. On the contrary, the altered determination to go into Macedonia, bears a relation to the previous purpose to go into Bithynia, before arriving at Troas; which must be understood of the same parties. Besides, if the Writer had attached himself to Paul at Troas, this would not have justified his speaking of himself as Divinely called to preach the Gospel. The only individuals to whom this language could apply, were Paul and Silas, who had been specially “recommended by the brethren to the grace of God,” on setting out from Antioch, and Timothy, who was added to them at Lystra. Accordingly, in the Epistles to the Macedonian Christians, Paul, Sylvanus, and Timotheus are associated in the opening salutation as having together preached the Gospel to them; and it is scarcely to be supposed that the Writer of the Acts, who speaks of himself as called to preach the Gospel to these same Macedonians, would have been omitted in the salutation, had he been a different person from Sylvanus or Silas. In the subsequent narrative, Paul and Silas are alike spoken of in the third person, conformably to the general practice of the sacred writers, both of the Old and the New Testament, in speaking of themselves. Yet, in the midst of the recital, we meet with an incidental transition to the use of the first person: “As *we* went to prayer;” and, “The same followed Paul *and us* :”—which must be understood of Silas and Timotheus; otherwise the Writer would assuredly have said, “Paul and Silas.” And this use of the first person continues to occur till the arrival of Paul at Jerusalem. Silas is last mentioned by name, at ver.

Ch. xvi. 13;
16, 17.

Ch. xx. 5, 6;
13—15;
xxi. 17.

5 of ch. xviii., as having joined Paul at Corinth with Timotheus. He had parted from them at Berea ; and in the intervening narrative, there is no indication that the Writer was with the Apostle. Leaving them at Corinth, St. Paul went into Syria and Asia Minor with Priscilla and Aquila ; he afterwards went up to Jerusalem, and did not rejoin Silas till his return to Corinth, whence they together proceeded to Philippi, and there embarked for Troas. Of these intermediate journeys, no particular account is given, the Writer not being in the Apostle's company ; but, on Paul's return to Greece, where Silas appears to have remained, the Historian again employs the first person plural. If, then, during the separation of Paul and Silas, the Writer never speaks of himself as the companion of the Apostle, but resumes it as soon as we find them again associated, how can we avoid inferring, that he was himself the Silas of the history, and the Sylvanus of the Epistles, the biographer as well as the companion of the Apostle, and the same with Lucas? That he should be referred to under different names, is not more to be wondered at, than that Peter should be mentioned, in different places, under the names of Simon, Simeon, Peter, and Cephas ; that Saul should also have been called Paul ; Joseph, Barsabas and also Justus ; Nathanael, Bartholomew ; Thaddeus, Judas ; Zelotes, Cananites ; Thomas, Didymus ; and Levi, Matthew. Mr. Greswell remarks, that the name of Silas for Sylvanus, is clearly analogous to that of Lucas for Lucanus ; but he does not notice what is equally obvious, that the meaning of the names, if we derive Lucanus from *lucus*, is so similar

Ch. xx. 2.

Greswell,
vol. i. p. 78.

(*lucus* and *sylva* each signifying a wood) as to account for their being borne by the same individual. It is evident from St. Paul's declaration, Acts xvi. 37, that Silas, as well as himself, was a Roman citizen, although a Jew; and as it was usual for those who were not Romans by extraction, upon acquiring the privilege of citizenship, to assume a Roman name, it is not improbable that Luke or Lucas might have taken the name of Sylvanus on that occasion. That he was a native of Antioch, which was a Roman colony, is very possible, though it must be deemed uncertain. He was, no doubt, a man of education; was esteemed by the church at Jerusalem one of their chief men; a prophet; and was therefore unquestionably of Jewish extraction, though not a native of Judea.* There is nothing in the history to indicate, that Antioch was the place from which Silas derived his citizenship, unless it be his preferring to abide there, instead of returning to Jerusalem. We learn, indeed, from Josephus, that that metropolis, which ranked as the third city of the Roman provinces, 'was famous among the Jews for the *jus civitatum*, or right of citizenship, which Seleucus had given them in common with the Greeks;' and this rendered it so desirable a residence to Christians, who were considered as a sect of the Jews. St. Paul, however, was a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, and a Roman freeman by hereditary claim,—“free-born.” In like manner,

Acts xv. 22.
Ib. v. 32.

Acts xv. 34.

* It has been inferred from Col. iv. 11, that Luke, who is mentioned afterwards with Demas, was not of the Circumcision, but a proselyte; yet, surely, proselytes were included among “the Circumcision.”

Silas was a citizen of no mean city, but whether free-born or a Roman by having acquired the privilege, must remain, as well as the place of his birth, a matter of conjecture.

§ 3. With respect to the time at which he composed his Gospel, we have no other data than are supplied by internal evidence. As both the Gospel and the Acts are inscribed to the same personage, Theophilus, and are but two parts of the same narrative, it is reasonable to suppose them to have been written nearly at the same date, or in immediate continuation. Now the Acts could not have been finished, though possibly commenced, till after Paul's arrival at Rome;* and the abruptness with which the history terminates, shows that it was not of later date. Mr. Greswell conjectures, that Theophilus was one of the freedmen of Nero, or some other personage about the court of that emperor, to whom, among others, St. Paul alludes in the Epistle to the Philippians, when he speaks of his bonds having become manifest in all the prætorium, and tells them, that they of Cæsar's household sent salutations. Whoever Theophilus was, it may be inferred from the internal evidence supplied by the concluding portion of the narrative, that he was somebody familiar with Rome and its environs, with Italy and the neighbouring regions in particular.

St. Paul arrived at Rome about the middle of the seventh of Nero, A.U. 814, or A.D. 61; and as we know that Silas or Luke remained with him during

Date of his
Gospel.

Greswell,
vol. i. 142, 3;
147, 8.
Hug. ii. § 34.

* The reference to the reign of Claudius Cæsar, Acts xi. 23, indicates that it was not written before the following reign. Mr. Greswell notices other similar indications, vol. i. p. 136, &c.

the greater part, if not the whole, of his two years' imprisonment, nothing is more probable than that both works should have been composed within that period, when the Writer must have had so much leisure for the task. Tradition, as usual, is wholly at fault, there being no fewer than ten different opinions as to the place where Luke's Gospel was written. The *trato* 1, that it was composed in Achaia, is as ancient as any, but rests on no better foundation than the precarious assumption, that Luke, after the death of Paul, finished his course in Greece, and that Theophilus was a Greek of distinction, possibly a prefect or governor; while others, with no better reason, make him to have been a nobleman of Antioch. That Luke ever returned from Rome into Greece, as asserted by some ancient writers, is an unsupported conjecture, as little worthy of attention as the conflicting stories of his having suffered martyrdom in Achaia, and having died a natural death in his 84th year.* On the contrary, there are reasons for concluding that he did not survive St. Paul, and that the abruptness with which his narrative closes, receives explanation from his death. In his Second Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul speaks of himself as almost deserted, Demas having forsaken him, and Crescens and Titus having also gone away, leaving only Luke with him. He therefore enjoins Timothy to use diligence in coming speedily to him, and to bring Mark with him. But, when the Epistle to the Philippians was written, Timothy had joined the Apostle at Rome,

Lardner,
vol. v. pp.
382, 3.

* To say nothing of the idle stories of his being a painter, a bishop of Alexandria, &c.

and he alone, of all St. Paul's colleagues, was with him ; so that he could not spare him on a mission to the Philippians till he saw what was likely to be the issue of his approaching examination. Had Luke or Silas been at Rome, the Apostle would hardly have said, "that he had no one like-minded to send, except Timothy."* It is possible, indeed, that Luke had for sufficient reasons left Rome on the arrival of Timothy ; but we find that the Apostle had recently suffered an afflicting bereavement, for he speaks of the recovery of Epaphroditus as a mercy to himself— "lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." Although these words may be differently explained, as referring to his complicated troubles, they admit of no sense so natural as denoting a *similar* sorrow, arising from the loss of a cherished friend. That Luke would have left the Apostle at such a crisis, seems highly improbable ; and connecting the silence observed respecting him with the circumstance already referred to, the unfinished narrative of the Acts, we can scarcely resist the conclusion that he had been removed by death † If so, we cease to wonder that Tradition

Phil. ii. 20.

* Had Silas been with the Apostle when he wrote to the Philippians, it is almost certain, that his name would have appeared in the opening salutation, as in the Epistle to the Thessalonians. Its omission in the Epistle to the Colossians is more easily explained, as Silas had never visited that church.

† "Whatever might be the reason for the abrupt termination of the Book of Acts," says Mr. Milman, it "could neither be the death of the Author, for he *probably* survived St. Paul, nor his total separation from him, for he was with him towards the close of his career (2 Tim. iv. 11)." What renders it probable that Luke survived the Apostle, the learned Author does not explain ; and the assertion is a mere assumption.

should be at fault respecting his supposed subsequent history.

We may then conclude it to be nearly certain, that the Gospel of Luke, and the Sequel to it, were both written at Rome, between the years 60—62; and that his Gospel was consequently the third of the four in order of date.

To what
prior ac-
counts does
Luke refer?

§ 4. But to what previous accounts does this Evangelist allude, when he speaks, at the commencement of his Gospel, of many who had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of the things assuredly believed among Christians? This description will not apply to the Gospel of Matthew, which is neither an orderly narrative nor a complete history; and in the words following, St. Luke draws a plain distinction between the persons he refers to, and the eye-witnesses who had delivered or transmitted the substance of such narratives, among whom he would rank the Apostle and proto-Evangelist Matthew. In like manner, and for the same reasons, the Gospel of St. John, if then written and known to him, could not have been so referred to. That of Mark, he may have had before him; but it is not to be supposed that he would class him among the "many." Nor is it reasonable to conclude that St. Luke alludes to any apocryphal gospels and heretical writings. These, so far as any trace of them remains, are known to have been of later origin. Doddridge and others suppose some lost histories of the life of Christ to be referred to, which were written with honest intention, but from defective information. All these speculations are gratuitous,

See Lardner,
vol. v. 333-7.
Greswell,
Sup. Dis.
p. 342.
Ib. p. 388.
Burton,
p. 106.

since the words of St. Luke do not necessarily imply that any *writings* were intended. Prior to the publication of Matthew's Gospel, there seems no reason whatever to suppose that the acts and sayings of Our Lord had been preserved in a collective form; much less that any attempt had been made to combine them in a written history. It is evident, that oral information was the principal medium relied upon. Paul, addressing Festus, supposes King Agrippa to know of the great facts of the Gospel history; "for," he adds, "I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him, for this thing was not done in a corner." We are apt to forget, that, before the invention of printing, the diffusion of information by the multiplication of elaborate transcripts of books, was a slow and costly process, and ill adapted for popular instruction. It is much more natural to suppose, therefore, that St. Luke alludes to individuals who, in the capacity of public teachers, undertook to give an accurate and orderly account of the things believed by Christians. So, St. Paul himself is stated to have received all that came unto him at Rome, "teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus." Hence the stress laid, in the Apostolic writings, upon tradition as an organ of instruction; not to supply the defectiveness of the Apostolic Scriptures, either as a record or as a directory, but as necessary previously to the composition or the general circulation of the Gospels and Epistles. "The things that thou hast *heard* of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Acts xxvi.
26.

Acts xxviii.
31.

2 Tim. ii. 2.

Character of
Luke as an
historian.

§ 5. Strictly speaking, St. Luke is the only historian of the New Testament writers. His Gospel, though containing information supplementary to what is given by Matthew, has not the character of a supplemental document. Nor is it, like Mark's, merely a new edition, as it were, of the first Gospel, more orderly, circumstantial, and complete, and adapted to Christians out of Judea: it is a work of a different kind, independent and original, and specific as to collateral historical facts and dates, with which the other Evangelists did not concern themselves. While often closely following Matthew in his narrative, in noticing occurrences which Mark has omitted,* it is remarkable that he introduces few parables but such as the first Evangelist had not given; which seems to prove that he was well acquainted with Matthew's Gospel, and had no thought of superseding it, while he availed himself of other sources of information which he deemed of equal authority. In point of chronology, Luke's must of necessity form the basis of a Gospel history or diatessaron. To suppose him to have neglected order in the narration of events, would be to impugn his own pretensions, and to impeach his credibility. No other Evangelist makes similar pretensions to historical accuracy. The order of events and the order of matter are not, however, the same thing; nor is there any law of historical writing which requires the strict observance of chronological series in introducing specimens of the sayings and discourses

* Hug remarks, that Luke has taken only those facts directly from Matthew, which Mark omitted, but that he has assigned them to a totally different arrangement as to time.

of the subject of the Memoir. The most accurate historian may introduce anecdotes without regard to the particular date and place; and the structure of the Gospels has been happily characterized by a learned critic (Greswell) as "anecdotal." The connexion of subject may have appeared to the Writer, a better reason for introducing particular discourses, than the order of time, or, on the principle of association, may have suggested the introduction of them; and thus, transpositions intended to harmonize the chronological order of the discourses in the different Gospels, not unfrequently do violence to the intention of the inspired writer and to the general scope of the context.

§ 6. The Gospel of Matthew is not a less regular composition than that of Luke, although not, like the latter, a regular history. The historical notices are brief and, as it were, incidental and subsidiary to his main purpose, which was, to give an account of Our Lord's public ministry, and to prove Him to be the promised Messiah. Writing at a period when all the historical facts were fresh and notorious, he is much more concise than any of the other Evangelists, in narrating occurrences, except when referring to such as were called in question by the Jews. In narrating, for instance, the story invented by the chief priests to account for the disappearance of Our Lord's body from the sepulchre, he is remarkably particular and minute; and yet, he does not mention the Ascension, which no one would question who believed in the Resurrection. The argument of those learned men who contend that, writing as an eye-witness, St.

Variations
from
Matthew's
gospel
accounted
for.

Matthew would write the most regularly, Mr. Greswell has shown to be unsound and not agreeable to fact; since it is the predominant character of his Gospel, that facts really distinct in the order of time, are brought together as bearing upon one subject, or as the result of the principle of association, and related consecutively. Yet has this Evangelist, he thinks, defined with more precision than any of the rest, the time of certain points in Our Lord's ministry; as, when he first began to preach publicly; when to teach in parables; when to predict his sufferings and death without disguise; and when Judas conceived the design of betraying his Master. And this affords a proof that he wrote early, as an eye-witness of what he relates, and not as having obtained his information from others. But, if St. Matthew's immediate object, and the structure of his Gospel, did not require him to observe chronological exactness, it is the more probable that those who came after him, and whose object was to set forth in order the facts relating to the life and ministry of Our Lord, would be found to deviate from his inexact method, though not without sufficient reason. This, in a few instances, Mark appears to have done; although between the Gospels of Matthew and Mark there is a general agreement in point of order as well as of phraseology. But Luke, while in some parts he appears to introduce memorable incidents in Our Lord's ministry, in the shape of anecdotes, and not in any orderly connection, discovers a marked attention to chronological order in his historical matter; while the number of important and new facts which he has supplied, gives to his Gospel a

Greswell,
vol. i.
pp. 185-7.

peculiar value. Some occurrences which are fully detailed by Matthew and Mark, he notices briefly, as if deeming it unnecessary to dilate upon what they had recorded; but he has not omitted to notice any material facts, except such as are connected with Our Lord's infancy, which Matthew adduces as corresponding to ancient prophecy; points of great significance to Jewish readers, but which did not require to be repeated in a history more especially designed for the Roman world.

In the succession of facts related by both Matthew and Mark, Luke has almost uniformly taken the latter as his guide, where he differs from the former. Mark and Luke vary only twice in their arrangement; viz. in reference to the occasion upon which Our Lord delivered the parable of the sower, and to the circumstance of his mother and brethren sending for him. In both these instances, Mark has followed Matthew, and with good reason, because the connexion marks the time; whereas, in Luke, they are introduced without any specific reference to time, as detached fragments or anecdotes; and the deviation from the order of the other Evangelists appears accidental. In like manner, the discourse upon divorce, which is particularly recorded by both Matthew and Mark, is but cursorily and abruptly referred to by Luke, among other specimens of Our Lord's doctrine.

Luke viii. 4.

Mark iv. 3.
Luke viii. 19.
Mark iii. 31.

Luke xvi.
18.

Considering the great number of additional occurrences and discourses which Luke has inserted in his Gospel, it can afford no ground for surprise, that he should not have included the whole that had been given in the preceding Gospels; yet, upon this

ground alone it has been contended, that he could not even have been acquainted with the Gospel of Matthew. When we examine the few miracles or occurrences which he has omitted, we may often discover an apparent reason for his passing them over. Thus, of the instances adduced of passages peculiar to Matthew's Gospel, and not given by either Mark or Luke, it is observable, that the miracle by which Our Lord provided the tribute-money, had a peculiar reference to his character as the Messiah; and his charging the multitudes he healed, not to spread it abroad, is adduced by Matthew as an illustration of his predicted meekness, in connection with the cited language of Isaiah. Again, the withering of the fig-tree, so fearfully emblematic of the Jewish nation, is recorded by both Matthew and Mark, and passed over by Luke with equal propriety. That the latter has omitted to notice Our Lord's conduct towards the Syro-phenician mother, in a selection composed for Gentile readers, receives a natural explanation from the language employed by The Saviour to test the woman's faith, which might seem to wear a harsh aspect towards other nations. Another apparent omission relates to the anointing of Our Lord at Bethany, as recorded by both Matthew and Mark, and also by John; to which occasion, however, Luke may be thought to refer where he mentions Mary's sitting at Jesus' feet. He had, however, in a previous chapter, related a similar occurrence, not noticed by the other Evangelists, which appears to have taken place at an early period of Our Lord's public ministry; and on this account he may have passed

Matt. xvii.
24.

Matt. xii. 15.

Luke x. 39.

Ch. vii. 26.

over the second.* The unction at Bethany was possibly an *imitation* of the former act, which The Saviour had commended; dictated by a sudden impulse on the part of Mary, for she appears to have prepared the precious oil for a very different occasion. Besides these instances, the only occurrences mentioned by the former two Evangelists, which Luke has omitted to notice, are the following: 1. The calling of Simon Peter and Andrew, and of the two Sons of Zebedee (Matt. iv. 12. Mark i. 14.), if a distinct transaction from what Luke has recorded, ch. v. 2. 2. The restoring of sight, on one occasion, to two blind men (Matt. ix. 27; not in Mark); and, on another, to an individual (only in Mark viii. 22). 3. Our Lord's walking on the sea to join his disciples (Matt. xiv. 22. Mark vi. 45). 4. The *second* miracle of the loaves and fishes† (Matt. xv. 32. Mark viii. 1). To which we may add, (though it comes under the head of discourses, rather than of events,) the ambitious request of James and John and their mother, which gave so much just offence to the ten Apostles (Matt. xx. 20. Mark x. 35). While we cannot but admire the fidelity which has recorded this occurrence, its omission by Luke we may be allowed to ascribe to delicacy. Without, however,

* The distinctness of the two transactions is indicated, not only by the different time at which they occurred, but by the difference of place—Bethany, and ‘the city;’ of person,—for the woman of Luke cannot be identified with Mary, the sister of Lazarus; and of intent,—the act of the one being an expression of contrition and faith, that of the other importing honour and affection, but, as Our Lord's words shew, having another reference.—See Greswell, vol. ii. pp. 301, 487.

† As to the distinctness of the two miracles, see Greswell, vol. ii. p. 324.

attempting to discover the precise reasons for each of these omissions, we may account for them generally by the variety of additional facts preserved by Luke. The following are the principal which relate to Our Lord's public ministry: 1. His passing through the multitude when they would have thrown him down from the ridge on which Nazareth stood (iv. 30). 2. The healing of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum (iv. 33). 3. The miraculous draught of fishes (v. 4). 4. The raising to life of the widow's son at Nain (vii. 12). 5. His being attended by Mary the Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, and other women whom he had healed, and who ministered to him (viii. 3). 6. The refusal of some Samaritan villagers to receive him, and the improper spirit manifested on the occasion by James and John (ix. 54). 7. The sending forth of the seventy (x. 1). 8. Our Lord's disclaiming magisterial power (xii. 14). 9. His healing the woman who had been bent by infirmity for eighteen years (xiii. 10). 10. The healing of a man who had the dropsy (xiv. 2). 11. The cure of ten lepers (xvii. 12). 12. The call of Zaccheus (xix. 1). 13. The healing of the high-priest's servant (xxii. 51). 14. Our Lord's address to the women who followed him with lamentations to Calvary (xxiii. 27). 15. The case of the penitent malefactor (xxiii. 39). 16. Our Lord's appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus (xxiv. 13). 17. His partaking of food after the Resurrection (xxiv. 41). 18. The place and circumstances of the Ascension.

Besides these notices of miracles and other occur-

rences, Luke has given the following additional parables: 1. The good Samaritan. 2. The man who is persuaded to rise at night by his friend's importunity. 3. The barren fig-tree. 4. The lost sheep and the lost drachma. 5. The prodigal son. 6. The wise steward. 7. Dives and Lazarus. 8. The unjust judge. 9. The pharisee and the publican. All these occur between chaps. xiii. 6, and xviii. 14.

Now how is it possible to account for Luke's giving these parables as specimens of Our Lord's public teaching, and not inserting those which are peculiar to Matthew's Gospel, otherwise than by supposing, either that he deemed it unnecessary to recite what were already familiarly known, as being contained in the elder document, or that he was guided by a different principle of selection from Matthew, and inserted those parables which seemed to him most adapted for Gentile readers, while Matthew gave those which comported more with Jewish notions? How otherwise could Luke have failed to give the parables of the cruel servant; the Lord of the vineyard; the wedding garment; the ten virgins; and the sheep and the goats? It is wholly incredible that he should not have been familiar with these parables as well as with other of Our Lord's sayings.

Matt. xviii.
ch. xx.
ch. xxii.
ch. xxv.

Sometimes, in relating a parable given also by Matthew, (for instance, that of the Talents,) Luke appears to have followed a different copy. Our Lord doubtless delivered many of his instructions on more than one occasion, to different auditories, and with such variations as were incidental to such repetitions.

Matt. xxv.
Luke xix.

It is not necessary to suppose, therefore, that two faithful accounts of the same parable must agree verbatim: each might be a correct transcript of what was delivered, but delivered at different times with modifications which would cause them to differ. We see no reason to doubt that Our Lord's sayings were committed to writing by his disciples from time to time. That they should have not done so, would scarcely have consisted with their reverence for him as a teacher sent from God; and although many may not have possessed the skill of the ready scribe, there must have been a few at all times present, capable of taking down his words; possibly some who came with no honest intention, "seeking whereof they might accuse him." Of these detached records or notes, private copies would be made, and collections might be formed, but they would not be arranged in any order, or woven into a regular composition. It is not to be supposed, that the idea of writing a history would be present to the minds of those who were anxious to preserve the sayings of their Master. Facts and actions, an eye-witness would naturally entrust to his recollection, and his testimony might safely be relied upon; but no one who wished to preserve with fidelity the sentiments and instructions of a revered teacher, would, if he could avoid it, neglect to record them.

Of such written documents, brief notes, in the vernacular dialect, of Our Lord's teaching, we may suppose that Luke would not fail to avail himself, although it cannot be to such fragmentary records that he refers, where he speaks of those who had

attempted to give a history of the events believed on the testimony of eye-witnesses. Such narratives, whether written or oral, must have been of a totally different character. Of the leading facts, Luke claims to have had a perfect understanding from the first, and he does not write like one who borrowed from any other writer; but, in recording the parables and sayings of Our Lord, he closely follows the Gospel of Matthew, so far as that was available; and where, as in chapters xiii.—xviii., he introduces new matter, it is observable that the sayings and parables are disconnected, and cannot be distinctly referred to any time and place. They are given strictly as anecdotes; and in some instances, the occasion on which the words were spoken, is not even glanced at.* Now in such cases, we may reasonably suppose, that this Evangelist had only detached notes or memoranda made at the time by some of Our Lord's disciples. Nor did he exhaust those materials. In the Acts of the Apostles, a saying of Our Lord is preserved, which was so familiarly known, that Paul takes it for granted, that the words were in the recollection of the Ephesian elders; and yet, they are not contained in any of the Gospels. It was, doubtless, connected with some remarkable occasion, of which we have no record. Luke was followed by the Beloved Disciple, who has shown, by his rich supplement of Our Lord's choicest discourses, not only that the preceding Evangelists had given a mere selection or specimens of his more public

Acts xx. 25.

* Hug thinks it certain, that in ch. xiii.—xviii. we have before us no connected history, but fragments and collectanea.

teaching, but also, that what was written bore a small proportion to the miracles which Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, and of the words which the Holy Spirit was to bring to their remembrance.

We have seen, that Mark differs characteristically from Matthew, whom he has so closely followed, in the interesting and often picturesque touches by which he communicates to his narrative vividness and grace. In Luke, the distinguishing characteristics of style are, a greater conciseness of expression, and at the same time more attention to elegance of diction, and a construction conformable to the Greek idiom.* His writings bear the stamp of a man of information and polished education. His historical exactness is seen in those references to dates and contemporary secular events, which have furnished cavillers with a ground for impugning his authority, or for setting it in opposition to the testimony of Matthew.

Chronological difficulty relating to the taxing.

§ 7. One of these stumbling-blocks is the statement (Luke ii. 1—4), that the enrolment decreed by Cæsar Augustus was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; whereas, according to Josephus, the proconsul of Syria at the time of Our Saviour's birth, was Saturninus; and Cyrenius (or Quirinus) did not become proconsul till about A.D. 7 or 8, when Our Lord was eleven or twelve years of age. Various modes of solving this difficulty have been suggested by learned critics. Some have proposed to cut the knot, by considering the statement as a marginal gloss which has crept into

See Lardner, vol. i. p. 260—345. Prideaux's Connection, p. ii. b. 9; Greswell, vol. iv. p. 119.

* For various instances illustrative of this, see Hug, Pt. II. c. i. § 38.

the text; but this conjecture, unsupported by any manuscript, is too arbitrary to be admitted. Another more probable solution is, that Cyrenius, although not proconsul till A.D. 7 or 8, may have been *procurator* of Syria at the time referred to; for the term translated 'governor,' is applied by Josephus to Volumnius and Pilate, both procurators. It is supposed, that Cyrenius undertook this first enrolment at the express command of Augustus, since he stood high in the Emperor's favour, and resided about that time in the East as his commissary. If Luke be a credible historian, his testimony would be a sufficient voucher for the fact, that Cyrenius was procurator of Syria at the time of Our Saviour's birth; and there is nothing in profane history to contradict it. This first enrolment appears to be so called in reference to that which is mentioned in the Book of Acts, ch. v. 27. After all, the enrolment, though decreed, might not have been carried into effect at the time. In obedience to the decree, every one repaired to his own city; but circumstances might occur to prevent the completion of the enrolment, or, if it was general, its extension to Judea; so that it might have been actually made when Cyrenius was proconsul. This explanation is perfectly consistent with the sacred text. But, even had we no means of solving the difficulty, there could be no valid reason for preferring the authority of Josephus to that of Luke, or for imputing ignorance or error to the Evangelical Historian, merely because, in one instance, his details do not happen to be confirmed by profane history.

Davidson's
Hermeneu-
tics, p. 610.

Difficulty as
to the date
of Herod's
death.

But the very accuracy of Luke has furnished the sceptic with a ground for discrediting the testimony of Matthew; it being alleged, that, according to the statement of the former Evangelist, fixing the commencement of John's ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, Herod must have died nearly three years before the birth of Our Lord. The learned and cautious investigation of Lardner, and the not less able argumentative induction of Benson, have, however, vindicated at once the chronological accuracy of Luke, and the harmony of his statement with Matthew's narrative; by proving, that Tiberius was for two or three years associated in the government with Augustus; (as Titus was with Vespasian, and Trajan with Nerva;) that it was not unusual to compute the reign of a prince from the time of his accession to such joint empire;* and that, while the exact date of the death of Herod can be ascertained only by calculations founded on the imperfect data supplied by Josephus, (from which it cannot be inferred with precision and certainty in what year he died,) there is sufficient ground for fixing the birth of Our Saviour a year and a half before the death of Herod. If Luke be supposed to calculate the fifteenth year of Tiberius from the beginning of his proconsular empire,† then, the dates perfectly coincide with the account given by Josephus; and upon no other supposition can they

* A medal is mentioned, the legend on which refers to the 11th year of Titus; yet, he reigned after his father's death only a little more than two years.

† Had he meant his *sole* empire, the Evangelist would have employed the word βασιλεια, and not ἡγεμονια.

be reconciled with the statements in Tertullian and other early Christian writers, who place Our Lord's crucifixion in the fifteenth year of Tiberius's sole government, when the two Gemini were consuls of Rome (A. D. 29). If Tiberius's proconsular reign commenced A. U. 765 (A. D. 12), then, the fifteenth year began in A. U. 779 (A. D. 26), when Our Lord was in his thirtieth year.

Lardner, vol. i. pp. 372—388.
Benson's Chronology, pp. 210-212.
Gresswell, vol. i. diss. 6.

§ 8. The Gospel of John partakes so obviously of a supplemental character, filling up, in an exact manner, the hiatus left in various parts of the account given by the other Evangelists of Our Lord's public ministry, that there can be no reasonable doubt of its having been written after Matthew's, if not after those of Mark and Luke.* Clement of Alexandria, speaking of the order of the Gospels according to what he had learned from presbyters of more ancient times, says: 'Last of all, John, observing that in the other Gospels those things were related which concern the humanity of Christ, and being persuaded by his friends, and also moved by the Spirit of God, wrote a spiritual Gospel.' This implies, not only that John wrote last of the four, but also that he had seen the other three Gospels. Eusebius gives a similar statement of his having written to complete the accounts given by the preceding Evangelists. But these traditions, which have no historical evidence as their basis, can claim only to be regarded as ancient opinions or conjectures. The distinction which Clement draws between John's

Specific design and character of John's gospel.

Lardner, vol. v. p. 428.

* Semler and Tittman, however, strangely deem it the earliest of the canonical Gospels.

Gospel and the other three, is by no means accurate or judicious. No Evangelist has portrayed the softer lineaments of Our Lord's humanity with so much vividness, delicacy, and beauty as the Beloved Disciple. No other Gospel possesses, if we might be allowed the expression, so strong a biographical interest. While Matthew is the apologist, and Luke the historian, John may be regarded as the biographer of his Divine Master. The others record his actions, his discourses, his sufferings, in common with John; but it is in *his* Gospel only that we meet with such disclosures of the inmost feelings and affections of The Saviour, and such touches of deep pathos, as, to instance two passages: "When Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end." "When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy Son: then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother." These, surely, are incidents which concern and illustrate 'the humanity of Christ.'

John xiii. 1.

ch. xix. 26.

It is true, nevertheless, that the design with which John composed his Gospel, was, as declared by himself, to confirm believers in the faith, that Jesus is, in the highest sense, the Son of God. With this purpose in view, he commences his book with that sublime proëm or introduction, (which might seem intended as a sort of counterpart to the legal genealogy of Our Lord as the Son of David, prefixed not less appropriately by Matthew to his narrative,) declaring the eternal pre-existence of Him whom he styles the

Logos of the Deity, by whom all things were called into existence, and who, coming into the world, assumed humanity, or “became flesh.” The term *Logos*, rendered by our Translators, “The Word,” is peculiar to this Evangelist; but it bears an evident correspondence in idea to the expression used by St. Paul in a similar connexion, “The *Icon* or Image of the Invisible God;” as well as to those which occur in the Epistle to the Hebrews—“Radiance of His Glory and Representation (*χαρακτήρ*) of His Essence;” and to another equivalent phrase—“the form of God.” In all these varied forms of expression, the manifestation of the Godhead in the person of Him who is one with the Father, is evidently what is intended to be conveyed. That the term *Logos* cannot be understood as denoting an abstract perfection, as Reason or Wisdom, or anything less than a Divine Subsistence, has been admitted even by critics who, denying the divinity of our Lord, have endeavoured to explain away the obvious import of the Apostle’s language. Dr. Lardner contends, that, by “The Word,” St. John must mean God himself, or the wisdom and power of God, which is the same as God; and that in Jesus, the Word, that is, the power and wisdom of God, resided. Dr. Stolz interprets the passage—‘This *Logos*, this Creating Word, which is the Deity itself, took the nature of man; . . . for the all-animating and enlightening Deity revealed itself in his humanity.’ And another Continental critic of the neological school (De Wette) gives this annotation upon the phrase—‘That is, the speaking, self-revealing God.’ There is every reason to conclude

Col. i. 15.

Heb. i. 3.

Lardner,
vol. x. p. 90.

Smith's
Scripture
Testimony,
vol. iii. p. 71.

Ib. vol. iii.
p. 73.

Ib. p. 127.

Mat. xi. 27.

that John employed this phrase as equivalent to one by which the expected Messiah had been designated in the Targums. 'The Jews of Palestine,' says Wegschieder, 'had preceded John in annexing the idea of a Person to the phrase, the *Memra* of *Jah*, and in applying it to the Messiah. John, following Philo, intended, in using the name *Logos*, to denote a kind of Power, possessed of intelligence, acting with wisdom, and appearing as a Person.' It is far more probable that the Evangelist should have availed himself of an established appellation, in asserting the eternity of the Son of God in his Divine nature, than that he should have employed the term in a new and therefore obscure or ambiguous sense. What he designed to declare was, that the Word was eternal as God. 'An individual,' remarks Michaelis, 'who does not believe in the Eternal Deity of the Son of God, cannot put any other meaning upon those express words: he had better reject the Gospel of John, or rather the whole New Testament.'

Whatever peculiarity there may be in the language employed by St. John, his testimony differs in no respect from that of the Evangelists who had preceded him. The baptismal formula given by Matthew, has justly been regarded as one of the clearest proofs that the Son and the Holy Spirit are, with the Father, one God. The declaration of Our Lord himself, recorded by the same Evangelist, that "no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him,"—is also, by an implication not to be evaded, as decisive a testimony as any in St.

John's Gospel, to the ineffable mystery of his Divine Nature; involving a claim to a reciprocity of knowledge between the Father and the Son, which, in a creature, must have been deemed blasphemous presumption.

There seems, then, to be no propriety in representing the Gospel of John as differing specifically in its design, or in its 'spiritual' character, from those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The observations of Bertholdt upon this point, cited by the learned Author of the 'Scripture Testimony to the Messiah' with emphatic and just approbation, are the more satisfactory as proceeding from a critic whose religious opinions were too far removed from the Evangelical faith, to allow of his being suspected of partiality or bias in this direction. 'The Gospel of John,' says Bertholdt, 'has the same *general* design as the former three Gospels; for the Author himself explicitly says: "These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." But, both in ancient and in modern times, persons have been anxious to discover some *especial* design in this very remarkable and important composition. Indeed, not a few peculiar circumstances present themselves in this Gospel, which can hardly fail to lead to such an idea; though many erroneous opinions have been advanced upon it; and the right point will never be reached, if it be presupposed that the Author had before his eyes only one special design. Clemens of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, Theodore of Mopsuesta, and many others, both ancient and modern, have thought that John wrote his Gospel as a *supplement* to the three other canonical Gospels.

But, though it is probable that he was acquainted with them, and that he laid aside much which he possessed in his old written materials, or which he might have said from his own recollection, because he saw it already introduced into those writings, we cannot regard him as a mere supplement-writer. Much also that he relates, was in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. To a reflecting reader, the following passages will furnish evidence that, in the contents and structure of his Gospel, the Evangelist John pre-supposes in his readers an acquaintance with the general contents of the preceding three Gospels: Chap. i. 32, 33, compared with Matt. iii. 16, 17; Mark i. 10, 11; Luke iii. 22. Chap. i. 45, compared with Matt. ii. 23; Luke ii. 4. Chap. iii. 24, compared with Matt. xiv. 3—12. Chap. xi. 3, compared with Matt. xxvi. 6—13; Mark xiv. 3—9. Chap. xv. 20, compared with Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40. The omitted circumstances in the account of the denying of Jesus by Peter, which are evidently necessary to the understanding of the whole. Chap. xx. 30, implying a knowledge of the numerous miracles of Christ, as recited in the other books.

‘ Upon a passage in Irenæus (*adv. Hæret.* iii. 11), the opinion has been founded, that John wrote his Gospel against Cerinthus. It would seem to be going too far, to say that, in this Gospel, there are no polemical references whatever to some single doctrines of Cerinthus, who was certainly known to the Apostle John; yet, everything stands against the opinion, that he wrote his Gospel merely from the motive of opposition to Cerinthus. Irenæus also

points out the Nicolaitans and Valentinians as adversaries whom the Evangelist had at the same time in his eye. Some later writers (as Philastrius) have likewise mentioned the latter sect; but this is an unpardonable ignorance or neglect of chronology; and with regard to the Nicolaitans so called, it is perfectly certain, that this never was the name of any sect, though there were in the first century persons who were so denominated by the Author of the Apocalypse, but it was in a symbolical or analogical sense. In fine, we may remark, that there was no description of spurious Christians or heretics, to the refutation of whose errors the Gospel of John was found peculiarly useful, whom early writers have not imagined to be the adversaries to refute whom was the Evangelist's particular object. We must not therefore be surprised that, with a similar contempt of chronology, even the Marcionites have been brought into the list of the opponents whose principles are supposed to have been combated by John. Yet, since Epiphanius and Jerome mention the Ebionites, it must be admitted, that, whether we regard their time or their doctrines, they might very properly be esteemed persons against whom the Gospel of John was directed. For it was a principal object of his composition to demonstrate that Jesus was the Son of God, which the Author regarded as the same as the Word of God; while the Ebionites, it is well known, held Jesus to be a mere man. But it cannot be historically proved, that the opinions of the Ebionites had penetrated into the Lesser Asia; which country, and the doctrines disseminated in it contrary to apostolical Christianity,

John had alone in view. It is therefore evident, that the notion of the Gospel of John having been written against the Ebionites, was, equally as in the cases before mentioned, occasioned by the usefulness of this Gospel in confuting those persons. . . . Admitting that, in the drawing up of his Gospel, John had no other *general* design than that of the other three Evangelists, it can hardly be made to appear that he was not now and then led to have some *special* objects in view. His great motive undoubtedly was, to preserve for the Christians of future times, those declarations and conversations of Jesus, which he had long before written down.' (*Historical and Critical Introduction to all the Canonical and Apocryphal Books of the Old and New Testaments.* 6 vols. Erlangen. 1812—1819.)

Smith's
Script. Test.
vol. iii. pp.
119—122.

It is not absolutely necessary to suppose, that John had seen all the three other Gospels. Had he been acquainted only with that of Matthew, his own would probably have contained neither more nor less than at present. Its being supplemental to Mark's Gospel, results from its being so to the Gospel which Mark so closely followed; nor is there any reference to those parts of Luke's Gospel which are supplemental to both. It can scarcely be determined, therefore, from internal evidence, that it was the last written. Still less is there any solid reason for assigning so late a date to its composition as the end of the first century.

Reasons for
assigning to
John's Gos-
pel an early
date.

§ 9. There are, indeed, some internal indications that the Gospel of John was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. The reference to the Pool of Bethesda and its five porches as still existing, has been adduced

as a proof of this. Yet, it has been observed, on the other hand, that, in speaking of Bethany, of the site of the Crucifixion, and of the Sepulchre, he employs the past tense.* This, however, is surely natural in recording past transactions, and seems to indicate merely that the Evangelist was out of Judea, and was writing for the use of persons unacquainted with the topography of Jerusalem, rather than that the places described had been destroyed. After a lapse of even thirty or forty years, indeed, "the garden" might have ceased to exist as such; but Bethany would still be at the same distance from Jerusalem, whatever had befallen its inhabitants. The very minuteness of the Evangelist's descriptive references, affords a presumption that the places were still to be recognized. There seems no reason, for instance, why he should specify the place in which the judgment-seat of Pilate stood, under its Greek and Hebrew names of *Lithostroton* and *Gabbatha*, if all trace of such a place had been swept away by the utter ruin of the city. That the Evangelist wrote for other than Jewish Christians, is proved, indeed, by the parenthetical explanations which he introduces; such as, "for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (iv. 9); "the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias" (vi. 1); "the passover, a feast of the Jews" (vi. 4); "the Jews' feast of tabernacles" (vii. 2); "and it was at Jerusalem the feast of the

John xix. 13.

* Hug adduces this argument; but how little stress can be laid upon it, appears from the Evangelist's speaking in the same tense of Jacob's well, John iv. 6, which is still a marked topographical feature.

Dedication, and it was winter" (x. 22); "for that Sabbath-day was a high day" (xix. 31); and the instances above referred to. It may, therefore, be safely assumed, that it was not composed till John, in common with the rest of the Apostles, had finally removed from Palestine.

The last notice of this Evangelist which occurs in the Evangelical history, relates to his being sent forth with Peter to visit Samaria, probably about seven years after the Ascension. When Herod put to death James the brother of John, and afterwards proceeded to seize Peter, John's escaping the tyrant's fury can be accounted for only by his absence at that time from the city. We learn, however, that he was still ordinarily resident at Jerusalem, and one of the pillars of the church, at the time of Paul's second mission to Jerusalem, in company with Barnabas, A.D. 50. At the time of Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, eight years after, it would seem that James, the son of Alphaeus, of all the Apostles, alone remained. We have, however, no well authenticated account of the Apostle John, from the last mention of his name in the sacred history, till the time of his banishment to Patmos; which, if it really took place, according to the prevailing tradition, in the reign of Domitian, was after an interval of thirty years. That he would continue to reside at Jerusalem, so long as the Mother of Our Lord was living, is a very natural supposition. Her death is stated by Eusebius to have taken place A.D. 48; and we find St. John at Jerusalem two years later. He probably left Judea not long afterwards. It has been inferred from the addresses to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse,

Acts viii. 14.

A. D. 37.

Gal. ii. 9;
Acts xv.

that the Lesser Asia was the especial sphere of his labours. The absence of all reference to this Apostle in Luke's account of Paul's visits to Ephesus and the adjacent cities, and in the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, disproves the notion that he was the founder of those churches, and forbids our supposing that he was resident at Ephesus up to the close of the Apostolic history. If, therefore, there was any evidence to support the tradition, that John's Gospel was written at Ephesus, this would require us to assign to it a date posterior to A.D. 62. But the legends respecting the place and the time at which it was composed, are alike contradictory and improbable. Theophylact and others, with a host of MS. subscriptions, we are told, declare in favour of Patmos, as the place where it was written; while the subscriptions to the Syriac Translation and the Arabic of Erpenius, give Ephesus as the place; and Irenæus states it to have been published there. The Author of the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius, unites the two traditions, stating it to have been composed at Patmos, and published at Ephesus! As to the date, Epiphanius refers it to the reign of Claudius, adding the contradictory statement, that the Apostle was at the time of writing it upwards of ninety. The subscriptions to several Greek MSS. mention two and thirty years after the Ascension, which would be A.D. 62, in the reign of Nero. The Memphitico-Coptic, the Arabic of Erpenius, and Nicephorus mention the year 60.* Other MSS., again, affirm it to have been

Hug., vol. ii.
p. 257.
Lardner,
vol. v. p. 429,
et seq.

* 'Chrysostom,' says Cave, 'is very positive that John was a hundred years old when he wrote his Gospel, and that he lived full

written under Domitian, under Nerva, and even under Trajan. The reasons which have led Hug, Bertholdt, and other learned Continental critics to argue in support of the later date, are as fantastic as the notion itself. Thus, one of these writers, assuming that the Apocalypse was written before the Gospel, argues, that the latter is so much more elegant in its diction, that a considerable time must have elapsed to allow of the Apostle's having improved so much in writing Greek! Another fallacious argument is, that Gnostical ideas had not established themselves till towards the close of the first century. Dr. Lardner, with characteristic good sense, points out the improbability, that, if John's Gospel was written as a supplement to the other three, it should have been deferred till they had been more than thirty years in circulation. The learned writer inclines to think it might be published in the year 68. Wetstein, rejecting the improbable supposition that it was written by St. John in decrepid old age, adopts the date of the Greek codices which assign it to A.D. 62; and Lampe is of the same judgment. If St. Matthew's Gospel was published, as we have seen reason for concluding, in the year 44, Mark's Gospel not later than A.D. 60, and Luke's about 62, St. John's, even if the latest of the four, might have been written about the time fixed upon by Lardner; that is, after the breaking out of the last Jewish war, but prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. In

Bertholdt in
Preface to
Hug. xxxix.

Lardner,
vol. v. p. 431.

twenty years after. The same is affirmed by Dorotheus; which to me seems altogether improbable, seeing by this account he must be fifty years of age when called to be an Apostle.'

the absence, however, of any certain evidence that John was acquainted with Luke's Gospel, even if we suppose that he had seen that of Mark, (which, however, is equally uncertain,) the Gospel of John may have appeared at the earlier date mentioned by Theophylact, and supported by some Greek codices; namely, about two-and-thirty years after the Ascension, or between A.D. 60 and 62.

§ 10. If all the Four Gospels were in circulation at so early a period, it may, however, be urged, that some direct citations from them would be found in the Apostolic Epistles. It is scarcely credible, indeed, that Paul should have been unacquainted with that of Matthew, whatever dates are assigned to the others. Yet, in writing to the Gentile churches, he would not be likely to cite a document with which they were not already familiar. It must also be recollected, that St. Paul, in his teaching, stood upon his own apostolical authority; and he constantly refers to the instructions he had received from Our Lord himself, as the independent source of his information. Two striking instances of this occur in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, written A.D. 56. The first relates to the institution of the Lord's Supper: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the night in which he was betrayed, took bread," &c. It is observable, that the phraseology differs considerably from the corresponding passage in Matthew's Gospel, while it agrees with that in Luke so nearly as to suggest the idea, that it may have furnished that Evangelist with his precise information. The second

Independent source of Paul's Gospel.

1 Cor. xi. 23.

passage details circumstances connected with the evidence of our Lord's resurrection, which are not recorded by any Evangelist: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you For I delivered unto you first of all, *that which I also received*, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures:" &c. There can be no reasonable doubt that, as in the former passage, the Apostle means, that he had received his instructions from The Lord himself. Accordingly, in writing to the Galatians, he expressly declares, that the Gospel which he had preached to them, he had neither received from man, nor been taught it otherwise than by the revelation of Jesus Christ. In this sense we must understand the expression which elsewhere occurs:—"According to my gospel."* In writing to the Ephesians also, he refers to the revelation made to him of "the mystery of Christ" respecting the calling of the Gentiles; and, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, to "the abundance of the revelations" made to him. The writings of St. Paul may be considered, therefore, as constituting *a fifth Gospel*, as he stands forward in the character of an independent witness, and, for the main facts of the Gospel, was not indebted, and of course would not have chosen to seem in any way indebted, to human testimony.

§. 11. If, then, any allusions to the existing Gospels may be detected in the Pauline writings, we might

1 Cor. xv.
1-7.

Gal. i. 12.

Rom. ii. 16.
2 Tim. ii. 8.

Eph. iii. 3.

2 Cor. xii.
1, 7.

Apparent
allusions to
the Gospels
in the Epis-
tles.

* The ancient supposition, mentioned by Eusebius, that St. Paul refers to Luke's Gospel, is examined and rejected by Lardner, vol. v. ch. iv.

anticipate that they would not be direct citations, as from the Old Testament Scriptures, to confirm what he declared or taught, but incidental references either to circumstances narrated by the Evangelists, or to the recorded sayings of Our Lord. Indications of this kind, not amounting to absolute proof, (since the expressions referred to might have been orally preserved,) yet appearing to refer to the Evangelic records, are to be found in the Apostolic Epistles. That which has most the appearance of a direct citation occurs, 1 Tim. v. 18: "For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and, the labourer is worthy of his reward." The former clause is a citation from Deut. xxv. 4: the latter occurs no where in the Old Testament, yet seems to be quoted as Scripture, and it is found at Matt. x. 10. A similar reference to a passage in the Old Testament Scriptures (Deut. xviii. 1) occurs in the ninth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, ver. 14, in connection with an allusion to an ordinance of Christ of the same import as the words given by St. Matthew; and there can be little doubt that those words are alluded to; *viz.* "The workman is worthy of his meat." Our Lord had thereby clearly "ordained," that the preachers of the Gospel should "live of the Gospel."

We might naturally expect to find the allusions to the written Gospels more numerous as well as more distinct in proportion to the time which the date of the Epistle allowed for their having come into circulation. St. John's Gospel was probably not given to the churches when St. Paul wrote his earlier Epistles; and that

Cited also
1 Cor. ix. 9.

Also at
Luke x. 7.
See Gres-
well, vol. i.
p. 149.

of St. Matthew might not then have reached the hands of the Gentile converts of Achaia and Macedonia ; but, at the date of the Second Epistle to Timothy, and of the other Epistles written from Rome, St. Matthew's Gospel would have had ample time to become generally known, and that of St. John might possibly have been put into circulation.

Now, in the Epistle to the Philippians, there occurs a passage which has employed a great deal of critical discussion on account of the singular phraseology, but the apparent singularity of which is at once explained, and its propriety illustrated, if we take it in connection with what is recorded, John v. 18, "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because . . . he said that God was his father, making himself equal with God;" and at ch. x. 30: Our Lord having said, "I and my Father are one," the Jews took up stones to stone him, "because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." How appropriate is the Apostle's language in reference to this charge against the Saviour, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it no usurpation to be equal with God!" That St. Paul might have used these expressions without having seen St. John's Gospel, is quite possible ; but the correspondence is striking.

Another remarkable passage occurs in the Second Epistle to Timothy, ch. ii. 19, where, speaking of the doctrine of the Resurrection, St. Paul says: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his," &c., alluding to the legends upon a seal or medal. Now, in the xth chapter of John, Our Lord makes a declaration of this

exact import: "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." "I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." It is reasonable to suppose that St. Paul alludes to some Divine declaration; and no other passage of the evangelical records so closely corresponds to his words. The second inscription may allude to Matt. vii. 21—"Have we not prophesied in thy name? . . . Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

There are two or three other apparent allusions, in the Pauline Epistles, (the coincidence being in idea more than in words,) to corresponding passages in the Gospels, which may be worthy of notice. In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, the magnificent ascription of the attributes of Deity to the Son of God, forcibly recalls John i. 3—14; and the declaration, "Who is the image of the invisible God," receives illustration from John xiv. 9, as well as from ch. i. 18. Col. ii. 9, may also be compared with John i. 16. In a few instances, St. Paul seems to refer to unrecorded sayings of Our Lord which had been orally preserved. The most striking occurs, Acts xx. 35, where "the words of the Lord Jesus" are expressly cited,—“how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Four times, according to the English Version, the formula occurs, "This is a faithful saying;" viz. 1 Tim. i. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 6; 2 Tim. ii. 11; and Tit. iii. 8. In the first instance, that declaration of Our Lord may be referred to, "I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Matt. ix. 13; or, rather, that at Matt. xviii. 12,

“The Son of Man is come to save that which is lost.” In the second instance, a distinct promise is referred to,—“of the life that now is, and that which is to come;” which may be explained by Matt. vi. 33, and Luke xviii. 20. In the third instance, the meaning of the phrase seems to be, “Faithful is his word;” for it is added, “He abideth faithful;” and the reference, perhaps, is not to any particular saying, but to such declarations as are found, Matt. x. 32 and 39, and xx. 28—30. The fourth instance requires a similar explanation, as neither the words preceding nor those following the formula, appear to be a citation.

Verse 2.

In the vith chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul refers to a law of Christ which would be fulfilled by their bearing one another’s burdens; a law of course well known to his converts. The new commandment, John xiii. 34, is doubtless intended, although it is not necessary to suppose that any passage in the written Gospels is referred to. Again, the exhortation to “shine as lights in the world,” Phil. ii. 15, 16, forcibly recals Our Lord’s language, Matt. v. 14, “Ye are the light of the world . . . let your light shine before men.” And the Apostle’s language, Phil. iii. 3, “We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit,” receives illustration from Our Lord’s declaration to the Samaritan woman, John iv. 23: “The hour cometh, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit.” These are instances of what might be deemed elegant allusion, were it certain that St. Paul had in his mind the corresponding passages. Once more, at 1 Tim. vi. 14, occurs a

reference to the "good confession" witnessed by Our Lord before Pontius Pilate, of which there is no record except in the Gospel of John, ch. xviii. 36, 37: "My kingdom is not of this world. . . . I came into the world that I should bear witness of the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice." The Apostle supposes Timothy to be familiar with the matter of this confession; and his not stating of what it consisted, may be taken as a proof that the reference points to what is recorded in John's Gospel. In the same chapter, ver. 19, the exhortation to the rich, to "lay up in store for themselves a good foundation," is couched in language which we should scarcely have expected to find the Apostle employing, but for the parable in Luke xvi., and Our Lord's application of it.* These are all the apparent references or allusions to the contents of the Gospels in the Pauline Epistles.

In the Epistles of Peter, there are a few similar allusions, which it may be interesting to notice, though they are not exact enough to prove an intended reference. In the First Epistle, ch. ii. 23. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again," &c., may be compared with Matt. xxvii. 29, 39. Ch. iv. 14, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ," &c., closely corresponds to Matt. v. 11. Ch. iv. 17, 18, "The time is come," &c., and, "If the righteous scarcely be saved," may allude to Our Lord's declaration, Matt. xxiv. 22, 24. In the Second Epistle, the reference to the Transfiguration, ch. i. 17, is in ac-

* Yet, it may refer to Matt. vi. 19, &c.

cordance with Matt. xvii. 1—5. It would seem to be indicated, however, by ver. 15, that those to whom the Apostle was writing, were not in possession of a written Gospel, since the Apostle intimates that he would endeavour to provide means, (which may naturally be understood to imply a written memorial,) that, after his decease, they might have those things in remembrance. As it may be presumed that he would not leave this purpose unfulfilled, this passage would countenance the supposition, that the Gospel of Mark, whom the Apostle styles his son, was undertaken by his direction for the express use of the believers of the Dispersion in Pontus, Cappadocia, and the other parts of Asia Minor. Finally, at ch. ii. ver. 20, the language of the Apostle, “The latter end is worse with them,” &c., is in verbal coincidence with the declaration of Our Lord, Matt. xii. 45.

In the Epistle of James, there are two or three passages which may be considered as having a more decided reference to the earliest of the extant Gospels. At ch. ii. 5, the Apostle calls attention to what he is about to write, by employing the word “Hearken,” as if proceeding to cite the Scriptures; *q. d.* Hear the word of the Lord; and what follows agrees precisely in sense with Matt. v. 3: “Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Ch. iii. 1, has a similar relation to Matt. vii. 1; and the expression, “*knowing* that ye shall receive the greater condemnation,” implies that they were aware of the Divine authority for the declaration. At ch. iv. 5, there is clearly a reference to some passage of Scripture; but commentators have strangely

blundered in supposing the words following to be intended as the citation. The expression in the preceding verse, "Know ye not," (as, in the above instance, "knowing,") points to the citation; and the declaration, that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God," seems but a free rendering of Our Lord's words, Matt. vi. 24: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" mammon being but the world personified. And this declaration is one respecting which the Apostle might with peculiar reason appeal to them: "Think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain?" At ch. v. ver. 12, the admonition, "Swear not at all," though not introduced as Scripture, is a direct citation of Our Lord's words, Matt. v. 34—37. It may, indeed, be observed, that the whole Epistle forms a sort of commentary upon the Sermon on the Mount; or, at least, is deeply imbued with the spirit of that portion of the evangelical record.

See also
Rom. xi. 2.

Upon the whole, the passages adduced afford ground for reasonable belief, that the Gospel of Matthew was a well-known document at the time that St. James wrote his Epistle; that it was also not unknown to St. Paul, though, for reasons already assigned, he does not frequently or very directly cite it; and that, at the date of his later Epistles, the Gospel of John had also been given to the Church.

CHAP. IV.

ON HARMONIES OF THE GOSPELS.

ON HARMONIES OF THE FOUR GOSPELS—FIRST DIFFICULTY OF HARMONISTS: THE TWO GENEALOGIES—SECOND DIFFICULTY: THE VISIT OF THE MAGI—THIRD DIFFICULTY: THE ORDER OF THE TEMPTATIONS—FOURTH DIFFICULTY: OUR LORD'S MINISTRY PRIOR TO JOHN'S IMPRISONMENT—FIFTH DIFFICULTY: DURATION OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY—SIXTH DIFFICULTY: THE DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS OF THE RESURRECTION—PROOF OF THE ASCENSION—THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO THE PURPOSE OF HIS RESURRECTION—INCOMPLETENESS OF THE INFORMATION IN THE GOSPELS—EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION INDEPENDENT OF THE TESTIMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS—INDEPENDENT TESTIMONY OF ST. PAUL AS A WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION.

Proper use
of Har-
monies.

§ 1. THE attempt to construct a continuous narrative of the materials contained in the Four Gospels, has the precedent of early antiquity. Tatian, who flourished towards the latter end of the second century, was the author of a Harmony of the Four Gospels, which he called "Dia Tessaron"—Of the Four; in which he omitted the Genealogies, and probably suppressed other portions of the narrative. His compendium had come into so extensive use, in the fifth century, as a substitute for the Gospels, not only among the sect

of which he was the founder, but also among those who adhered to the apostolic doctrine, that Theodoret met with above two hundred copies which were in esteem in the churches, and which he took away, replacing them with the Gospels of the Four Evangelists. Whether the design of Tatian was insidious or not, his work must have been obnoxious to the objection which applies to all such works, considered as substitutes for the Gospels. No diatessaron can possess the authority, the internal evidence, or the efficient virtue, if we may so speak, of the separate documents: the stamp of genuineness and the seal of inspiration are wanting. Digests or summaries of the evangelical history may be legitimate vehicles of religious instruction; but a Harmony, which is an attempt to reduce the whole verbal contents of the four Gospels to one chronological arrangement, breaking up each narrative into fragments, for the purpose of bringing together parallel passages, or of connecting those which are supposed to be consecutive, is to be regarded as a work of art, adapted more for the use of the scholar or critic, than for the edification of the plain, ingenuous reader. As a part of an expository apparatus for illustrating the sacred text, such Harmonies may be useful, by affording a tabular view of the substantial accordance, the characteristic difference, and the separate value of the four documents respectively, and by serving as an illustrative index to their contents, so as to enable the teacher or commentator to throw upon each Gospel the concentrated light of all. But it forms a serious drawback upon the value of such artificial arrangements, that the proprieties of the

In Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 149.

composition are as much violated by the continual interpolation of passages from the several Evangelists, as they would be in a work composed of consecutive extracts from three or four authors of different countries. The variations and apparent discrepancies in the several narratives, too, are made to assume a naked and palpable form, while the reason of them is not seen ; and the accuracy or even veracity of the inspired Witnesses is submitted to a criterion as fallacious as it is artificial ; namely, the possibility of reducing to a regular order, irregularities not affecting leading events, and of assigning to every saying, as well as every miracle or action that is recorded, its exact time and place, without regard to the intention of the narrator or the plan of the narrative. In a word, the inspiration of the Evangelists is thus staked upon the skill and critical acumen of the Harmonist. It ought not, then, to excite surprise or astonishment, that the schemes of scarcely any two Harmonists precisely agree.

The plan which would involve the least violence to the inspired documents would be, to select simply those portions of them which record the facts relating to Our Lord's birth, life, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension, leaving all the discourses and minor incidents as they stand. The agreement of the witnesses as to these facts, is all that it can be necessary to establish, in reference to the credibility of their testimony ; the rest is matter only of recondite criticism ; while, for the purposes of exposition and annotation, the original form of the separate documents is on every account to be preferred.

§ 2. One of the first difficulties that presents itself to a Harmonist, is the placing of the two Genealogies, which, possibly for that reason, Tatian omitted. To reconcile them, and account for their apparent discrepancy, is of essential importance; but the place they should occupy, is a matter of very secondary consideration. Their respective position in the two Gospels is, however, deserving of notice. It would have been inappropriate for Luke to commence his orderly history with the genealogy of Our Lord, the circumstances of his birth not being adverted to till ver. 26th of the first chapter; and no opportunity occurs for introducing it till, on mentioning the age of Jesus at the time of his entering upon his public ministry, the Evangelist connects with that circumstance his descent by blood from the royal house of David; tracing his genealogy still upward to Adam, as if to represent him as the promised Seed of the Woman, in whom all nations were alike interested. But his descent by blood from Nathan, the son of David, was not the line of royal succession, which is given by Matthew as the legal genealogy of the heir of Joseph, who was descended from David by the line of Solomon, and which is therefore suitably prefixed to his Gospel, as establishing Our Lord's being not only the predicted Son of David, but also the "born king of the Jews." This, as the son of Mary, he would not be, because the sceptre could not be transmitted through the maternal line. Yet, it would be necessary to show, at the same time, that, as the son of Mary, he had proceeded from "the stem of Jesse." It is probable, that, as both Joseph and Mary were descended from

Greswell,
vol. ii. p. 106.

David, they were not only of kin, but next of kin ; and, by marrying the Heiress of Heli, Joseph would become his son, while the son of Mary, his betrothed, would as certainly be his own legal heir.* This natural explanation not only accounts for the double genealogy, but shows that, in each Gospel, the genealogy occupies its proper place in reference to the specific object of the Evangelist ; and the transposition required by the plan of a Harmony is the first instance of that disadvantageous sacrifice of the natural arrangement to the artificial, which meets us at almost every step. That Luke should have given a different genealogy from that contained in the previous Gospel, when he must have been acquainted with it, and could not possibly have intended to bring in question the veracity and accuracy of an Apostle by a contradictory statement,—puts it beyond all reasonable doubt, that he designed, by his supplemental genealogy, to complete the proof of Our Lord's being, according to the flesh, as well as by legal right, the Son of David and King of the Jews, in whom both lines met and terminated. Neither genealogy is of itself sufficient for this purpose, and neither, therefore, is

* Eusebius, on the authority of Africanus, gives another solution ; viz. ' that Matthan, whose descent is traced to Solomon, begat Jacob ; Matthan dying, Melchi, whose lineage is from Nathan, by marrying the widow of the former, had Eli. Hence, Eli and Jacob were brothers by the same mother. Eli dying childless, Jacob raised up seed to him, having Joseph, according to nature belonging to himself, but by the law to Eli. Thus, Joseph was the son of both.' The whole subject has been most laboriously investigated by Dr. Barrett, an outline of whose argument will be found in Davidson's *Herme-neutics*, pp. 589—605. See also Lardner's *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 462—464 ; Greswell, *Diss.* II. ; Horne's *Introd.* vol. ii. p. 568.

superfluous. Our Lord's kingly character was an essential attribute of his Messiahship. He inherited royal rights which had never been alienated. When Pilate asked him, "Art thou a king then?" Our Lord's answer implied the affirmative, although he had disclaimed the use of political weapons; and the superscription on the Cross was at once his rightful title and the condemnation of those who had procured the crucifixion of their King. When the rulers of the devoted nation delivered up the legitimate King of the Jews to the Roman power, declaring that they had no other king than Cæsar, they, in that very act, broke the sceptre of Judah, extinguished the last temporal hope of Israel, and unconsciously afforded a demonstration that the Shiloh had come. The act of the Jewish authorities, supported by the people, renouncing their King, could not be reversed. They transferred their allegiance to the Cæsar; and never since have they had any other king. In his regal character on earth, as well as in his mystic pontificate, He who lives for ever has had no successor.

§ 3. A second difficulty which has perplexed learned Harmonists, relates to the time of the visit of the Magi; some, with Calvin, placing it before the presentation in the Temple; others, among whom are Doddridge and Greswell, after it. If the star first appeared to the Magi at the time of the nativity, (which seems the more natural supposition,) and they were not quite six weeks on their journey from Persia, they might arrive just about the time of the presentation, which Dr. Benson supposes to have taken place between their arrival at Jerusalem and their visit to

The Visit of
the Magi.

Bethlehem. According to this learned chronologist, the death of Herod took place in the spring of J.P. 4711, answering to B.C. 3; and he fixes the time of Christ's birth in April or May of J.P. 4709, answering to A.M. 6749, or B.C. 5; while Mr. Greswell, by a series of erudite and ingenious calculations, renders it all but certain that the true date is April, A.U.C. 750, or B.C. 4. All that the sacred narrative requires for its consistency is, that the birth of Christ took place not less than about a year before the death of Herod. The limitation of the ruthless massacre ordered by the Tyrant to infants under two years, (and the Jewish computation reckoned one of thirteen months as a child of two years, that is, a second-year child,) agrees with the calculation that the birth of Jesus was ascertained to have taken place within twelve months; since the edict would doubtless be framed so as to make all sure, by providing against the difficulty of determining the precise age of an infant under a year old. Mr. Greswell supposes the Magi to have arrived at Jerusalem at the beginning of August, and accordingly, that the flight into Egypt took place not later than the middle of the same month. It has been observed, that the offerings brought by the distinguished visitors, would afford the Holy Family a seasonable supply for their journey. On this supposition, Joseph and Mary must have returned to Bethlehem after the presentation in the Temple, which they might have done on the same day in the month of May; nor is it likely that they would remain longer than was necessary in Jerusalem.*

* In the 'Vindication of the Authenticity of the Narratives in

§ 4. The account of the Temptation, as given by Matthew and Luke, with a variation of the order in which the three trials are narrated, has been a third stumbling-block to Harmonists. It is reasonable to suppose that St. Luke did not without some specific design deviate from the order observed by St. Matthew. That he transposed the second and third trials through error or negligence, or as considering the order of no consequence, is an explanation quite inadmissible, being at variance with his character as an exact historian, and in itself improbable. Equally difficult would it be to believe, that he intended to correct the account given in a Gospel bearing the stamp of apostolic authenticity. Mr. Greswell suggests, that ‘the order of the Temptations is the order of their strength; that is, they begin with the weakest, and proceed to the strongest. The end of the whole transaction is, to represent Our Lord “tempted on all points, like unto ourselves, yet without sin;” attacked in each vulnerable part of his human nature, yet superior to every art and to all the subtlety of the Devil.’ To a Jew, the third according to St. Matthew’s arrangement, which was actually the strongest, would also appear to be so. But St. Luke might have reason to think, that, to a Gentile reader, the second would appear the strongest, as the force of the last would not be appreciated, except by those who were looking for a temporal Messiah. To the

Order of the
Temptations.

the first two Chapters of Matthew and Luke, by a Layman, it is supposed, that, after the presentation, Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth, and that the Magi found them *there*; but this conjecture seems inadmissible.

Greeks or Romans, it might appear in the light of a temptation addressed simply to the desire of honour, wealth, or power, and therefore of inferior strength to the second, which was addressed more directly to the principle of intellectual pride; for the history of their own philosophers could furnish instances of individuals who had, by natural strength of mind, surmounted the former temptation, but few or none of such as had not fallen victims to the latter. St. Luke, then, in writing for Gentile Christians, would as naturally, and, for his object, as properly, place the second temptation last, as St. Matthew, in writing for the Jewish, had given that place to the third.

Greswell,
vol. ii.
pp. 186, 7.

In order to estimate the strength of the third temptation, it is necessary to take into consideration, that it was addressed to Him who was by right King of the Jews, in his regal character, and that the offer was made by the Tempter in the semblance, doubtless, of an angel of light, claiming a delegated rule over the kingdoms, agreeably to the received opinions of the Jews respecting the subordinate government of the world by angels, which were supposed to be countenanced by the language of the Prophet Daniel. The boast of the Tempter, "For that is delivered to me," implies no higher pretensions than to such a derived and administrative authority. And when we recollect, that the homage which the Tempter claimed as an acknowledgment for the splendid donation, was no more than the Apostle John was about to pay involuntarily to a true angel of light, when he was prevented by the heavenly messenger, we cannot but conclude, that

Dan. x. 13,
20.

Rev. xix. 10;
xxii. 9.

the temptation was such as one who had been no more than man would have found irresistible.

There is, indeed, another explanation which may be given of the transposed order of the Temptations ; but it may be deemed less satisfactory. The scene of the first two in Luke's narrative would seem to be the wilderness ; that of the third, Jerusalem ; which appears a more natural arrangement than that of Matthew, and might possibly have been the true order in point of time, though not in the order of strength. According to Matthew, Our Lord was transported from the wilderness to Jerusalem, and thence taken to a lofty mountain, upon the geographical position of which, however, it would be vain to speculate, since no mountain could command a natural prospect of all the kingdoms of the world, and we must therefore suppose that the representation partook of the nature of a splendid vision. With regard to the transportation of Our Lord's person from place to place, there can be no greater difficulty in understanding it as a literal fact, than the statement of the Apostolic historian, that Philip was caught away from the Ethiopian Eunuch by the Spirit of the Lord, and " found " at Azotus ; or than the account which the Prophet Ezekiel gives, of his having been lifted up between the earth and the heaven, and brought in the visions of God to Jerusalem ; or, again, than St. Paul's being caught up to the third heaven. Yet, as the Apostle was unable to tell whether it was " in the body or out of the body " that he experienced the visions and revelations referred to, it would be rash to pronounce with confidence, how far the scenes

Ezek. viii. 3.

and action of the Temptation were of a visionary character. The order of time, at all events, is a matter of no historical importance; and, unless both Evangelists had professed to give the three trials in strict succession, (and St. Luke uses no particle implying immediate sequence,) the variation cannot affect the accuracy of the narrative.* On the other hand, it proves, that Luke was not, in this part of his narrative, the mere copyist of Matthew; and at the same time, that he regarded this remarkable feature of Our Lord's personal history as among "the things most surely believed" among Christians, and of too much importance to be omitted in an historical record. We have thus a strong attestation of its reality as an actual transaction, in which Our Lord "suffered, being tempted," and, by his victory over the Prince of this world, not only demonstrated his being indeed the Son of God, but also, that in him, as the Son of Man, Satan "had nothing."

Heb. ii. 18.

John xiv. 30.

Our Lord's
Ministry
prior to
John's Im-
prisonment.

§ 5. The next difficulty which the Harmonist has to deal with, relates to the *hiatus* in the first three Gospels, occurring between the Temptation and the commencement of Our Lord's public ministry in Galilee. That interval appears, from the supplemental narrative comprised in the first four chapters of John's Gospel, to have been occupied with a series of transactions not inferior in interest to those which are recorded by the other Evangelists; comprising the "beginning of miracles" wrought by Our Lord, and his first appearance in the Temple as one having

* Not so Matthew, who employs the definite terms, *τότε* and *πάλιν*.

Divine authority; in fact, according to one learned Harmonist, extending over considerably more than a year, respecting which the other Evangelists give us no information. This circumstance, though at first view it may seem startling to one who has never closely examined the peculiarities of the several documents, admits of the most natural explanation. The point of time from which St. Matthew commences his account of Our Lord's ministry, is, "when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison." St. Mark, in like manner (at ver. 14 of chap. i.), thus begins his account: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God." But this language implies, that he had previously been out of Galilee, and leaves it to be inferred, that he had been exercising the office of a Teacher in other parts, where he would not seem to interfere with the ministry of his Forerunner. It was not till after his return to Galilee, probably, that St. Matthew became personally acquainted with Our Lord, or, at all events, that he became his disciple, so as to be qualified, as an eye-witness, to give an account of his teaching and miracles; and this consideration seems to furnish a sufficient reason for his not going further back, since, with regard to the previous ministry of Our Lord, St. Matthew could bear no direct personal testimony. It is evident, however, that, after John had been cast into prison, Our Lord's ministry assumed a more public, and, if we may so speak, regular and systematic character; for, though his disciples had become numerous, he had not yet chosen the Twelve as Apostles to go

forth in his name. It was quite in harmony with the meekness and modesty of The Saviour's character, to avoid every appearance of rivalry with his servant and harbinger, or of an impatience to supersede his preparatory ministry by his own higher commission. He had put the greatest honour upon the ministry of John, by stooping to become his disciple, thereby acknowledging his authority as a Teacher ; and when an attempt was made by the Pharisees to excite the jealousy of the Baptist, by representing that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,—which drew forth that magnanimous reply, “ He must increase, but I must decrease,”—Our Lord left Judea, then the scene of his ministry, and withdrew, for the sake of privacy, into Galilee.

John iii. 30.

Of that part of Our Lord's ministry which was contemporaneous with that of John the Baptist, our knowledge is derived exclusively from the Gospel of John, whose acquaintance with his Master was probably much earlier than that of Matthew. It is, indeed, scarcely possible, in reading the account given by this Evangelist, of the circumstances which led Our Lord's first disciples to follow him as the Lamb of God, to entertain a doubt that the Apostle John was one of them. It is observable, that “ one of the two ” who heard John the Baptist make the declaration which induced them to follow Jesus, was Andrew, Peter's brother. The other is not named, but we know that it was not Peter ; and the omission of the name affords a strong reason for supposing it to have been the Writer himself, who usually

John i. 40.

suppresses his own name.* From this period, these disciples of John became the followers of Christ, believers upon him as the predicted Messiah, though not as yet, it would appear, to the relinquishment of their temporal avocations: they had spontaneously attached themselves to Our Lord as a Master, but had not then been called by him to be his Apostles, —“fishers of men.” The calling of Peter and Andrew, James and John, narrated by Matthew and the other two Evangelists, was evidently a subsequent transaction, for thenceforth they “forsook all” to follow Christ as his constant attendants. Thus explained, all discrepancy between the narratives vanishes.

Matt. iv. 18;
Mark i. 16;
Luke v. 10.

Taking the Gospel of John as our clear and only guide in this part of the sacred narrative, we find that, some time after Our Lord's baptism by John, and therefore subsequently to the Temptation, a deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem had waited upon John, to demand in what character and by what authority he baptized. John was then baptizing near the ford of Bethabara, or Bethania, on the further side of the Jordan, in Perea; and on the day following, Jesus came to him there,—probably on his return from the scene of the Temptation to Galilee, where the Mother of Jesus then dwelt, together with those relatives who are styled his brethren. It was on seeing Jesus approaching, that the Baptist bore record to his having been, by a miraculous

* See John xiii. 23, xviii. 15, xix. 24. This opinion is an ancient one. Epiphanius says, ‘John or James;’ giving no reason for the alternative.

token, at his baptism, designated as the Son of God ; and in consequence of his testimony, two of his disciples, Andrew and the Evangelist himself followed Jesus. Andrew went in search of his brother Peter, with the joyful intelligence, " We have found the Messiah." And the next day, when Jesus was desirous of prosecuting his journey homeward, Philip, who was of the same fishing village as Andrew and Peter, and Nathanael, surnamed Bartholomew (or the son of Tholomæus), were added to the little band of disciples that attended him.* On the third day after his arrival in Galilee, a marriage took place at Cana, where the Mother of Our Lord appears to have been then residing ; and it is evident, that one or both of the parties must have been her kinsfolk, as she seems to have had in some degree the direction of the feast. It has been conjectured, that the marriage was that of Cleopas or Alpheus, who married the sister or cousin of the Virgin. The timely arrival of Jesus was no doubt joyfully hailed ; and not only himself, but his disciples also were invited to the feast, at which he wrought his first public miracle ; whereby, it is declared, he manifested his glory or divine power, and his disciples believed in him, recognizing that evidence of his being the Messiah, the King of Israel. After this, he accompanied his mother and relatives, attended also by his disciples, to Capernaum, and remained there for a

* According to the reading followed in the Common Version, Jesus findeth Philip ; but there is a varied reading which allows of the more natural rendering, that Peter found Philip, as Philip found Nathanael.

few days, till a little before the Passover, when he went up to Jerusalem.

John ii. 13.

And now it was that Our Lord may be considered as having formally and publicly entered upon the discharge of his prophetic office; agreeably to the language of the Prophet Malachi: "The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple."

Mal. iii. 1.

It is narrated that, suddenly appearing within the sacred enclosure, he not only assumed the authority of a Prophet and Reformer in clearing the precincts of the Temple of those who had made it a sort of fair, filling the minds of the multitude with terror and astonishment, but also, by his language, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandize," declared himself to be the Son of God. The comment of the Evangelist, "His disciples remembered," &c.,

John ii. 17.

indicates that the writer was an eye-witness of the transaction, and that such was the thought which it suggested at the time. That this act of Our Lord was an exertion of supernatural power, that it partook of a miraculous character, is not a mere inference from the submission of the crowd of traders to his command, but is apparent from what follows. At this passover, "many," it is said, "believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did." And of this number was Nicodemus, who, in his conversation with Our Lord, refers to these miracles. Yet, no particular miracle is specified, except his clearing of the Temple: this must, therefore, have been introduced as a specimen or instance of the miracles which attested at this time to all Jerusalem his Divine authority and commission.

Ch. ii. 23.

After this Passover, instead of returning to Galilee, Our Lord remained for some time with his disciples in Judea, exercising his public ministry, and receiving the multitudes who flocked to him to be baptized as his disciples. Meantime John, not having yet been cast into prison by Herod, was still discharging his mission, and baptizing disciples, though his popularity was now declining; and some of his disciples among the Pharisees, in the true spirit of partizans, endeavoured to excite his jealousy of Christ as a more successful teacher. His noble answer was a fresh testimony to Our Lord as the promised Messiah. Yet, to avoid the semblance of rivalry with the Baptist, whose career was now drawing to its close, Jesus, on learning what the Pharisees had said, left Judæa, where John had fixed his station, and returned to Galilee, by way of Samaria, where the Galileans who had attended the passover and witnessed his miracles at Jerusalem, received him. While he was at Cana, he wrought a second striking miracle in the cure of the son of a nobleman (*βασιλικὸς*) residing at Capernaum. We are not informed how long he remained at this time in Galilee, but evidently till after John had been committed to prison; for, when Our Lord next went up to Jerusalem, to be present at a feast, (which of the great feasts is not mentioned,) it appears from ch. v. 35, that John was no longer bearing witness to the truth,—that the burning and shining light was set or extinguished. On his return from *this* feast to Galilee, the ministry of his Forerunner being thus terminated, Our Lord “began to preach” the

John iii. 24.

John iv. 3.

John v. 1.

doctrine of repentance, and to go about the country, teaching in their synagogues, and healing all manner of diseases. We may therefore, without hesitation, conclude, that the narrative of St. John up to this point, is antecedent to that of Matthew, and that ch. vi. 1, of the former corresponds, in point of time, to Matt. iv. 12 (and Luke iv. 14).

§ 6. The duration of Our Lord's ministry is a question which has given rise to much learned discussion; and upon very slender grounds, opposite theories have been raised, some harmonists extending it to three or four years, and others limiting it to little more than a year. The determination of this question falls within the province of the chronologist, rather than of the commentator; and as we find it nowhere distinctly asserted by the sacred writers, how long Our Lord carried on his ministry, we can ascertain it only from the dates afforded by incidental references. Now we find it expressly stated by the Evangelical Historian, Luke, that the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa; and by a careful historical induction, Mr. Greswell has satisfactorily established, that the ministry of the Baptist must therefore have begun in the autumn of J.P. 4739, or A.D. 26, answering to A.U.C. 779, which was the fifteenth year from the accession of Tiberius to the imperial authority, during the life, and as the colleague, of Augustus.* Our Lord, who was six months younger

Duration of
Our Lord's
ministry.

Horne's In-
trod. vol. ii.
p. 354.

* Greswell, vol. i. diss. vi. viii. Other authorities place the accession of Tiberius to joint empire a year later, A.D. 12.

than his Forerunner, was not quite thirty at his baptism; and his birth being determined to have taken place A.U.C. 750, or 4 before the vulgar era, he would enter his thirtieth year, A.U.C. 779; and consequently, his baptism must have taken place about that time.* It is natural to suppose, apart from the chronological indications, that Our Lord and his Forerunner would enter upon their respective ministries at the same age; and if so, six months must be allowed for the preparatory ministry of John. There is no reason to conclude that it was of longer duration. Now, from the Gospel of John we learn, that, at the time of the Passover immediately ensuing upon Our Lord's baptism, when he in fact first announced in the Temple his Divine authority, the building of the Temple, that is, the restoration begun by Herod the Great, A.U. 734, or B.C. 20, had been going on for six and forty years. This Passover, therefore, must have been that which fell in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, or, according to Mr. Greswell's erudite calculation, April 9, A.D. 27 (A.U.C. 780). John the Baptist appears to have continued to baptize disciples till his imprisonment, by order of Herod the Tetrarch, in the castle of Machærus; (a fact recorded by Josephus, † Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. v. § 1;) which Greswell fixes in the spring quarter of A.U.C. 780. In the following spring, Herod returned from Rome; and in the autumn, about the Feast of Tabernacles (Sept. 22 or 23), he is supposed to

John ii. 20.

Greswell,
vol. i. p. 188.

Ib. vol. i.
p. 268.

* Benson fixes Our Lord's baptism about Nov. J. P. 4739.

† Lardner has vindicated the genuineness of this remarkable passage, vol. vi. pp. 430—436.

have given that magnificent festival, during which John was put to death. A.U. 781 or A.D. 28.*

When Our Lord went up to Jerusalem for the first time after his appearance in the Temple, John was still living, though a prisoner; and it seems most probable, that the Feast referred to, John v. 1, was the Feast of Tabernacles, which fell, Oct. 4, A.D. 27.† On his return, he began to teach publicly throughout Galilee; and after he had been thus engaged for some months, it is incidentally mentioned, John vi. 4, that the Passover was nigh: this if no other had intervened, would be that which fell, March 29, A.D. 28;‡ and the Feast of Tabernacles mentioned ch. vii. 2, would be that of September in the same year. No reference occurs to any other Passover, in this Evangelist, till that which immediately preceded Our Lord's suffering,§ ch. xi. 55. We find, however, that he attended the Feast of the Dedication (ch. x. 22), which occurred in winter, towards the end of December.¶ On that occasion, the Jews attempted to stone him to death; and Our Lord, escaping from their hands, withdrew into Perea. There he appears to have remained till a short time before the illness and death of Lazarus; when, on intimating his intention to return to Judea, the disciples expressed their astonishment and apprehension: "Master, the Jews of late

John v. 32.

* Mr. Greswell supposes his imprisonment to have lasted about eighteen months. Vol. ii. p. 312, and Diss. viii.

† Calvin supposes it to have been the Feast of Pentecost, which would fall, May 30.

‡ If the third Passover, it fell, April 16, A.D. 29; and the Feast of Tabernacles, Oct. 11.

§ Greswell fixes it Dec. 19—26, A.D. 29. Vol. ii. p. 451.

John xi. 8. sought to stone^e thee, and goest thou thither again? ”
 After raising^r Lazarus from the dead, Our Lord
 “walked no more openly among the Jews,” but took
 up his residence at Ephraim on the border of the
 John xii. 1. wilderness. Six days before the ensuing Passover, he
 came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had
 raised from the dead; and at *this* Passover he was
 betrayed, and suffered. On the supposition that it
 was the third Passover after Our Lord’s baptism, it
 would be that of A.D. 29; and in that case, the dura-
 tion of his public ministry would be only two years.
 But Mr. Greswell has adduced sufficient evidence to
 justify the conclusion, that the year of the Passion
 was A.D. 30, answering to A.U.C. 783, thereby
 extending Our Lord’s ministry to three years; and
 he supposes the Feast referred to, John v. 1, to have
 been, not the Feast of Tabernacles, but the second
 Passover after Our Lord’s baptism, and that referred
 Diss. v. to, John vi. 4, the third. This is at once a doubtful
 and an immaterial point. The duration of Our
 Lord’s ministry being ascertained by the two extreme
 Vol.ii. p.237. dates of the first and the fourth Passover after his
 baptism, the exact distribution of the interval is of
 subordinate consequence. Whether, with the learned
 Harmonist, we suppose the interval between John
 v. i, and John vi. 4, to comprise the second year of
 his ministry, the incidents of which are passed over
 as being fully related by the other Evangelists,—or
 suppose an interval of eighteen months to have
 occurred between the Feast mentioned, John v. 1,
 and the Passover of John vi. 4,—or, again, assuming
 the latter to be the second Passover, conclude that

the third is not referred to, the result is much the same. For eighteen months before the Feast of Tabernacles mentioned John vii. 2, Our Lord appears not to have visited Jerusalem; whence it is clear that he felt under no obligation to attend all the feasts; and prudential reasons might dictate his absence. It also appears, that on every occasion of his going up to Jerusalem, except the last, he went up privately, accompanied, probably, by only a few disciples; whereas his last journey to Jerusalem was attended at every step with circumstances which gave it publicity: he made a public entry into the city in the character of the Son of David, and a second time asserted his Divine authority in the clearing of the Temple. This will explain why the first three Evangelists mention only this last visit to Jerusalem,—properly speaking, the only one connected with his public ministry, after the calling of the Apostles,—and why no reference is made by them to any other Passover.

According to the scheme of the learned Harmonist so often referred to, the true Chronology of the Gospel History, as regards the leading events, may be thus arranged:—

	B.C.	A.U.C.	JUL. P.
Edict of Augustus	5	749	4709
Birth of John the Baptist.....	5 (Oct. 5)		
Birth of Christ	4 (April 5)	750	4710
Presentation	4 (May)		
Flight into Egypt	4 (Aug.)		
Death of Herod	3 (March)		4711*

* Benson, Mann, and Lardner fix the death of Herod in 4710, a year earlier.

	A.D.	A.U.C.	JUL.P.
Visit of Jesus to Jerusalem	8 (Apr. 5)	761	4721
First year of the government of Tiberius			
Cæsar	12 (Spring)	765	4725
Death of Augustus	14 (Aug.)	767	4727
Beginning of John's ministry	26 (Oct.)	779	4739
Baptism of Our Lord	27 (Jan.)	780	4740
First appearance of Our Lord in the Temple	— (April)	780	
Imprisonment of John	— (May)		
Second Passover	28 (Mar. 29)	781	4741
Death of John the Baptist	— (Sept.)		
Third Passover	29 (Ap. 16)	782	4742
Transfiguration	— (May)		
Third Feast of Tabernacles	— (Oct. 11)		
Miracle on the Blind Man	— (Oct. 18)		
Third Feast of Dedication	— (Dec. 19)		
Raising of Lazarus	30 (Jan.)	783	4743
Unction at Bethany	— (Mar. 30)		
Second Cleansing of the Temple	— (April 2)		
Last Supper	— (April 4)		
Fourth Passover	— (April 5)		
Resurrection of Our Lord	— (April 7)		
Ascension to Heaven	— (May 16)		
Effusion of the Holy Spirit	— (May 26)		

Greswell,
vol. iii.
Tables 1 & 3.

According to Mr. Benson, Our Saviour was born in the spring of J.P. 4709 (B.C. 5), baptized in Nov. 4739 (A.D. 26), and crucified at the Passover of 4742, after a ministry of two years and a half.

Different
Accounts of
the Resur-
rection.

§ 7. The last difficulty which requires notice in arranging the Gospel Narrative as contained in the Four Documents, arises from the different accounts of the Resurrection, the alleged discrepancies in which, have furnished an occasion of cavil to the infidel, and been a source of some perplexity to the more candid inquirer. The discrepancies relate chiefly to the circumstances attending the visits of the women to

the Sepulchre ; and Michaelis, in a treatise on the subject, states the cases of apparent contradiction in the following strong and unwarrantable language :— ‘ 1. The last twelve verses of Mark (xvi. 9—20) contradict another Evangelist. 2. The preceding part of Mark’s statement contradicts another Evangelist. 3. The Gospel of Luke contradicts another Evangelist.’ When we come, however, to examine these alleged contradictions, we shall find cause for astonishment, that, upon such slender grounds, either the genuineness of any part of St. Mark’s Gospel, or the accuracy of St. Luke as an historian should have been called in question. In the time of Jerome, indeed, it appears that the concluding part of St. Mark’s Gospel had been struck out by many transcribers both of the Greek Text and of the Latin Translation, for no better reason than that ‘it seemed to relate things different from and contrary to the other Gospels.’ Of its genuineness, however, there is no reason to doubt, since it is found in all the extant manuscripts, and in all the old Translations, including the Syriac, which was made in the first century. The last two verses of the chapter are, moreover, cited by Irenæus, whose evidence is sufficient to prove that the chapter never contained less than we now read in it, or that, if added to St. Mark’s Gospel by another hand, it must have been received as canonical and authentic in the Apostolic age.

The first apparent contradiction to which Michaelis refers, is, the declaration, Mark xvi. 8, that the women “said nothing to any man, for they were afraid ;” as compared with the statement of St. Matthew, that

they saw Jesus, as it would seem on their return to the city, received his instructions, and carried them to his disciples. Now even assuming that the same party of women is referred to by Mark and Matthew, (an assumption which we shall presently show to be erroneous,) it is only by ascribing to the declaration of St. Mark a meaning altogether forced and unnatural, namely, that they maintained a *permanent* silence as to what they had witnessed, after their fear had subsided, that the slightest inconsistency can be made to attach to the narrative. St. Matthew states, "that the women departed quickly from the sepulchre *with fear* and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word." St. Mark, following, as usual, the narrative of the Proto-Evangelist, but adding some illustrative details, describes their fear to have been so extreme that "they trembled and were amazed, neither said they anything to any man, for they were sore afraid." They fled from the Sepulchre in speechless terror; and, as they hurried back to the city, instead of spreading the report of the wonderful occurrence, as might have been expected, they said nothing of the circumstance to any persons whom they met. The explanation is, that fear held them silent. Yet, when that fear had subsided, they would naturally run direct to carry the strange tidings to the disciples. Mr. West supposes, that they might pass Peter and John going to the Sepulchre, without speaking even to *them*, not having sufficiently recovered from their panic in their hasty flight. But to suppose that, after the terror which held them silent had subsided, they would say nothing of what they had wit-

nessed, is neither implied by the words of St. Mark, nor to be reconciled with probability or common sense.

It is, however, quite in accordance with the extreme conciseness of St. Matthew, and with the very general terms in which he adverts to well-known facts, to understand him as speaking of what was truly the case with regard to the different women who visited the Sepulchre respectively, but not strictly the fact as to each and all. Thus, while some departed quickly from the Sepulchre with fear, others departed with great joy. The emotions of terror and great joy are scarcely compatible; and it is more natural to suppose, that St. Matthew refers to the different emotions produced by the scene in the minds of different women, than to construe his words strictly, as denoting that they all were affected in the same manner, and acted in the same way. Now it is observable, that St. Mark is silent as to the great joy inspired in those who kept silence through terror; and yet, that joy is a material circumstance in connexion with St. Matthew's statement, that it was with great joy some of them ran to bring his disciples word. The following words, "As they went to tell his disciples," are, upon purely critical grounds, considered to be an interpolation; and Griesbach affixes to them the note which implies only one remove from unquestionable spuriousness. They are wanting in the Codex Vaticanus, the Codex Bezae, in the Syriac and other ancient Versions, and in the citations of the passage by Origen and Chrysostom.* There is, therefore, no reason to conclude

* Greswell, vol. iii, p. 209. Matt. xxvii. 9 should therefore begin, *καὶ ἰδοὺ*.

that it was on their way back to the city, that Jesus appeared to the terror-stricken women, but rather to some who were filled with great joy, (which we know to have been the case with Mary Magdalene,) who remained behind. The explanation to which the judicious Calvin inclines, is, that, by synecdoche, Matthew extends to all, what was peculiar to one ; and on this supposition, the appearance of Jesus to one of the two Mariés named by the Evangelist, namely, Mary Magdalene, is what Matthew intends to refer to, though he seems to speak as if it had been witnessed by both or all.* This interpretation not only reconciles the accounts given by the two Evangelists, but, by furnishing the reason of St. Mark's deviation from St. Matthew, proves almost to demonstration how he understood the reference. It has already been remarked, that, in speaking of the women who fled from the Sepulchre, he drops or omits the expression which is so emphatic in St. Matthew, "with great joy did run to bring word to his disciples," while he dwells upon their being afraid. Immediately afterwards, however, he particularizes the appearance of Our Lord to Mary Magdalene ; and adds, that she went and told the disciples as they mourned and wept. According, then, to St. Mark's explanation of the more general account given by St. Matthew, while the other women fled in speechless terror from the Sepulchre, to one of the company, Jesus himself appeared, and with great joy she ran to carry the tidings to the disciples ; who yet, when they

* In like manner, Matt. xxvii. 44, by a similar idiom, attributes to the two thieves the language of the impenitent one.

heard that he was alive and had been seen of her, believed not. This account is in perfect accordance with the more detailed narration of St. John, ch. xx. 11—18. Luke, indeed, represents the women generally as returning from the Sepulchre, and telling all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest; but the things specified by him are, the vision of angels and the angelic declaration; for Our Lord had not appeared to Mary Magdalene, when Peter, on the first information brought to the Apostles, ran to the Sepulchre; and it is clear, that it was at the second visit of Mary to the Sepulchre, after Peter and John had retired, that the first appearance of Christ took place, which was the subject of Mary's second communication to the disciples. By this natural explanation, the first two supposed contradictions referred to by Michaelis are satisfactorily disposed of.

Luke xxiv.
4—9; 23.

The third relates to the number of the angels seen by the women, the situation in which they were seen, and the conduct of the women, as narrated in the Gospel of Luke; but the difficulty has already been partly met in the preceding remarks. Dr. Lardner observes, that 'St. Luke puts together the whole testimony of the women;' whereas 'we know from St. John, that their testimony consisted of two reports, brought down to the Apostles at different times;' and Dr. Townson, taking the words of St. Luke, 'these things,' in a distributive sense, thinks that we may distribute them into three reports. 'This is a point,' he adds, 'that, I think, puts the design of the verse out of question, and shows that St. Luke joined Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of

Townson's
Works,
vol. ii. p. 144.

James together, not because they all reported the same things to the Apostles, but for a higher reason; because they severally attested different things, in such manner that the amount of their testimonies was the whole of the evidence that could be exhibited.'

Nothing can be more clear, than that the Sepulchre was visited by several different parties; probably by many more, in the course of the same day, than are mentioned by the Evangelists. The two visits paid by Mary Magdalene, the first of which took place while it was yet dark, that of the other Mary, attended probably by Salome, and that of Joanna and her company, bearing the spices and ointment for embalmment, seem at least to have been all distinct. It is to the latter that St. Luke more particularly alludes; and, as each of the angelic appearances was made to a different party, that which St. Luke describes, must be understood as applying to the latter visit, whereas the account given by St. Matthew relates to the earlier ones. All that Mary Magdalene saw or staid to notice, on her first visit, was, that the stone had been rolled away; whence she naturally concluded that the Sepulchre had been violated, and the body removed. According to St. Matthew's account, collated with St. Mark's, about sun-rise, the other Mary and Salome arrived, bringing sweet spices; and, on approaching the Sepulchre, they beheld not only the stone rolled away, but the angel who sat upon it, and who addressed them in the language of encouragement, on beholding their terror,—“Be not afraid;” notwithstanding which, they appear abruptly to have fled. When Joanna and her party

arrived, not knowing what had taken place, they found the stone removed, but saw nothing to prevent their entering into the Sepulchre, which they found empty. While they are lost in perplexity, two angels appear to them standing, as if, their office fulfilled, they were preparing to depart; and address the women in the language of expostulation, as if to reprove their lingering about the empty grave, "Why seek ye the Living One among the dead?" When, shortly afterwards, Peter reached the Sepulchre, the angels had not departed, although to him they were not visible, for Mary Magdalene afterwards saw them, yet, apparently, without being aware of their being angels.

Mr. Greswell has laboured to prove, that the manifestation recorded by St. Matthew (ch. xxviii. 9.) was wholly distinct from that made to Mary Magdalene; contending that the former was not made on the day of the Resurrection, but many days afterwards; that it was, in fact, the sixth appearance of Our Lord.* As there is no necessity for having recourse to this hypothesis, so, there is no ground whatever to support the conjecture. Mr. Greswell admits, that no other manifestation than that recorded by Mark and John to have been made to Mary Magdalene, could have preceded it; and that the other women could not have beheld Our Lord previously to his

* With most unjustifiable confidence in his own hypothesis, the learned Author rashly asserts, that 'we must give up the authority of St. John, if the manifestation recorded at large by him, and alluded to in brief by Mark, as made to Mary Magdalene, was the manifestation recorded by Matthew as made to the women who visited the sepulchre.'—Vol. iii. p. 201.

appearance to the Eleven. Is it probable, then, that St. Matthew would pass over the first five appearances, including all that took place on the day of the Resurrection? Were we to reject the explanation which supposes the Proto-Evangelist to refer to the appearance to Mary Magdalene, it would be much more reasonable to understand his words as applying to Our Lord's manifestation to his disciples on the same day; but this would require an alteration of the text, unwarranted by manuscripts, in order to make the pronouns agree with and refer to the disciples, not to the women. Upon the whole, therefore, the most satisfactory conclusion seems to be, that St. Matthew, in his very summary account of the main circumstances, blends together what the latter Evangelists distribute into the details. The main facts are, that the Sepulchre was visited early in the morning by the women who came with the spices for embalmment;—that they found the Sepulchre open, and Our Lord's body removed;—that angels appeared to them, who declared that he had risen from the dead;—that they fled with amazement and terror to carry the tidings to the disciples;—and that Jesus himself appeared and saluted them,—that is one of their number,—and was recognized and worshipped. The expression rendered, "All hail!" corresponds to the "Peace be with you" of the other Evangelists, and is so rendered in the Syriac Version; and, being the customary form of salutation, is such as Our Lord would naturally employ before he asked Mary why she wept. No stress, therefore, can be laid upon the omission of the salutation in the account given by

ἀυραῖς ; αἰ,
ver. 9, 10.

St. John. As to the supposed discrepancy between the statements, that they (that is Mary) held him by the feet, and that Jesus said to Mary, "Touch (or embrace) me not,"—it would seem to be implied by this very language, that Mary was in the act of embracing Our Lord's feet; why otherwise was she told not to do so,—to desist from that expression of her homage or joy,—and not to detain him? To reconcile her mind to this, Our Lord assures her, that he had not yet left the earth and returned to the Father; and commissions her to bear to the disciples the consolatory assurance, that, when he should ascend, it would be to Him who was, through his own relation to the Father, their Father and their God.

This was Our Lord's first appearance. It is not quite clear which was his second, for we learn only incidentally from Luke xxii. 14, that, in the course of the same day, he appeared to Simon Peter; and St. Paul also adverts to this appearance, 1 Cor. xv. 5:—"he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." The third appearance (if not the second in order of time) was to Cleopas and his companion on their way to Emmaus.* Cleopas is supposed to have been the husband of Mary the mother of James, one of those who had visited the Sepulchre, and had seen the vision of angels, but had not witnessed or heard of Our Lord's personal manifestation. (St. Mark mentions this as Our Lord's second appearance, but he omits that made to Peter.) Emmaus was between

* Of the various ancient conjectures as to the name of this companion, the most probable seems to be, that it was the Evangelist himself.

seven and eight miles from Jerusalem, and the distance would occupy not much less than three hours. As the day was far spent when they reached the village, yet there was time to return to Jerusalem before night, we may suppose that they arrived at Emmaus about the ninth hour or three o'clock, not much earlier than the ordinary time of the afternoon repast; and at this repast, Our Lord was made known to them. Returning with speed, they would join the assembled disciples "at evening," that is, about the twelfth hour or six o'clock, yet still on the same day: supper would then be over; and all that seems to have remained of the repast, was part of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb, of which Our Lord partook at this first personal manifestation to the Disciples, in order to assure them of his being no spectre, but flesh and blood,—himself risen bodily. This his fourth appearance is particularly referred to by three of the Evangelists as well as by St. Paul.* The fifth would seem to be that which occurred on the first day of the following week, when Thomas, who had not been present at the previous interview vouchsafed to the assembled disciples, was gently rebuked for his incredulity, and invited to satisfy himself by the stronger than ocular evidence which he had required, that his Divine Master's appearance was a substantial reality. "The third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples," was by the Sea of Tiberias, after they had returned to

Greswell,
vol.iii.p.214.

Johnxxi.14.

* The expression, 1 Cor. xv. 5, "*the twelve*," must be understood of the Apostles; for, strictly, it could no more apply to the eleven present at the next appearance, than to the ten in the absence of Thomas.

Galilee ; and this must therefore have been his sixth appearance.

The seventh manifestation on record is that more solemn and public one which took place, agreeably to Our Lord's own appointment, in Galilee, the principal scene of his ministry, and where it may be concluded that the greater part of his disciples resided. This public manifestation is the only one mentioned by St. Matthew, because it was, in fact, that upon which the truth of the Resurrection mainly rested, as attested by a crowd of witnesses, all the others being of a private nature. And to this St. Paul doubtless refers, 1 Cor. xv. 6, as having been made to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part were then living, twenty-five years after the event. It is an apparent omission, that St. Mark should not particularly specify this interview ; yet, it is clearly implied by his recording the angelic message, "Tell his disciples, that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." It was, Matt. xvi. 7. therefore, in fulfilment of a promise made before his suffering, and by express appointment, that Our Lord met his assembled disciples in Galilee after his Resurrection, at a particular spot, "a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." The message with which the women were charged, was simply to remind the disciples of instructions which they had already received, although, at the time, they may not have fully understood them, and were now in danger of neglecting them through the perplexity and distress into which they were cast. It is evident, however, that they had no right to expect to see Our Lord after his Resurrection

at any other than the appointed place of meeting. Their repairing to Galilee for this purpose, was to be a test of their faith and obedience. Yet, in gracious accommodation to their incredulity, not only is an express message conveyed to them by the angelic attendants at the Sepulchre, but Our Lord himself appears, first to Mary Magdalene, then to Peter, then to Cleopas and his companion, and afterwards twice to the Eleven, to assure them of his having actually risen, and to prepare them for the promised meeting in Galilee. It was requisite that they should be fully convinced of the fact of the Resurrection of their Master, in order to their acting upon the instructions they had received; hence the importance that, by a second appearance to the Eleven, the doubts of Thomas also should be overcome. Obedience to the law, indeed, would require their continuance in Jerusalem till the days of unleavened bread, the feast of the Azyma, were over. Immediately afterwards, those disciples who had come up from Galilee to attend the Passover, would be returning home; but the Apostles might yet have lingered behind, had they not received positive instructions to repair to the mountain which Jesus had appointed. Now, however, they would lose no time in returning; and the message would rapidly spread through the whole company of the disciples, so that hundreds repaired with eager expectation to meet their risen Lord. 'The fact of such a manifestation,' it has been judiciously remarked by Mr. Greswell, 'is an answer to the common objection, Why did not Christ appear in person, after his Resurrection, to the same people

among whom he had been personally conversant before his death? For it proves that he did so appear to those who alone could have any reasonable claim, *à priori*, to the privilege of seeing him after his Resurrection; viz. those who alone had known and believed in him before his death. It is that manifestation which a Gospel that was first written, and written upon the spot, would naturally, and perhaps exclusively, select for narration; and St. Matthew's Gospel, by confining itself to this, and saying nothing of any other which was not connected with this, has not only discharged the duty of a Gospel in general, but has communicated an integrity and a unity to its own account, which none of the later narratives, in the nature of things, could have communicated to theirs.'

Greswell,
vol.iii.p.207.

But, if this appointment in Galilee had been made before Our Lord's passion, and the place was so well known to the disciples as not to require to be specified, we might expect to meet with some record of the previous promise and command. The only distinct intimation of the kind is recorded by Matthew, as having been conveyed in the words of Our Lord on the night on which he was betrayed: "After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." But no particular spot is specified; and there must have been, either at this time or on some former occasion, a more express appointment. Now, in the account of the Transfiguration, we meet with significant expressions which seem to render it highly probable, that it was upon that occasion the command was first given to the disciples, and that that was the

Matt. xxvi.
32.

mountain appointed for the meeting. We are told, that the subject of which Moses and Elijah spake, was the decease which Our Lord was to accomplish at Jerusalem ; and as the disciples came down from the mountain, they were charged to tell no man what they had seen, (including of course the conversation they had heard,) “ till the Son of Man were risen from the dead.” And “ they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.” It is evident, that much more passed on this occasion, than is narrated ; and as the reference to the Resurrection, though obscure at the time, is so express, we cannot but infer that there was a special reason why, as soon as he was risen, they were to publish what they had witnessed on that “ holy mount,” and which was, so to speak, a pre-manifestation of the glorified body in which he was afterwards to appear,—a visible foreshewing of his Resurrection. With what force must this scene have recurred to their recollection, in connexion with his solemn charge, as a confirmation of their faith ! To this hallowed spot, even if none had been named, they would most naturally repair in the expectation of beholding a more glorious repetition of the transcendent vision. But it cannot be deemed an improbable supposition, that, in the conversation which took place, Our Lord appointed this very mount as the spot where he would meet them after the Son of Man should be risen from the dead ; and they would proclaim at the same time to his believing followers in Galilee, the invitation to attend the solemn public manifestation of their risen Lord, and

Luke ix. 31.

Mark ix. 9,
10.

the previous display of his glory, of which they had been the chosen witnesses on the same spot, about a year before.

This view of the subject may serve to throw light upon a passage, the precise import of which has been a question with commentators. In the verse immediately preceding the account of the Transfiguration, given respectively by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Our Lord solemnly assures the disciples, that some were then present, who should not die till they had seen the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. It is expressly stated, that, a week after this declaration, Jesus took three of his disciples up into a high mountain, where he was transfigured before them; and it seems a reasonable inference, that this display of his glory was the fulfilment of the previous declaration. That it was a partial fulfilment, must be admitted; but that it was the intended and ultimate fulfilment of his words, there is reason to question. First, it is hard to imagine, that the solemn assurance that they should not die till they had witnessed his glory, would have been given in reference to an occurrence that was to take place in a few days; and in the second place, it is difficult to view the Transfiguration as the event intended by the coming of the Son of Man in his kingdom or kingly power. But, if we understand Our Lord's declaration as referring to a manifestation of his glory as the risen Saviour, of which the Transfiguration was a pledge and emblem, their prophetic significance becomes evident, as one of those sayings which, though not understood at the time by his disciples, were brought to their

recollection in their full import after he had risen from the dead. It was not till after his Resurrection, that Our Lord could be said to come in his kingdom, when he declared, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

How long this public interview lasted, we are not informed. St. Luke states, that Our Lord was seen by the Apostles "during forty days;" that is, from time to time during those days; and that "he spoke to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." But we have no record of any other distinct manifestation, subsequent to his appearance to the assembled multitude in the holy mountain,* except one mentioned only by St. Paul, namely, his appearance to James, and the final interview at Jerusalem immediately preceding his Ascension. As to the former, which appears to have been the eighth manifestation in order of time, Mr. Greswell conjectures, that its object might be, to direct the Apostles to return to Jerusalem, and that it took place in Galilee; and we may at all events conclude, without presumption, that it was for the purpose of conveying some message to the Eleven. We find that The Lord's appearance to Peter preceded his first manifestation to the assembled disciples; and it was doubtless in consequence of that appearance, if not of a direct message, that the Eleven and their companions were found by Cleopas gathered together. Now, from the brief recapitulation of St. Paul, Our Lord's being seen by James, then by all the Apostles, would appear to correspond to his being

Acts i. 3.

* Mr. Greswell is clearly mistaken in placing the appearance, recorded John xxi., *after* the public manifestation.

seen by Peter, then by the Twelve: that is, in each case, the appearance to the individual not only preceded, but was related to the interview with the assembled disciples. It is, indeed, scarcely probable, that, without a specific command, the Apostles would have ventured to repair so soon to the scene of Our Lord's sufferings, more especially after having been directed to return to Galilee. And even had they felt under any obligation to attend the Feast of Pentecost, they would not have gone up to the capital so soon by many days. Forty days, however, after the Resurrection, and ten before the day of Pentecost was fully come, we find them assembled at Jerusalem for the purpose of collectively receiving their Lord and Master's last commands, immediately before his Ascension. This was his ninth appearance, which took place "on the day in which he was taken up." Acts 1. 2.

The Apostles were no doubt convened agreeably to the Divine appointment, we may suppose in the upper chamber which we find them afterwards occupying, when Our Lord, as on former occasions, stood in the midst of them. And now it was that they were commanded not to depart from Jerusalem until they should receive the promise of the Father, and be endued with power from on high. The conversation was probably the longest and most familiar that they had enjoyed with their risen Master; and they were emboldened to inquire, whether He was about at that time to assume his royal power, and restore the kingdom to Israel. They were apparently not prepared for his approaching departure from the earth. As he had often done, he led them forth from the city, along

the well-known path that wound up Mount Olivet, as far as the village of Bethany, where he had been accustomed to lodge; discoursing still, as they proceeded, of the things pertaining to his kingdom; and they might imagine that he was about to enter Bethany once more as a guest; when suddenly, as he was raising his hands in the attitude of benediction, and their eyes were fixed upon his countenance, he was parted from them, and taken up visibly into heaven, till a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were steadfastly gazing upon him as he went up, two angelic messengers in human form appeared, who gently reproving their speechless amazement, assured them, that the same Jesus who was so taken from them into heaven, should in like manner visibly descend again. Upon which the disciples, after prostrating themselves in an act of worship to their departed Lord, returned with great joy to Jerusalem, to proclaim the august spectacle of which they had been the eye-witnesses.

Proof of the
Ascension.

§. 8. It has been remarked, that Luke is the only Evangelist who gives a particular account of the Ascension. Mark, however, mentions the fact with his usual emphatic conciseness: "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." John, though he does not describe the Ascension, records the declaration of Our Lord himself to Mary Magdalene, that he was about to ascend to the Father; while, in the last conversation with the disciples before his Passion, preserved by this Evangelist, his approaching Ascension is repeatedly intimated, although the disciples

Mark xvi.
19.

were at a loss to understand his language. The omission of any direct mention of the crowning event of the Gospel history by the Proto-Evangelist, alone remains to be accounted for ; and the proper explanation is, that it was not necessary for his purpose. The disappearance of Christ from the earth was not what it was necessary to prove to the Jews, who, had they believed him to be the Messiah, or one of the Prophets, would have had no difficulty in giving credit to his having been, like Enoch and Elijah, miraculously withdrawn from the world. It was his appearance after his Resurrection, not his final disappearance, which it was of importance to prove. The story circulated to account for the removal of his body from the sealed and guarded sepulchre, was, that his disciples had stolen the corpse. St. Matthew, after referring to this "common saying," records Our Lord's meeting with his assembled followers in Galilee, and states, that they worshipped him. He then mentions the commission which Our Lord gave to his disciples, in which there is the most unequivocal assertion of his Divine power in heaven and in earth, a power of which this world could be neither the seat nor the exclusive sphere, and of his efficient spiritual presence with his disciples to the end of the world, which was to compensate for his personal removal. This declaration, although it might have been made to the multitude of his followers at the meeting in Galilee, was most likely part of the conversation immediately preceding the Ascension.

The grand and demonstrative proof of Our Lord's

Ascension, however, was, not the unsupported testimony of the few who saw him taken up into heaven, but the fulfilment of his promise of a miraculous effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. To this, Peter refers as the demonstration of his being both Lord and Christ: "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." That Jesus had actually ascended into heaven, and, according to the prophetic language of David, taken his seat at the right hand of Jehovah, was a fact which no mere human testimony could establish; but, while the Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of Christ, God himself witnessed to his exaltation, "by signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." It may indeed be regarded as the main purpose of the miraculous gifts conferred upon the Apostles, to confirm, first, their own faith, not in the resurrection of Christ, of which they could not doubt, but in his having entered into his glory in the presence of the Father; and further, to establish by supernatural evidence, not what the Apostles asserted as of their own knowledge, but what was to them, as to us, the matter of religious faith. Miracles were not an attestation of their veracity as witnesses, so much as a seal of their authority as teachers Divinely instructed and commissioned; and they wrought them in and by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, in order to shew, that "Him had God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour,"

Acts ii. 33.

eb. ii. 4.

“whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things.”

§ 9. The bare fact of the Resurrection of Christ, though it would have proved him to be the Son of God as he had declared himself, and have established the truth of all that he had taught, would have afforded but little consolation to his disciples, nor any ground for their proclaiming his reign as actually begun. Indeed, the very purpose of the Resurrection would have been left in mystery, and the promises of the Saviour would have remained an enigma. But the Apostles always connect the Resurrection with the Reign of Christ. Thus St. Peter, in his first Epistle, after speaking of his Resurrection, adds: “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him.” So, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, “When he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name.” Again, Rom. viii. 34, “It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God.” And in the Epistle to the Corinthians, treating expressly of the Resurrection, the Apostle declares, that “He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” Once more, in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, “Who, being the brightness of his glory, . . . when he had by himself expiated our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” It is evident, then, that the inspired writers considered the Resurrection and the Ascen-

The Exaltation of Christ essential to the purpose of his Resurrection.

1 Peter iii.
22.

Eph. i. 20.

Rom. viii.
34.

1 Cor. xv.
25.

Heb. i. 3.

sion of Christ as one event.* The Reign of Christ, as dating from his having entered into glory, was as essential a part of the Gospel which they preached, as his Atonement ; and upon the fact of his having ascended into heaven rested their belief, that he would return as the Judge of the living and the dead. An individual, therefore, who should profess to believe in the Resurrection of Christ as an historical fact, and yet deny or doubt his Ascension and exaltation to universal dominion, would have no claim to be regarded as a believer in Christianity or the Christian doctrine ; since he would not only reject the Apostolic testimony with its miraculous attestation, but would reject the claims of Christ himself as “ a Prince and a Saviour,” and deny him to be “ the great High Priest who has passed through the heavens.”

Incomplete-
ness of the
Information
in the
Gospels.

§ 10. These considerations may serve to show the futility of the distinction often assumed, originating in superstitious ignorance, between the Four Gospels and the other Apostolic writings, as if the former were entitled to more implicit credit and reverential regard than the latter ; as if the testimony of St. Peter, for instance, in the form of an encyclical letter, were to be regarded as of less weight than the statement of the same fact by Mark or Luke ; or, as if the Gospel of St. Paul were less authentic than that of Luke or Matthew, because it is contained in his letters to the churches, not in a continued narrative. In harmonizing the Four Gospels, we should have effected but little towards vindicating the Christian Revelation

* This may explain St. Luke's seeming, in his Gospel, to make the one follow immediately upon the other.

against the cavils of infidelity, if we were unable to establish the same harmony between the Gospels and the Epistles, between the testimony and doctrine of Peter and Matthew, of Paul and John. Of the facts upon which the Christian faith rests, the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the Ascension and Glorification of Christ must be regarded as the most important; and these are so essentially connected, that, if one is taken away, the Christian system falls. Yet, as we have seen, the Gospels supply but little information as to the Ascension, of which Luke alone, in his second Book, gives a particular description; and to his work we are indebted for the only account of the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, by which the very foundations of the Christian Church were laid. This cardinal fact, scepticism has attempted to explain away, but has not ventured to treat as doubtful; for, though recorded by only a single evangelical historian, it is so interwoven with the entire fabric of Christian truth, that, without it, the whole is reduced to a cunningly devised fable. The references to this great manifestation of the power of the risen Saviour are, indeed, numerous and explicit in the Gospels as well as in the Epistles. Thus, in the Gospel of Matthew, John the Baptist is recorded to have declared, that He whose harbinger he was, would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire; a declaration preserved by each of the other Evangelists, although the words, "and with fire," (which plainly refer to the symbolic flames that rested on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost,) are not given by Mark and John. To no act of Our

See also
John vii. 39 ;
xii. 16.

Lord, during his ministry on earth, could the prediction of the Baptist be applied; so that, if not fulfilled by the effusion of the Spirit after his Ascension, it was never accomplished. Again, in the Gospel of John, Christ is recorded to have repeatedly promised to send forth, on his return to the Father, the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; declaring that, if he went not away, the Comforter would not come, but that, if he went away, he would send him. The truth of the Gospel is involved in the fact, that this promise was fulfilled. Yet, the fulfilment of it is not recorded by any one of the Four Evangelists, except by the Author of the Book of Acts; and unless it was fulfilled by the event of which the symbolic miracle was the attestation, it has never been accomplished. Various impostors, indeed, who arose in the early ages of Christianity, availed themselves of this promise in order to obtain credit for their mission, by claiming to be the Paraclete whom Christ was to send. Not only in the Book of Acts, however, do we find the Apostles referring to their having received the promised Holy Spirit as the gift of their ascended Lord and Saviour, but, throughout the Epistles, the fact is assumed to be known to all, and acknowledged by all who believed. The Apostle John assumes, that those whom he addresses had received an unction from the Holy One, by which they were guided into the knowledge of the truth. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, distinctly connects the bestowment of miraculous gifts with the Ascension of Christ; and, in writing to the Corinthians, he declares that no man

1 John ii.
20, 27.

Eph. iv.
8-12.

could truly confess Jesus to be the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, the author of all spiritual gifts. Not only is there the most perfect accordance, in these respects, between the Gospels and the Epistles, but, as the latter assume and presuppose as incontestible *fact*, all that is recorded by the Evangelists, so, the former assume the truth of the cardinal *doctrines* of Christianity, the matter of Christian belief, to which the Church was a living witness.

1 Cor. xii. 3.

It must be borne in mind, that the Gospels were not published till the Christian faith had been widely proclaimed, and its truth had been attested by its moral power and regenerating efficacy, as well as by the miraculous credentials of its ministers. Three of the Gospels are of later date than some at least of the Apostolic Epistles. It was not to be expected, then, that the historic narrative of the events connected with the life, ministry, and death of Him whom all the Church worshipped as Lord and Christ, should embrace more than had become matter of tradition or historic testimony. The later facts, those respecting which no information could be necessary, and no doubt existed, would naturally be less distinctly noticed. Thus, the circumstances of the Birth of Christ would require to be more particularly narrated than those of his Resurrection and Ascension, not as being of superior importance, but as coming less within the range of direct living testimony and familiar knowledge. Had the Gospels been written at a later period, they would have comprised, doubtless, a more full and exact account of circumstances which are but referred to as matters of notoriety.

We find, indeed, that the Gospels last written are the most minute ; and thus, the very omissions afford an indirect proof of early date, as well as a mark of genuineness. The oral teaching of the Apostles, however, which is substantially preserved in the Acts and in the Epistles, preceded the written Gospels, and was necessary to explain them, supplying the evidence of the facts, the fulfilment of the predictions, the reason of the events, recorded by the Evangelists. The Apostolic testimony contained in the several books must, in short, be taken as a whole, in order to our being in a condition to appreciate either its force or its import. No portion is superfluous ; each reflects light upon the rest ; and in point of fact, Christianity is the product, so to speak, not of the Gospels, but of the whole teaching, historical and doctrinal, contained in the writings of the New Testament, which, ever since the Apostolic age, has been received and preserved by the Church as one complete canon, all the books being of equal authority as a record and a rule of faith, and to be rightly understood only when taken altogether.

Evidence of the Resurrection independent of the Testimony of the Evangelists.

§ 11. The allegation of the sceptic is, then, absolutely false, that the fact of the Resurrection, or our belief of that fact, rests upon the testimony and details of the Four Evangelists. ‘We believe it,’ remarks the learned Michaelis, ‘because it was believed and known to be certain and true about eighteen hundred years ago, and before the Evangelists and the Apostles had written. We believe it upon the testimony of disciples who say, they were themselves eye-witnesses of the fact,—who saw Jesus after his

Resurrection,—who avowed it before the Synod at Jerusalem, although they knew that pain and anguish and misery would follow the avowal; some of whom sealed with their blood their belief in the *fact*, (not a belief in an opinion, for opinions will induce men to support their own way of thinking at any risk,) without any of them recalling that belief or disavowing their knowledge, without any of them revealing the deceit, if deceit there was, but confirming their mission by the working of miracles and the communication of supernatural gifts; setting at defiance the Synod of Jerusalem, who never made any judicial inquiry into the subject as to where the body of Jesus was, or whether his disciples had actually stolen it.* The learned writer goes so far as to contend, that the truth of Christianity is demonstrable apart from the infallibility and inspiration of the Evangelists. As historians, simply, the competency of their testimony does not, indeed, depend upon their having been inspired, since the only qualities requisite to constitute a credible witness are, accurate knowledge and inflexible integrity; but, as the depositaries of revealed truth, the stewards of the Divine mysteries, in which high character they claim to be regarded by all who give credit to their testimony, their qualifications are absolutely dependent upon that Inspiration which secures their infallibility, and stamps upon their communications the seal of Heaven. Two of the four Evangelists were not, indeed, of the number of the Apostles, nor invested with their

* Michaelis. 'Burial and Resurr. of Jesus Christ.' From the German, 12mo. 1827.

Acts xv. 32.

peculiar commission and plenary authority ; but Luke, if, as has been shewn, the same as Silas, was an inspired man, being styled ‘ a prophet,’ as well as a coadjutor of one who claimed to be in the highest sense an Apostle ; and a similar character appears to have attached to the fourth Evangelist, Mark, the companion of Peter. If neither Luke nor Mark was an eye-witness, like Matthew and John, of the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, yet, both of them were witnesses of the miraculous attestations of those events ; and their contemporary testimony to what was assuredly believed upon such evidence, is as valid and irresistible as the testimony of eye-witnesses to the events themselves, out of which that belief sprang. St. Luke has indeed recorded, as of his own knowledge, that which could not have been true, could not have taken place, had not the whole tenor of his Gospel been in accordance with antecedent facts. For instance, he reports the miracles wrought by the Apostles, which never could have been wrought, had not the power to perform them been bestowed, as they alleged, by Christ himself ; and he must have been an eye-witness of those events connected with the first planting of Christianity, which were of as supernatural an order as those upon which Christianity itself is founded.

Independent Testimony of St. Paul as a Witness to the Resurrection.

§ 12. St. Paul, however, distinctly lays claim to the character of an original witness to the Resurrection and subsequent appearance of Our Lord. In the xvth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, after enumerating the appearances of Christ to the other Apostles, he adds : “ And last of all, he was

seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." He had previously, in the same Epistle (ch. ix. 1), challenged a denial of his Apostolic authority as derived personally and immediately from Christ: "Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ Our Lord?" The Apostles having been chosen to be witnesses of the Resurrection, it was requisite that St. Paul should also see him risen; and the fact, that Our Lord appeared to him as he was proceeding to Damascus, and addressed him by name, was upon all occasions appealed to by St. Paul, not only as the immediate cause of his conversion, but as the warrant for his Apostolic mission. In the narrative of this event by the sacred Historian, Acts ix., the personal appearance of Christ, though not described, is clearly implied; and the reality of the transaction is strongly indicated by the manner in which The Lord is recorded to have addressed the astonished zealot; but, at v. 17, Ananias refers to the appearance of Our Lord: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way." Again, at ch. xxii. 14, St. Paul himself, in reciting the whole transaction, represents Ananias as saying to him: "The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and *see that Just One*, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." From collating the two accounts in the ninth and twenty-second chapters, it must be inferred, that the men by whom Saul was attended, saw the preternatural light, but not the personal appearance, and heard also the sound of the

voice, but not the words or the voice itself. They saw and heard enough, however, to be filled with terror and amazement, and to be competent witnesses of the supernatural character of the occurrence. It was not without reason, then, that St. Paul adduced this appearance of the Risen and Glorified Jesus as an illustrious evidence of the Resurrection, the more signal as being posterior to his Ascension. We find the Apostle referring to other occasions upon which Our Lord appeared to him; at Jerusalem, while he was praying in the Temple; at Corinth; and when he was suffering under the affliction which he describes as "a thorn in the flesh;" but these appearances were more strictly visions, attended by a state of trance, similar to those by which the Prophets of the Old Dispensation were instructed respecting the subject of their commission. Such was the remarkable vision of the Lord sitting upon a throne, described by Isaiah; such the "visions of God" which appeared to Ezekiel; and those which were seen by Daniel. Of the same description, probably, was the vision of the ascended Saviour vouchsafed to Stephen, the proto-martyr; as well as the appearances described by the Apostle John in the first chapter of the Apocalypse, and throughout that wonderful work. These visions differed from dreams, inasmuch as they were not mere impressions made upon the brain during sleep. The state of trance resembles more closely the phenomena of somnambulism. Thus, we find Balaam describing himself as seeing the vision of the Almighty, "falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." St. Paul, speaking of the visions and

Acts xxii.
17; xviii. 9.

2 Cor. xii. 9.

Num. xii. 6.

Isa. vi.

Ezek. i. 1,
&c.; viii. 1,
2; xi. 24.
Dan. viii.

Num. xxiv.
4, 16.

revelations made to him, probably in the same state of trance, confesses that he was unable to tell whether it was in the body or out of the body that he was caught up into Paradise. The language of Ezekiel suggests a similar state: "And he put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head, and the spirit lift me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem." But, although these waking visions differed in some remarkable respects from dreams, they appear to have been, like dreams, confined to the consciousness of the individual, the appearances and voices not being perceptible by the observation of others. It is evident, that the appearance of Christ to Saul was of a totally different character, and as really personal as his appearance when transfigured before his suffering, or as any other appearance after his Resurrection; since, as regards the refulgent light, exceeding the noontide sunshine in brightness, and the sound of the voice, it was witnessed by the attendants. It is for this reason that St. Paul refers to this sight of Christ by himself, and to this alone, among the evidences of Our Lord's Resurrection. It was a fact notorious to the Church, that he had "seen Jesus Christ Our Lord."* The testimony

Ezek. viii. 3.

* 'If Paul did not see Jesus in person at the time of his conversion, when did he so see him? Some may say, at the time mentioned, Acts xxii. 17—21. . . . But I cannot persuade myself that this is what Paul intended, when he said to the Corinthians, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ Our Lord?" Nor when he says afterwards in the same Epistle, "And last of all he was seen of me also," &c. For there, as I apprehend, he must mean seeing Jesus Christ in person, waking and with eyes open. Which is quite different from what

of St. Paul, therefore, is as important as that of any one of the Apostles and Evangelists, by whom the converted persecutor of the faith which he afterwards spent his whole life in proclaiming, was regarded as a brother and a colleague equal in authority to themselves. Yet, in histories constructed on the basis simply of the Four Gospels, the testimony of St. Paul to the Resurrection is overlooked, together with the most important portion of the Apostolic testimony as comprised in the Acts and the Epistles.

happens in a dream, vision, trance, ecstasy." Lardner, vol. v. pp. 490, 491.

CHAP. V.

THE EPISTLES OF JAMES, PETER, AND JUDE.

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES—ORDER OF THE EPISTLES NOT DETERMINED BY THEIR DATE—EPISTLE OF JAMES: ITS CANONICITY, WHY QUESTIONED—NOT OPPOSED TO THE PAULINE DOCTRINE—ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE—FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER: ARGUMENT FOR ITS EARLY DATE—ITS HARMONY WITH THE PAULINE WRITINGS—ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE—ITS HARMONY WITH THE ORAL TEACHING OF PETER IN THE ACTS—TRADITION RELATING TO PETER'S MARTYRDOM—HIS SECOND EPISTLE: ANALYSIS—COINCIDENCE WITH THE EPISTLE OF JUDE EXPLAINED—IMPORT OF THE PHRASE, "THE LAST DAYS"—EPISTLE OF JUDE: OBJECTIONS TO ITS CANONICITY EXAMINED—PROPHECY OF ENOCH—IMPORT OF THE PHRASE, "THE BODY OF MOSES"—ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

§ 1. OF the Eight Writers of the books comprised in the Canon of the New Testament, we have now examined more particularly the four who are usually distinguished as the Evangelists, although to two of them belongs the higher appellation of Apostles, and the title of Evangelist is given, in the New Testament, not to writers, but to preachers of the Gospel. We have seen, that these documents were not the first written of the Christian Scriptures, and that they receive important and indispensable illustration from the facts imbodyed in the historical testimony

The order of the Epistles not determined by their date.

Lardner, vol. v. p. 282.

and written communications preserved to us in the other portions of the sacred volume. The parallel passages which have been cited, if not direct quotations from the Evangelists, show the harmony between the Gospels and the Epistles. In now proceeding to examine more in detail the writings of James, Peter, Jude, and Paul, in reference to their specific design, occasion, and purport, we shall endeavour to trace their connexion and harmony with the historic narrative, and to ascertain the true chronology of the New Testament.

What reasons soever led to the adoption of the present order in which the Epistles are given, it is indisputable, that that order has not been determined by their respective dates, since all critics agree in opinion, that the Epistles to the Thessalonians were the earliest of the Pauline writings. The Epistle to the Romans was placed first, as Theodoret observes, either as being the most elaborate and important, or else as being addressed to a body of Christians resident in the Imperial Metropolis. As Corinth ranked next to Rome, that may have been the reason for giving the second place to the Epistles addressed to the Church at Corinth. We are, indeed, at a loss to account for the interposing of the Epistle to the Christians of Philippi between two Epistles addressed to Asiatic Churches, in disregard of their close connexion in point of matter and date, unless the arrangement had some reference to the dignity and rank of the city. Not less difficult of explanation is the place assigned in the Canon to those which are styled Catholic Epistles; a designation of ancient

Lardner,
vol. vi.
pp. 337, 8.

origin, but doubtful import; some understanding it as implying that they were addressed to Christians in general or of several countries; others, that they were universally received as canonical. One might have expected to find the first place assigned to the Epistles of St. Peter, whom ancient writers exalt as the chief and primate of the Apostles, and of whom the Bishops of Rome claimed to be the successors. Instead of this, not only is the precedence given to St. Paul, who, as a writer, might claim such pre-eminence, but, among the Catholic Epistles, a priority is given to that of St. James; although, in some ancient catalogues, this order is reversed, that of James being placed last. Eusebius, indeed, distinguishes the First Epistle of John and the First of Peter, which were universally received, from the other five, respecting which some doubt was entertained; though without sufficient ground.

Hug, vol. ii.
§ 144;
Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 159.

Lardner,
vol. vi.
p. 101.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

§ 2. The reason that the Epistle of James was not, in the time of Eusebius, universally received as canonical,* (although incorporated with the sacred books in the Syriac and other ancient Versions, and commonly read in most churches, with the other Epistles,) was, the doubt which had arisen, whether the writer of it was an Apostle. Whatever other grounds for hesitation in receiving it as a part of canonical Scripture, may have been assigned in later times, they were not

The Epistle
of James—
why not
universally
received as
canonical.

* It is apparently referred to by Clement of Rome, and in the Epistle of Hermas, and is recognised as canonical by Chrysostom and Theodoret.

known to early antiquity ; and the only question was, whether St. James the Lord's brother, surnamed the Just, to whom the Epistle was generally ascribed, was the same as James the son of Alphæus, and consequently one of the Twelve. That this should have been doubted, (as it appears to have been by Eusebius,) is a singular proof of the unsoundness and uncertainty of ancient opinion. That James the Lord's Brother is the same as the Son of Alphæus (or Cleophas), is allowed by Epiphanius, Chrysostom, and Theophylact ; and his relationship to Our Lord is explained in two ways. Epiphanius supposes, that Cleophas (Klopas) and Joseph were brothers, and that, the former dying without issue, Joseph raised up seed to his brother. Origen affirms, that the brethren of Jesus were the sons of Joseph by a former wife. Jerome appears to have been the first who suggested the more probable explanation ; that those who are called Our Lord's brethren in the Gospels, were his cousins or kinsmen, the sons of Mary, his mother's sister ; an opinion embraced by Augustine, and by the majority both of Romanists and Protestants. This question, happily one of no intrinsic importance, is pronounced by Neander one of the most difficult in the Apostolic history ; and it has employed the ingenuity of several German critics without any very satisfactory result.* Mr. Greswell, in a dissertation upon the subject, remarks, that Jude, as the brother of James, must have had either the same father or the same mother ; but he is never called, like James, the Brother of

See Lardner, vol. vi. p. 186.

Greswell, vol. ii. p. 125.

* Especially Schneckenburger, Credner, and Hug. See, also, Dr. Wait's Preface to his Translation of Hug's Introduction, pp. xliv—liv ; and the Notes to vol. ii. § cli.

Our Lord; nor is he mentioned as the son of that Mary who was the mother of James and Joses. He might, however, be the son of Alphæus. Mr. Greswell conjectures, that Alphæus was married to two wives; one, the mother of Jude the Apostle, the other, Mary, the cousin of the Virgin, and mother of James and Joses, the ἀδελφοὶ of Christ. He supposes, further, that this Mary also was twice married, once to Alphæus, and again to Klopas,* as whose wife she is mentioned by the Evangelist John; while Hug and others consider Alphæus and Klopas as different forms of the same Hebrew name, and consequently, as denoting the same individual. Eusebius, however, speaks of this Mary as the daughter, not the wife of Klopas, so filling up the ellipsis at John xix. 25. All that appears certain is, that James the son of Alphæus, was nearly related to Our Lord; and that, to distinguish him from the other Apostle of the same name, the son of Zebedee, he was, on the ground of that relationship, designated as Our Lord's Brother. Yet, he would seem to have been not the only one among the Apostles who stood in this near relation to Christ; since St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, refers to the brethren of the Lord and Cephas as among "the other Apostles;" for we cannot suppose that he intended to distinguish them, any more than Peter, from the Apostles. There were, however, brethren of Jesus, not Apostles, among the hundred and twenty disciples who assembled at Jerusalem after the Ascension. It is obvious, there-

John xix. 25.

Hug, vol. ii.
p. 562.
Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 188.

1 Cor. ix. 5.

Acts i. 14.

* Κλωπας, not Κλεοπας, which is supposed to be a Greek name, abbreviated from Κλεοπατρος.

Mark xv. 40.
Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 192.

John vii. 5.

Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 184.

to the Son of Alphæus by way of pre-eminence, or as an exclusive distinction, but was intended simply to prevent his being mistaken for the Son of Zebedee ; as he is styled by Mark, “James the Less,” or rather, “the Little,” probably in allusion to his stature. There is no reason to suppose that he was more nearly related to Our Lord than the other disciples who are styled his brethren ; and as this term can denote no more in the one case than in the other, we must conclude, that it was equivalent to kinsmen. The Mother of Our Lord, after the death of Joseph, appears to have removed to Capernaum, and there taken up her residence with some of her relatives ; so that Our Lord and those who are called his brethren (all of whom did not believe upon him) composed one family. We find, on one occasion, his Mother, attended by these brethren, desiring to speak to him ; on which Our Lord declared, that he regarded his disciples and those who obeyed his Heavenly Father, as standing to him in place of those human relations, or as connected with him by higher and holier ties. Yet, upon the Cross, he committed his Mother to the guardianship of John the son of Zebedee ; which is adduced by ancient writers as a proof that she was not only a widow, but had no children of her own. And certainly, had James been her son, or even her step-son, it can scarcely be supposed that Our Lord would have transferred the charge of protecting his Mother to another Apostle who sustained no such relation.

There is no room, then, to doubt that the Apostle James, the son of Alphæus, and Our Lord’s kinsman, is the same that, on account of his eminent reputation

for sanctity, even among his unbelieving countrymen, was called the Just, and whom the ecclesiastical writers represent to have been appointed the first bishop of Jerusalem. We are not to infer from this, Dr. Burton remarks, that he bore that appellation; ‘but the writers who applied to him this title, looked rather to its primary meaning of an inspector or overseer, than to the sense which it acquired when church government was more uniformly established; and, by calling James the first bishop of Jerusalem, they meant, that the Christians of that city, who undoubtedly amounted to some thousands, were confided to his care, when the Apostles found themselves so frequently called away.’* Lardner remarks, that ‘everything said of James (subsequently to the choice of the seven deacons), implies his presiding in the church of Jerusalem.’ This, he concludes to be the reason that St. Paul, in mentioning the three chiefs who were pillars of the church (Gal. ii. 9), with whom he conferred at Jerusalem, names James first; and he draws the same inference from the language of Peter, Acts xii. 12, “Go shew these things to James and the Brethren;”—from Gal. ii. 11, 12,—“before certain came from James;”—and from the part which this Apostle appears to have taken in the council of the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem, Acts xv. ‘After there had been much disputing, Peter spoke, and then Barnabas and Paul; after all which,

* Burton’s History of the Christian Church, p. 54. The learned Writer doubts whether James the Just, to whom he ascribes the Epistle, was an Apostle; assigning no better reason than ‘the opinion of a majority of the early writers.’

James speaks last, sums up the argument, and proposes the terms upon which the Gentiles should be received.' Once more, when Paul went up to Jerusalem about Pentecost, A. D. 58, the day after our arrival, Paul, says the sacred Historian, "went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present." (Acts xxi. 17.)

Lardner,
vol. vi.
pp. 165, 6.

The martyrdom of James, according to Eusebius, took place within four years afterwards, under the following circumstances: 'When Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and Festus had sent him to Rome, the Jews, disappointed in their design against him, turned their rage against James, the Lord's Brother, to whom the Apostles had assigned the episcopal chair at Jerusalem. Having laid hold of him, they required him, in the presence of all the people, to renounce his faith in Christ. But he, with freedom and boldness beyond expectation, before all the multitude declared Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. They, not enduring the testimony of a man who was in high esteem for his piety, laid hold of the opportunity, when the country was without a governor, to put him to death. For, Festus having died about that time in Judea, the province had no procurator. The manner of the death of James was, . . . that he was thrown from the battlement of the temple, and then beat to death by a club.' Eusebius proceeds to cite a more particular account of this transaction from Hegesippus, whose narrative, however, must be regarded as containing much that is unlikely and probably fictitious. He represents the Apostle to have been a Nazarite from his birth, an

ascetic of the strictest kind ; and to him alone, it is added, was it lawful to enter the holy place. Eusebius further subjoins the account of the death of James, which he states to be given by Josephus, but which, in many points, is irreconcilable with the story told by Hegesippus, as it makes the Apostle to have been stoned, with some others, by order of the Younger Ananus, then high-priest, in the interval between the death of Festus and the arrival of Albinus his successor. Dr. Lardner, with other learned writers, considers the reference to James, in the passage cited from Josephus, as an ancient interpolation.* Origen cites Josephus as bearing a very singular testimony to the reputation of James for virtue, and as ascribing the sufferings of the Jews to the anger of God for what they did to James, the brother of Jesus called Christ. ‘And it is wonderful,’ adds this ancient Writer, ‘that he who did not believe our Jesus to be the Christ, should bear such a testimony to James.’ Eusebius cites Josephus also, as affirming that ‘these things befel the Jews in vindication of James the Just, who was brother of Jesus called the Christ.’ No such passage, however, is now to be found in the writings of Josephus ; and there seems to be good reason for distrusting the accuracy of the citation of his testimony by the Christian writers. The account of the death of James given by Hegesippus, Lardner regards as substantially the true one, but it leaves uncertain the date. Whether Eusebius had any other authority than the passage cited from Josephus, for

Cited by
Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 173.

* Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 181, 497. Mr. Greswell (vol. ii. p. 82) contends for the genuineness of the passage.

fixing it after the death of Festus, and before the arrival of Albinus, does not appear. All that can be said is, that at no time was it so likely to have occurred as during such an interregnum; and Mr. Greswell, assuming the correctness of the tradition, fixes the death of James in the latter half of the eighth of Nero, A. U. 815, or A. D. 62.*

How long the Epistle of James was written before his death, it is not easy to determine. There seems no reason for assigning to it the latest possible date, rather than any previous time during the thirty years that he appears to have presided over the Christian community at Jerusalem. Yet, Professor Hug, having embraced the hypothesis, that this Epistle was written to combat the erroneous interpretations that had been put upon St. Paul's doctrine of Justification without works and the efficacy of Faith, in the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews, is compelled to assume, that it was written after those Epistles had obtained circulation. But, as the Epistle to the Romans was not composed till the year 58, and that to the Hebrews probably not before A. D. 63, even if we suppose St. James not to have written his Epistle till the last year of his life, it must have been of earlier date than that to the Hebrews; nor could that to the Romans have given rise, in the course of so short a time, to the erroneous notions which St. James opposes.

§ 3. The opinion that this Apostle intended to

The Epistle
not opposed
to the Pau-
line Doc-
trine.

* Greswell, vol. ii. p. 84. Jerome makes St. James to have suffered in the 7th of Nero. Hug would postpone it, to comport with his theory, till the 10th of Nero. Dr. Burton places the death of both James and Mark in A. D. 62.

combat either the Pauline doctrine or a perversion of it, (although it has been prevalent from ancient times, and has furnished some theologians with a reason for rejecting the Epistle,) will appear, on examination, to be quite untenable. Upon this point, Professor Neander has some very judicious remarks. ‘The Epistle, as the superscription and contents inform us, was manifestly addressed only to churches that were composed entirely of Jewish Christians. But such persons were least of all disposed to attach themselves particularly to Paul, and least of all disposed and fitted to agree to the Pauline doctrine, which presented the most direct opposition to their customary mode of thinking. It was precisely from persons of this stamp, that the intemperate fanatical outcry was raised against this form of Christian doctrine, as if, by depending on grace, men were made secure in sin, or that they were authorized in doing evil that good might come. . . . It is impossible to suppose, in an Epistle addressed to such churches as these, any reference whatever to the Pauline formula of faith. And even admitting such a reference to exist, yet, the notion that it consisted only in combating a *misunderstanding* of the Pauline doctrine, would be wholly untenable. For how can we suppose that James, if he did not intend to contradict Paul, but to maintain apostolic fellowship with him, and the knowledge of it in the churches,—would not, while combating an erroneous interpretation of the Pauline doctrine, at the same time expressly state the correct interpretation, and guard himself against the appearance of opposition to Paul, especially when an opposition

might otherwise be so easily imagined by the Jewish Christians? But, if we assume that the intention of James was really to combat Paul's doctrine, this view would be at variance with what we know from history of the good understanding between the two Apostles; which cannot be set aside by the fact, that some of Paul's opponents were those who appealed to the authority of James.

' Another supposition still remains; that some one forged the Epistle under James's name, in order to give currency in the church to a belief in the opposition between the two Apostles; and this design would well suit the one-sided tendency of a Jewish Christian. But such a person would not only have expressed himself in a more decided manner than that James of whose reputation he wished to avail himself; but he would have pointed out by name the individual (Paul) against whom he directed his attack, and would have expressed in stronger terms the censure of his doctrine. The subordinate place which, in this case, the confutation of the Pauline doctrine occupies in relation to the whole Epistle, certainly does not agree with this hypothesis. Or, if it be said, that the Author of this Epistle, who presented himself under the mask of James, did not belong to the violent judaizing opponents of Paul, but to a milder, more accommodating party, who aimed only at smoothing down the peculiarities of the Pauline scheme of doctrine, . . . in this case, there would still have been a necessity for naming him, and explicitly stating that the Writer of the Epistle impugned not his doctrine in itself, but only a harsh and overstrained construction of it. And after

all, the singular fact would remain unaccounted for, that the main object and design of the Writer occupies only a subordinate place in relation to the whole of the Epistle.'

Neander's
Hist. of the
Christian
Church, by
Ryland,
vol. ii. pp.
13—16.

Marks of
early date.

Since, then, agreeably to the learned Author's conclusion, a reference to the Pauline doctrine is not indicated in this Epistle, that mark is withdrawn, by which it has been thought that the late period of its composition could be proved: in order, therefore, to determine its probable date, we must seek for other marks in the Epistle itself. Dr. Neander is inclined to fix the date of the Epistle 'at a time preceding the separate formation of Gentile Christian churches, before the relation of Gentiles and Jews to one another in the Christian church had been brought under discussion; the period of the first spread of Christianity in Syria, Cilicia, and the adjacent regions.' That is to say, prior to the year 45. This opinion makes it to have been the first written of all the Epistles in the New Testament. In support of this view, Dr. Neander remarks, that the churches, or rather synagogues, to which it was addressed, 'were so constituted that, in many cases, their Christianity consisted only in the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah, and of his peculiar moral precepts, which they considered as the perfecting of the law. Since they were far from recognizing and appropriating the real essence of Christianity, they resembled the great mass of the Jewish nation, in the predominance of a carnal mind, and the prevalence of worldly lusts, contention, and slander. Accordingly, either we must assume,' he thinks, 'that Christianity among

them was still novel, and had not yet penetrated the life ; (as, from the beginning, there were many among the Jews who, carried away by the impression which the extraordinary operations of the Apostles had made upon them, and attracted by the hope that Jesus would soon return and establish his kingdom upon earth, made a profession of Christianity without having experienced any essential change of character ;) or we must suppose that these churches had sunk into a state of degeneracy from a higher standing-point of the Christian life.' The latter supposition is of course incompatible with an early date, and it seems by far the less probable explanation. Moreover, it is remarked by the learned Writer, 'there was in the constitution of these churches this peculiarity ; that, as the direction of the office of teaching had not been committed to the presbytery, but only the outward management of church affairs, many members of the community came forward as teachers, while no one acted officially in that capacity. Hence, James deemed it needful to admonish them, that too many ought not to obtrude themselves as teachers ; that none ought inconsiderately to speak in their public meetings ; but that each should recollect the responsibility he incurred by such a procedure (James i. 19 ; iii. 1, 2.)' In these exhortations, the Apostle closely follows in the steps of his Divine Master.

Neander,
vol. ii. pp.
19, 20.

See p. 99.

Indeed, the whole Epistle, as has already been remarked, strikingly corresponds to Our Lord's teaching, both in the matter and the manner. And it is not impossible, as Neander suggests, that, although the Apostle addressed his Epistle especially to Chris-

tian Jews, he had also in his thoughts the Jewish readers into whose hands it might fall, as Christians lived among the Jews without any marked separation; and in some parts, he evidently points to the conduct of the Jewish people at large, and of the rich among them more particularly. In addressing the Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion, he would call them his brethren, irrespectively of their having embraced the Christian faith.*

Viewed in this light, the Epistle of St. James may be regarded as the link between the teaching of Our Lord as contained in the Gospels, and the fuller development of the Christian system in the inspired teaching of his Apostles. Every thing concurs to render probable its early date; that is, not later than about A.D. 45. Yet, we have a sufficient reason for not assigning it a much earlier date, since, had James the Son of Zebedee been living, the Writer would have added to his own name some distinguishing appellative.†

§ 4. The Epistle consists for the most part, like Our Lord's discourses, of a string of apophthegms, and scarcely admits, therefore, of analysis. Immediately after the Salutation to the Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion, it opens with an exhortation to his brethren, to rejoice in the trial of their faith and con-

Analysis of
the Epistle.

* Lardner thinks, that the Epistle was written to all Jews, in and out of Judea, there being no limitation restraining it to Christians; 'nor does he wish them grace or peace from Jesus Christ.' Divers passages, he thinks, must be understood as addressed to unbelieving Jews. Lardner, vol. vi. p. 200.

† The apparent allusions to the Gospel of Matthew in this Epistle, furnish another reason for this conclusion, although portions of that Gospel might be extant even previously to the date assigned for its composition, viz. between A.D. 41 and 44. See pp. 31, 36, 99.

stancy, on account of the reward promised to them that endure trial; a strain of admonition strikingly corresponding to that which commences what is termed the Sermon on the Mount. The Apostle directs them, however, to seek wisdom from above, by asking for it in faith and simplicity of heart. Having spoken of the blessedness of the man that endures trial, or the test of suffering, he guards them against ascribing to God those trials, or temptations, which spring from man's sinful nature, and the cause of which lies in ourselves. God is the source of all good, unchangeable in his perfections; and the end for which in his sovereign purpose he regenerates his people by the word of truth, is, that they may be holy to Himself,—a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Having mentioned the word of truth, (by which we must understand the Gospel or Christian doctrine as preached by the Apostles,) St. James proceeds to exhort them, as beloved brethren, to lay aside all contention and angry emulation, (referring probably to their fierce logomachies or party contests,) and to receive with meekness the ingrafted doctrine which alone would save their souls; (an expression suggested, possibly, by the Parable of the Sower, and implying, that the word must be sown or implanted in the heart;) and he cautions them against being forgetful and unprofitable hearers; declaring all pretensions to piety vain, which are not accompanied with the government of the tongue, deeds of beneficence, and spotlessness of character. Next, he enjoins it upon those who held the Christian faith, to show to their brethren of every condition an equal

regard, and not to despise the poor; a respect of persons on the ground of their wealth, being inconsistent with the spirit of the great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and those who showed no mercy to others, having only to look for judgment without mercy. The Apostle then exposes the hypocrisy of a man's pretending to have faith, or to believe, while his works do not answer to his words. Words will not clothe the naked, or feed the hungry; and so, that faith which is not shown in any practical fruits, is dead and worthless. Of this description is the mere belief of the Jew, that there is but one God; for demons believe this, and tremble. This illustration seems to denote, that James is not addressing Christian believers exclusively, or referring to the faith of the Gospel. The Jews boasted of their creed; and the Apostle proceeds to show, from their own Scriptures, that the faith in God which was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, and which entitled him to the honourable designation of the Friend of God, was attested by his obedience. It is by works, therefore, not by faith only, a bare creed, that a man's character is attested or justified. In like manner, Rahab showed her faith by her works. The Apostle next adverts more specifically to an evil already glanced at, their fondness for setting up as teachers and censors, and the unbridled license which such persons gave to their tongue, in invectives and anathemas. To check the former, he reminds them, that they would, by judging others, expose themselves to the severer condemnation: the latter vice, he exposes with great force of

See p. 98.

language by a series of striking metaphors. He concludes this head of exhortation by contrasting with the disputatious, envious, angry spirit of the schools of earthly wisdom, the pure, peaceful, gentle, and beneficent character of heavenly wisdom. Assuming now a tone of severer rebuke, he indignantly expatiates upon their conflicts and feuds, arising out of their covetousness and sensuality; and recalls to their recollection the declaration of Scripture, that no one could love the world without being the enemy of God. To correct this strong master passion, the propensity to envy and covetousness, he reminds them, that God had promised to bestow his grace upon the humble; and he exhorts them, therefore, to submit to God and resist the Devil, who would then flee from them,—alluding, probably, to the accounts of the Temptation, and Satan's being put to flight by Our Lord's rebuke. In the succeeding sentences, he urges it upon the sinner and hypocrite to repent and humble themselves sorrowfully before God. Again addressing them as brethren, he warns them against calumniating or sitting in judgment upon each other, so usurping the prerogative of the Supreme Lawgiver who alone can save or destroy. Next he reproves the presumption of those who formed their worldly projects without reference to the uncertainty of life and the permissive will and providence of God. He then apostrophizes the rich in terms partly borrowed from the ancient prophets, with a sort of prophetic vehemence predicting the calamities which should come upon them. He charges them with oppression and rapacity which called out

for Divine retribution, winding up the solemn accusation with their having condemned and murdered "the Just One."* Turning then to the Christian brethren who were suffering under oppression and persecution, he exhorts them to be patient, for the advent of the Lord, the righteous Judge, was drawing nigh. He admonishes them against the use of profane oaths; enjoins prayer as the best balm of affliction, and thanksgiving as the best mirth; recommends that the sick should send for the elders of the congregation, by whom, in answer to the prayer of faith, the gift of healing should be exercised; encourages them to pray for one another under such circumstances, and illustrates the efficacy of earnest, energetic prayer by the example of Elijah. Finally, to encourage them in thus interceding for each other, and supplicating Divine forgiveness, the Apostle reminds them, that he who should turn a sinner from the error of his way, would save a soul from death, and hide from view a multitude of sins.

So 1 John
v. 16.

It is remarkable, that the Epistle seems to end abruptly, without any Christian or Apostolic benediction; which confirms the idea, that it was not directed to Christian Jews exclusively, but was rather a homiletic address to the Jewish people at large. Lardner has cited from the Venerable Bede's Exposition of the Epistle, a comment upon the first verse, in which, referring the 'dispersion' to the scattering of the church that took place after the death of

* On comparing this expression with the language of Stephen, Acts vii. 52, and with Acts xxii. 14, there will appear no room to doubt that Our Lord is referred to.

Stephen, he says: ‘James writes this Epistle to those who were scattered abroad and suffered persecution for the sake of righteousness; nor to them only, but also to those who, though they had believed in Christ, were not careful to be perfect in good works, as what follows in the Epistle plainly shows; and likewise to such as continued unbelieving, and to the utmost of their power persecuted those who believed.’ There is nothing in the Epistle unsuitable to the circumstances of the period immediately following upon the martyrdom of Stephen; and it might have been appropriately written by the Proto-martyr himself.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

Inquiry as to the date of the First Epistle of Peter.

§ 5. The First Epistle of Peter is commonly supposed to have been written about A.D. 64; but this supposition rests entirely upon the erroneous assumption, that it was written from Rome, taken in connection with the generally admitted conclusion, that the Apostle could not have visited that metropolis at an earlier period.* No reliance can be placed upon the testimony of Tradition on this point; and an attentive comparison of the Epistle with historical facts, will lead to the conclusion, that it was written many years before, and that it even preceded the earliest of St. Paul’s Epistles.

From comparing 1 Pet. iv. 16, “If any man

* Baronius and some others assign it to the year 44, but upon no ground that will bear examination. And Cave remarks: ‘This cannot be, Peter not being at Rome at that time.’

suffer as a Christian," with the statement, Acts xi. 26, that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch," it is inferred, that the Epistle of Peter could not have been written before the time at which that appellation had become common, and therefore not earlier than A.D. 42, the second year of Claudius Cæsar. And up to that time, the Apostles appear to have resided in Judea. The martyrdom of James the son of Zebedee, and the imprisonment of Peter, are fixed by Mr. Greswell as having taken place at the Passover of A.D. 43. Peter, on his escape, left Jerusalem, and departed "to another place." He would be likely to withdraw from the dominions of the king; and some commentators have fixed upon this period for his supposed first visit to Rome. It seems far more probable, that he would repair to Antioch; whence, in the prosecution of his mission to the Circumcision, he would find it easy to proceed to visit the Jewish colonies beyond the Euphrates. We find, from Gal. ii., that Peter came to Antioch while Paul and Barnabas were staying there, and that he at first freely mingled with the Gentile converts; but, on the arrival of some Jewish zealots from Jerusalem, he separated himself, which drew upon him the faithful rebuke of Paul. The date of this interview is fixed by Mr. Greswell, A.D. 52, and by Dr. Lardner, A.D. 50, agreeably to the general opinion, that it took place *after* what has been called the Council of Jerusalem, recorded Acts xv., which was held about A.D. 50 or 49.* In that case, Peter must have returned to Jerusalem subsequently to his imprison-

A. U. 796.

Acts xii. 17.

* Lardner says, 49 or 50; Greswell, 'about 48.'

ment, and before his visit to Antioch. Still, in the interval between A.D. 43 and 48, there would be ample time for his journeying into distant parts. Basnage, however, forcibly contends, that the interview at Antioch must have occurred prior to the Council of Jerusalem, since the dissimulation of Peter would otherwise have been at variance with the decision of that synod, and without sufficient motive. Nothing is more likely than that the arrival of certain men from Judea, mentioned Acts xv. 1, which gave rise to the council, is the same circumstance that is alluded to, Gal. ii. 12, in connection with Peter's conduct. Besides which, it is evident, that, at the time, Paul and Barnabas were together; whereas, very shortly after their return to Antioch from Jerusalem, they separated. We may therefore date the arrival of Peter at Antioch about A.D. 47, or early in A.D. 48; which still leaves the same interval of four or five years for his apostolic travels.

Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 231.

That Peter did not visit Rome in this interval, is certain; first, because it is incredible, that he should have been there before the Apostle Paul, and no notice of the fact have been taken in the Epistle to the Romans; and secondly, because the vague tradition which is the only authority for his ever having visited Rome, makes Peter to have come thither in the reign of Nero, about the year 63 or 64. His first Epistle is dated from Babylon; and the ancient supposition that, under this name, Rome was intended, is one of the most unfounded conjectures that ever obtained the stamp of Tradition. Yet, it is mentioned by Eusebius as a prevailing opinion, and has

been eagerly adopted by writers of the Roman communion, in order to prove the contested point of St. Peter's residence in the imperial metropolis; while Protestant controvertists have favoured a notion which seemed to identify Rome, Papal as well as Pagan, with the mystical Babylon.* No conceivable reason, however, can be assigned, why Peter should refer to the city from which he was sending salutations to the Asiatic Christians, under a figurative name, when Paul, in writing to the Romans and in Epistles written from Rome, uses no such reserve. There could scarcely have arisen any difference of opinion as to the place from which Peter dated his Epistle, had not the Assyrian Babylon of the Old Testament been the only city of that name known to the Western Christians, the site of which had long been reduced to utter desolation. But not only might the name be understood (as Wetstein suggests) of the region, which still comprehends several small towns;† there is historical evidence, that Seleucia, which was built out of the ruins of the ancient city, was known, in the Apostolic age, under the name of Babylon. That Seleucia was the place from which Peter dated his Epistle, there is little reason to ques-

* It has been sanctioned by Grotius, Cave, Whitby, and Lardner, but is rejected by Greswell (vol. i. p. 127), as the most unnatural, uncritical, and unsound imaginable.

† In Lardner, vol. vi. p. 266. Milman 'believes with Lightfoot, that Babylonia was the scene of St. Peter's labours;' and remarks, that both Josephus, and Philo in two places, name Babylon as the habitation of the Great Eastern settlement. *Hist. of Christianity*, b. i. c. 2; b. ii. c. 3. The notion, espoused by Greswell, (following Le Clerc and Pearson,) that Babylon in Egypt is intended, is without any support from evidence.

tion. At that period, the city still retained the genuine character of a Grecian colony, governed, as an independent republic, by a senate of three hundred nobles, while the people are said to have included 600,000 citizens. The Jews were at one period very numerous; and they could not have been overlooked or neglected by the Apostle of the Circumcision. Between Antioch and Seleucia, there must have been a constant commercial intercourse, so that the Gospel would at an early period have spread from the Syrian capital to the emporium of the Persian trade. Cosmas of Alexandria, who flourished in the first part of the sixth century, says: ‘The Gospel was first preached by the Apostles with great success in the Roman Empire: soon after that, it was preached in Persia by the Apostle Thaddæus. Accordingly, it is written in the Catholic Epistles, “The church which is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you.”’ He evidently places this Babylon without the bounds of the Roman Empire, and in Persia, to which the region at that time belonged; and as he had been a merchant, and had travelled in Persia, India, Ethiopia, and Arabia, he could scarcely have been mistaken upon a geographical point of so much notoriety. The Apostle, in writing from the Seleucidan Babylon, would naturally refer to the countries named at the opening of his Epistle, in the order of proximity, beginning with Pontus as the most easterly province, and ending with the proconsular Asia and Bithynia; whereas, had he written from Rome, he would have named them in a reversed order.*

Josephus,
Ant. xviii.
c. 9, § 8.

* Wetstein adduces this argument, and Lardner only blunders in

We may then venture to assume as certain, that, at the time of writing his First Epistle, Peter was at Seleucia; and the next point of inquiry is, whether there is any internal evidence that would lead us to fix the date of the Epistle at a period as early as his first visit to Antioch will allow, viz., between A.D. 43 and 48, rather than at a later stage of his apostolic career.

Argument
for its early
date.

The opportunity afforded by the intended mission of Silvanus to the Jews of the Dispersion in Pontus and the other provinces of the Asiatic peninsula,* for transmitting to them his Apostolic charge, appears to have been the immediate occasion of its being written. This Silvanus, if the same person with the Companion of St. Paul and the Silas of the Acts, (as is generally supposed, and can scarcely be regarded as questionable,) must have come to Seleucia either prior to the Council of Jerusalem, about A.D. 50, or after accompanying St. Paul to Rome; and accordingly, the Epistle must have been written either before A.D. 53, or at a later period than is generally fixed for St. Peter's martyrdom. In support of the earlier date, an argument may be drawn from the manner in which Silvanus is mentioned by the Apostle,—“a faithful brother as I esteem him;” since it is hardly supposable, that no stronger terms of commendation would have been employed, had the Epistle been written

his reason for rejecting it. We may suppose that the countries would be named as they would occur in the route from Seleucia.

* These Jews, Prideaux supposes to be descended from the two thousand families of the Jews of Babylonia and Mesopotamia whom Antiochus transplanted into those provinces, and placed as a garrison in the strongest fortresses. Josephus, Ant. xii. 3.

after Silas had become so distinguished as to be selected by the Church at Jerusalem as their envoy to the Gentiles of Syria and Cilicia, and by St. Paul as his companion and fellow-labourer.

Another consideration which seems to favour the opinion of its early date, is the age of the Apostle at the time of writing it. As he was married before he was called by Our Lord to follow him, he must be presumed to have been older than his Master, and could not have been at that time under two or three
 A. D. 27 or 28. and thirty. If this Epistle was written from Seleucia about A. D. 48, the Apostle would at that time be about fifty-three or fifty-four; while, at the date usually assigned for the two Epistles, he must have been upwards of seventy. That his First Epistle should not have been penned before he had reached so advanced an age, is, on the face of the supposition, extremely improbable. The Second Epistle bears internal evidence of having been written not long before his death; but there is no reason whatever to conclude that this was the case with the former one.* The real or supposed difference of style, and the doubts anciently entertained respecting the genuineness of the Second Epistle, are opposed to the supposition that they were written at nearly the same time; but those doubts would be in some measure accounted for by the occurrence of an interval between the two Epistles, of fourteen or fifteen years,† inasmuch as the First Epistle would have obtained a general circulation

* In styling himself a Co-elder (1 Ep. v. 1.), the Apostle cannot mean to refer to his age.

† Mr. Greswell supposes an interval of six years to have occurred, viz. from A. D. 59 to 65.

among the churches before the Second was written ; and the circumstances of the times might have prevented the latter from being so extensively published. Whatever date, however, be assigned to the Second, it seems reasonable to conclude, that the First Epistle must have been written when the Apostle was in the full maturity of his powers, and not later than the period we have fixed upon as the true date.

It remains for us to examine, whether the references to the external circumstances of the Asiatic believers, in this Epistle, are in harmony with this conclusion. It is evident, that it was addressed to persons exposed to severe trials and persecutions, and in danger of being excited to resistance, or involved in political commotion. Now it was very shortly after the death of Agrippa, in the fourth year of the Emperor Claudius, A.D. 44, that those disorders broke out in Judea, which issued in the ruin of the Jewish nation. But the fiery trials which are referred to in this Epistle, as coming upon the family of God as Christians, were to precede the calamities that would eventually overtake those who were disobedient to the Gospel ; and the end (*τέλος*) of the Jewish nation seems more specifically pointed to in the prediction. Till after the overthrow of the Jewish state, the persecutions to which the Christians were exposed, came chiefly, if not uniformly, from their Jewish countrymen, not from heathen persecutors.* This was the case with the first persecution that scattered the Church at Jerusalem, A.D. 37 ; and it was to “ please

Josephus,
Wars, b. ii.
c. 12.

Acts viii.
1—4.

* This was the case up to the persecution under Nero, A.D. 64, which did not extend to the provinces.

Acts xiii,
xiv.

1 Thess. ii.
16.

the Jews," that Herod stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the Church. It was from the Jews of Pisidia and Iconium, and their rulers, that Paul met with such barbarous treatment in his first mission to those parts, A.D. 45. And in writing to the Macedonian Christians, A.D. 53, he refers to their having suffered, at the hands of their countrymen, treatment similar to that which the churches of Judea had sustained from the Jews, whom he describes as "contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins away;" adding, that the Divine wrath was about to come upon them to their utter destruction. The expression which he uses, *εις τέλος*, forcibly recalls the exclamation of St. Peter, "What shall be the end of the disobedient?" Now we cannot suppose that the Christians of Pontus or Cappadocia would escape the fate of the churches of Judea, Syria, and Cilicia; and if such persecutions are referred to,—persecutions at the hands of the Jews, we have an additional reason for not assigning to the First Epistle of Peter a later date than that which other considerations have led us to assume, viz. about A.D. 48. If so, it was written a few years before the earliest of the Pauline Epistles; which, considering the difference of age between the two Apostles, is more likely to have been the fact, than that St. Paul should have preceded him as a Writer. Once more, the absence of all reference, in the First Epistle of Peter, to any of those heresies, schisms, and disorders which too soon sprang up in the churches, affords another indication of its early date.

§ 6. Viewed in this light, as, after the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle of James, the earliest of the Scriptures of the New Testament, it acquires peculiar interest as a portion of that documentary evidence by which the truth of Christianity is established. As an Apostle and eye-witness, the testimony of Peter to the Resurrection of Christ (ch. i. 3, 21 ; and iii. 18, 21), to His Ascension and exaltation at the right hand of God (iii. 22), as well as to the Crucifixion and the sacrificial character of His voluntary death (i. 19 ; ii. 21—24 ; iii. 18 ; v. 1), must be considered as of at least equal value with that of any one of the Evangelists ; and the Gospel of Peter, comprised in this Epistle, is to be held in as much reverence as the Gospels of Mark and Luke. Again, in the perfect harmony of doctrine between this Epistle and the latest writings of St. Paul, we are furnished with a proof, that Christianity did not, as some neological critics have insinuated, undergo any change in the teaching of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Not only is the fundamental doctrine of the Atonement through Christ crucified as clearly taught in the Epistle of Peter as in any of the Pauline writings, but, brief as it is, there are not wanting decided allusions to the doctrines of Justification by faith (ch. i. 21 ; ii. 4—8, 24 ; iii. 21) ; of Election or Divine Sovereignty in the calling of believers (i. 1, 15 ; ii. 9 ; v. 10) ; of Regeneration (i. 23) ; and of the Headship of Christ as Lord of all (ii. 25 ; iii. 22 ; v. 4).

Harmony of the Petrine doctrine with the Pauline writings.

§ 7. The general design of the Epistle is, to confirm and encourage the Christian brethren of the Hebrew stock in the Asiatic provinces, under the impending

Analysis of the Epistle.

trial of persecution. In the opening salutation, the Apostle tacitly contrasts with their political depression as exiles, dispersed over a foreign land, their high calling as the objects of Divine favour, sanctified in character, the redeemed servants of Christ; and he places before them the hope of their calling as that which could alone sustain them under the trial of their faith; connecting the consummation of that hope with the glorious appearing of the Saviour, the object of that personal affection and confidence which are essential to the believer's fidelity. The salvation they looked for in connexion with the glory of Christ, is declared to have been the subject of those sublime predictions in holy writ, of which the full import was not comprehended by the Prophets themselves: they were, indeed, most solicitous to ascertain to what events or to what period of time they pointed; and were given to understand, that they related to a future and distant day, the times of the Gospel; and angels themselves intently watched the development of those prophetic intimations. Upon this glorious and blessed hope, the Apostle exhorts the brethren to keep their attention fixed, while bracing their minds for the prosecution of their pilgrimage towards the heavenly country. This exhortation to constancy, he follows up by urging the motives which should induce them to maintain a corresponding sanctity of character; namely, the filial obligation to imitate their heavenly Father as holy,—the all-discerning scrutiny of His eye to whom they must give account,—the inestimable price of their redemption,—and the designed result of the resurrection of Christ. He then enjoins

upon them the cultivation of fraternal affection, as being one of the fruits and tests of the sanctifying efficacy of the truth. Having been spiritually new-born, through the regenerating power of the Gospel, they ought to put off, as the slough of the old nature, everything inconsistent with mutual kindness, sincerity, and ingenuousness, and to evince an aptitude of mind for the reception of the pure doctrine of God's word, strong and instinctive as the appetite of the new-born infant for its natural nourishment, that they might advance in spiritual attainments, if indeed they had experienced the grace of Christ. He then places before them the dignity and end of their calling as believers, under the figure of living stones in the Spiritual Temple of which Christ is the life-giving foundation, —or, in other words, a holy priesthood, whose function it was to offer up spiritual worship acceptable through Jesus Christ. To explain or to enforce his meaning, he cites from Isaiah the prophetic reference to Messiah under the image of the Corner-Stone of the Temple, rejected by the Jewish architects, but chosen of God; and he reminds them, it was in accordance with the language of ancient prophecy, that Christ should become a refuge and rock of life to those only who received the Gospel, while he was a stone of stumbling and ruin to those who rejected the word preached to them. The Apostle may probably have intended tacitly to refer to the state of the majority of the Jewish nation at that time, given over through their unbelief to infatuation. The high prerogatives and exalted dignity which belonged to ancient Israel as the chosen nation of

Jehovah, he represents as now applying to those who had been the subjects of the Divine illumination of the Gospel, and who had been gathered out of a state of political expatriation and moral darkness into the kingdom of God. He then adjures them, as foreigners and exiles in the world, to refrain from indulging those desires and passions which are the enemies of the soul, and to maintain a blameless consistency before the heathen, that should constrain their calumniators to acknowledge the holy tendency of their religion, and to give glory to God. From this motive, they are enjoined to yield civil obedience, not only to the supreme authority, but also to that of the provincial governors and subordinate magistrates; it being the will of God, that, by exemplary conduct in this respect, they should stop the mouths of those who charged Christians with being seditious or disaffected persons; and they are cautioned against making their spiritual freedom a cloak for political insubordination. There is, he reminds them, a respect due to all men, distinct from the love they owed to the Christian brotherhood; and while God alone is to be worshipped, the King is to be honoured. He then more especially admonishes those who were in the condition of domestic servitude, to behave submissively to their masters, although they might even be severe or morose, and to bear with patience the undeserved ill-treatment to which they might be subjected, in conformity to the pattern set by Christ, who, though spotless, endured reviling and suffering in silent meekness, that he might expiate our sins, and by his wounds afford healing balm to our souls.

Upon the same principle, the married women are exhorted to submit to the will of their husbands, even when they were unbelievers, as the most likely way to win them over to the faith, and, in order to recommend their religious profession, to adorn themselves with the imperishable ornaments of a mild, compliant, gentle spirit and temper, after the example of holy women of ancient time; for so even Sarah acknowledged her subjection to Abraham, by calling him her lord; and they would best prove themselves to be her daughters, by imitating her, not only in this respect, but also in her courageous faith. The Apostle then points out the correlative obligations under which Christian husbands are peculiarly laid, to treat their wives with the tender consideration due to them as standing in need of protection, and with the honour they claimed as fellow-partakers of Divine grace and the hope of the Gospel; that so no impediment might be created by a want of harmony, to the acceptableness of their joint supplications. These special exhortations are summed up with a general admonition to believers in every station and of every class, to cultivate unanimity and mutual sympathy, brotherly feeling towards the Church, benignity towards all men; when reviled or persecuted, returning blessing for cursing, according as they were called to bless others, that they might obtain the promised blessing; an evident allusion to the words of Our Lord; Matt. v. 44, 45. The Apostle supports this declaration by citing, from the xxxivth Psalm, the promise of the Divine favour annexed to meekness, guilelessness, beneficence, and peacefulness. Ch. iii.

While acting thus, they would have nothing to fear from men; for, if they should be called to suffer for conscience' sake, they were still blessed. They ought not, therefore, to quail before their persecutors, but to fear God only, and to be prepared to give an answer to those who challenged them respecting their hope of eternal life, in a spirit of meekness and piety; shaming their calumniators by their virtuous conduct; and if then they were called to suffer, it would be better to suffer for well-doing than for evil doing. To reconcile their minds to the prospect of such a trial of their faith, the Apostle again reminds them, that Christ, the righteous One, had suffered in the sinner's stead, to reconcile us to God; undergoing bodily death as man, though in spirit triumphant over death, or raised to life by the power of his Godhead,* and having ascended to the right hand of the Father, where all angelic powers are made subject unto him.

Ch. iii. 18—
22.

The passage which intervenes between verses 18 and 22 of the third chapter, is obviously a digression from the practical argument, and has the appearance of being parenthetically interposed†. It embraces

* *ἀναστὰς τῷ δυνάμει τῆς Θεότητος.* Œcumenius.

† There is, perhaps, no other passage of the New Testament, upon which the best commentators differ, not only from one another, but even from themselves. Luther, Calvin, and Archbishop Leighton adopted different interpretations at different periods. Melancthon, Camerarius, and Castellio confess their inability to give a satisfactory explanation. Steiger, after examining at length the five principal interpretations, adopts the one which seems most conformable to the plain and literal sense; 'that Christ manifested himself to the unbelieving dead.' But against this view, as well as against those

the following positions: That the Spirit of Christ, after his crucifixion, proceeded to that region of the invisible world in which the spirits of the antediluvian transgressors were held in custody; and that to those who were disobedient to Noah, Our Lord made proclamation; that, between the Ark in which Noah and his family were saved in the General Deluge, and Baptism, there is an analogy or correspondence; (either, we may suppose, because Baptism admits us to that which was typified by the Ark, or as it introduces us, by the regeneration which it symbolizes, to a new life;) the family of Noah being as it were buried to the old world, and, by a sort of resurrection, coming forth to the new world; that by Baptism we are to understand, not the mere ritual washing, but the confession of a good conscience; and that it becomes the instrument of salvation in virtue of the resurrection of Christ. This series of propositions relating to Our Lord's descent into Hades, the antediluvian transgressors, the small number saved in the Ark, the saving virtue of Baptism, and the mystical analogy between this rite and the Ark, have so little apparent congruity with each other, or with the drift of the context, and involve so much that is obscure and difficult of interpretation, that, in the whole compass of the Apostolic writings, no other passage occurs, having so much the appearance of a marginal gloss.

As a further inducement to patience, or a reason Ch. iv.

which he rejects, formidable objections lie. The exclusive reference to the Antediluvians is left unaccounted for; and the connexion with the context is unexplained.

that they should fortify themselves against suffering, the Apostle suggests the consideration, that by such suffering they would be emancipated or discharged from the servitude of sin; a declaration taken by some of the ancient Expositors in an ascetic sense, but more probably alluding to the principle of the Roman law, by which a slave, on being delivered up to punishment as a public offender, became thereby freed from his former master, who thenceforth lost all his interest in him. After undergoing his sentence, the offender was enfranchised. Thus, the believer, who was treated as an offender for Christ's sake, was rendered spiritually free to live henceforward only to God.* And the Apostle reminds them, that they had too long lived conformably to the will of the heathen world, and to the state of society around them, which is characterized as dissolute and corrupt in the extreme; and their singularity in not going to the same excesses, was but a theme of wonder and a cause of resentment to worldly men, who calumniated their motives; for which they would have to give account to Him who will be the judge of both living and dead. And, as regards the dead, it is added, the Gospel had been preached to them for this end, that they might be judged, condemned, as regards men, in the flesh, but might live to God in spirit. (The sense of this parenthetical declaration is confessedly obscure, and has been diversely interpreted, as referring either to those Christians who had

* The same idea occurs in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, ch. vi.; and so we may understand the expression, "crucified to the world," Gal. vi. 14.

suffered martyrdom, or to those who, while living, had set an example of subjecting themselves to the condemnation of man and to personal suffering, that they might live to God.) But the consummation of all things, the Apostle reminds them, drew near; which should be a motive to the temperance and vigilance that comported with the spirit of prayer. At the same time, as if to discountenance an ascetic spirit, St. Peter exhorts them to exercise mutual affection, such as casts the mantle of forgiveness over the sins of others, a generous hospitality, and active beneficence as faithful dispensers of the manifold bounty of God, according to their several endowments and functions, that God might in all be glorified through Christ Jesus.

Once more reverting to the prospect of the fiery trials awaiting them, the Apostle admonishes them not to think it strange that the purifying flame of persecution should be sent among them for the trial of their faith, but rather to rejoice in sharing the sufferings of Christ, as a pledge of their partaking hereafter of the joy of their Lord. To be reviled for Christ's sake, carried with it this blessedness; there was the especial promise of the assistance of the Spirit by which Christ is glorified. They are cautioned, however, against rendering themselves obnoxious to punishment for any crime or political offence. To suffer for our own fault, is no honour: to suffer in the character of a Christian, ought to be esteemed no shame. A time of trial had arrived, which was to commence with God's family, in the persecutions raised against them by their fanatical

Ch. iv. 12.

countrymen. But the time of the ungodly would come; and if the righteous were saved as it were with difficulty, as passing through a fiery ordeal, how should the transgressor be able to stand in the day of penal retribution? Those, then, who were called to suffer in obedience to the will of God, ought with confidence to commit their souls to His keeping.

Ch. v.

Finally, addressing himself to their elders or pastors with the authority of an Apostle, St. Peter charges them to tend the flock of Christ, not as by compulsion or from any sordid motive, nor in a spirit of domination, but setting an example to their flocks, and looking for their reward at the hand of the Chief Shepherd. The younger members of the Church are exhorted, at the same time, to submit to the elder; and mutual deference and humility are enjoined on all. Also, he encourages them, while humbling themselves under God's hand, to devolve all their anxieties upon Him. He then reiterates the solemn admonition to be constantly on the watch, seeing that their great adversary was prowling about for prey; and they must withstand him by stedfastness in the faith. It is evident, that Satan is here referred to as the instigator of those persecutions which presented the temptation to apostasy. As a motive to stedfastness, they are reminded, that their brethren throughout the world were enduring similar trials. And the Apostle closes his exhortations with praying that God would perfect them in stedfastness, patience, and constancy. To this prayer succeeds a brief doxology. The bearer of the Epistle, Silvanus, is then mentioned; and after conveying the salutations

of the Christian brethren in Babylon, the Apostle closes with his benediction.

§ 8. In the leading design of this Epistle, and in several of the topics introduced, a close resemblance may be traced between it and the Epistle of James. Both Apostles commence by calling upon the Christians they address, to rejoice under the trial of their faith,—*ἐν πειρασμοῖς ποικίλοις*; (James i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7;) both exhort them, in similar terms, to lay aside their contentions and angry feelings, and to receive with meekness and simplicity the word of truth; (James i. 21, 1 Pet. ii. 1;) in both, we find the same figure employed to denote the frailty of human glory; (James i. 10, 1 Pet. i. 24;) in both, we find a remarkable citation of the same passage from Proverbs iii. 34; (James iv. 6, 1 Pet. v. 5;) and again, of another passage from the same book, Proverbs x. 12, (James v. 20, 1 Pet. iv. 8). These coincidences afford a presumption that Peter had seen the Epistle of James, and that it suggested some of the ideas he has introduced, though in a varied form; and if so, we have the strongest possible testimony to the genuineness and authority, as well as early date, of the Epistle which we have on other grounds concluded to have been the first written.* Similar coincidences have been pointed out between this Epistle and the Pauline writings; *e. g.*, in the eucharistic commencement; (i. 3, compared with Ephes. i. 3;) in the exhortations addressed to servants and married women; (ii. 18, iii. 1, compared with Ephes. vi. 5;

Coincidences with the Epistles of James and Paul.

* Hug has employed this argument in support of the authenticity of the Epistle of James. Vol. ii. p. 533.

Colos. iii. 18 ; 1 Tim. ii. 9 ;) and in particular modes of expression. But, while Professor Hug hence infers, that Peter, when he wrote this Epistle, must have been conversant with the writings of Paul, who was certainly much his junior, we should rather draw the more natural conclusion, that Paul was acquainted with the Epistle of Peter, when he composed his later Epistles. Yet, after all, the agreement of ideas, of doctrine, and of language, is not more exact than we might expect to find in the compositions of fellow Apostles, not only contemporaries, but both of them Jews by birth and education, and divinely instructed in the same truths, by which their minds were moulded anew after the same model. Under either point of view, the coincidences are interesting.

And with
the oral
teaching of
Peter.

It is satisfactory, too, to compare the language of the Apostle Peter in this Epistle, with the specimens of his oral teaching preserved by the sacred Historian in the Acts of the Apostles, (ch. ii. 14—40 ; iii. 12—26 ; iv. 8—12 ; v. 29—32 ; x. 34—43,) which will be found, in several places, to exhibit a striking coincidence even of expression.* It deserves notice, that the speeches of Peter are reported more particularly than those of any other Apostle ; which would lead us to infer, that the Writer of the Book of Acts was more intimately acquainted with Peter, or had especial opportunities of informing himself upon the matter of Peter's discourses. Yet, it is remarkable that

* Comp. Acts iv. 11, "This is the stone," &c., with 1 Pet. ii. 8.

v. 32, "and also the Holy Ghost," with 1 Pet. i. 12.

v. 30, x. 39, "hanged on a tree," with 1 Pet. ii. 24.

the Historian drops all mention of the proceedings of this Apostle after the xvth chapter, in which his name occurs for the last time. Now it is precisely at this point in the history, that Silas, or Silvanus, who had hitherto (as may be presumed from his being the bearer of Peter's first Epistle) been in intimate communication with that Apostle, attached himself thenceforward to Paul. If Silvanus was the author of the narrative, (as we have shown there is every reason to believe,) what seems otherwise unaccounted for, is explained at once, and in the most natural manner. The Historian thus becomes himself the link between the two Apostles and their separate missions; that of Peter, which chiefly occupies the first part of the narrative, being to the Circumcision, and that of Paul and his colleagues, which is the subject of the sequel, to the heathen.

See pp. 57—
64.

Gal. ii. 9.

§ 9. The life of Peter, thus far, may be traced from the evangelical record; but, where that ceases to afford us any light, we cannot take a step without finding ourselves in bewildering uncertainty. From the year 49 or 50, at which time the sacred narrative leaves Peter at Jerusalem, to the supposed time of his coming to Rome, (which, Lardner contends, could scarcely be before A.D. 63 or 64,) ecclesiastical history affords us no distinct or credible information. Eusebius places Peter's first coming to Rome in the second year of Claudius, A.D. 44, and his martyrdom in the fourteenth of Nero, A.D. 69;* and during this interval of five and twenty years, he is repre-

Tradition
relating to
Peter's
martyrdom.

* Epiphanius places his martyrdom in the twelfth of Nero. Cave thinks the tenth most probable.

Lardner,
vol. iv. p. 240.

sented to have been bishop of Rome. The fiction of his first supposed visit, which is at variance with the inspired record, has been sufficiently exposed by Lardner and Cave; and it is as certain as anything can be, for which we have only negative evidence, that he had not visited Rome at the time of Paul's writing to the Christians at Rome, A.D. 57 or 58, or up to the date at which the history of the Acts closes, about A.D. 63. The early and prevailing tradition, that he suffered martyrdom at Rome at the same time as St. Paul, appears to rest upon no better foundation than a forced interpretation of a passage in the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, in which the fact, that both Peter and Paul were martyred, is stated in plain terms, but no expression indicates either the time or the place, or implies that it was in the same place; and an opposite inference, namely, that Peter never was at Rome, has been maintained by the learned Benson with more plausibility.* Papias, the next authority, affirms, that Peter was at Rome, and wrote his first Epistle from that city; an assertion which at once invalidates his testimony, and shows that his opinion rested on no better foundation than the mistaken notion, that by Babylon Rome was intended. Irenæus, Papias's scholar, makes Peter and Paul to have been the

* Lardner, in contesting the opinion of Benson, does not display his usual acuteness; and shews more impartiality than judgment in the stress he lays on the tradition. Among those who deny or doubt that Peter ever was at Rome, are, Scaliger, Salmasius, F. Spanheim, Lightfoot, Bower, and Milman. See page 177, note †. It is contended for or conceded by Cave, Pearson, Le Clerc, Basnage, Barratier, and Greswell. See Lardner, vol. vi. p. 243; Greswell, vol. i. p. 84.

joint founders of the great and most ancient church at Rome, which they are represented as having handed over to the episcopal care of Linus; a statement palpably at variance with the sacred record. Dionysius of Corinth, as cited by Eusebius, refers to the same Apostles as joint founders of the Corinthian Church, and adds: 'In like manner, going together into Italy, they taught there, and suffered martyrdom about the same time.' In the time of Eusebius, these were the best authorities for the fond tradition; unless we can believe the statement of Caius the Presbyter, that the trophies or tombs of Peter and Paul were still to be seen in the cemeteries of Rome, with their names inscribed upon them. Lardner remarks, that 'it is not for our honour nor our interest, either as Christians or as Protestants, to deny the truth of events ascertained by early and well attested Tradition.' In the present case, however, the tradition is not well attested; and since it is admitted, that 'fables and fictions have been mixed with the accounts of Peter's being at Rome,' and the statements of even the most early writers respecting this Apostle are inconsistent with historical fact, or irreconcilable with the sacred records, it cannot be for the honour of Christianity or for the interest of truth, to put faith in such unauthenticated legends, how ancient and venerable soever, or blindly to follow so blind a guide. If, when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, the faith of the Christians in that city was already "spoken of throughout the whole world," it is clear, that neither Peter nor Paul could have been the founder or the first bishop of the church in that city; and if Peter ever visited Rome, it must have been at a period

Lardner,
vol.ii.p.146;
vol.vi.p.249.

See p. 13.

Rom. i. 8.

subsequent to the latest of Paul's Epistles, i. e. after A.D. 64, and under circumstances of which we have no authentic record. Protestants have, as such, no interest in discrediting the tradition, that he suffered martyrdom at Rome; for this may have been the case without affording the slightest ground for the claims of the Bishop of Rome to a fictitious succession and an arrogant assumption of supremacy.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

Date and
character-
istic features
of Peter's
Second
Epistle.

§ 10. From what place the Second Epistle of Peter was written, we have no means of ascertaining; but it bears internal evidence of having been addressed to the same communities or description of persons as the First, and at a date posterior to an Epistle of Paul specifically written to the same persons also. The words of Peter, ch. iii. 14, 15, would seem to be, if not a citation, yet, a very distinct reference to some passage in the Epistle in question: "And account that the long-suffering of Our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you." Now there is extant no Epistle of St. Paul's in which these precise words are to be found, but the sentiment is in accordance with several passages in his writings; more particularly with 1 Thess. v. 1—9, and 2 Thess. ii. 1—14. This Epistle of Peter could not, however, have been addressed to Macedonian Greeks; and we are therefore led to look for the passage alluded to in another Epistle, which, as being addressed to Hebrews, (that is, Christians of the Hebrew stock, though not inhabitants of Judea,) may well be supposed to have

been sent to those Jews of the Dispersion in the Asiatic Peninsula, among whom Silvanus had formerly laboured. The main design of the Epistle to the Hebrews, like that of the Second Epistle of Peter, was, to warn them against the danger of being seduced into apostacy through unbelief. At ch. vi. 11, we find these expressions: "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." And at ch. x., the inspired Writer encourages them by declaring, "He is faithful that promised;" but adds, that they "had need of patience; for yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." This language is in remarkable accordance with Peter's declaration, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." There is also a solemn reference, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to the approaching day of the Lord. (ch. x. 25). The general coincidence, then, might appear sufficient to warrant the conclusion, that Peter actually refers to this passage in the writings of Paul. At the same time, the sentiment, that "the long suffering of God is salvation," agrees most precisely with the following passages in the Epistle to the Romans: "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." (ch. ii. v. 4.) "What if God . . . endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy." (ch. ix. 22, 23.) Now, as St. Peter supposes those to whom

he wrote to be acquainted with other Epistles of St. Paul besides the one specifically addressed to them, we see no reason that he might not combine the more precise reference to those striking passages in the Epistle to the Romans with a general reference to the exhortations contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And this double reference, while it removes every difficulty, is not only perfectly natural, but is a mark of genuineness, since a writer forging the name or authority of St. Peter would scarcely have cited St. Paul's writings in this indirect, yet most appropriate manner.

The Epistle to the Hebrews has generally been supposed to be one of the latest of St. Paul's Epistles, and to have been written about A.D. 63. To the Second Epistle of Peter we must therefore assign a later date; and Mr. Greswell fixes it in A.D. 65. At that time, St. Peter would have reached, if not have passed, his seventieth year; and his martyrdom, as we may presume from his own language in this Epistle, was near at hand. It appears, indeed, to have been under the expectation of his approaching death, that he was induced to write this farewell letter of admonition to those "who had obtained like precious faith with himself;" a style of address which indicates, that, although it might be primarily designed for the churches to whom his First Epistle was sent, it was not meant for them exclusively. In the interval which had elapsed since sending forth his First Epistle, it is more than probable, that it had come into general circulation throughout the whole Christian Church; and St. Peter might with the

greatest propriety, therefore, assume that this Second Epistle would be received by all the churches.

On examining its general tenor, we find, that the external circumstances of the churches addressed, were very different from those of the period at which the First Epistle was written ; and whereas the absence of all reference to any existing heresies and disorders, is an indication of the early date of the former Epistle, the prophetic warnings in the Second seem to imply a state of things belonging to a later period. There is a similar difference observable between St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, and those addressed to Timothy. At the same time, it must not be overlooked, that the description which St. Peter gives of the false teachers, licentious professors, and profane scoffers, is not applied to the actual state of things at that time, but to what should take place.

§ 11. The Apostle, addressing believers, after the usual salutation, reminds them of the end of their high calling, and of the design of the Gospel promises, which were given that they might be made partakers of a Divine nature ; using this consideration as a motive to enforce the diligent cultivation of all the Christian graces, in order that they might not deceive themselves with a barren knowledge, or fail of obtaining a joyful admission into the heavenly kingdom. Aware that he must shortly be taken from them, and put off the body, he deems it his duty to put them in remembrance of these things, and to commit them to writing, in order that, after his decease, they should retain them in remembrance. For they, the Apostles, had followed no cunning fictions, or myths,

Analysis of
the Epistle.

See p. 98.

in making known to them the second coming of The Lord in power, having been eye-witnesses of His Transfiguration, which at once attested his being the Son of God, and was intended to foreshow His glory when he shall "come in his kingdom." And believers had also, in confirmation of this testimony, the prophetic word, the inspired Scriptures and the declarations of inspired men, to which they are enjoined to take heed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, till the morning should break upon them. From the mention of the holy prophets of ancient days, the Apostle takes occasion to advert to the danger of their being misled by false prophets and false teachers. There were such, he remarks, among the Israelites in former times; and so there would arise in the Church, teachers of pernicious heresies, denying their Redeemer to be their Lord and Master, and seducing many by their licentious doctrines, so as to bring reproach upon the Gospel; their only object being to make a gain of their disciples. But the punishment denounced against such offenders would not long be delayed. St. Peter adduces as warnings to such corrupters of the truth, the punishment of the fallen angels, the destruction of the antediluvian world, and the overthrow of the Cities of the Plain. More especially would Divine judgment overtake the persons whom he proceeds to characterize as addicted to sensuality, despisers of all authority, daring and insolent, calumnious revilers of glory and excellence. By a series of forcible metaphors illustrative of the flagrant wickedness and fatal issue of their course of apostacy, (which, as scarcely

harmonizing with the general style of the Epistle, are thought to be cited from some ancient writer,) the Apostle holds up the case of such characters as a caution against following their pernicious ways. He then repeats, that his object in this Epistle, as in his former one, is to recall to their remembrance the predictions of holy prophets, and the injunctions they had received from himself and the other Apostles; and especially what had been declared as to the scoffers who should rise up in the last days, ridiculing the expectation of Our Lord's second advent and the Day of Judgment. The unreasonableness of such profane scepticism is exposed, by reminding them of the destruction of the Old World by the Deluge; and so, the present Earth is destined to be destroyed by fire. If The Lord may appear to delay His coming, the lapse of time makes no difference in His purpose: He delays only from long-suffering, that all may have the opportunity of being brought to repentance. But the Day of The Lord will come suddenly upon the world; and it behoved them to live under the constant influence of such an expectation, giving diligence that they might be found spotless and blameless at the coming of Christ. He then refers to the admonitions they had received upon this subject from the Apostle Paul, to whose Epistles he bears testimony as having been dictated by inspired wisdom, although containing, like the other Scriptures, passages difficult to be understood by the untaught and unstable, and liable to be fatally perverted by such persons to their own perdition. Finally, the Apostle affectionately exhorts them,

forewarned as they were of the danger of being seduced from their stedfastness, to seek after an increase of grace and knowledge. The Epistle concludes with a doxology to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Coincidence
with the
Epistle of
Jude.

§ 12. The close correspondence between the description of the false teachers and apostates contained in this Epistle, and that given by Jude, together with the variation of style and manner, in contrast with the character of the rest of the Epistle, as well as of the former one, have given rise to much critical speculation.* By some writers, the genuineness of the Second Epistle has been called in question, on no better ground than this difference of style; while others have deemed it necessary to suppose, that the Apostle, in the second chapter, was carried away by his subject, so as to rise into the animation and figurative phraseology of the prophetic style. And Jude, it has been suggested, might have seen and borrowed from this Epistle.† A far more natural and satisfactory explanation of the coincidence has been proposed by Bishop Sherlock, who suggests, that both Apostles cited from some ancient Jewish writer the description which they apply to the times that were coming on. Nor does Lardner's objection to this conjecture seem very forcible; that the Apostles

* This difference is, after all, not greater than might be critically shewn to exist, between Our Lord's denunciation of the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii., and his parables and ordinary style of teaching. It deserves notice also, that the Epistle of James contains some passages of very similar character, a series of figures being employed in a strain of vehement denunciation, resembling that of the old prophets.

† Hug contends that Jude's Epistle must have been the first written of the two.

needed not any other assistance than their own inspiration and an acquaintance with the ancient Scriptures of the Jewish Church. St. Paul did not scruple to cite, in reference to the character of the Cretans, one of their own poets; and there is nothing derogatory to the character of an inspired Apostle in the supposition, that he borrowed language which seems to partake of a proverbial or poetical style.

Lardner,
vol. vi.
pp. 257, 314.

After all, the similarity between the two Epistles, in the portion of each to which the remark applies, is not more marked than the verbal difference; which is such as precludes the idea, that one writer copied from or intended to cite the other. For *πηγαὶ ἄνδροι*, “wells without water,” and *νεφέλαι ὑπὸ λαίλαπος ἐλαυνόμεναι*, “clouds carried with a tempest,” in Peter, Jude has *νεφέλαι ἄνδροι ὑπὸ ἀνέμων παραφερόμεναι*, “clouds without water, carried about by winds;” and, for *ὑπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι*, in the former, we have, in the latter, *τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν λαλεῖ ὑπέρογκα*. Here, the sentiment or idea is the same, but the expression is so very different, as to render it wholly improbable that the two passages had reference to any common written document. Again, the “spots and blemishes” (*σπίλοι καὶ μῶμοι*) of Peter, bears the same relation to Jude’s “spots in your love-feasts” (*ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν σπιλάδες*), but with a similar variation of expression. In St. Paul’s Epistles, however, we find both the same thought and a similar phraseology: “carried about with every wind of doctrine” (*περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας*) occurs, Eph. iv. 14; and at 2 Tim. iii. 1, we have a closely parallel description of the false professors who should spring

up in the perilous times of the last days,—“arrogant” (*ὑπερήφανοι*), “pleasure-lovers” (*φιλήδονοι*), and in other respects answering to the account of them given by Peter and Jude. Now it must be observed, that the latter Apostle exhorts those to whom his Epistle was addressed, to “remember the words which had been spoken before by the Apostles of Our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you that there should be in the last time scoffers (*ἐμπύικται*—the same word occurs in the same reference, 2 Pet. iii. 2), “walking after their own lusts.” And so Peter writes his Second Epistle, “that they may be mindful of the words spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour; knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers.” It has been supposed, that there may be an intended reference to certain passages in the Pauline writings; (viz. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2; 2 Tim. iii. 1; and 2 Thess. ii. 3, 12;) but Paul himself, in the first of the passages supposed to be referred to, appears to allude to some express declaration that had been made under the guidance of immediate Inspiration; not a revelation to himself, but a prophetic communication to the churches, like those in the first chapters of the Apocalypse. We can scarcely doubt, therefore, that Paul, Peter, and Jude refer to the same “words spoken by holy prophets,” the substance of which had been carefully preserved, and communicated orally to the churches, but had probably not been committed to writing. We are not indeed required to suppose, that the communication had been made through only

one medium, or at one time, as there were numerous prophets in the churches, whose concurrent testimony might be to the same effect. This view of the subject seems to remove every difficulty, as it explains why the prophecy is not cited verbatim by any one of the sacred Writers ; and why, in referring to it, the Apostles Peter and Jude should have so much in common in their phraseology, without the one copying from the other, as is shown by the variation. Not only is the objection raised against the authenticity of St. Peter's Second Epistle thus completely disproved ; we are also furnished with an additional argument in support of its genuine authority, by its agreement with the Epistle which it more closely resembles, as well as with those of Paul, written about the same time, in the reference to the prophetic declarations to which they all bear witness.

§ 13. In connexion with those prophetic intimations, a phraseology is used by all three of the Apostolic Writers, the precise import of which, if it can be ascertained, would throw some light upon the date at which the Epistles were written:—"in the last time,"—"in the last days,"—"in the latter times or seasons ;" expressions evidently used convertibly. The question to be determined is, whether they are to be taken in that general and comprehensive sense which it is necessary to attach to them in some connexions, as denoting the age of Messiah, or the final dispensation ; or, whether, in these and some other parallel instances, they are to be understood of the close of a particular period. When St. Peter speaks of Christ as having been "fore-ordained from

Import of
the phrase,
"the last
days."

the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last times ;”—when the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, that “in these last days,” God has spoken by his Son ;—and when, again, in the Book of Acts, we find the Apostle Peter applying to the miraculous transactions of the day of Pentecost the prediction of Joel relative to the last days ;—we can scarcely err in concluding the Christian dispensation to be referred to, as that which, extending to the end of time, will consummate the scheme of Divine Providence. In the same sense, we may probably understand the phrase, “the ends of the ages or cycles ;” (1 Cor. x. 11 ; Heb. ix. 26 ;) that is, the final cycle or era, the age of Messiah, to which the Jews looked forward as the last dispensation. In these cases, the term *last* has an obvious relation to preceding times. But when St. John admonishes his spiritual children, that it is “the last hour,” and, in proof of this, refers to the many Antichrists that had even then appeared, from which they might know that it was the last hour,—it is evident that he must refer to Our Lord’s prediction, that there should arise false Christs and false prophets before the overthrow of the Jewish polity ; and “the last hour” seems to point to the brief interval that yet remained before the approaching day of wrath that was to extinguish Jerusalem, and be the end of the Jewish world ; a fearful emblem of the final and universal Judgment.

The expression of Jude is, however, somewhat different ; and it has been suggested that, by “the last time,” may be intended “the last age of the

Ch. i. 2.

Ch. ii. 17.

1 Ep. ii. 18.

Matt. xxiv.
24.
See p. 154.

Apostles, when several had left the world, and few of them were still surviving." Or rather, it might be understood of the closing years of that generation which was not to pass away till Our Lord's predictions had been accomplished. Considering, however, the express declaration, that in the last days perilous times of corruption and apostacy should come, as a prophecy, and especially connecting it with the language of St. Peter (ch. iii. v. 8—10), we must conclude, that the phrase is to be understood in a more indefinite sense, of times still in futurity. The whole Book of the Revelation may be viewed as a commentary upon the expression. Of the duration of the world, the early Christians had evidently no clear ideas; and they required to be reminded, that a thousand years is with The Lord as one day. The Apostles themselves, though taught by Inspiration that a falling away or apostacy would intervene between the first triumphs of Christianity and the Day of The Lord, had, probably, no definite notion of the ages that were to elapse before the Second Advent. They would, therefore, knowing the Christian age to be the last dispensation, speak of the things predicted of the distant future, as happening in the latter time, in contradistinction from "the beginning of the Gospel." Scoffers, sceptics, and sensualists cannot, indeed, be regarded as peculiar to any age or dispensation, or as distinguishing the Christian age as such; but, that they should arise in the very bosom of the Church itself, was a fearful consideration, and a proper subject of Apostolic warning. Indications must already have presented

Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 317.

themselves, in the characters of individual professors, which led the Apostles to put the churches on their guard; and to such indications St. Paul very distinctly refers.

There is nothing, therefore, in the subject matter, that requires us to assign a later date to the Second Epistle of Peter, or to that of Jude, than to the Epistles of Paul to Timothy; and, although a date considerably later has been conjecturally assigned by some learned critics to Jude's Epistle,* yet, as the same state of things seems to have existed in the Church, or in some part of it, as when Paul and Peter wrote, it is more probable that they were all written about the same time, or between A.D. 62 and 66.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

Supposed
Citation
from the
Book of
Enoch in
Jude's
Epistle.

§ 14. Eusebius mentions the Epistle of Jude among those which were not universally received; yet, of its canonicity and genuineness there is no reason to doubt. It is repeatedly cited by Clement of Alexandria as of Apostolic authority; also by Tertullian, Origen, and Epiphanius. Jerome mentions as a reason why it had been rejected by many, that it contains a quotation from the apocryphal Book of Enoch. That the passage is found in that Book, of which an Ethiopic Version is extant, †

* Dodwell and Cave, A.D. 71; Beausobre, between 70 and 75; Mill, 90. Hug contends, that Jude's Epistle bears marks of being written before the Second of Peter, and consequently not later than 63 or 64.

† Edited, with a Translation, by Archbishop Laurence. Oxford, 1821.

is certain; but it by no means follows, that the Apostle cited them from that work, which, if the composition of a Jewish writer of the time of Herod the Great, as is supposed, must have been founded upon some ancient tradition. It deserves remark, that the Apostle does not cite the prophecy as Scripture, or introduce it with the formula, "It is written." That he should refer to a Jewish tradition respecting Enoch, it has been argued, is not more strange, than that St. Paul should mention Jannes and Jambres as the two magicians of Pharaoh who opposed Moses, on the authority of tradition, for their names are not preserved in the Books of Moses.* Yet, the cases can scarcely be deemed strictly parallel, as the names of the magicians, by which they were traditionally known, was a circumstance quite immaterial; whereas the prophecy ascribed to Enoch was either actually delivered by him to the antediluvian transgressors, or was a Rabbinical fiction; and if the latter, there is a great difficulty involved in the supposition, that St. Jude would, even by way of illustration, and in accommodation to Jewish Christians, cite a spurious prophecy upon so awful a subject. We therefore conclude, that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, did in fact warn the Antediluvians of a final judgment, when the words as well as the deeds of the ungodly will be judged; a point upon which the Apostle evidently lays stress, and to which Our Lord himself

* So Cave argues. See Lardner, vol. vi. p. 312. The names of the two magicians are found in the Gemara, and are mentioned by Numenius, a Pythagorean philosopher, and by the historian Artabanus. Davidson's Hermeneutics, p. 336.

Matt. xii. 37. had directed the attention of his disciples. Assuming this to be fact, it matters not whence St. Jude derived his knowledge of the prophecy of Enoch; whether from a true tradition, of which the Author of the apocryphal Book may have availed himself, or from the teaching of Our Lord while upon earth. It is not likely, indeed, that the prophecy, which has nothing to distinguish it from similar declarations in the Hebrew Scriptures, but its early antiquity, should have been a fiction. The force of the Apostle's reference depends upon the implied parallel between the character and circumstances of the antediluvian transgressors and those of Apostolic days. Our Lord himself made use of a similar comparison: "As the days of Noah were, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be." We find in St. Peter's first Epistle, a reference also to the disobedience of the antediluvian world:—"when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing." And, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Noah is represented as having, by the preparing of an ark for the saving of his family, condemned the unbelieving world. It was, therefore, a feature of the Apostolic teaching, that it constantly held out the unbelief and the fate of the contemporaries of Enoch and Noah, before the Flood, as a warning to their own generation; as well as the fearful overthrow of the Cities of the Plain, and the punishment of the Israelites who fell in the wilderness; and St. Jude declares, that he writes only to put them in remembrance of what they had been taught, and once knew. It was no novel information that he

Matt. xxiv.
37.

1 Ep. iii. 20.

Heb. xi. 7.

communicated, but simply a brief repetition of admonitory facts.

That the language of Enoch should have been traditionally preserved, though not recorded in the Books of Moses, will appear less singular when it is recollected, that the Prophet Micah has cited an inquiry of Balak, with the answer of Balaam, as known to the people of his day, and yet, no record of them is to be found in the Book of Numbers. Mic. vi. 5.

Whatever difficulty may be connected with the general subject of Jewish traditions and opinions which may be termed extra-Scriptural, the passage in Jude relating to Enoch claims to be regarded as a mark of its genuineness and authenticity; and admitting the Epistle to be genuine, no believer in the Apostolic Inspiration can question or doubt its canonical authority. *ἄγραφον,*
Calvin.

§ 15. There is another passage in this Epistle, which has been treated as a difficulty, but evidently through misapprehension. It is that in which the Apostle refers to Michael's contending with the Devil about the Body of Moses. Origen, in the third century, supposed that St. Jude might refer to a book called, "The Assumption or Ascension of Moses," although it is doubtful whether any such book was then extant: it was, probably, the forgery of later times. This is, however, a point of small moment: the intended reference is, unquestionably, to the vision in Zech. iii. 1—3; and the passage in Jude's Epistle is parallel with 2 Pet. ii. 11: "Whereas angels, who are greater in power, bring not railing accusations before the Lord." According to an interpretation Import of
the phrase,
"The Body
of Moses."

of the vision given by Ephrem the Syrian, Joshua, the high-priest, represents the Jewish people; and the Body of Moses is evidently to be taken in a sense corresponding to that in which Christians are spoken of as composing the Body of Christ. The subject of the contention in the vision was Jerusalem, or the Jewish State, under the Mosaic dispensation, of which Moses was the only legislative head; and the expression used by Jude intimates, that the Jewish or Mosaic Church, not the Jerusalem above, is there referred to. It may be observed, that these allusions to ideas and expressions familiar to Jewish readers, and intelligible to them only, afford a strong presumption, that the Epistle of Jude was, like that of James his Brother, and those of Peter, addressed to Christians of the Twelve Tribes, or those of the Circumcision.

Analysis of
the Epistle.

§ 16. Unlike the Epistle of James, however, which is addressed generally to the Hebrew nation, this Epistle opens with a salutation which indicates that it was intended for the sanctified and saved in Christ Jesus. The Apostle states at once the reason which had rendered it necessary for him to exhort them by this Epistle to contend earnestly for the faith they had received; namely, the intrusion into the Church of ungodly men who perverted the Gospel into a doctrine of licentiousness, and denied the Lord Jesus; that is, either his Deity or his Divine authority. He therefore reminds them of what they had already been taught; that the Israelites who were led forth out of Egypt, nevertheless perished for their unbelief in the wilderness; that the angels who fell from their

original dignity, were reserved in chains against the Day of Judgment ; that the Cities of the Plain were in like manner set forth as an example of the Divine vengeance against transgressors ; and a similar fate awaited these lewd fanatics, who are described as at once sensualists, despisers of authority, and revilers of dignities. Their presumption, in the latter respect, is illustrated by what is recorded by Zechariah ; that the Angel of the Lord, instead of railing against Satan, said, “ The Lord rebuke thee ; ” whereas these men reviled what they did not comprehend, and abused what they knew by their senses and animal instincts. They are further described as treading in the steps of Cain, of Balaam, and of Korah ; and their characters are vividly portrayed in a series of metaphors or emblems. To persons of the same description, the prophetic denunciation of Enoch was applied ; or rather, the fate of such transgressors was foretold by the antediluvian Prophet, when he spake of the coming of The Lord, to execute vengeance upon those who were guilty of ungodly deeds and ungodly speeches,—transgressors and blasphemers : and these were both. The Apostles had forewarned them that scorners, sensualists, schismatics of this description, should arise in the last time ; and they ought not, therefore, to be staggered at it, but to be on their guard against them. St. Jude, addressing them as beloved brethren, admonishes them, in conclusion, to seek after an advancement in religious knowledge, to cultivate the spirit of prayer, and to cherish in their hearts the love of God and the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ. Some of those who had

thus erred, were to be pitied and forgiven: others were to be saved as from the fire, escaping only with life. The Epistle concludes with an appropriate and sublime doxology to Him who alone could preserve them from falling, and present them faultless before the presence of the Divine glory.

We have now examined all the Catholic Epistles except that of St. John; and this we reserve for a distinct chapter, together with the Apocalypse. We have next to enter upon the consideration of the Pauline writings, which constitute so large and precious a portion of the Scriptures of the New Testament.

CHAP. VI.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ACTS.

THE PAULINE EPISTLES: THEIR TRUE ORDER AND DATE—CHARACTERS OF GENUINENESS—POINT OF TIME AT WHICH THEY CONNECT WITH THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE IN THE ACTS—RETROSPECT OF THE ANTECEDENT HISTORY—DATE OF THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN AND CONVERSION OF SAUL—REVIEW OF THE APOSTOLIC HISTORY UP TO THE ARRIVAL OF PAUL AT CORINTH, A.D. 52.

§ 1. OF the fourteen Epistles ascribed to the pen of St. Paul, thirteen bear his name, and no doubt can reasonably be entertained as to their genuineness or authority. The Epistle to the Hebrews is anonymous, and hence, even in early times, a difference of opinion arose with respect to its actual authorship. Reserving this question for distinct inquiry, we have before us thirteen Epistles, of which nine are addressed to seven different churches or Christian communities; and four to three individuals. The earliest was the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, which, as well as the Second, appears to have been written at Corinth, A.D. 52. That to the Galatians was probably composed not later than the following year. Those to the Corinthians, written from Ephesus and

Number
and order of
the Pauline
Epistles.

Philippi, and that to the Romans, dated from Corinth, must have been written between A.D. 56 and 58, inclusive. The First to Timothy, and that to Titus, we shall see reason to refer to the same period. The remaining five were all composed at Rome, probably between A.D. 61 and 63.

Characters
of gemine-
ness.

Although, as Dr. Paley remarks, in his ingenious work, 'On the Truth of the Scripture History of St. Paul,' every thing about these Epistles indicates that they proceeded from the same hand, yet, it is not less certain, that they were originally separate publications. 'They form no continued story; they compose no regular correspondence; they comprise not the transactions of any particular period; they carry on no connexion of argument; they depend not on one another; except in one or two instances, they refer not to one another.' Yet, as the learned Writer has shown, they all, more or less, mutually illustrate each other. He has also brought together from the Acts of the Apostles, and from the several Epistles, numerous passages, furnishing examples of undesigned coincidence, so striking as to establish at once the substantial truth of the narrative, and the genuineness of the Letters ascribed to the Apostle. Of these coincidences, notice will be taken in the following pages; although we shall see occasion to differ from some of the hypothetical opinions they are adduced by the learned Writer to support.

Horæ Paul.
c. 1. p. 9.

Point at
which they
connect with
the Acts.

The period of the Evangelical history at which St. Paul's writings connect (in point of date) with the account of his Apostolic labours, is when Silas and Timotheus joined him at Corinth, as mentioned,

Acts xviii. 5. Before we proceed to compare the Epistles with the Narrative, it will be interesting to trace up to this point the chronology of the leading facts of the sacred annals, subsequent to the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 30.*

CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW, A. D. 30—52.

§ 2. The first remarkable event in the history of the infant Church, which demands the attention of the chronologist, is the martyrdom of Stephen, and the persecution raised against the Christians of Jerusalem, with which it was followed up. How long this occurred after the Effusion of the Holy Spirit, has been a question among ancient as well as modern writers. Some of the early chronologists imagined that the stoning of Stephen took place in the very year in which Our Lord suffered; an opinion to which Eusebius, with his usual want of judgment, appears to have subscribed. Others place it in the third, and others, again, in the seventh year after the Ascension. Among modern writers, Cave supposes Stephen to have been stoned, and Saul converted, in the year 33, or the beginning of the year following; Pearson thinks that Stephen was stoned in 34, and Saul converted in 35; L'Enfant and Beausobre place Saul's conversion in A.D. 36; while F. Spanheim, who is followed by Witsius and Fabricius, concludes that it did not take place till the last year of Caius

Date of the
Martyrdom
of Stephen
and Saul's
Conversion.

* Milnan assumes for the Crucifixion, A.D. 31; Benson, A.D. 29. We have followed Greswell. See p. 122.

Caligula, or the first of Claudius, A.D. 40, or 41. Dr. Lardner, after citing these various opinions, adduces reasons for coming to the conclusion, that Saul was converted in A.D. 37, or, possibly, before the end of 36, and that Stephen was stoned in the beginning of the same year, or, at the soonest, near the end of 35. Finally, Mr. Greswell, by a very elaborate deduction, fixes the latter event in May, 37, and the former in the autumnal quarter of the same year. His arguments in support of this opinion (in part the same as those adduced by Lardner*) are drawn from the history of the times; and he shews, that the lapse of time which this opinion assigns for the transactions recorded in the first seven chapters of the Book of Acts, is not more than sufficient, according to the probability of the case, for the intermediate events.

First. Some considerable time probably intervened between the conversion of the three thousand, the first-fruits of the preaching of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii. 41,) and the miraculous cure of the impotent man, (recorded ch. iii.) which was followed by another signal addition to the number of the believers (ch. iv. 4).

Secondly. The circumstances related in the fourth chapter, (ver. 32—36,) and the effects which resulted from the awful fate of Ananias and Sapphira, (ch. v. 12—16,) require us to suppose an interval of some duration. Nor is it likely, that the second attempt

* Michaelis, followed by Eickhorn and Milman, arrives at a similar conclusion, fixing the persecution connected with the death of Stephen in A.D. 37.

Lardner,
vol. v. pp.
474—479;
also, vol. i.
p. 100.

of the Sanhedrim to put a stop to the progress of the new faith, would have followed very closely upon the first. Ch. v. 17.

Thirdly. The circumstances which led to the appointment of the Seven, to superintend "the daily ministrations," arose out of the gradual multiplication of the disciples; and it was some time after this, that "a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith," and that Stephen rendered himself so conspicuous by the miracles which he wrought, as well as by his eloquence and holy zeal, as to become the first victim of the ensuing persecution. Ch. vi.

Fourthly. The nature of the advice given by Gamaliel, and adopted by the Jewish council, would lead us to infer, that, for some time, at least, after that decision, all violent proceedings against the Christian believers would be suspended; and the events which occurred during the latter part of Pilate's oppressive administration, were of a nature to absorb the attention of the Jewish rulers.*

It needs not be shown, that the events recorded, and the intervals required or supposed, actually extended over seven years: it is enough for the present purpose, that a considerable time must have elapsed;

* 'As the jealousies which appear to have arisen in the infant community, would require some time to mature and grow to head, we should interpose two or three years between this collision with the authorities (Acts v. 17), and the next which first embred the soil of Jerusalem with the blood of a Christian martyr. Nor would the peaceful policy adopted through the authority of Gamaliel have had a fair trial in a shorter period of time: it would scarcely have been overthrown at once or immediately by the more violent party.' Milman's Hist. of Christianity, b. ii. c. 1.

and nothing in the narrative forbids the supposition, that the persecution connected with the death of Stephen, which was the *third* attempt to suppress the Christian faith, took place about seven years after Our Lord's Ascension.

Now that the Sanhedrim should, in the case of Stephen, have ventured to exercise the long suspended right to inflict capital punishment, is a circumstance which requires to be accounted for. 'The Talmud itself,' Mr. Greswell remarks, 'greatly as it stickles for the authority of the Sanhedrim in other respects, admits, that this power had been taken from it forty years before the destruction of the Second Temple; that is, as early as A.U.C. 783, at the very time when, according to St. John, the members of this council themselves professed to Pilate, it was not permitted them to put any man to death. Nor is it any just ground of exception, that, in some instances, the Jewish authorities appear to have exercised this power, even after the period in question; for it is found, upon examination into the circumstances of the time, that such instances fall out critically between the demise of one of the regular governors, and the appointment or the arrival of another: that is, they fall out critically in an interval of anarchy, during which the turbulent spirit of the people, or the ambition of their rulers, who never could brook with patience this deprivation of their ancient privileges, had power to resume them, at least for a season, with impunity.' The death of James the Just, brought about by the contrivance of the younger Ananus, in the interreg-

See also
Lardner,
vol. i. p. 105.

Greswell,
vol. i. p. 542.
See also
Lardner,
vol. i. p. 99.

num between the decease of Festus and the arrival of Albinus, the learned Author adduces as one case in point; and the martyrdom of Stephen appears, from his investigation, to have been another; such an interregnum having occurred between the deposition of Pilate by Vitellius in the twenty-third of Tiberius, (the latter half of A.U.C. 789,) and the appointment of his successor. See p. 163.

Pilate was sent in disgrace to Rome, A.D. 36; but, while Vitellius himself remained at Jerusalem, no disorders of the kind could have taken place. He had arrived there a second time, when tidings of the death of Tiberius were brought, about May, A.U.C. 790 (A.D. 37); and the oath of allegiance to Caius Caligula, his successor, was administered to his subjects in Judea. 'Upon the second departure of Vitellius, which took place without further delay, the Jewish nation and the Jewish council were absolutely left to themselves. At Rome, the kingdom of Judea had been already conferred by Caius on Herod Agrippa; but Agrippa did not visit his dominions before the summer of the second of Caius, A.U. 791. . . . No juncture of circumstances could have been more favourable for the eruption of the national hatred against the Christian Church at Jerusalem, or, as the enemies of that Church considered it, against the sect of the Nazarenes, in its daily increasing and flourishing state. The very fact, that Tiberius was now dead, but only just known to be so, might be the exciting cause of the violence itself; especially if there is any foundation in truth for the tradition of his memorable rescript in favour of Christianity.

The intentions of his successor might not yet be known; or if the tidings of the favours which he had already conferred on Agrippa, had reached Judea, this would tend to encourage, rather than to deter, the execution of any designs against the obnoxious religion; for the whole conduct of Agrippa, subsequently, serves to demonstrate, that he was as bigoted to the ancient faith, and as inimically disposed towards Christianity, as any of his subjects.'

Greswell,
vol. i. pp.
544, 5.
See also
Lardner,
vol. i. p. 98.

Up to the time of Stephen's martyrdom, the Sadducees, not the Pharisees, appear to have had the ascendancy in the Jewish council. To this sect, Caiaphas belonged; and that the same party who had been instrumental in putting Our Lord to death, were still in power, is distinctly intimated in the history.* We learn from Josephus, that Caiaphas, having been appointed high-priest by Gratus, about the twelfth of Tiberius, continued in office till he was removed by Vitellius in the twenty-third of that emperor's reign. Annas himself, whom Quirinius had appointed as early as A.U.C. 760, continued to be the vicar of Caiaphas, even when he had been superseded by him, and, in point of precedence, was scarcely to be distinguished from Caiaphas himself. When Vitellius, at the Passover of A.U.C. 790, deposed Caiaphas, he appointed Jonathan, one of the sons of Ananus; and at the Pentecost of the same year, he deposed this Jonathan, and appointed his brother

See Acts v.
17.

Greswell,
vol. i. p. 548.

* Acts iv. 5, 6. Mr. Milman is mistaken in his remark, that a revolution had taken place in the internal politics of the Sanhedrim, and that up to the death of Jesus the Pharisees were (in the council) his chief opponents.

Theophilus in his stead. It was, probably, this Theophilus who gave Saul his letters to Damascus, and who was still living at the time of Paul's apprehension, twenty years afterwards. Thus, the high-priest by whom Stephen was condemned, must have been some one of the family of Ananus, and of the sect of the Sadducees. See Acts xxii. 5.

That the martyrdom of Stephen took place at the time of some Jewish festival, may be inferred from the mention made of the African, Cilician, and other Jews* who are said to have disputed with him, and who would not have been assembled at Jerusalem, except upon the occasion of some one of the great feasts; and Mr. Greswell's conclusion is, that it may be at least presumptively determined to have been the feast of Pentecost, A.U.C. 790, or A.D. 37. Acts vi. 9.

How long the persecution lasted, "which arose about Stephen," we are not informed by the sacred Historian; but the circumstances which led to its cessation, and to the rest subsequently enjoyed by the churches throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, receive satisfactory illustration from external history. Acts ix. 31.

Soon after Caligula's accession, Dr. Lardner remarks, the Jews at Alexandria suffered very much at the hands of the Egyptians in that city; and, at length, all their oratories there were destroyed. The Jewish nation were soon, however, to have their very existence placed in jeopardy. In the third year of Caligula,

* Those of Liberta, Cyrene, and Alexandria, formed one synagogue. Greswell, vol. i. p. 548.

(A.D. 39,) the Prefect Petronius was sent into Syria with orders to set up the Emperor's statue in the Temple at Jerusalem; being enjoined, if the Jews opposed it, to put to death all who made any resistance, and to make the rest of the nation slaves. Petronius, therefore, Josephus states, marched from Antioch into Judea with three legions and a large body of auxiliaries raised in Syria. All were hereupon filled with consternation, the army being come as far as Ptolemais. The Jews, then gathering together, went to the plain near Ptolemais, and entreated Petronius in the first place for their laws, and in the next place for themselves. Petronius was moved by their entreaties, and, leaving his army and the statues at Ptolemais, went into Galilee; and at Tiberias, he called together the chief men of the Jewish people, and exhorted them to submit to the Emperor's orders. When they could not engage so to do, he asked them, 'Will ye then fight against Cæsar?' The Jews answered him, that they offered up sacrifices twice every day for Cæsar and the Roman people; but that, if he would set up the Images, he ought first to sacrifice the whole Jewish nation, and that they were ready to submit themselves, their wives, and children to the slaughter. Petronius deferred his journey to Jerusalem, that the Jews might not, out of concern for such a violation of their religion, neglect their gathering in their corn, it being then ripe, or lose the seed-time. He was the more moved by this consideration, because it was expected that Caligula would be at Alexandria the next summer; and he judged it not proper to do anything that might hinder a sufficient plenty for the

company that would follow the Emperor from Italy, and the concourse of the princes of Asia and other great men in those parts. And, in his letter to Caligula, he made use of this as the excuse for not immediately executing his orders. 'It is very likely,' concludes the learned Writer, 'that the persecution of the Christians ceased now, and that the Jews were fully employed in warding off this terrible blow from the Temple which was their glory and confidence.'*

§ 3. In the account of the martyrdom of Stephen, Saul is styled, (according to the Received Translation,) 'a young man;' but he must have been, in fact, a man in the prime of life, for the expression in the original (*νεανίας*) was never applied, among the Greeks, to a man under thirty years of age. To young persons under twenty, the term *pueri* or *παῖδες* was applied; between twenty and thirty, they were *juvenes* or *νεανίσκοι*; afterwards, they became *adolescentes*, *νεῦναι*, or young men; after fifty, they began to be reputed *senes*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, or elders. Saul must therefore, at his conversion, have been between thirty and forty; and accordingly, in the Epistle to Philemon, written about five and twenty years later, he describes himself as Paul the aged (*πρεσβύτης*), an expression which he would scarcely have deemed applicable to himself under three-score. Indeed, it is not likely that a man under the age of thirty-five or forty, would have been entrusted by the high-priest and the estate of elders with a commission to apprehend and bring

Age of Saul
at his con-
version.

Greswell,
vol. i. p. 554.

* Lardner, vol. i. pp. 101, 2. It is not certain whether Petronius published this edict in A.D. 39 or in 40.

bound to Jerusalem any of the disciples of the new faith which he should meet with at Damascus. If, in the year 37, the date of Stephen's martyrdom, Saul was about forty, (and he could not, as we have seen, have been much under that age,) he would have been born about the time of Our Saviour. A native of Tarsus, he had been brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel; but, supposing him to have been between twelve and fourteen when he was taken to Jerusalem for the sake of perfecting his education as a Pharisee,* and to have continued there till he was twenty, he would have returned to Cilicia long before the Baptist commenced his ministry, and might not have revisited Judea till after the period of Our Lord's abode upon earth. He appears, indeed, to have had no personal acquaintance with any of the Apostles previously to his conversion, nor to have witnessed any of the miracles wrought by them before he became a persecutor. He had, however, before he returned to Jerusalem, already acquired a considerable reputation by his proficiency in Jewish lore; and it is highly probable that he had already been invested with the office of a rabbi or doctor. This would explain at once his professional zeal against the new heresy, his influence with the high priest, and the authority which he exercised, even before he obtained letters to Damascus, in committing men and women to prison at Jerusalem; all which indicates, that he was recognised in his public character. Again, it is stated, that he consented to the

Gal. i. 14.

Lardner,
vol. v. p. 487.

* Mr. Greswell cites the example of Josephus as a case in point. Vol. i. p. 555.

death of Stephen, which seems to denote an official concurrence in his condemnation. After his conversion, wherever he went, Saul entered boldly into the synagogues of the Jews, and preached, as one who, from station and office, had the right to teach. It is remarkable, also, that we never read of his having been excommunicated; a circumstance explained by the evidence which the Talmud affords, that the Jews were 'very backward to excommunicate the disciples of the wise, the doctors and teachers of the law.'

Lardner,
vol. v. p. 487.

§ 4. We are not told whether Saul was among 'them of Cilicia' who entered into dispute with Stephen; but nothing is more natural than that his professional jealousy and pharisaic bigotry should be exasperated by his finding himself unable to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which Stephen spake. He had, probably, not been long in Jerusalem, having, with others of his countrymen, come to attend the Feast of Pentecost, but his reputation had doubtless preceded him; and to have been defeated in disputation by the champion of the new faith, must have excited the deepest mortification. No wonder, then, that he so willingly lent himself to the conspiracy against the innocent cause of it, and, when the blood of the martyr was shed, "stood by, consenting to his death, and kept the raiment of those who slew him." His fury and malignity against the disciples of The Lord had not abated, he was still "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against them, when, intending, perhaps, to return to Tarsus by way of Damascus, he desired of the high-priest letters to the rulers of the synagogues in that city, that, if he found any

Personal
history of
Saul.

Acts xxii. 20.

cts ix. 13.

Christians among the Jewish inhabitants, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Time enough had elapsed before his journey, to allow of its having become matter of notoriety in Damascus, how much evil he had done to the saints in Jerusalem; but it is not necessary to suppose that the interval extended beyond five or six months; the period which is supposed to have intervened between the martyrdom of Stephen and Saul's conversion. Mr. Greswell fixes the latter event in November A.D. 37.* After his conversion, he remained but a short time ('certain days') with the disciples at Damascus, before he went into Arabia, the dominions of Aretas, which bordered closely on the Syrian territory; probably to escape persecution from the Jews. This journey into Arabia is not noticed by the sacred Historian,† as it was connected with no marked event, but simply occupied the interval between Saul's first and second residence at Damascus, where, on his return, he abode 'many days.' The political events of the time may have had some share in determining his movements. Damascus was included in the tetrarchy of Abilene, which had been bestowed on Herod Agrippa. Previously to St. Paul's second residence in that city, it had fallen into the hands of Aretas, who, at the time of the death of Tiberius, was at war with the Tetrarch.

* A.U.C. 790. Dr. Burton did not hesitate to fix it as early as A.D. 31, but on very insufficient grounds.

† Lardner speaks of Saul as having resided three years in Arabia, which may be true, considering Damascus as included in the dominions of the Arabian prince; it being evident, from the narrative in the Acts, collated with Gal. i., that he passed the greater part of the three years in that city.

Vitellius, the prefect of Syria, was actually on his march to invest Petra, the capital of the Arabian king, and to avenge the defeat of Herod, when the tidings of that event led him to suspend his operations. For two or three years afterwards, the Roman Presidents of Syria were too much occupied with the movements of the Parthian princes, to have leisure to attend to the petty feud between the vassal king of Judea and the Arabian prince; and it was during this time that Damascus became subject to Aretas. Here, then, under the protection of his government, Saul might esteem himself safe. Supposing the last year of his residence in that city to have been from the Passover of A.U.C. 793, the fourth of Caius, to that of A.U.C. 794, the first of Claudius, this would well accord with all the historical circumstances of the case.

Greswell,
vol. i.
pp. 561, 304.

Ib. vol. i.
p. 562.

On the detection of the conspiracy against him, Saul fled from Damascus by night, and, for the first time after his conversion, repaired to Jerusalem, "to see Peter, with whom he abode fifteen days." At first, indeed, when he attempted to join the company of the disciples, "they were afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple," till Barnabas brought him to the Apostles then residing at Jerusalem, (namely, Peter and James, The Lord's Brother,) "and declared to them how he had seen The Lord in the way, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." The persecution which had raged during the three years preceding, had now, apparently, subsided. Yet, when Paul ventured openly to preach in the name of The Lord Jesus, and

Gal. ii. 18.

Acts ix. 26,
27.

to dispute with the Hellenists or Grecian Jews,* they conspired to slay him. Upon learning this, the brethren conducted him (probably by night, as upon another occasion, Acts xvii. 10) to Cæsarea, on his way to his native city, Tarsus; and he “came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.” † It was, possibly, during this voyage and subsequent travels, Dr. Lardner remarks, that Paul met with some of those dangers and difficulties which it did not come within the design of the Historian of the Acts to notice, but which the Apostle himself glances at in the eleventh chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Duration of
the rest
which suc-
ceeded to
the persecu-
tion.

§ 5. And now it was that the churches had rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, to which, at this period, the preaching of the Apostles had been limited, and in which alone churches or Christian synagogues had been formed. How long the period of repose lasted, we are not informed; but it appears to have been undisturbed for about three years, (viz. A. D. 39—41,) extending into the reign of Claudius, till Herod Agrippa (who was at Rome when Caligula was slain, and was very serviceable to his successor in settling matters between him and the Senate) took possession of his hereditary dominions, and aimed to ingratiate himself with his subjects, by the strictest profession of Judaism. It soon ap-

* i. e. Foreign Jews speaking Greek, or Jews of the Dispersion, whose presence at Jerusalem indicates the time of some feast. It is remarkable, that he who had consented to the death of Stephen, should so nearly have fallen a victim to the same malign animosity.

† It is unnecessary, with Doddridge and others, to understand Cæsarea Philippi, though that would be in the land route. But Paul would probably embark at Cæsarea Augusta for Antioch.

peared, that neither the great danger of utter national ruin to which the Jews had been exposed in the reign of Caligula, nor the gracious as well as just edicts passed in their favour by Claudius in the beginning of his reign, had had any salutary effect upon their minds. For, when Herod “stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church, and killed James (the Son of Zebedee) with the sword,” the gratification which these cruelties afforded to the Jews, was the inducement that led the Tyrant to seize and imprison Peter also.

Acts xii. 1, 2.

§ 6. The “persecution which arose about Stephen” had evidently been general, and had scattered the disciples, many of whom had sought refuge in neighbouring countries,—in Phenicia, Syria, and Cyprus; and wherever they went, they preached the faith of Christ, but “to Jews only.” At length, at Antioch, some of these Christian disciples, who were natives of Cyprus and of Cyrene, and therefore spoke Greek, preached Christianity to the Grecians in that city.* In the mean time, Samaria had received the Gospel at the preaching of Philip the Evangelist; and the Apostles Peter and John had visited the Samaritan community on a special mission from the Church at Jerusalem, and had in the fullest manner, as well by

Era of the first preaching to the Gentiles,

Acts xi. 19.

* By this expression, Gentile proselytes are supposed to be intended. Bloomfield, indeed, contends strenuously (with Matthæi) for the various reading, Hellenists; which is rejected, however, by Griesbach, Knapp, Tittmann, and others upon strong evidence. Mr. Tate remarks, that ‘at this point in the progress of the Gospel, direct converts from heathenism had not been made;’ and that, by “Ελληνες, are clearly meant, Gentile proselytes who had become worshippers of the True God. Continuous History, &c. p. 134.

the bestowment of spiritual gifts as by their unreserved intercourse with them, recognized these aliens as Christian brethren. But the moment had now arrived, when the gates of the kingdom of heaven, into which the Jews as a nation had refused to enter, were to be thrown open to the Gentile world. Their persecution of the Church, following upon the martyrdom of Stephen, may be regarded as a deliberate rejection of the Gospel on the part of the Jewish authorities, under every conceivable aggravation of malignity. Now, therefore, "through their fall," salvation was to be tendered to the Gentile world; and the partition-wall in the Christian Temple, which forbade the intrusion of the uncircumcised within the sacred precincts, was to be thrown down. The conversion of Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band, with all his family, at the preaching of Peter, preceded by the heavenly vision which prepared the Apostle to abandon at once all his national prejudices, and followed by the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentile converts, was regarded at the time as the Divine intimation that thenceforth the Gospel was to be preached to all the tribes of mankind. This signal event, Mr. Greswell places early in A.U.C. 794 or A.D. 41.

Vol. i. pp.
563, 572.
So Lardner,
vol. v. p. 500.

It must have been shortly afterwards, that the Cyprian and Cyrenian disciples at Antioch, hearing, possibly, of Peter's having opened the gates of the Church to Cornelius and his household at Cæsarea, began to preach to the Greeks in that city. No sooner did tidings of their success reach the Apostles at Jerusalem, than they sent forth Barnabas to visit

Antioch ; who, on finding so important a sphere of labour, proceeded to Tarsus in search of Saul, and brought him back with him as a colleague. All this may have taken place in the course of that year ; and during a whole year subsequently to the return of Barnabas with Saul, “ they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people ; and the disciples,” having become numerous, and being no longer deemed a mere Jewish sect, received at Antioch the appellation of Christians.* The year Acts xi. 26. which Barnabas and Saul thus passed at Antioch, is supposed to have comprised part of A. U. C. 794 and 795, (A. D. 41, 42,) as their subsequent mission to Jerusalem with the contributions of the Syrian brethren, in consequence of the prediction of Agabus, could not have taken place later than the close of the latter year or the spring of 796.† The famine is stated by Eusebius, Orosius, and others, to have taken place in the fourth year of Claudius Cæsar ; but it was probably not confined to a single year ; and if it commenced in the third, it would be severely felt in Judea as setting in immediately after a sabbatic year. (A. U. C. 794, 5.) It must have been about the time that Barnabas and Saul were on their route to Jerusalem, that Herod Agrippa caused James, the brother of John, to be apprehended and beheaded, in order to gratify the malignant hostility of his Jewish subjects to the Christians ; and that, seeing it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also.

* Probably from their fellow-citizens, or from the Roman authorities. See Lardner, vol. v. p. 502.

† See the elaborate dissertation of Greswell, vol. i. pp. 565—70.

Mr. Greswell fixes this event at the Passover of A. U. C. 796. After satiating his rage at Peter's miraculous escape, the Tyrant quitted Jerusalem for Cæsarea, where, in the autumn of the same year, he died a miserable death, the awful punishment of his boastful impiety.*

Paul and Barnabas, having fulfilled their mission, did not remain long in Jerusalem, where they could hardly deem themselves secure, but returned to Antioch. Lardner supposes, that it was during this visit to Jerusalem, that Paul had that vision in the Temple, to which he refers in his speech to the Jewish people, Acts xxii. 17—21; since, on that occasion, he was directed to hasten his departure from the city, the direction being accompanied with the intimation that he was to be sent as an Apostle to the Gentiles. But, at this time, Paul had already commenced his labours among the Gentiles of Syria and Cilicia; and it is much more in accordance with the account given of the transaction, to refer it to his first visit after his conversion, A. D. 40. On this second visit, it is not likely that Paul would have attempted to address the Jews of Jerusalem, who had, so short a time before, conspired to assassinate him; and the fate of James was a warning not to expose himself to the rage of Herod. Nor would the death of the King render it more safe to remain in

* A. D. 43, the third of Claudius. Greswell, vol. i. p. 564. Lardner places it in 44. As to the appalling suddenness of his seizure, in the midst of his splendour and the adulations of his court, and the loathsome nature of the disease, the accounts of Luke and Josephus fully coincide.

Judea. Whether the return of Paul and Barnabas took place before or after that event, it would be some time in the autumn of that year. And in the ensuing spring, they might set out on their first Apostolic circuit.

§ 7. With the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Acts, commences that new and remarkable stage in the progress of Christianity, which was the result of the Divine mission of Barnabas and Saul to the adjacent nations of the Gentile world. The precise date of their entering upon the work to which they were especially called, there are no means of determining; but it could not, as we have seen, be earlier than the beginning of A.U.C. 797, or A.D. 44; and, if we suppose a year to have intervened between their return from Jerusalem and the transaction recorded, Acts xiii. 1—3, it may have been A.D. 45. Proceeding to Seleucia, at the mouth of the Orontes, they embarked for Cyprus, of which island Barnabas was a native, and where Jewish converts had already made known the Gospel among their own countrymen of the Circumcision. They landed at Salamis, on the eastern side of the island, where, finding Jewish synagogues, they preached the word of God to them, and afterwards went through the whole country to Paphos, the seat of the proconsular government, at the western extremity. Thence, they sailed for the opposite coast of the Asiatic Peninsula, and landing at Perga, in Pamphylia, (at or near the modern Kelendri,) proceeded up the country to Antioch, the chief city of Pisidia, (represented, probably, by the modern town of Mout,) where also was a synagogue of Jews; and to

Date of the first mission of Paul and Barnabas.

The date of Greswell and Pearson.

According to Basnage and Lardner.

Mod. Trav. Asia Minor, p. 306.

them they preached the Gospel. On their refusing to receive it, the Apostolic Missionaries turned to the Gentiles; and the word of The Lord was published through all that region. Expelled at length from the Pisidian territory, through the machinations of their Jewish opponents, Paul and Barnabas crossed the mountainous ridge which separates it on the north from the plains of Lycaonia, and proceeded to Iconium,* where finding a large community of Jews, part of whom became obedient to the faith, and meeting with still greater success among the Greek inhabitants, they abode a long time. On being at length compelled to seek safety from persecution by flight, they went on to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, which formed the northern limit of their journey. Returning by the same route to the coast of Pamphylia, they pursued the maritime road westward from Perga to Attalia, near the border of Lycia, and there embarked for the Syrian Antioch, “whence they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. . . . And there they abode long time with the disciples.”

Acts xiv.
26, 28.

Date of the
council of
Jerusalem.

§ 8. For this circuit, Biblical chronologists have allotted from two to three years; but an interval of five years must have occurred between the departure of Paul and Barnabas for Cyprus (A.D. 44), and their subsequent journey to Jerusalem, as a deputation from the Church at Antioch, to confer with the Apostles and elders about the question raised by the Judaistic zealots, if it is to this journey that St. Paul himself

* Now Konieh, in lat. 37° 52'. long. 32° 40'. Mod. Traveller, Asia Minor, p. 300.

alludes in the Epistle to the Galatians. It is evident, indeed, that they remained at Antioch for a considerable time after their return from their mission; yet, they may not have confined their labours to that city; and it is probable, that St. Paul would devote part of the time to revisiting his native city and the Cilician territory. Computing from the time of his conversion, A.D. 37, it would be about fourteen years, in the year 50, that he went up to Jerusalem, on this mission, with Barnabas and Titus; and there seems no reason to doubt that this gives the true date of the "council of Jerusalem."*

On comparing the accounts given, respectively, by the Apostle himself in the Epistle to the Galatians, and by the Historian in the xvth chapter of Acts, the occasion of the journey we find to have been, the dissension and disputes raised in the Church at Antioch by certain men from Judea, "false brethren," who had "crept in" to act as spies upon the liberty enjoyed by the Syrian Christians with regard to Jewish ordinances, and who sought, by preaching the necessity of circumcision, to impose upon them the yoke of legal bondage. St. Paul states, indeed, that he went up "by revelation" (*κατὰ ἀποκαλύψιν*); that is, agreeably to Divine intimation or instruction; which is quite consistent with its being the result of the determination of the Church under Divine direc-

* The supposed chronological difficulty has led some critics to read four years for fourteen, without any sufficient evidence or reason. Mr. Greswell, who fixes the Council in A.U.C. 800 or 801, A.D. 47, 48, is, on this point, unusually unsatisfactory (Vol. ii. pp. 18, 47). In the Table appended to Gæscher's New Testament, the Council is fixed, A.D. 52. Mr. Milman adopts the date of A.D. 49.

tion ; also, that he went up to lay before them the Gospel which he preached to the Gentiles,—to declare what God had done by his instrumentality and that of Barnabas in the conversion of the Gentiles, that he might not have laboured in vain. Accordingly, the narrative in the Book of Acts states, that, when they were come to Jerusalem, they declared all things that God had done with them ; but that “ there had risen up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”* And when the Apostles and elders were subsequently convened to consider the matter, “ the multitude kept silence, and gave audience while Barnabas and Paul declared what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.” It is clear, therefore, that Paul went up to Jerusalem, as much for the purpose of communicating information as to the results of his ministry, and of vindicating his apostolic authority, as of obtaining the opinion of the Apostles and elders ; and that, as he declares, they in conference “ added nothing to him,” but recognized at once his Divine commission. “ Seeing,” he says, “ that I was entrusted with the Gospel to the Uncircumcised, as Peter was to the Circumcised, and recognizing the gift bestowed upon me, James, and Cephas, and John, who were looked up to as pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right-hand of fellowship in agreement that we should preach

* Doddridge, Grotius, Tillemont, and Bloomfield understand these words as those of the Historian ; but Lardner, with Beza, L'Enfant, and Whitby, more justly considers them as the report of Paul and Barnabas.

among the heathen, and they among the Jews; stipulating only that we should bear in remembrance the poor (of the Circumcision in Judea), which I have ever been ready to do." This agreement was, no doubt, entered into, not at the public conference, when "the whole multitude" were present, but at the *previous* interview to which the Apostle refers, Gal. ii. 2, which was of a more private nature, and at which the course to be adopted would be determined upon. It is impossible, that, after the public decision recorded in the history, it should have been requisite for St. Paul to take another journey to Jerusalem, for the purpose of vindicating his proceedings; or that, after his separation from Barnabas, Paul should have been associated with him on this errand to the Apostles. Every consideration, therefore, leads to the conclusion, that the same journey is referred to in both accounts, and that it took place in the fourteenth year after Paul's conversion, A.D. 50.*

On their return to Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were accompanied by two chief men among the brethren, who were themselves prophets; Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas or Silvanus, who afterwards became the chosen companion of the Apostle Paul, and who, it has been shewn, there is strong ground for identifying with Luke, the Evangelical

* Mr. Tate strenuously contends for the posteriority of the council at Jerusalem to the journey related in Gal. ii., as shewn by the total discrepancy of the two narratives. Hor. Paul. App. A. I have carefully examined his arguments, but am unable to perceive their conclusiveness.

See p. 195.

Historian. From this point in the narrative, the actions and adventures of St. Paul are brought before us with much greater distinctness and minuteness, while those of the other Apostles are lost sight of. They were, indeed, still confined for the most part to the scattered tribes of Israel,—the Circumcision; while the mission of Paul and his fellow-labourers was to the world. With propriety, therefore, the sacred Historian, having arrived at this stage in the progress of the Gospel, when its reception by the Greeks of Syria and Asia Minor left no doubt as to the purpose of God, drops the account of what was taking place within the narrow limits of Judea, destined soon to be the theatre of frightful disorders and calamities, and relates the triumphant success of the Apostolic ministry in distant lands.

One circumstance of some interest here deserves our notice, which the Historian may have suppressed through delicacy. We learn incidentally from St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, that, while Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, (probably after their *first* visit to Jerusalem,*) Peter arrived there; partly, we may suppose, to witness the flourishing state of the Church, but also, in all probability, on his way to prosecute his apostolic mission to the Jews of other lands. For some time, he mixed familiarly at the table with believers of all nations; but, on the arrival of some members of the Church at Jerusalem, through fear of offending their Jewish prejudices, he withdrew himself from the company of the Gentile

*See page 175. This opinion is supported also by Plank, who is followed by Milman, b. ii. c. 2.

Christians, and the rest of the Jewish believers followed his example, so that even Barnabas was led away, and took part in this dissimulation. Paul's bold and faithful expostulation had, no doubt, its intended effect; and we may gather from the affectionate reference to his beloved brother Paul, in Peter's Second Epistle, that his being faithfully withstood and reproved on this occasion by the great champion of the privileges of the Gentiles and the unity of the Christian fellowship, occasioned no interruption of their friendship.

§ 9. It appears to have been not long after their return from Jerusalem to Antioch, and we may therefore suppose it to have been in the ensuing spring,* that Paul proposed to Barnabas to visit the brethren in every city in which they had preached the word of the Lord. Barnabas readily assented, but determined to take with them his nephew, John Mark, who had before accompanied them through Cyprus, but had declined to go any further, and, leaving them, had returned to Jerusalem.† Paul appears to have resented his deserting "the work," not without apparent reason: and he thought it not good to take with them one who had shown himself so wanting in constancy. Barnabas, on the other hand, took the part of his young relative with so much warmth, that it led to a separation between these two eminent fellow-labourers. The last that we hear of Barnabas,

Separation
of Paul and
Barnabas.

* Pearson, Basnage, and Lardner place it in the beginning of A. D. 50: the true date would seem to be 51.

† Lardner suggests, that Mark may have come to Antioch with Peter.

is, that, taking Mark as his companion, he sailed for Cyprus, his native island; and as we do not read that Paul again visited it, we may conclude that they agreed to take different directions in the prosecution of their apostolic labours.* If, after having traversed

* It may be proper to notice here, the question which has been raised, whether Barnabas is to be ranked as an Apostle. St. Paul may be thought to recognise him as such in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (ix. 6), where he says: "Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" And he certainly refers to him, as equally entitled with himself to be supported by the hospitality of the churches in the prosecution of his ministry. Again, the Writer of the Acts expressly applies to Barnabas this designation (ch. xiv. 4, 14): "Part held with the Apostles" (Paul and Barnabas) . . . "Which when the Apostles Paul and Barnabas heard." That Barnabas was in some sense an Apostle, is therefore undeniable; and it may be assumed, that the Historian considered him entitled to this appellation, as having been sent forth from the Church at Antioch on the special work to which, with Saul, he had been divinely called. In like manner, St. Paul refers to others of his companions (1 Cor. viii. 23) as "Apostles of the churches." That Barnabas was not, however, in the highest sense, an Apostle of *Christ*,—that is, as sustaining permanently that character in virtue of an immediate appointment by Christ himself, like St. Paul, who claimed to be an Apostle as having *seen* the Lord (1 Cor. ix. 1), we may conclude: 1, from the manner in which he is spoken of by the sacred Historian, as "a good man full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts xi. 24), like Stephen; and he is mentioned among other prophets and teachers in the Church at Antioch (xiii. 1); but not as an Apostle, except as associated with Paul in his first circuit: 2, from the marked manner in which St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, speaks of himself in the singular, as having received the favour of the apostleship, when, if Barnabas had been in the same sense an Apostle, he would naturally have said *us*, instead of *me*. (Gal. ii. 7—9). To these arguments, Lardner adds the precedence usually assumed by Paul, and given to him, although younger in years and discipleship. (Lardner, vol. v. p. 275.) Further, in his Epistle, which is received as genuine, but not canonical, Barnabas disclaims apostolic authority; and by the early Fathers, though sometimes styled an Apostle, he is ranked among companions of the Apostles, or apostolical men.

that island, Barnabas extended his travels to other countries, the constant intercourse between Cyprus and the ports of Egypt and Libya, would afford an opportunity of which he would naturally be induced to avail himself, of preaching to the Greeks of Alexandria, Cyrene, and the Pentapolis. The ancient tradition, that Mark, going into Egypt, first preached the Gospel there, and founded the church at Alexandria, seems to impart some degree of probability to this conjecture. He may first have accompanied Barnabas in a visit to those regions, and, at a later period, have visited Alexandria a second time, where he is reported to have died in the eighth year of Nero.

See pages
50, 51.

§ 10. Paul, having chosen Silas as his colleague in place of Barnabas, took a solemn farewell of the brethren at Antioch, and set forth on a longer journey than he had hitherto undertaken. Instead of departing, as before, by sea, he appears to have taken the customary land route into Cilicia, and, from Tarsus, to have crossed Mount Taurus, by way of the Cilician Gates, into the plains of Lycaonia. Thus, it will be seen from the narrative, he arrived at Derbe and Lystra, by this route, in his way to Iconium and Antioch.* At Lystra, he met with a young man, a disciple, with whom he was so greatly pleased that he adopted him as his spiritual son and assistant in his evangelical labours. This was Timothy, the son of a Greek, but of Jewish descent on his mother's side, and therefore entitled to be received as one of the sacred nation, on undergoing the rite of circumcision.

Second circuit of Paul
with Silas.

* By this route, he appears to have reached Derbe before Lystra ; whereas, on the route from Iconium, Lystra occurs before Derbe.

Gal. ii. 1—3. Titus, being a Greek, when he accompanied the Apostle to Jerusalem, had not been compelled to undergo the rite; for to have exacted this from a Gentile as the condition of his intercourse with the Church at Jerusalem, would have been to contravene the great principle of which it was the object of the Apostle, in that visit, to obtain the formal recognition. The case of Timothy was, however, wholly different; first, because his submitting to circumcision involved no compromise of the privileges of Gentile believers; and secondly, because it was intended to qualify him, not for intercourse with Christians, but for coming into contact with Jews in the discharge of his duties as an Evangelist; otherwise he could never have gained access to their synagogues.

Acts xvi. 6. From Iconium, the Apostle and his companions appear to have taken a northern route through Phrygia into Galatia, the capital of which is represented by the modern Angora (*Ancyra*).* Being “forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia” (the proconsular province), they turned towards Mysia. From Kutaya (*Cotyæum*), near its confines, a road runs to Broussa (*Prusa*), the capital of the kings of Bithynia, by which they might naturally have proceeded to that important city; but “the Spirit suffered them not.” Their course was again changed by a Divine intimation, for reasons unexplained, but possibly as it would have led them

* As no single place of importance in the region of Galatia is mentioned in the narrative, Mr. Tate suggests, that the country may have been inhabited *vicatim*, in small communities; a supposition agreeing with their Galatic or Gallic origin.

into a territory in which they would have been exposed to personal danger. Skirting Mysia, therefore, they reached the coast at Troas, having traversed the whole length of the Asiatic Peninsula.

At Troas, a vision appeared to Paul in the night, which decided his future course, and might suggest the reason that his purpose had been controlled, as regarded preaching the Gospel in Asia and Bithynia at that time. A man of Macedonia appeared to him in the attitude of beseeching him to come over and help them; after which, says the sacred Historian, “we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel unto them;” language which implies that the Writer was not merely a companion of Paul, but one of his colleagues, and consequently no other than Silas. Embarking at Troas for Samothrace, they thence crossed to Neapolis, (now Cavallo,) the port of Philippi, in *Macedonia Adjuncta*;* and in that flourishing city, they prepared to make some stay. The signal success which attended their ministry, the miraculous attestation of their mission afforded by the case of the Pythoness, and their triumphant vindication from the charge of being political offenders, must have served to reconcile them to a hastened departure from Philippi. Thence, they passed through Amphipolis† and Apollonia, to Thessalonica, where Paul addressed himself at first, agreeably to his constant practice, to the Jews, and

See page 57.

* That part of Thrace between the Strymon and the Nestus, added to Macedonia by Philip.

† Now Emboli, on the Strymon.

See Paley's
Hor. Paul.
1st Thess.
No. 6.

afterwards with more success to the Gentiles. Being at length obliged, through a disturbance raised by the Jews, to flee by night from that city, Paul and Silas were sent on to Beroëa. Thither they were followed by their Thessalonian persecutors, who stirred up the people at Beroëa against them. On this, the Brethren sent Paul away towards the sea, as if to embark;* but those to whose care he was confided, conducted him by land to Athens, where he purposed to await the arrival of his colleagues, Silas and Timothy. In the midst of a city given up to idolatry and false philosophy, he was not forgetful of his mission, nor "ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." In the synagogues, he disputed with the Jews; in the market-place and in Areopagus daily with all who met with him, including philosophers both of the Epicurean and of the Stoic sects; and not wholly without success.

Paul preach-
ing at
Athens.

§ 11. 'At Athens,' remarks Mr. Milman, 'the centre at once and capital of the Greek philosophy and heathen superstition, takes place the first public and direct conflict between Christianity and Paganism. Up to this time, there is no account of any one of the Apostles taking his station in the public street or market-place, and addressing the general multitude. Their place of teaching had invariably been the synagogue of their nation, or, as at Philippi, the neighbourhood of their customary place of worship. Here, however, Paul does not confine himself to the synagogue, or to the society of his countrymen and their proselytes. He takes his stand in the public

* Mr. Tate supposes the Apostle to have been 'conducted to Athens by sea.'

market-place, probably not the *Ceramicus*, but the Eretriac Forum, which, in the reign of Augustus, had begun to be more frequented, and at the top of which was the famous portico from which the Stoics assumed their name. In Athens, the appearance of a new public teacher, instead of offending the popular feelings, was too familiar to excite astonishment, and was rather welcomed as promising some fresh intellectual excitement. Though they affect at first (probably the philosophic part of his hearers) to treat him as an idle "babbling," and others (the vulgar, alarmed for the honour of their deities) supposed that he was about to introduce some new religious worship which might endanger the supremacy of their own tutelary divinities; he is conveyed, not without respect, to a still more public and commodious place, from which he may explain his doctrines to a numerous assembly without disturbance. On the Areopagus, the Christian leader takes his stand, surrounded on every side with whatever was noble, beautiful, and intellectual in the older world; temples, of which the materials were only surpassed by the architectural grace and majesty; statues, in which the ideal anthropomorphism of the Greeks had almost elevated the popular notions of the Deity, by embodying it in forms of such exquisite perfection; public edifices where the civil interests of man had been discussed with the acuteness and versatility of the highest Grecian intellect, in all the purity of the inimitable Attic dialect,—where oratory had attained its highest triumphs by "wielding at will the fierce democracy." . . . It was in the midst of these elevating associations, to

Milman's
History of
Christianity, b. ii.
c. 3.

which the student of Greek literature in Tarsus, the reader of Menander and of the Greek philosophical poets, could scarcely be entirely dead or ignorant, that Paul stands forth to proclaim the lowly yet authoritative religion of Jesus of Nazareth.'

The exquisite propriety and wisdom of the Apostle's discourse, as preserved by the sacred Historian, are finely illustrated by the ingenious and learned Author. The opening of it, he remarks, is in accordance with the most perfect rules of art,—calm, temperate, and conciliatory. Up to a certain point in the higher view which he unfolded of the Supreme Being, 'the philosopher of the Garden, as well as of the Porch might listen with wonder and admiration. It soared, indeed, high above the vulgar religion; but, in the lofty and serene Deity who disdained to dwell in the earthly temple, and needed nothing from the hand of man,* the Epicurean might almost suppose that he heard the language of his own teacher. But the next sentence, which asserted the providence of God as the active, creative energy,—as the conservative, the ruling, the ordaining principle,—annihilated at once the atomic theory and the government of blind chance, to which Epicurus ascribed the origin and preservation of the universe. "This high and impassive Deity who dwelt aloof in serene and majestic superiority to all want, was perceptible in some mysterious manner by man: his all-pervading providence comprehended the whole human race; man was in constant union with the Deity, as an

* The coincidence with the '*nihil indiga nostri*' of Lucretius, is curious, Mr. Milman remarks, even if accidental.

offspring with its parent." And still the Stoic might applaud with complacent satisfaction the ardent words of the Apostle; he might approve the lofty condemnation of idolatry: "We, thus of divine descent, ought to think more nobly of our universal Father than to suppose that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device." But this Divine Providence was far different from the stern and all-controlling Necessity, the inexorable Fatalism of the Stoic system. While the moral value of human actions was recognized by the solemn retributive judgment to be passed on all mankind, the dignity of Stoic virtue was lowered by the general demand of repentance. The perfect man, the moral king, was deposed, as it were, and abased to the general level: he had to learn new lessons in the school of Christ; lessons of humility and conscious deficiency, the most directly opposed to the principles and the sentiments of his philosophy. The great Christian doctrine of the Resurrection closed the speech of Paul; a doctrine received with mockery, perhaps, by his Epicurean hearers; with suspension of judgment, probably, by the Stoic, with whose theory of the final destruction of the world by fire, and his tenet of future retribution, it might appear in some degree to harmonize. Some, however, became declared converts; among whom are particularly named Dionysius, a man of sufficient distinction to be a member of the famous court of the Areopagus, and a woman named Damaris, probably of considerable rank and influence.'

Milman's
History of
Chris-
tianity, b. ii.
c. 3.

Paul at
Corinth.

§ 12. At length, his colleagues not having arrived,

(probably through some alteration of the first arrangement,) Paul proceeded to Corinth, where he met with a Jew of Pontus and his wife, recently arrived from Rome, having been compelled to leave that city by an edict of the Emperor Claudius; and because he was of the same craft with them, that of tent-makers,* (it being customary for even the most learned rabbins to be brought up to some manual trade,†) Paul abode with them, and wrought with his own hands for his maintenance, (as he had done before at Thessalonica,) that he might not be burdensome to any person. Corinth was the great thoroughfare between Italy and Asia; and Aquila and Priscilla had probably arrived there on their way, for they left Corinth at the same time with St. Paul, and afterwards settled in Ephesus. The decree which led to their expulsion, was issued, according to Lardner (who follows Basnage), in the eleventh year of the reign of Claudius, A. D. 51‡; and the meeting of Paul with Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth, is supposed to have taken place in the same year. If, however, St. Paul left Antioch in the spring of 51, we

1 Thess. ii. 9.

* A coarse stuff, called *cilicium*, made of goats' hair, was manufactured in the native country of Paul, and used for portable tents. This is supposed to have been the craft referred to.

† According to the Jewish maxim, 'He who teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief.' Nothing is more common than to meet with such designations of their learned men as, Rabbi Jose the tanner, Rabbi Jochanan the shoemaker, &c. Cave. It would appear from this, that Our Lord's being taught the carpenter's handicraft, and working at it, would not be deemed derogatory to his character as a Teacher.

‡ Greswell thinks it must have been in A. U. C. 803 (A. D. 50) at the earliest. Vol. ii. p. 17. Hug brings Paul to Corinth in 55.

cannot assign much less than a year for his journeyings and sojournings in Asia Minor and Macedonia; and Basnage supposes them to have taken up a year and a half. Assuming that Aquila and Priscilla had already been a month or two at Corinth, we may conclude that they left Rome some time in A.D. 51, and that Paul joined them early in 52.

Some months had probably elapsed, during which Paul had preached with great boldness and success, when Gallio, the brother of Seneca, arrived at Corinth, as prætor of the province of Achaia; and the Jews took advantage of his coming, to accuse Paul before him of "persuading men to worship God contrary to the Law." Mr. Greswell has adduced historical reasons for dating this occurrence not later than the autumn of A.U.C. 805 (A.D. 52). It is not necessary, indeed, to understand the Historian of the Acts as stating that Paul had been teaching at Corinth a year and six months previously to his being brought before Gallio: he seems to have remained there a considerable time afterwards; and the "year and a half" may be understood as comprising the whole length of his stay, which could not have terminated earlier than the year 53.*

Acts xviii.
12.

Greswell,
vol. ii. p. 24.

Paul had not been very long at Corinth, (apparently only a few weeks,) when he was joined by Silas and Timotheus from Macedonia. This circumstance is adverted to in the First Epistle to the

* Mr. Greswell fixes the Apostle's departure from Corinth early in the winter quarter of A.U.C. 805 (A.D. 52); but his calculations are governed by a fallacious inference respecting the time of 'the Council of Jerusalem.'

Thessalonians, which was evidently written shortly after their arrival, and consequently at Corinth; not at Athens, as the apocryphal note at the end of the Epistle asserts. On comparing this Epistle with the History, it may appear a discrepancy, that the Apostle seems to speak as if he had sent Timothy to Thessalonica from Athens. It is, indeed, very possible, that Timothy followed him to that city "with all speed," agreeably to the message transmitted by the Apostle's Berean guides; and that Paul, anxious to learn how his Thessalonian converts endured the test of persecution, "thought it good to be left at Athens alone," and sent him back to Macedonia. Dr. Paley suggests this explanation, as affording one of those striking instances of undesigned conformity between the History and the Epistles, which attest the genuineness and authenticity of both. 'The Epistle discloses a fact which is not preserved in the History, but which makes what is said in the History more significant, probable, and consistent. The History bears marks of an omission: the Epistle, by reference, furnishes a circumstance which supplies that omission.' Ingenious and probable as is this explanation, it is not absolutely necessary to have recourse to the supposition that Timothy came to Athens, since he might receive the Apostle's instructions to return to Thessalonica, instead of joining him at Athens, as at first arranged, by some messenger despatched to Berea, where Silas appears to have remained for a while. We may be reasonably sure that, without some communication having passed between them, Paul would not have left Attica for

the Isthmus, nor could they have known where to rejoin him. But, that both Silas and Timothy were with him when he wrote his first Epistle, is clear, not only from the history, but from their being joined with the Apostle in the opening salutation ; and the Epistle, by its peculiar phraseology, indicates that the Writer considered himself as speaking for them as well as for himself.

CHAP. VII.

THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS (I. AND II.),
THE GALATIANS, AND THE CORINTHIANS (I.).

THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS — ANALYSIS — CONTINUATION OF THE NARRATIVE FROM THE TIME OF PAUL'S LEAVING CORINTH TILL HIS ARRIVAL AT EPHESUS, ACTS XVIII. 18—XIX. 1.—THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS—CHARACTER OF ST. PAUL AS A RHETORICIAN—ANALYSIS.—THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS: ITS DATE AND OCCASION—ANALYSIS—CHARACTER OF THE COMPOSITION.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

§ 1. THE First Epistle to the Thessalonians is, unquestionably, the earliest of St. Paul's writings; and towards the close of it occurs the remarkable charge, that it should be read to all the holy brethren. 'Paul,' observes the judicious Lardner, 'knowing the plenitude of his apostolical commission, demands the same respect to be paid to his writings with those of the ancient prophets. This is a direction fit to be inserted in the first Epistle written by him. And the manner in which it is given, suggests an argument that this was his first apostolical Epistle.'

Lardner, vol. vi. p. 6.

Analysis.

The occasion and object of this Epistle are obvious. The Apostle had been anxious to revisit Thessalonica; and he wished these his converts, of whose exemplary faith and obedience he speaks, in the opening para-

graphs, in terms of the warmest eulogy, to know that he had endeavoured to come once and again, but had been prevented by the obstacles thrown in his way by Satan; he had therefore sent Timothy to exhort and comfort them under the persecutions to which he had heard they were exposed from their heathen countrymen. And now that Timothy had returned to him with such satisfactory accounts of their steadfastness and constancy, and their affection for him, he was filled with gratitude and joy on their behalf before God. It was his daily prayer, that his way might be directed so as to be able to revisit them.

Ch. ii. 18.

In the mean time, in the latter part of the Epistle, he gives them apostolic exhortations and warnings upon several points of conduct. The laxity of manners and licentiousness which notoriously prevailed in their city, rendered it especially necessary to guard them against a class of sins, respecting which the standard of conventional morality is apt to be fearfully below the law of God, and of which, though they may be practised with impunity as regards man, God will be the avenger. Next, he exhorts them to follow his example in supporting themselves by their own industry, so as not to be burdensome to the community. He then adverts to a mistaken view of the Second Advent of Christ, the great object of expectation to the Church, which had led them to suppose that those who should be living at the time would have some peculiar advantage, and for that reason to indulge in an excess of grief on account of the departed. In turning from idols to serve the living and true God, they had also embraced the

Ch. iv.

Lucian in
Hug, pt. ii.
§ 85.

glorious hope which led them to “wait for His Son from heaven.” And this event was probably believed to be not so far off, but that many then living might survive to witness it. The Apostles had no certain knowledge on this point ; and of the times and seasons, St. Paul had nothing to communicate beyond what they already knew ; that the Day of The Lord would come suddenly upon the world. But, speaking by Divine authority, he assures them, that the resurrection of the just would take place prior to the descent of The Lord from heaven, so that the living saints would have no advantage over those who had long been slumbering in their graves ; for whom, therefore, it did not become them to mourn with the bitter regret or despondency of the heathen, who had no such hope, or as feeling parted from their deceased friends for long. He exhorts them, accordingly, to comfort each other with these considerations, and to live in constant preparation for the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This is followed with a series of practical admonitions. After solemnly commending them to the Divine keeping, the Apostle bespeaks their prayers for himself ; directs that the Epistle be publicly read ; and closes with his Apostolic benediction.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

Occasion
and scope of
the Second
Epistle.

§ 2. It appears, however, from the Second Epistle, which was evidently written after no long interval, and while Paul was still at Corinth, that the Thessalonian Christians had either misunderstood the Apostle’s language, as implying that the Day of The

Lord was to take place almost immediately,* or had been led to entertain that persuasion by some persons who pretended to have his authority for the statement; and that they had consequently been much agitated and troubled by the false impression. On being informed of this, the Apostle wrote to quiet their alarm, and to rectify the misconstruction that had been put upon his words. Referring to what he had already told them on the subject, when he was yet with them, he reminds them,† that that Day must be preceded by a predicted apostacy, and by the appearance and temporary triumph of the Man of Sin, the Spiritual Usurper, which could not itself take place till certain hinderances were removed. He then exhorts them to stand fast in the instructions delivered to them, whether in writing or by word of mouth, by himself and his colleagues. He bespeaks their especial prayers, that he may be delivered from perverse and faithless men; (alluding probably to his Jewish assailants at Corinth, who accused him before Gallio;) and the Epistle concludes with some practical exhortations and directions how to deal with disorderly and idle members of their own body.

§ 3. Both these Epistles were written either in the same year,‡ that is, some time in the year 52, or, possibly, the second early in 53, when the Writer, having given up all intention of returning to Macedonia, was contemplating a visit to Jerusalem. His

Travels of
St. Paul,
A. D. 53—56.

* So Benson and Paley—'as if we had said or written any such thing.'

† Paley adduces the obscurity of this reference to a previous conversation as a striking mark of authenticity.

‡ The opinion of Lardner, Milman, and Benson.

motive for wishing to attend the festival (probably that of Pentecost) is not explained; but we may naturally suppose that he would be desirous of communicating to the Apostles, and all who should be convened at Jerusalem, the success of his labours among the Greeks of Europe. The supposition, that his visiting Jerusalem was in consequence of a vow, is founded upon a mistaken construction of the narrative; as it was Aquila, not Paul, who must be understood to have shorn his head in Cenchrea,* and as the Apostle had resided with Aquila and Priscilla, and wrought at their craft, during his stay at Corinth, their removal to Ephesus (probably on the expiration or fulfilment of the vow of Aquila) may have determined him to return to Syria, leaving Silas and Timotheus behind. The ship in which he embarked, touched at Ephesus, and staid there long enough to allow of his entering into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and reasoning with the Jews. On being pressed to remain there longer, he "consented not," being bent upon keeping the approaching festival in Jerusalem, but promised to return, "God willing." Accordingly, he sailed from Ephesus to Cesarea, where he landed, and thence proceeded to Jerusalem, to salute the Church, which was evidently the object of his visiting Judea, in his way to Antioch. He made no stay in Jerusalem; but, at Antioch, which he might

* To shave the head was, generally, to declare the consummation of the vow; but of what nature this vow was, commentators are not agreed. See Greswell, vol. ii. p. 23. Bloomfield *in loco*. That Aquila is referred to, is clear from the transposition of his name after that of Priscilla, which nowhere else occurs in the history, and can be no otherwise explained. So Chrysostom, the Vulgate, and the best commentators understand the words.

reach in May, or early in June, he spent some time. Before the autumn was far advanced, however, he would set out upon his journey to Galatia and Phrygia. This was the third time he had made an excursion into the Asiatic Peninsula, but only the second time of his penetrating into Galatia; and it is a natural supposition, that what he had heard of the unsteadiness and defection of his Galatian converts, was the main inducement of his resolving to pay them this visit. It is briefly stated by the sacred Historian, that "he went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples;" and having made the circuit of these "upper regions," he now passed through Asia, (in which he had, at his previous visit, been forbidden to preach,) and came down to Ephesus, where he proposed, agreeably to his promise, to remain for some time.

For this journey, beginning at Antioch, and embracing the tour of the Peninsula, we cannot allow less than six or eight months; and if so, the earliest period that can be assigned for his reaching Ephesus, would seem to be the autumn of A.D. 54. He remained there for a period of three years (*τρεῖς ἔτη*), that is, between two and three, and then proceeded to Macedonia. His departure took place in the summer, which must have been that of either 57 or 56.*

* Mr. Greswell supposes the Apostle's stay at Ephesus to have been during A.U.C. 806—809, or A.D. 52—56; (vol. ii. pp. 26, 36;) but upon calculations already shown to be fallacious. Lardner supposes Paul to have kept the Pentecost of A.D. 53 at Jerusalem, and yet to have reached Ephesus in October or November of the same year, which seems scarcely possible, and to have remained there till about Pentecost, A.D. 56.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

Date of the
Epistle to
the Gala-
tians.

§ 4. If the view taken of the Apostle's reason for visiting Galatia be correct, the Epistle to the Galatian church must have been written in consequence of the information that had been conveyed to him, before he left Corinth. And such is the opinion adopted by Lardner, after Beausobre and Benson, upon grounds which seem not easily to be shaken. In this Epistle, he expresses his surprise that they should so soon have been turned aside unto another Gospel; which indicates that no long time had elapsed since they had embraced the Gospel which he had preached among them; nor is there any reference to the second journey which he made into that region.* We know that the leaven of the Judaistic schism was beginning to work in the churches of Syria, before his first visit to Galatia; and every thing in the Epistle agrees with its early date. Besides, as Lardner remarks, we seem to see the reason of the Apostle's not returning directly to Ephesus from Jerusalem. 'At Corinth, he heard of the defection of many in Galatia. Whereupon he sent away a sharp letter to them. But, considering the nature of the case, he judged it best to take the first opportunity to go to Galatia, and support the instruc-

* Hug and Greswell, indeed, argue, that *το προτερον*, Gal. iv. 13, implies a first, in contradistinction from a second visit. But, though it may be rendered, "the first time," it does not require to be so taken, and will not of itself support the notion of a second visit previously to the Epistle.

tions of his letter. And both together had a very good effect.' The learned Author remarks, that, at the time of his writing to the Corinthians from Ephesus, in 56, Paul had evidently (as appears from ch. xvi. 1) a good opinion of his converts in Galatia, and entertained no doubt of their observing his directions. We assume, therefore, that this Epistle was written in 52 or 53, before he left the Isthmus for Syria.*

§ 5. This Epistle is one of the most finished and rhetorical of St. Paul's compositions, and owing, perhaps, to its having been written entirely with his own hand, and not dictated, as was his usual practice, to an amanuensis, displays a terseness of style and closeness of argumentation, not so observable in his other writings. Justin Martyr cites it as Paul's 'Oration to the Greeks;' and it partakes very decidedly of an oratorical character, being more rhetorical than demonstrative.† In this respect, it corresponds to the character of his eloquence given by Longinus, who, after enumerating some of the most renowned orators of Greece, Demosthenes, Lysias, Æschines, Isocrates, and others, says: 'To these may be added Paul of Tarsus, who was the first, to my knowledge,

Character of
St. Paul as
a rhetori-
cian.

* Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 11, 12. The spurious inscription which makes the Epistle to have been written at Rome, has no reasonable foundation; and Lardner has shown, that the various conjectures which assign it a date as late as 57, 58, &c., are unsupported by either internal evidence or probability.

† Lardner, vol. ii. p. 135. The Greek was used in all public documents and inscriptions; and the country was called *Gallo-Grecia*, though the Galatians were a Gaulish race. Hug, vol. ii. p. 363.

who did not make use of demonstration ;' *—meaning, who sought to persuade, rather than to prove. The genuineness of this passage has, indeed, been questioned ; but, for the scepticism expressed, there appears to be no foundation ; and Hug has both vindicated the genuineness, and illustrated the correctness of the criticism of the accomplished Platonist. ' Paul seems to the critic, to persuade rather than to prove, and not without reason ; for the Apostle either pre-supposes certain doctrines as known, and joins others to them ; or he cites passages from the Old Testament, the authoritative force of which the heathen philosopher did not understand, and which he was forced, therefore, to consider as mere erudition and literary embellishment. Viewing the matter, then, as he was obliged to view it, he could remark nothing more accurately concerning him, than that he, the first among all his predecessors, applied himself less to proofs than to the excitement of the passions and to pathos.' In this Epistle, more especially, writing to his own converts, he rests much on his apostolic authority ; whereas, in writing to the Roman Christians, to whom he was not personally known, he rests entirely upon argument.

Hug, vol. ii.
p. 343.

Analysis of
the Epistle.

§ 6. In the opening salutation, St. Paul emphatically asserts his plenary and independent authority as the Apostle of Christ ; and he enters at once upon the occasion of his writing to them, by expressing the astonishment with which he had heard of their de-

* Or, as Lardner renders, ' Of whom I may say, that he first excelled in an argument which is not of a demonstrative kind.' Vol. vii. p. 379.

elension from the faith which they had so recently embraced; solemnly declaring, that, if even an Apostle or an Angel from heaven should come to them, teaching a doctrine at variance with what they had received from his lips, he would deserve to be held in execration, since the Gospel which he had preached among them was a revelation from God. To remove all ground for doubt upon this cardinal point, the Apostle proceeds to give them an account of his previous history, of the circumstances attending his conversion, and of his subsequent proceedings; from which it would be evident, that he was not indebted for his knowledge of the Christian faith and doctrine to human teaching, nor had received it upon the authority of any Apostle; that his source of information was immediate Inspiration; and that he had maintained his independence in differing from the chief Apostles, who had recognized his Divine commission, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, to be of equal validity with their own. And he thus leads the Galatian believers to infer, that, if he had felt himself authorized, and bound in fidelity, to stand up for the purity of the Gospel against Peter himself, when, by his conduct, he but tacitly sanctioned the errors of the judaistic zealots, much less would he suffer his own converts to be led astray by intrusive teachers, who could pretend to no apostolic authority, and claimed no forbearance at his hands. He then briefly shews the utter inconsistency of falling back upon the Law as a means or condition of acceptance with God, which went to nullify the doctrine of the Cross. By one of those rhetorical transitions with

See p. 242.

which the Epistle abounds, the inspired Writer then makes a direct and passionate appeal to his converts:— “By what sorcery has this delusion been imposed upon you?” He appeals to the results of his preaching, to their own experience of the power of the Gospel, as the simple effect of faith. The doctrine which makes faith in God the way of acceptance, he shews to be in accordance with what the Scriptures declare concerning the faith of Abraham, and with the tenor of the Divine covenant made with him ; which, as being prior to the giving of the Sinaitic law, could not depend upon the conditions of the Mosaic dispensation. The design of the Law, he shews to have been, not to supersede the Covenant of Promise or the exercise of faith, but to prepare the way, and shew the necessity for the Gospel as a dispensation of mercy. Under the Law, the people of God were in a state of nonage and subjection : by the Redemption of Christ, they were put into possession of their rights and privileges as sons and heirs. Those whom he was addressing, indeed, had not, before their conversion, been in the condition of subjection to the Law, but in a far more degrading bondage as bowing down to imaginary deities. In them, therefore, who had been turned from polytheism to the knowledge of the True God, and raised to the state of filial privilege, it was the more astonishing and deplorable, that they should fall back into the slavery of superstition. With affectionate earnestness he pleads with them as his spiritual children ; reminds them of the devoted regard they had professed for him ; appeals to them, whether he had done any thing

to justify a change in their feelings towards him ; and expresses his anxious desire to re-visit them in person, that he might the better know how to combat the arguments of their false teachers. At this point, he suddenly strikes off into a fresh strain of argument, addressed to the sticklers for the authority of the Jewish law, and affording a fine specimen of the *argumentum ad hominem*, or the persuasive, as distinguished from the demonstrative mode. They appealed to the Law, to the letter of the Old Testament ; but, as the bondsmen of the Law, the language of Scripture might be cited against them, as denoting their exclusion from the blessing enjoyed by the spiritual progeny of Abraham. In the Patriarch's two sons by different mothers, the one bond, the other free, there was afforded an emblematic illustration of the relative position and spirit of the two contending parties, or of the two Economies ; that of the Law, the Sinaitic Covenant, gendering children into bondage ; and that of Grace or Promise, the Gospel dispensation, under which all the spiritually redeemed are free. The latter are the true heirs, who, like Isaac, might suffer persecution from those who were actuated by the spirit of Ishmael ; but the Scripture should be fulfilled in the expulsion or rejection of those who trusted for salvation to the Law, like the Bondwoman and her Son from the family of Abraham.

This allegorical accommodation of Scripture history, which, if it seems not to have the force of strict logical argument, is yet a reasoning from analogy, well-suited to the purpose of persuasion,—was quite after the manner, and in accordance with the taste, of the Rabbinical

school. By many of the Jewish writers, as by some of the Christian fathers who were of the same school, the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament was carried to an unwarrantable and ridiculous excess; historical facts not being, as by St. Paul, allegorically applied, but converted into allegory, and the true sense of Scripture lost in the mystical meaning attributed to it. But, in the Apostle's figurative use of the Scripture narrative, there is no mysticism; and his deduction from it is entirely practical. He exhorts them, as children of the promise, and free-born, to stand firm in their Christian liberty. And he proceeds, in the plainest and most emphatic terms, to warn them, that, by submitting, as Gentiles, to circumcision, they would virtually renounce Christianity for Judaism, and thereby forfeit all part in the hope and grace of the Gospel. Again changing his strain, he addresses them in the language of affectionate and impassioned expostulation; and using a familiar agonistic metaphor, asks, who had turned them from the course in which they had started so well? Yet he felt confident that they would not be turned from the doctrine he had taught them; and the party who had unsettled them, whoever he was, should bear the penalty of his sin. He then reminds them of what he had suffered from his own countrymen for maintaining that circumcision and an observance of the rites of Judaism were not necessary to salvation, and ought not to be imposed upon the Gentiles: in this doctrine consisted, in the eyes of the Jews, the main offence of the Gospel. These Galatian converts were called to the enjoyment of

freedom from that yoke of bondage; and it became them to assert that freedom, but not to abuse it. By a natural transition, he follows up this consideration with a series of practical admonitions, warning them especially against the danger of mutual dissensions. In conclusion, he adverts to his having written to them thus copiously with his own hand, as a mark of his affectionate solicitude; warns them again of the selfish views and party object of those who sought to bring them under the yoke of Judaism; and protests, that to himself the Cross of Christ was the only subject of glorying, for the sake of which he set light by the opinions and applause of men, as one who had no interest in the present world, and who bore in his own person the marks of crucifixion to the world, the scars of suffering for Christ (the *stigmata* of the Lord Jesus). The Epistle concludes with the benediction affixed to all his Letters to the Churches.

Such is the outline of this admirable composition, which, apart from its inspired character and Apostolic authority, might well challenge a comparison with the finest productions of the great Orators of Greece with whom Paul is ranked by the Author of the Treatise on the Sublime.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

§ 7. During the Apostle's residence at Ephesus, he composed his Fourth Epistle, the first of the two addressed to the Church at Corinth, respecting the date and occasion of which there is no room for any difference of opinion. At ver. 8 of the xvith chapter,

Date and occasion of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

he announces his intention to go into Macedonia by way of Corinth, but says, that he will tarry at Ephesus till Pentecost, as there was a wide sphere of labour opening to him there, while there were many adversaries. That it was written at Ephesus, (not, as the spurious inscription states, from Philippi,) is further indicated by the salutation from the churches of Asia, and from Aquila and Priscilla specifically. On comparing these passages in the Epistle with the history, we are enabled to fix with precision the time of its being written; in the interval between his sending Timotheus and Erastus into Macedonia, (Acts xix. 22,) and the tumult raised by Demetrius and the silversmiths. And, as it was written some time before Pentecost, so, from the allusion to keeping the feast, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, it was probably written about the time of the Passover, or shortly before it; that is, in the spring. Mr. Greswell has also adduced learned reasons for supposing that the disturbance raised by Demetrius was at the time of the celebration of the *Ephesia*,—games in honour of Artemis or Diana, which were held in the summer. At that season, the Asiarchs, who were magistrates annually chosen (like the Roman *Ædiles*), having the superintendence of religious festivals, public games, &c., would be found assembled at Ephesus, as they appear to have been when the disturbance occurred.* Immediately after the suppression of the uproar, Paul called to him the

Greswell,
vol. ii. p. 29.
Acts xix. 31.

* See Greswell, vol. ii. p. 29. The learned Writer observes, that the epithet *νεωκόρος*, applied to the city in the speech of the town-clerk or recorder, begins to appear on the coins of Ephesus first in the reign of Nero, who acceded to the purple, A. U. C. 807 (A. D. 54).

disciples, and took leave of them, and departed to go into Macedonia.

In the meantime, it appears that Timothy, having accomplished the object of his mission to Macedonia, had returned to Ephesus, where, on departing for Macedonia, the Apostle besought him to abide. His original instructions were, to proceed from Macedonia to Corinth; (as indicated 1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10, 11;) but that part of his instructions he was probably unable to fulfil; and Titus appears to have been sent there by the Apostle in his stead. 1 Tim. i. 3.

The immediate occasion of the Apostle's writing his First Epistle to the Corinthian Church, was, the account which he had received of the dissensions and party divisions that had, since he left Corinth, broken out among them. The arrival of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, as a deputation from the Church with a contribution, which he acknowledges as a seasonable supply, afforded the opportunity of which he eagerly availed himself, to transmit to them his Apostolic instructions. 1 Cor. i. 11.
1 Cor. xvi. 17. It was now three (or four) years since he had personally laboured among them; and in the interval, Apollos,* a learned Alexandrian Jew, who had met with Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, and from them acquired a more perfect knowledge of the Christian doctrine, visited the Corinthian brethren, and produced a very powerful impression by his eloquence and erudition upon the minds both of

* A name contracted from Apollonius; as Epaphras from Epaphroditus, and Artemas from Artemonius. As the name of a Jew, it must have been a surname, and was probably given to the learned Rabbi on account of his eloquence.

believers, whom he confirmed and edified by his gifts, and of the Jews, whom he convinced by Scriptural evidence that Jesus is the Messiah. The result, though it must powerfully have contributed to advance the Christian cause in the polished and voluptuous metropolis of Achaia, was, in one respect, disadvantageous, by leading to the formation of a party in the Church, who gloried in being the disciples or followers of the learned Alexandrian, while the converts of St. Paul stood up for his paramount authority, or boasted of him as their master. There appears to have been another faction, consisting, probably, of Jewish believers who had first heard the Gospel at Jerusalem, and who considered themselves as the disciples of Peter or Cephas;* and again, a fourth sect or faction professed to be peculiarly, and in an invidious sense, followers of Christ, and, as such, not bound to receive the instructions, or to acknowledge the authority of St. Paul. That Apollos was not more answerable than Peter, for the factious conduct of his professed disciples and zealous partisans, is clear. He was at Ephesus when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians; and we may reasonably suppose that it was not till after he had left Corinth, that the spirit of faction showed itself in so determinate and mischievous a form. The Apostle had urged his returning to Corinth with the brethren; but "his will was not at all to go at

Acts xviii.
27.

Comp. 1 Cor.
i. 12, and
2 Cor. x. 7.

1 Cor. xiv. 12.

* It has been inferred from 1 Cor. i. 12, that Peter must have visited Corinth; but, as Milman remarks, 'the passage by no means necessarily implies the personal presence of Peter in that city. There was a party there, no doubt a judaizing one, which professed to preach the pure doctrine of Cephas, in opposition to that of Paul.' B. ii. c. 3.

that time," though, it is added, "he will come when he shall have convenient time." From the manner in which St. Paul speaks of his "brother Apollos" in this passage, and throughout the Epistle, it is evident that no jealousy or opposition existed between them, and that they were one in heart as in doctrine. There were among the schismatical teachers, however, those who boldly questioned St. Paul's apostolic authority, and depreciated his character and claims. Of some of these he speaks, in his Second Epistle, with great severity, as false apostles, deceitful workers, and ministers of Satan. They were, like himself, Hebrews, and boasted of their Abrahamic descent; and they had come to Corinth, probably, from Palestine. Although professed converts to Christianity and "ministers of Christ," it would seem that some of them were still Sadducees in heart in respect to the doctrine of the Resurrection; and that they had started doubts, very perplexing to the minds of persons but recently brought out of the darkness of heathenism, as to the identity of the body that should be raised. Other questions savouring of Rabbinical casuistry and the puerility of Jewish superstition, appear to have been mooted; and concerning some of these, the converts of St. Paul had appealed to him for instruction. One case of grievous scandal is referred to as matter of common report, such as even the heathen morality did not tolerate; namely, that of a member of the Christian community who had married his step-mother. It has been suggested, that this might be connived at on the ground taken by the Jewish casuists, that whosoever embraced Judaism

2 Cor. x. 13
—15, 22.

2 Cor. xi. 4.

1 Cor. xv. 12.

1 Cor. vii. 1.

Selden in
Hug, vol. ii.
p. 47.

was regarded as new-born, and severed from all his preceding connexions, so that his mother, father, brother, and sisters no more belonged to him. In this case, his former connexions were not considered in marriage; so that, gross as was this case, it might have been defended upon Jewish principles. The question relating to the superiority of celibacy over a married life, is also likely to have been suggested by the dogmas of ascetics of the Alexandrian school. The licentious manners which characterized this great Emporium, rendered it the more necessary for the Apostle, while rebuking with stern severity all sinful conformity to the world, and everything bordering on impurity, to discountenance an unsocial and repulsive separation, an ascetic self-mortification, or a needless and superstitious scrupulosity. In these respects, the wisdom of the Apostle is strikingly manifested.

1 Cor. v. 10;
x. 27.

Corinth had, from early times, been celebrated for its commercial wealth, its luxury, and its profligate manners. In its Temple of Venus, a thousand priestesses ministered to dissoluteness under the patronage of Religion. The 'prow and stern of Greece,' the key and bulwark of the Peloponnesus,* by its two ports it received, on the one hand, the rich merchandize of Asia, and, on the other, that of Sicily and Italy. Destroyed by the Romans (under Mummius), it had risen again to the dignity of a colony, and become the residence of the proconsul of Achaia, under the Cæsars; and the ancient manners had returned with its commercial prosperity. Of all

* Dion. Chrysostom. Mr. Milman styles it, the Venice of the Old World.

cities, this was accounted the most voluptuous ; and the Satirist could only jocularly affect to be at a loss whether, in this respect, to give the preference to Corinth or to Athens. At the same time, it was the seat of polite learning, a favourite resort of the sophists ; and its Isthmian games, one of the great fairs of antiquity, attracted a vast concourse of strangers from all quarters.

Lucian
in Hug.

§ 8. To the Church of God in this polished and dissolute metropolis, composed of those who were sanctified in Christ Jesus, (constituted holy persons,) St. Paul addresses his Epistle ; associating with himself in the opening salutation, Sosthenes, who is mentioned in the Apostolic History as the chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, but who was now at Ephesus with St. Paul, and is designated as a brother. He begins with expressing his devout thankfulness that the testimony of Christ had been confirmed among them by so rich an impartation of spiritual gifts, that, in this respect, they came behind no other church, especially in the gifts of eloquence and knowledge. He then proceeds at once to refer to what he had heard of their party divisions, and to disclaim having, while among them, afforded the slightest countenance to the formation of a sect or party in his own name. He had even scrupulously abstained from baptizing disciples with his own hands, lest his motives should be misrepresented, or his converts be called his followers, rather than Christians. He had also, in executing his Divine commission by preaching the Gospel, whether to the sceptical Jew or to the philosophic Greek, confined himself to one

Analysis of
the Epistle.

Or their
brother.

theme, most repugnant alike to Jewish prejudices and to Grecian wisdom, Redemption through the Cross of Christ,—a Crucified Messiah. And this faithful saying, the substance of the Divine Message he was sent to proclaim, he had not attempted to adorn with the graces of oratory, or to recommend by elaborate reasoning. Far from aiming to conciliate admiration by a display of eloquence, or from assuming the air of an ambitious philosopher who sought to found a school, he reminds them, that he had appeared among them labouring under bodily infirmity, and suffering from the constant apprehension of personal violence from his inveterate enemies;* and his preaching had not been set off by any of the attractions of human rhetoric, but owed all its efficiency to the Divine influence attending the truth. And why was this, but that their faith might rest, not upon any human authority, but upon the evidence of Divine power? As there were at Corinth some persons who sought to detract from his authority by depreciating his attainments, the Apostle intimates, that, for the course he had adopted in preaching to them, he had a special reason in their own inaptitude to receive the profounder truths of Revelation, which can be discerned and understood only by a spiritual mind. There was a higher wisdom than that of this world, into which he had been himself initiated; but they were not prepared, even now, for its communication. And the proof of this was supplied by their contentions and divisions, which showed them to be still

* Or, perhaps, under nervous tremor, occasioned by his bodily infirmity.

children in Christianity, or unregenerate. He then expostulates with them upon the inconsistency and impropriety of their attaching themselves to any one Minister of Christ in the spirit of worldly partisans, and boasting of him as their leader, to the disparagement of others. He, Paul himself, from whom they had first received the Gospel, as well as Apollos, who had subsequently laboured among them, and much more their other teachers, were but the instruments, in the hand of God, of carrying on His work, of building up His Church, that spiritual temple of which Christ is the foundation; and were no otherwise to be estimated than as His servants, dispensers of the treasure entrusted to them, indebted for all their gifts and endowments to Sovereign Grace. He then, in the language of irony, rebukes the vain-glorious spirit by which, under the influence of their false teachers and party leaders, many of them were inflated, so that, like persons satiated at a feast, or abounding in wealth, wanting nothing, independent, and above control,* they reigned in the church without the Apostles,—as if already in possession of the felicity of the heavenly kingdom. With this condition of luxurious ease or imaginary exaltation, he pathetically contrasts the privations, ill-treatment, sufferings, and toil, which he and his fellow-apostles were called to endure. Under these circumstances, he had set them an example of patience, meekness, and humility, which, as their spiritual father, he exhorts his converts to follow, rather than to copy the spirit of

* Comp. Rev. iii. 17. Or such might be the actual condition of the Corinthian doctors, living in luxury and lording it as princes.

their new teachers. To recal to them his instructions, he had sent Timothy to visit them ; and though some among them insolently presumed upon his not coming in person, it was his intention very shortly to see them, and to put to the proof the boastful pretensions of their teachers. And it rested with them, whether he should come to exert his apostolic authority judicially, or in the spirit of affection and tenderness.

Chap. v.

Having adverted to the painful necessity under which he might find himself placed, of dealing judicially with offenders, the Apostle proceeds to explain himself, by specifically referring to the disgraceful case of one of their number, who had married his step-mother ; and he directs them to act upon the sentence which, though absent, he had felt authorized to pass upon the delinquent, by formally excommunicating him. The presence of such a man in their religious assemblies, was like an unhallowed leaven, corrupting the whole mass, and marring their Passover feast. In reiterating the direction to have no intercourse with persons living in open sin, he explains, that he does not refer to their mixing with unconverted men in the ordinary business of life, but that it applied only to their Christian brethren. Those who were without the pale of the Church, must be left to the judgment of God.

Compare
Jude 12.

The broad distinction between the Church and the world without, furnishes the Apostle with a ground for rebuking them for carrying any of their disputes before the heathen tribunals, to the scandal of their religion. Either they ought to submit their matters to arbitrators chosen from among themselves,

or else to suffer wrong, rather than go to law before the heathen. Instead of this, some of them were chargeable with wronging and defrauding their brethren. But unrighteous persons, such as these, would be excluded from the kingdom of God. Upon this point, the Apostle solemnly cautions them against being deceived by any sophistry. No persons living in the practice of vice could obtain an entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Such had been the case, indeed, with many of them before their conversion; but they had been cleansed from their sins, and made holy and righteous. He therefore urges upon them, by the solemn considerations arising out of their consecration to God and their relation to Christ, to keep their bodies from defilement, and, as redeemed by a precious ransom, to consider themselves, body and spirit, the Lord's.

From the subject of these admonitions, he naturally passes to the notice of a question which had been submitted to him with respect to the expediency of entering into the married state; in treating which he is careful to distinguish between what, as an Apostle, he enjoined in the name of The Lord, and what he offered merely as advice in matters which admitted of option. Another question which had been referred to him, related to the lawfulness of eating food that had been offered in sacrifice to idols; which he decides in the affirmative, with this restriction,—that what is lawful in itself, becomes sinful, if, by our act, we tempt or embolden others to do wrong in going against conscience. He proceeds to remind them, that he had himself acted upon this

Chap. vii.

See p. 150.

principle of abstaining from the use of his liberty and undoubted rights for the sake of others. With some abruptness, as if repelling the insidious allegations of the schismatical teachers who had denied his authority, and depreciated the sacrifices he had made, he exclaims, "Am I not an Apostle? Am I not free?" He was an Apostle, to whom, as to the other Apostles, The Lord had appeared after His resurrection; and the proof of his Apostleship was, the success of his labours among the heathen:—such was his answer to those who disputed his claims. He had, therefore, in common with the other Apostles, a right to be maintained by those to whom he had preached the Gospel, according to the ordinance of Christ; yet, he had waived this right, and supported himself, while among them, by his own labour, that he might preach the Gospel without charge. And he was free from any obligation to man; yet had he adapted his conduct to all, like a servant or slave obliged to please his master, for the sake of the Gospel, and that he might be a fellow-partaker of salvation. Comparing himself in this respect to a competitor in the Isthmian and other public games, he proposes his example for imitation, in seeking, by the preparatory discipline of self-denial, to ensure his gaining the reward of success. Many might start in the race, who should never reach the goal. It was not enough, therefore, to have been brought within the pale of the Church. This consideration he enforces by referring to the sacred privileges enjoyed in common by the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses, who, nevertheless, for the most part perished

in the wilderness, as the punishment of their sensuality, idolatry, and unbelief; sins into which the Corinthian converts were not less liable to fall. More especially he exhorts them to be on their guard against provoking the Divine jealousy, by partaking of the sin of idolatry; and, reverting to the subject of meats offered to idols, he lays down more expressly the rule by which they ought to be guided, so as to avoid injuring the cause of Religion, by throwing stumbling-blocks in the way either of unbelievers or of the weaker members of the Christian body.

The Apostle now turns to another subject. He Chap. xi. expresses his satisfaction that they had continued to observe the institutions which he had established among them; but, as to the manner of observing them, many improprieties had crept in, which he proceeds to point out and rebuke. One related to the unfeminine deportment of those women who, in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, laid aside the veil, the distinguishing mark of their sex. Another abuse consisted in their disorderly celebration of the Lord's Supper, at which they appear to have split into little parties, and, without waiting for one another, eaten what they had severally provided. To expose the gross perversion of the Eucharist which this unseemly practice involved, the Apostle gives them a distinct account of the institution of the Supper by Our Lord, as it had been communicated to him by immediate revelation; and he solemnly cautions them against an unworthy or irreverent participation See p. 91. of the sacred symbols of the Body and Blood of The Lord.

Chap. xii.

In the next place, the Apostle proceeds to treat of the subject of Spiritual Gifts, with which, it appears, the Corinthian Church was richly endowed, so as not to be inferior in that respect to any other body of Christians. First, he puts them on their guard, as having once been idolaters, against false pretensions to inspiration; referring, probably, to the heathen oracles and the Pythic divination; or to some Gnostic pretenders, possibly, who affected to be inspired, and yet denied Jesus to be the Lord. The test of the teacher was his doctrine. The diversified gifts of the Spirit, moreover, had one common Author and source, and were all alike intended to promote the edification of the general body, their very diversity being adapted to bind together its members in mutual dependence and sympathy; it became each individual, therefore, to be contented with the function and place allotted to him. All could not have those higher and more extraordinary gifts which they too eagerly coveted; but he could shew them a more excellent method of attaining what they ought to aim at,—the edification of the Church, by the cultivation of Love. In an exquisite rhetorical digression, he expatiates upon the superiority of Love to all intellectual endowments and preternatural gifts, in point of intrinsic excellence, utility, and permanence. Returning then to his theme, he teaches them, that, of all spiritual gifts, that of prophecy, or speaking to men so as to edify, exhort, and comfort them, was chiefly to be desired, rather than the more extraordinary powers which were given as a miraculous attestation of the truth for the conviction of unbelievers. Finally, he exhorts

them to exercise their several gifts in an orderly and becoming manner.

Having now disposed of the questions which had been put to him, relating to matters of practice and discipline, the Apostle enters upon a subject which he appears to have reserved as the most important and vital of all. There were some among the Corinthians who denied the future resurrection of the body. In proceeding to combat this Sadducean heresy, he begins by reminding them of that great event which lay at the foundation of the Christian doctrine, and which was the substance of the Gospel he had preached to them; the death of Christ, and his Resurrection on the third day, according to the Scriptures. To deny that there is a resurrection, was to deny this cardinal fact, and to make the Apostles false witnesses. But Christ had risen as the first-fruits and pledge of the future Resurrection; and he was to reign at the right hand of God, till the last enemy, Death, should be subdued. Were there no resurrection to look forward to, the motive for patient endurance would be destroyed, and the Epicurean maxim would be wisdom. The Apostle refers to the peril he had recently encountered at Ephesus from ferocious adversaries; and appeals to them, what advantage it could be to him to be in perpetual jeopardy of life, unless he had looked for a joyful resurrection. Citing part of a verse which is found both in Euripides and in Menander, but which had probably passed into a proverb, he warns them against the corrupting influence of familiar intercourse with the sensual. He then proceeds to meet the objections which had been urged

Chap. xv.

See p. 150.

against the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, on the ground of the mystery attaching to the mode and to the identity of the future body. The production of a blade of corn from a grain that appears to perish in the ground, presents an analogous display of Divine power, equally mysterious as to the mode; but, as now we see an infinite diversity in the composition of material bodies, so will the human body that shall be raised, differ, in its material structure and qualities, from the corruptible one that is committed to the grave. The didactic style of the argument rises into the fervour of eloquence, as the Apostle expatiates upon the glorious nature of the change; and he announces to them, as what had hitherto been a secret, but which he was commissioned to divulge, that this change would pass, in a moment, upon the bodies of those who should be alive at the coming of Christ. He exhorts them, therefore, as having this assured prospect of a heavenly reward, to be stedfast and unwearied in the service of the Lord. In conclusion, he gives directions as to the collection which was being made for the poor brethren at Jerusalem; informs them of his intention to visit Corinth, after he had been into Macedonia; commends Timothy (in case of his visiting Corinth) to their cordial and respectful treatment; makes honourable mention of the Corinthian brethren who were returning to them with this Epistle; and concludes with the accustomed salutation and benediction.

Character of
the Epistle
as a composition.

§ 9. The general strain of this noble production of inspired wisdom is more didactic, though abounding with rhetorical passages, than the Epistle to the Gala-

tians, and most of St. Paul's writings. It seems as if, in addressing the Corinthians, he restrained himself from any display of that "excellence of speech" or rhetorical skill in which he was well qualified to shine, as well as from topics of a recondite or lofty character. It is observable, that the doctrines treated of in this Epistle, are at once fundamental and elementary; such as, in another Epistle, are referred to as among "the first rudiments of the Oracles of God," and in which only novices required to be instructed again and again. To this class of truths, the doctrine of the Resurrection clearly belongs, as well as the nature of spiritual gifts, the design of the Christian ordinances, and the practical subjects of exhortation which occupy the larger portion. And this adaptation of the Epistle to the character which he himself gives of the Corinthian church, as composed of persons endowed with knowledge, adepts in the philosophy of the schools, but novices in the school of Christ, is at once a mark of its genuineness as a production of St. Paul, and an evidence of his Apostolic wisdom.

Heb. vi. 2.

In another point of view, this Epistle is valuable, as furnishing a confirmation of the truth of the historic record with regard to those miraculous endowments which attested the Apostolic commission. It is quite incredible, that the Author of this Epistle could have ventured to refer with so much minuteness to diversities of gifts as actually possessed and exercised by the Corinthian believers, if the fact had not been matter of notoriety; still less, that he would have charged them with misusing for purposes of dis-

play their splendid and miraculous endowments. Yet, the brevity with which these are incidentally enumerated, is remarkable, as it denotes that the persons to whom he wrote were well acquainted with the diversified character of those gifts, and required no explanation of terms which to us have become obscure and of uncertain import. For instance, it is now difficult to ascertain the precise import of the *λόγος σοφίας*, as distinguishable from the *λόγος γνώσεως*; yet, the distinction must at the time have been well understood as denoting a different kind of Inspiration,—such, perhaps, as was peculiar, on the one hand, to Apostles, and, on the other, to Prophets and Teachers. Extraordinary as was their character, the Apostle does not expatiate upon them with a view to magnify their importance, or to prove their supernatural origin. With regard to those gifts, more especially, which were a sign to unbelievers, there was no possible room for deception or collusion. The enemies of Christianity did not attempt to deny the miracles wrought, but ascribed them to magical and occult causes, or to the agency of evil spirits. A belief in Inspiration was, in that age, common to both the Jews and the Pagans; and if, on this account, pretensions to Inspiration were the more likely to be credulously received, it was the more necessary that the miraculous gifts which were the standing proof of the Ascension of Christ, and the credentials of His Apostles, should be broadly distinguishable from every false pretension, whether originating in possession, in fanatical delusion, or in imposture.

The Jewish Rabbies distinguish four degrees of

Prophetic Inspiration ; assigning the lowest rank to that in which the impression is made upon the imagination, as in dreams and visions, and in which the prophet himself is not able clearly to discern the mystical meaning of his parables and allegories. This species of Inspiration, the seat of which is the imaginative faculty, would be most easily imitated by pretenders to divination. In the second degree, the imaginative and the rational powers were equally balanced. In the third, the prophetic spirit, acting principally upon the reason and understanding of the prophets, guided them consistently and intelligibly into the comprehension of things. The last or highest degree was the *Gradus Mosaicus*, which the Jewish writers held to be distinguishable, by the absence of all ecstasy or impression upon the imagination ; by the immediateness and familiarity of the Divine communication ; (as it is said, “The Lord spake unto Moses face to face;”) by its being unattended with terror or mental disturbance ; and lastly, by its constantly abiding or being at all times available.* Whether these distinctions are in all respects accurate or not, they may throw some light upon the different kinds of Inspiration which are obviously recognized by the New Testament writers. As an instance of what might certainly seem to correspond to the lowest degree, we may refer to the prophetic impulse under which Agabus, after the manner of the ancient prophets, is seen accompanying with a symbolical action, the prediction that the

Exod. xxxiii.
11.

* See the learned Discourse ‘of Prophecy,’ in ‘Select Discourses,’ by John Smith, Fellow of Queen’s College, Cambridge.

owner of Paul's girdle would be bound by the Jews at Jerusalem. This species of Inspiration, by which future events were predicted, is clearly ascribed to the agency of the Holy Ghost; yet, it was evidently that which most nearly resembled the "spirit of divination" in the Pythoness, and could most easily be simulated by impostors. Accordingly, it was deemed necessary to caution the churches not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets had gone forth. The danger of being imposed upon by false prophets, seems to have been specially provided against by a distinct gift, that of "discerning of spirits," which appears to have been deemed by no means of inferior dignity or importance. It is remarkable, that Plato, speaking of the power of divination as seated in the imagination, and inferior to wisdom, lays it down as a law, 'that prophets should be set as it were judges over these enthusiastic divinations, which prophets some ignorantly and falsely call diviners.' One of the marks by which the genuine Divine inspiration and the pseudo-prophetical spirit were distinguishable, was, the self-command and calmness of judgment attending the former, and the ecstatic, involuntary, and ungovernable character of the latter. 'It is the property of a diviner,' says Chrysostom, 'to be ecstatical, to undergo some violence, to be tossed and hurried about like a madman. But it is otherwise with a prophet, whose understanding is awake, and his mind in a sober and orderly temper, and he knows every thing that he saith.' St. Paul evidently alludes to this characteristic of true Inspiration,

Acts xx. 23.

Acts xvi. 16.

1 John iv. 1.

1 Cor. xii. 10.

In his
Timæus.
See John
Smith's
Disc. p. 209.

Homily 28
on 1 Ep. to
Cor. cited
by John
Smith.

when he tells the Corinthians, that “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”* Any uncontrollable impulse, therefore, was to be suspected; and the scene of confusion and tumult which he describes as taking place in their assemblies, when “every one had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a tongue, had an interpretation,” was not only unseemly, but even tended to render questionable the character and source of the inspiration under which they spake, since God could not be the author of discord.

1 Cor. xiv. 26.

ver. 33.

The inspiration and authority to which the Apostles laid claim, were evidently of the highest degree, corresponding to that Divine illumination which the Jewish writers represent as peculiar to their Master Moses,—clear, distinct, serene, permanent. And it is made a test of the inferior inspiration, that those who possessed it recognized the paramount authority which attached to the Apostolic. “If any one among you is reputed to be a prophet or inspired person, let him acknowledge what I write to you to be injunctions of the Lord.” “He that is of God heareth us :

1 Cor. xiv. 37.

* ‘An inspiration, abstractly considered, can only satisfy the mind of him to whom it is made of its own authority and authenticity; and therefore, that one man may know that another hath that doctrine revealed to him by a prophetic spirit which he delivers, he must also either be inspired, and so be *in gradu prophetico* in a true sense, or be confirmed in the belief of it by some miracle, whereby it may appear that God hath committed his truth to such a one, by giving him some signal power in altering the course of nature; which, indeed, was the way by which the Prophets of old ordinarily confirmed their doctrine, when they delivered anything new to the people; which course Our Saviour and his disciples also took to confirm the truth of the Gospel.’—John Smith’s Disc. p. 286.

he that is not of God, heareth us not: hereby we may know how to distinguish the spirit of truth from that of error." Such lofty pretensions as these required to be sustained by evidence of no ordinary or equivocal character; and accordingly, we find St. Paul appealing to the proofs of his Apostleship wrought among the Corinthians, "in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds," while he "spoke with tongues" more than they all, and could boast of visions and revelations vouchsafed to him, transcending any to which the pseudo-prophets could lay claim. The latter fact rested, of course, upon his own testimony; but, as to the miraculous deeds to which he appeals, the Corinthians are addressed as having witnessed them. The fact, therefore, must have been notorious.

1 John iv. 6.

2 Cor. vii. 12.

1 Cor. xiv. 18.

The proof of the Apostolic Inspiration, then, is, that the Apostles claimed implicit submission to their authority as infallible and divinely commissioned teachers, appealing to their miraculous powers as credentials of their prophetic and plenary inspiration, and that those claims were recognized. As it is impossible they could themselves be deceived, either they must have been what they claimed to be, infallible, or they were impostors. But, as it is impossible that such imposture should not have been detected and exposed, the history of Christianity attests at once the irrefragable character of the evidence, and the genuineness of those pretensions, by which the Divine signet is affixed to all that they taught.

CHAP. VIII.

THE EPISTLES TO TITUS, I. TO TIMOTHY, II. TO
THE CORINTHIANS, AND TO THE ROMANS.

CONTINUATION OF THE NARRATIVE FROM PAUL'S LEAVING EPHESUS TO HIS LAST VOYAGE TO JERUSALEM—INQUIRY INTO THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE TO TITUS AND FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY—DIFFICULTY RELATING TO PAUL'S VISIT TO CRETE—ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE TO TITUS—ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY—THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS: ITS DATE AND CHARACTER AS A COMPOSITION—ANALYSIS—DATE OF THE RAPTURE REFERRED TO IN CHAP. XII—THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: ITS DATE AND OCCASION—ANALYSIS—ITS CHARACTER AS A COMPOSITION.

§ 1. WHEN St. Paul left Ephesus to go into Macedonia, he desired Timothy to remain behind, while he proceeded by way of Troas, where he expected to be joined by Titus, whom he had sent to Corinth to ascertain the effect produced by his Epistle to that church; and he was greatly disappointed and troubled at not finding him there. He therefore hastened onward to Macedonia, where Titus shortly afterwards arrived, bringing intelligence which filled the Apostle with consolation and joy. After going over those parts, (and it was probably in this journey that he penetrated into Dalmatia, and extended his Apostolic

Continuation of St. Paul's travels.
1 Tim. i. 3.

2 Cor. ii. 13;
vii. 6; xii. 18.

Acts xx. 2.

Rom. xv. 19. circuit into Illyricum,) he came into Greece, where he abode three months, part of which he must have passed at Corinth. It was his intention thence to proceed by sea to Syria; but he was diverted from this purpose by learning that his Jewish enemies had formed a plot to seize him, and were lying in wait for his embarkation. He therefore returned to Philippi, accompanied by Silas; while Timothy, who had joined the Apostle in Greece, together with a company of brethren, crossed over to Troas, and waited there for St. Paul. It was after Easter that Paul and his beloved colleague, Silas, sailed from Philippi: they reached Troas in five days, and remained there a week, during which Paul wrought the miraculous restoration to life of a young man, Eutyclus, who had fallen from a window in an upper room, and been taken up dead. From Troas, he proceeded overland to Assos (now Beyram), on the Adramyttian Gulf, where he met the vessel in which the rest of his party had embarked; and, after four days sail, they reached Miletus, at the mouth of the Meander, where they landed. St. Paul had not touched at Ephesus, because he was anxious not to be detained in Asia; but, from Miletus, he sent to the elders of the Ephesian church, who came down to him, and received that solemn and affecting charge from his lips which is recorded in the Apostolic history. Paul and his companions* then pursued their voyage, by way of Rhodes, to Patara in Lycia, where they found

From Assos
to Mitylene;
—to Chios;
—to Tro-
gyllium:
—to Mile-
tus.

* Timothy, however, it is suggested by Lardner, probably parted here from the Apostle, and returned to Ephesus, as he does not appear to have attended him to Jerusalem.

a vessel bound for Phenicia. Landing at Tyre, they spent a week with the disciples, and then sailed again for Ptolemais (Acre); whence they proceeded to Cæsarea, where they remained for many days before setting out for Jerusalem, which, however, they must have reached before Pentecost, or in about six weeks after leaving Philippi. If St. Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia in the year 56, this must have been (as Lardner supposes) the Pentecost of A.D. 58.

Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 400.

During the intervening two years, four of the Epistles of Paul appear to have been written; namely, the Epistle to Titus, the First Epistle to Timothy, the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans. Respecting the latter two, there is no question: the date of the former two is less certain and has been much controverted.

§ 2. The First Epistle to Timothy is enumerated by Theodoret as the fifth of St. Paul's Epistles; and referring to the Apostle's language in the opening verses, he remarks: 'It is manifest, therefore, that, when Paul went the second time into Macedonia, he left the most excellent Timothy at Ephesus, to take care of those who had received the salutary doctrine.' In making it the fifth in order, however, he places it after the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and before that to the Galatians; in both which respects, his opinion must be deemed erroneous. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians could not have been written before the Apostle had left Ephesus; and at the date of his writing it, Timothy, as appears from the opening salutation, had rejoined him. The Epistle to Timothy must therefore have been sent to

Contro-
verted date
of the First
Epistle to
Timothy
and Epistle
to Titus.

In Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 17.

him at Ephesus, while the Apostle was still in Macedonia, and when he was contemplating a return to Asia; as is indicated by the expressions, “hoping to come unto thee shortly.” Lardner, therefore, supposes it to have been written before the end of the year 56.* Those who adopt the hypothesis of a later date, upon grounds which are examined and rejected by the learned Writer, are compelled to suppose it written after the release of the Apostle from his first imprisonment at Rome.

1 Tim. iii. 14.

This hypothesis, first started by Bishop Pearson, and adopted by Paley, has found a very zealous advocate in the late Rev. James Tate, Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, in his ‘Continuous History’ of the Apostle's Labours. Among the most important subjects which he has aimed to elucidate, he ranks the posteriority of the First Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus to St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, which he represents as constituting ‘the very column on which the calculation adopted and maintained for what is called the Last Apostolic Progress has entirely to rest for its support.’ His ‘original argument against the early date of the First Epistle to Timothy,’ demands a brief examination. Mr. Tate admits, that Timothy, after visiting the Macedonian churches, might have visited the church at Corinth, and yet have had time to arrive at Ephesus before Paul's departure from that city. Of this, indeed,

* Dr. Burton refers it to A.D. 52. Pearson, Whitby, Basnage, Cave, Fabricius, Mill, and Greswell contend for the later date of 64 or 65. Baronius, Estius, Lightfoot, Benson, Doddridge, Hammond, and Hug agree with Lardner.

supposing him to have set out from Ephesus at the end of winter, Professor Hug has shewn the practicability. The journey from Ephesus to Troas would occupy four days; the passage from Troas to Neapolis, the port of Philippi, four or five days; on leaving Macedonia, he would have a journey of about ten days to Athens, and thence of two days to Corinth; the voyage from Corinth to Ephesus would occupy thirteen or fourteen days. Thus, allowing five or six weeks for his stay in the different places which he visited, the whole circuit might have been performed in less than three months.

Hug. vol. ii
p. 98.

From
Athens to
Thessa-
lonica, 264
miles; from
Thessa-
lonica to
Philippi,
94 miles.

It is, however, objected, that, if Timothy had joined the Apostle at Ephesus, after visiting Corinth, St. Paul must, in that case, have received from him 'the very latest information of the now happy state of things in the church at Corinth; and being released, therefore, from all immediate solicitude about the spiritual state of the Corinthian brethren, he could not possibly have felt any anxiety or impatience to hear the report of what must have been of an earlier date, from the mouth of Titus, concerning them. The supposed arrival, therefore, of Timothy at Ephesus, before Paul departed from thence, thus stands,' Mr. Tate contends, 'utterly irreconcilable with the recorded fact, that Paul, when he reached Troas, was labouring under affectionate disquietude as to meeting Titus there; which painful feeling was unabated, till Titus after all came to him at Philippi, and poured into his heart the consolatory intelligence that all at Corinth was well.'

Tate's Horæ
Paul, p. 161.

The whole force of this 'original argument' de-

pends upon the assumption, that Timothy had actually visited Corinth, agreeably to his original instructions. Not only is this assumed without evidence, but there are reasons for a contrary conclusion. In the first place, some doubt appears to have existed in the Apostle's mind from the first, as to Timothy's being able to visit Corinth; for, while he speaks of having sent Timothy to them, he expresses himself, towards the close of the Epistle, in the language of doubt, as if it were a contingency—"Now in case of Timothy's coming." In the second place, Titus's visit to Corinth would have been unnecessary, had Timothy proceeded thither agreeably to the Apostle's original intention; and it may therefore be fairly concluded, that he was sent there in Timothy's stead. This would explain why Timothy did not visit Corinth, and why he returned to Ephesus the sooner, recalled, it may have been, by the Apostle. At all events, there seems to have been a change of the original arrangement. In the third place, although Timothy's name appears in the opening salutation of the Second Epistle, and mention is made of his having preached Christ to the Corinthians, in company with the Writer and Silvanus, there occurs no reference whatever to Timothy's supposed visit to Corinth as the Apostle's delegate. That of Titus is repeatedly spoken of; and it is in the highest degree improbable that, if Timothy had recently visited Corinth, no notice whatever should have been taken of the circumstance. But, if he had not, then the argument drawn from the mistaken assumption is baseless. There was ample time for Timothy's visit to Mace-

Ch. xvi. 10.
This Mr.
Tate has
candidly
noticed.

Ch. i. 19.

donia; and nothing forbids the conclusion that he had returned to Ephesus before St. Paul's departure,—that he was left there by the Apostle,—and that he did not rejoin him in Macedonia till the following year.

How long St. Paul remained in Macedonia before he went into Greece, does not appear from the history; but, from his language in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, it is evident that he had been detained much longer than he had expected, and that his intention of wintering at Corinth, referred to in his First Epistle, had been overruled. He had, as he informs them, purposed to take Corinth in his way to Macedonia, and afterwards to return from Macedonia, by way of Corinth, in his way to Judea; but the first part of his plan was set aside by his taking the route of Troas, and he had not been able to fulfil the latter part, his voyage to Syria being postponed for a year. Hence he deems it necessary to assure the Corinthians, that he had not without sufficient reason changed his purpose; that he had even deferred his visit to Corinth out of consideration to their interests; 2 Cor. i. 23. but, as regarded their ready compliance with his directions respecting the collection for the saints at Jerusalem, he had confidently adduced their example to the churches of Macedonia, boasting that Achaia had been ready with its contributions a year before. This proves that above a year must have elapsed between his writing the First and the Second Epistle. The winter after he left Ephesus, which he had thought of spending at Corinth, must have been spent in Macedonia, or in those parts. 1 Cor. xvi. 6. Now in writing to Titus,

St. Paul directs that he should join him at Nicopolis, for he had determined there to winter. This Nicopolis must have been the city founded by Augustus, to commemorate his victory at Actium, situated in Epirus; since (as Mr. Greswell remarks) the Nicopolis on the confines of Thrace was founded by Trajan, and was not then in existence.* Lardner concludes, that the winter which the Apostle passed in that city, was the one which followed his departure from Ephesus, and that the Epistle to Titus, as well as that to Timothy, was written, about the same time, from Macedonia. And such was the opinion of Theodoret.

Date of the
Apostle's
visit to
Crete.

§ 3. But here a difficulty results from the fact, that Titus, when the Epistle was addressed to him, had been left by the Apostle in Crete: this implies, that St. Paul had himself visited that island, of which no intimation is given in the Evangelical narrative. The question arises, therefore, at what time could the Apostolic visit to Crete have taken place?

Acts xviii.
18.

Professor Hug thinks, that the only journey in which St. Paul could have left Titus behind him in Crete, was, when he left Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla for Ephesus. 'That time alone he was so near Crete as to have had an opportunity of going there, either by embarking on board of a ship which was bound thither, or by being driven there at sea.' In the latter case, one of those perils at sea which he mentions in 2 Cor. xi., may have taken place. 'What otherwise,' he asks, 'was the cause, when he had embarked for Syria, of his coming, instead,

Hug, vol. ii.
§ 90, p. 129.

* Greswell, vol. ii. p. 88. So Jerome thought, though Theodoret and Chrysostom supposed the Thracian Nicopolis to be intended.

to Ephesus?' Yet, he supposes, somewhat inconsistently, that the voyage by Crete was not an unusual road of commerce between Corinth and Ephesus. Conformably to this hypothesis, he supposes the Epistle to Titus to have been written at Ephesus, before St. Paul sailed for Syria; and the Nicopolis referred to, to have been the city of that name between Antioch and Tarsus. This opinion involves so much that is purely conjectural, if not improbable, that it has not found much favour with Biblical critics.

Lardner agrees with Baronius and Lightfoot in supposing that St. Paul's visit to Crete took place between his leaving Ephesus for Macedonia and his second visit to Corinth. 'It appears to me very probable,' says the learned Writer, 'that, at this time, Paul was in Illyricum and Crete. But I cannot digest the order of his journeys, since St. Luke has not related them.' It may be observed, indeed, that, under the general expression, "he came into Greece," might very well be included a visit to Crete. Had the sacred Writer intended simply, that the Apostle came from Macedonia to Corinth, he would scarcely have said, that he came into Hellas, but rather into Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital. Hellas or Greece, in the largest sense, comprehended both the Peninsula and the Islands of the Ægean Sea, as well as the Continental provinces south of Macedonia; but Greece Proper was limited to the country south of Thessaly and Epirus, now divided into Eastern and Western Hellas. There is, however, a difficulty which forbids our bringing the voyage to

Crete within those three months, inasmuch as it must have been prior to the Apostle's wintering at Nicopolis, which was not in Greece. We are therefore led to the conclusion, that, when Paul left Ephesus, he was attended by Titus, and that, before he proceeded to Macedonia, he was induced to visit Crete, possibly by finding a vessel bound for that island; and it might be his plan to pass by way of Achaia into Macedonia, as he intimates in writing to the Corinthians. Circumstances induced him, however, to leave Titus in Crete, and to deviate from his intended route. He therefore charged Titus, after executing his commission in Crete, to visit Corinth, and thence to repair to Troas, where it is evident the Apostle expected to find him. It is not unlikely that the Epistle to Titus was written at Troas, where Paul might learn that he was still in Crete; and that it was despatched to him by Artemas, or by Tychicus, on whose arrival he was to hasten to join the Apostle at Nicopolis. It may serve to strengthen the probability of this supposition, to observe, that Apollos was at Ephesus when Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and that he was in Crete when Titus was left there. We have no means of filling up the hiatus between Paul's leaving Titus and reaching Troas, on his way to Macedonia; but, when we recollect that the only navigation in those times was by short passages from port to port, or by coasting voyages, we may account for its taking up sufficient time to justify his expecting Titus at Troas. From Crete, he would most likely make his passage in a vessel bound for one of the Syrian ports, whence he

Tit. iii. 12.

might proceed either by sea or overland: in either case, he would be liable to detention at the important cities in his route, and he would doubtless avail himself of every opportunity of preaching the Gospel where it had not been preached. It is at least certain, that large portions of St. Paul's life are passed over in the history, which we know to have been busily spent. From the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, it appears, that he had thrice suffered shipwreck, and been a night and a day in the deep, of which no account is to be found in the Acts; he must, therefore, have taken voyages which exposed him to these misfortunes, *previously* to his journey to Macedonia. Now, on no occasion would this have been more likely to occur, than in his passage to and from Crete. It must be confessed, as Paley remarks of a different explanation, that 'the journey thus traced out for St. Paul, is, in a great measure, hypothetical; but it should be observed, that it is a species of consistency which seldom belongs to falsehood, to admit of an hypothesis which includes a great number of independent circumstances without contradiction.'

Hor. Paul.
c. xiii.

The hypothesis which Paley adopts, is, that, after his liberation from his first imprisonment at Rome, St. Paul sailed into Asia, taking Crete in his way, leaving Titus at Crete, and Timothy at Ephesus, as he went into Macedonia, and writing to both not long after, from the Peninsula of Greece. This hypothesis cuts the knot of the difficulty arising from the attempt to combine the scattered indications of the Apostle's proceedings into a consistent narrative; and it supposes him to have executed his intention of

visiting Philippi and Colosse as soon as he should be set at liberty at Rome. But, in the first place, the main reason for postponing the date of the First Epistle to Timothy, is the assumption, which has been shewn to be erroneous, that there was no journey into Macedonia prior to Paul's imprisonment, which accorded with the circumstance of his leaving Timothy at Ephesus.* In the second place, as Lardner argues, 'all that is said of Paul's going into Spain, and Crete, and some other places, after being released from his imprisonment at Rome, is mere conjecture, without any good authority, either from the books of the New Testament or very early antiquity. Nor is it at all likely, that the Cretans should have been so long without being instructed in the doctrine of the Gospel.' Especially considering how much earlier Cyprus and Libya had been evangelized, this will appear a forcible argument. Again, the fact, that Titus afterwards was sent into Dalmatia, while the Apostle was a prisoner at Rome, affords a reason for supposing that he had been there before, although it is not stated in the history. But further, the internal evidence is in favour of this early date. It is scarcely reasonable to think, as Lardner remarks, that Paul should have occasion, so late as the year 64 or 65, to send to his assistants and fellow-labourers such par-

* Mr. Greswell is unusually positive in maintaining, that neither Epistle could have been written before Paul's imprisonment at Rome, or before A.U.C. 817 (A.D. 64); but his main reasons are, that 'the men speaking perverse things had not,' before then, 'risen up in the Ephesian church;' and that 'the constitution of the visible church had not,' till then, 'assumed its settled and definite state under the government of bishops, presbyters, and deacons.'

ticular directions concerning the qualifications of elders (or bishops) and deacons, as are found in these two Epistles. There were certainly elders at Ephesus, exercising the episcopacy of the church, when Paul touched at Miletus, in his way to Judea; and, in fact, in the very first apostolic circuit of Paul with Barnabas, they “ordained elders in every church,” who, in the Epistle to the Philippians, as well as in the farewell address to those of Ephesus, are styled *episcopi*, or bishops. Once more, Timothy, though still youthful for a rabbi at the date of the First Epistle addressed to him, as he was also when St. Paul proposed sending him to Corinth, could scarcely have been so young, seven and even ten years later than the date of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, as to lead the Apostle to say, “Let no man despise thy youth.”

Acts xiv. 20.

1 Tim. iv. 12.

That the two Epistles, to Titus and to Timothy, bear strong and all but indubitable marks of having been written about the same time, is admitted on all hands; and both are impressed with the same character. The question has been raised, whether they are to be considered as private letters, intended chiefly for the guidance of the individuals to whom they were addressed, or as public charges, in which the Apostle conveyed his exhortations indirectly to the churches. That the latter is the true description, the internal evidence sufficiently indicates, as well as their place in the sacred Canon.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

Character-
istic fea-
tures of the
Epistle.

Hug, part ii.
§ 91.

§ 4. The Epistle to Titus, probably the earlier of the two, is distinguished, as Professor Hug remarks, by the strong marks of local reference. It might be explained and confirmed, in almost every sentence, by citations from classical writers. ‘Nature had endowed this Island with all that renders man happy; the inhabitants, likewise, had formerly possessed a constitution which was renowned, and frequently compared with that of Sparta; but, at this time, and even long before, the state of laws and of morals had sunk very low.’ Polybius characterizes them as fickle, prone to quarrelling, to civil disturbances and frays, to robbery and violence; as avaricious and basely sordid, whence arose their treachery, their false and deceitful disposition, which had passed into a proverb. Even in the times of purer morals, they were addicted to intemperance; and their propensity to incontinence is the subject of frequent censure by ancient writers. One of their native writers, Epimenides,* bore that testimony to their brutish and slothful character, which Paul pronounced to be so true. Some of the Jews who had established themselves in Crete, the Apostle seems to have regarded as more dangerous, in many respects, than the natives themselves. There were Hellenistic Jews from Crete, who had gone up to Jerusalem to attend the feast of

* Epimenides, the writer referred to as one of their prophets, was reputed, Theophylact says, to be an able *μάγιστρος*. Hence, Cicero applies to him the term, *vaticinans*.

Pentecost, and who witnessed the miraculous effects of the effusion of the Holy Spirit ; and by converts from among these Cretan Jews, the Christian faith was doubtless planted in that island. The mission of Titus, who was a Greek, like that of the Apostle of the Gentiles himself, would, however, be directed chiefly to the heathen population, or to converts from heathenism ; and it was over these, probably, as being unaccustomed to the synagogue government by elders, that he was to appoint *episcopi*, or bishops.

The Epistle opens with the customary salutation, in which the Apostle recognizes Titus as his spiritual son ; and he then declares the object for which he had left him in Crete ; as if to obviate all doubt or question as to the authority by which Titus was acting.* He proceeds to describe, less for the guidance of Titus himself, we may suppose, than as an admonition to candidates, the qualifications requisite in a Christian pastor or ruler of the church ; and he intimates, that the greatest caution would be requisite in the selection of proper persons, on account of the many ungovernable spirits and arrogant pretenders, who would be ready to thrust themselves into the sacred office ; public teachers whose only motives were venal, and who, for the sake of lucre, taught things unbecoming. More especially were such characters numerous among those of the Circumcision, with whom it would be necessary to take a decided

Analysis of
the Epistle.

* Calvin remarks, that St. Paul wrote to Titus with a view to arm him with his own authority in the discharge of the commission intrusted to him, and that he did not write privately to Titus so much as publicly to the Cretans.

course, and to rebuke them sharply. The Apostle next describes the virtues which ought severally to distinguish the aged and the young; exhorting Titus to set a pattern, in his own conduct, of the virtues he was to inculcate. He is instructed also to teach the domestic slaves to be submissive and faithful; whereby, abject as was their social condition, they would recommend the Christian doctrine; for the salvation of the Gospel, which was a redemption from all iniquity, had been revealed to all orders and classes of mankind. He was also to insist upon obedience to governors and magistrates, and upon a peaceable and meek deportment towards all men, as peculiarly incumbent upon those who had been formerly, like the other heathens, slaves of the most degrading lusts and hateful dispositions, and who were indebted for their regeneration to the sovereign grace of God. Although justification is by Grace, it was necessary to insist upon the obligation under which believers in God are laid, to maintain an honourable and useful course. Such matters of practical exhortation were profitable; but frivolous inquiries, scholastic subtilities, and casuistical wranglings were to be avoided; and one who persisted in contentious opposition was, after a second admonition, to be rejected or shunned, as a man perverted or contemned by his own conscience. Some brief directions are then given to Titus, as to his joining the Apostle at Nicopolis, and speeding Zenas and Apollos on their journey; and the more immediate disciples or converts of Paul are especially exhorted to maintain good works, (by which, industrious labour seems especially

intended,) not only for the supply of their own necessities, but also to enable them to shew hospitality and liberality to others. The Epistle closes with a brief salutation and benediction.

If this Apostolic Charge, distinguished by its terseness, does not contain any bursts of eloquence, it bears the stamp of Inspiration in the conscious authority and the wisdom which it displays. Nothing can be more admirable than the skill with which so large an amount of instruction, embracing doctrine, morals, and discipline, is compressed into an Epistle scarcely exceeding in length many single chapters of the other Books of the New Testament.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

§ 5. The First Epistle to Timothy had evidently the same general purpose as that to Titus, and, as Calvin remarks, was written for the sake of others more than of him to whom it was addressed; containing many things which would have been superfluous, had the Apostle intended it for Timothy alone. It may therefore be considered as, in effect, an Epistle to the church at Ephesus. As, in writing to Titus, the Apostle begins with declaring for what object he had left him at Crete, so, he commences this Epistle by stating why he had desired Timothy to remain at Ephesus; namely, to oppose and counteract the insidious efforts of the Rabbinical doctors and other intrusive teachers to blend their dogmas and puerile traditions with the Christian doctrine, as comprised

Analysis of
the Epistle
to Timothy.

in the glorious Gospel which he was Divinely commissioned to preach. The reference to the high trust committed to himself as an Apostle, calls forth a devout and impassioned expression of gratitude for the mercy which had been so signally shown to one who had been a blasphemer and a persecutor, and which, as an example of the Divine clemency, held out encouragement to the vilest transgressors to repent and believe. He then resumes the subject of his charge to his son Timothy; and he proceeds to give directions, in the first place, relating to public worship. To remove any doubts as to the propriety of praying for heathen magistrates, the Apostle enjoins that supplication and thanksgivings should be offered on behalf of all men, and for kings and rulers, therefore, more especially; for the salvation of the Gospel was to be proclaimed to all. Prayer was to be offered not only for all, but by all men in every place, without official or ceremonial restrictions. As to Christian women, they also were to pray, but not to teach or to assume authority in the church; and their most becoming ornaments were modesty and beneficence. Next, the Apostle specifies the qualifications required in one who aspired to the office of a pastor or ruler in the church; also, what ought to be looked for in the character of deacons or ministers, and deaconesses. These brief directions he deemed it necessary to transmit, in order that, if he (the Apostle) should be prevented from rejoining him, Timothy might know how to conduct the affairs of the Christian household in the maintenance of the Truth, the Mystery of the Faith, of which is

So, Bloomfield shows, we must interpret *ὡσαύτως*, ch. ii. 9.

given a very remarkable summary in a hexalogue of propositions or articles.* Adverting, then, to the predictions which had foretold that apostacies would occur, as the result of false doctrine and Satanic delusions, the Apostle admonishes Timothy to warn the brethren against them, and to be himself on his guard against being diverted from the course of practical godliness; to set an example to believers, and to give all attention to those studies which might qualify him for the effective discharge of his ministry. He instructs him to avoid assuming the air of harsh authority, and to pay especial respect to the widows of the church, who were really bereaved and destitute. Some special directions are given as to those who had families capable of supporting them, and the younger widows who were still marriageable; also, with regard to the support of the ruling presbyters or pastors, and the caution to be exercised in receiving any complaints against them. Timothy is very solemnly charged to shew no partiality or respect of persons, and not rashly or unadvisedly to appoint any one to an office in the church. An exhortation to keep himself pure, in reference to implication in the sins of others, is followed by a caution against too rigid abstemiousness, which seems intended to correct ascetic notions of purity. A direction to inculcate upon Christian servants or slaves, obedience and subjection to their

* See, on this remarkable passage, Dr. Pye Smith's *Scrip. Test.* vol. iii. pp. 321—323. Dr. Henderson's 'Great Mystery of Godliness Incontrovertible.' Bp. Pearson on the Creed. Also, *Eclectic Rev.* Nov. 1832, Art. Blomfield's Gr. Test.

masters, whether believers or not, appears also designed to correct the pernicious dogma of the Rabbinical doctors, that conversion or regeneration released men from their previous social relations. In reference to their notorious covetousness and love of money, the Apostle very solemnly cautions Timothy against imitating them in that respect. He adjures him to maintain the good contest with a perpetual reference to the prize of eternal life and to the second coming of The Lord. He gives him a special charge to the rich ; and, after reiterating the injunction to keep the Truth entrusted to him pure from profane logomachies and false philosophy, which had proved fatal to some, concludes with his benediction.

Character-
istic marks
of the
Pauline au-
thorship of
the Epistle.

§ 6. This Epistle bears in every part such unequivocal marks of its Pauline authorship, that no doubt of its canonicity appears ever to have been entertained in ancient times. It was reserved for the perverted learning and subtilty of Schleiermacher, to raise objections against its genuineness, equally arbitrary and futile. These have been satisfactorily refuted by Professor Hug, and still more completely and triumphantly by Professor Henry Planck, the learned son of a celebrated father.* The coincidence in matter and in expression between this Epistle and the Second Epistle to Timothy, (which will come under our notice hereafter,) is almost sufficient to establish its genuineness. But it may be deemed

* Göttingen, 1808. It is sad to find Neander, while attaching no force to the objections of Baur and others, expressing doubts as to the genuineness of this Epistle, on such trivial grounds as his feeling or fancy that there is something in the style not Pauline.

still more satisfactory to compare the language of the Epistle before us with the Apostle's address to the Ephesian Elders at Miletus, not quite two years afterwards. It has been urged by the German sceptic, that St. Paul there speaks of the heretics in the future tense, as if they did not exist at the time, but were about to arise: "For I know this, that, after my departure, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your ownelves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." But how did Paul know this? In the Epistle to Timothy, this is explained: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith." There is no indication in this Epistle, that the Ephesian church had as yet been invaded by those whom St. Paul designates as "grievous wolves," or that heretical teachers had already sprung up from among themselves. The Apostle may be supposed, in writing to Timothy, to refer rather to what had already occurred in the Corinthian church, as a warning against allowing such men to obtain a footing at Ephesus. That Hymenæus, who is mentioned as having 'made shipwreck as concerns the faith,' was one of the Corinthian teachers, appears the more probable from his being one who maintained that the Resurrection was past,—that there was, in fact, no future resurrection of the body; a Sadducean error which, in writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul so earnestly and eloquently combats. Alexander, the other false teacher mentioned by name, has been conjectured to be the same as 'Alexander the copper-

Acts xx. 29,
30.

Ch. iv. 1.

2 Tim. ii. 17.

smith,' referred to in the Second Epistle. The designation applied to him does not forbid our supposing him to have been a Rabbi, since the Jews were accustomed to distinguish their learned men by the craft to which they had been brought up; as, Rabbi Isaac the smith, &c. Calvin concludes, that he was the Alexander of whom mention is made in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Acts, and who, he supposes, would have allayed the tumult at Ephesus, had he not been repulsed; and that he was an Ephesian. All this is very doubtful. It might be thought, on the contrary, that he was a stranger at Ephesus; for, when the people discovered that he was a Jew, they refused to listen to him. With what intent he was put forward by the Jews on that occasion, is questionable; probably with no design favourable to the cause of the Apostle.* The Alexander referred to in the Epistle, must have been a professed convert to the Christian faith, who had lapsed into sin as well as error. Yet, there is no reason to suppose that his heresy was the same as that of Hymenæus; for when, in the Second Epistle, St. Paul refers to the Sadducean error respecting the Resurrection, maintained by Hymenæus and Philetus, Alexander's name does not occur. His defection was, therefore, probably of a different character; but it had brought him, as well as Hymenæus, under a judicial exclusion from the church; and the Apostle refers to them as warnings to others. Their cases were of course well known to Timothy, and their names might be familiar

* Professor Hug ranks this Alexander among the accusers of the Apostle.

to the Ephesian church; but there is no ground for concluding that they had belonged to that church, or were Ephesian teachers. Nothing is more natural than that the Apostle should be led by what had taken place in the church at Corinth, and in the churches of Galatia, to guard Timothy against the danger to be apprehended from the intrusion of heretical teachers, although none might as yet have appeared to trouble the church at Ephesus.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

§ 7. Both Timothy and Titus had rejoined the Apostle before he composed his Second Epistle to the Corinthians; and the former, being associated with the Apostle in the opening salutation, must have been with him at the time of its composition, while he was still in Macedonia; * probably in the autumn of the year 57, when he was contemplating going into Greece. Titus had certainly visited Corinth, (as we have supposed, in his way from Crete to join the Apostle at Nicopolis,) before the Second Epistle was written; but he was now to return thither, accompanied by

Date and occasion of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

* Paley remarks, that, in the First Epistle to Timothy, the Writer speaks uniformly of his intention to return to Timothy at Ephesus, and not of his expecting Timothy to come to him in Macedonia. But this is easily explained by St. Paul's being detained longer in Macedonia than he anticipated, or by his having put off for a year his intended journey to Syria. Timothy had remained, probably, a year at Ephesus before he rejoined the Apostle, and he might be desirous of obtaining his advice in a personal interview.

Ch. viii. 18. Silas, bearing this Epistle, for the purpose more especially of completing the collection for the poor of Jerusalem, respecting which, St. Paul tells them, he had boasted to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; yet, he thought it prudent to send the brethren before him, to make up their bounty, lest, when he came, attended by some of the Macedonian brethren, he should find them unprepared, and be exposed, as well as the Corinthians themselves, to mortification. That he was intending shortly to follow his messengers, is expressly stated. Twice before, he had announced his purpose to revisit them, but had been prevented from fulfilling his intention; once, when he left Ephesus for Macedonia, and again when he had intended to go by way of Corinth to Judea in the spring, but had been obliged to defer his visit to Jerusalem till the next year. This, therefore, was "the third time" he was coming to them, or purposing to come, to pay them a second visit. These particulars, gathered from the Epistle itself, fix the date, and explain the occasion of its being written.

Ch. xiii. 1.

Ch. i. 16.

Character of
the composi-
tion.

The general character of the composition is strikingly dissimilar from that of the First Epistle, which is throughout admonitory, didactic, authoritative, we might say polemical; whereas this Epistle resembles more that to the Galatians, in bearing the marks of strong and mingled emotion, and in being more persuasive than dogmatic or argumentative, more replete with pathos and an indignant eloquence than with dialectic skill. For this dissimilarity, the different circumstances under which it was composed, naturally account. When he wrote the First Epistle, he had

heard that the church was split into parties and factions, that disorderly practices as well as heresies had sprung up, that his apostolic authority had been called in question; and he evidently felt considerable doubt how far his own converts would remain faithful, and what reception would be given to the counsels and admonitions which he addressed to the church. The information brought by Titus, though of a mixed character, had removed this painful anxiety, and filled him with joy, while it emboldened him to deal the more plainly with those false apostles who still ventured to depreciate his authority, and to misrepresent his conduct and motives.

§ 8. He begins the Epistle, according to his usual method, with expressions of devout gratulation, giving thanks for the comfort Divinely vouchsafed to him under the sufferings and troubles which he had endured, referring especially to what he had been exposed to at Ephesus; and he gracefully intimates, that these troubles had been permitted to come upon him, that he might be the better qualified to impart comfort to others, and that those to whose prayers he ascribed his deliverance, might give praise to God for his preservation. He then explains his delay in coming again to visit them, assuring them, that it arose from no levity of purpose or inconstancy; that he had written his former letter under much affliction and anguish; that he had purposely deferred his return to Corinth till he should ascertain how far they would yield obedience to his instructions; and that he had with intense anxiety awaited the return of Titus as the bearer of the desired information.

Analysis of
the Epistle.

Not finding him at Troas, he had hurried on into Macedonia to meet him there. This recalls to his mind the triumphant success of his apostolic labours in that region, which he adverts to in the language of thanksgiving ; but, aware that he had been accused of boasting of his labours, he adds, that, if he were disposed to praise himself, or felt to stand in any need, like some who had obtruded themselves among them, of letters of recommendation, he would adduce them, his own converts, as his living credentials, bearing on their hearts what the Spirit of Christ had, by his hand, inscribed. If he extolled his ministry, it was not from any self-confidence, but as trusting in God, who had constituted him a minister of the new and more excellent dispensation of the Spirit, which he contrasts with that of the Mosaic law and ritual. In the discharge of this ministry, he had discarded all reserve or concealment ; he did not veil the Gospel under ambiguous phrases, to avoid offending the prejudices of the Jew ; it was not his practice, to attempt to make converts or to proselyte to Christianity, by craftily keeping back or adulterating the truth ; but, by an open manifestation of the whole truth, he commended himself to every man's conscience ; so that, if there was any obscurity in his teaching, (as had probably been alleged,) and his Gospel seemed to be veiled, it arose from the blindness of those who believed not, whose minds were darkened by Satanic influence. But, while he extolled his ministry, he was feelingly conscious of his personal weakness and frailty. The heavenly treasure was deposited in fragile vessels ;

and the power of God was rendered the more illustrious by the feeble instruments employed.

The Apostle proceeds pathetically to describe the manner in which he had been Divinely sustained under complicated troubles and extremities, a sort of perpetual crucifixion, by which he was made conformable to the death of Christ, in order that the Divine power of the living Saviour might be manifested in his body, so wonderfully preserved amid such perils and under such sufferings, for the benefit of the Church. Supported by the strong assurance of faith and the hope of eternal glory, he did not faint, but looked forward to death as but an exchange of the earthly tenement for an eternal habitation; absence from the body being infinitely compensated by an introduction to the immediate presence of The Lord, at whose tribunal we must all appear. Ch. iv. 8.

After this touching and sublime digression, the Apostle returns to the subject of his ministry, which he extols, not as deeming it necessary to commend it to those whom he was addressing, but with a view to furnish them with matter of glorying respecting him and his fellow-labourers, in opposition to those who appeared to do so, but were insincere. For, whether he was transported, or seemed to exceed proper bounds, it was for the cause of God; or whether he spoke (as in the First Epistle) in modest and humble terms of his ministry, it was for their instruction and benefit.* His ruling and binding motive was, de- Ch. vi. 11.

* Or, 'whether we be thought sane or insane, it is for God and your sakes.' *'Sana enim erat gloriatio Pauli, vel sobria et sapientissima insania.'* Calvin.

votedness to Christ, whose love in dying to redeem all from death, (whether Jew or Gentile,) laid him and all the regenerate under the strongest obligation to consecrate their lives to his service. He had therefore ceased to regard man according to human estimate or opinion; and even Christ himself, he knew or recognised only spiritually, or in his Divine and exalted relation. Every real Christian was a changed man, having undergone a heavenly transformation of character corresponding to the spiritual kingdom of Christ. The Apostle evidently alludes to some of the Corinthian teachers, whose worldly-mindedness discovered itself in their priding themselves upon personal and extrinsic recommendations. It is probable that some of them deemed themselves entitled to higher consideration, either as having personally known Our Lord, or as standing more closely related to him as Jews, than the Gentile believers. St. Paul might have claimed the same honour of *national* relationship to Christ; but he waives this claim, recognising him only as his Master and Lord, the Lord of all, without distinction of Jew or Gentile. Moreover, he adds, God is the Author of this new creation, for he it is who has reconciled us to Himself through the sacrifice of Christ, and committed to us, the Apostles, the ministry of reconciliation; so that, as the ambassadors of Christ, our office is to beseech men to be reconciled to God, and, as co-operators with Him, to exhort you not in vain to receive the Divine grace, while the day of salvation lasts.

1 Ep. i. 12.

Ch. xi. 22.

“*Chrysostomus de auditoribus interpretatur (συν), quibus co-operantur ministri.*”
Calvin.

Ch. vi. 3.

After this exposition of the nature and dignity of

the Apostolic embassy, St. Paul returns to the manner in which he had endeavoured to fulfil this ministry of reconciliation, so as to bring upon it no reproach; approving himself as God's minister by a patient endurance of the various sufferings and hardships, trials and persecutions, to which the exercise of his office had exposed him, and by exemplifying the virtues and graces of the Christian character. He winds up this vindication of his ministry by describing the moral paradox which his life exhibited, as happy in the midst of so much misery, and, though himself poor, yet making many rich. In this last expression, he seems indirectly to point to the ingratitude of those whom he had spiritually enriched, but who had so ill requited him. And then, with a burst of feeling, he apostrophizes the Corinthians as his spiritual children, and professes the tender affection which he feels for them; for which, as his best reward, he entreats them to shew the same expansive affection towards himself. By this pathetic adjuration, he bespeaks their obedience to the solemn injunction to have no fellowship, no close connexion or intimate society with unbelievers and idolaters; enforcing the admonition by a reference to the promises of the New Covenant. He then reverts to the idea which seems to oppress his mind,—the ingratitude and causeless alienation from himself of some individuals among them, when he had not wronged, or corrupted, or deceived any of them. But, as if suddenly correcting himself, he retracts the charge, repeats the expression of his strong affection for them, and declares, that he addressed them with confidence, having occasion for high satisfaction and

joy in the effect which his former Epistle had produced. He now takes up the subject of Titus's return from Corinth, bringing him the welcome tidings for which, as he mentions in the beginning of the Epistle, he had waited with so much anxiety; and dwells with cordial approbation on the manner in which they had cleared themselves in the case of the incestuous offender. He assures them, that Titus remembered with much affection the reception they had given him; and repeats, that he feels he can entirely confide in them.

Chap. viii.

The Apostle now gracefully introduces the subject of the collection which he was making for the church at Jerusalem, by informing them how liberally the churches of Macedonia had contributed, notwithstanding their extreme poverty; on which account, in order that they, the Corinthians, who abounded in faith, knowledge, and regard for himself, might not be outdone in the grace of liberality, he had determined to send Titus again to them, to complete the work of collecting their contributions. He lays no command upon them in this respect, but wishes them to give according to their means, voluntarily, and from a desire to please God. He tells them, that Titus had most readily consented to undertake this service, having in the first instance gone to Corinth of his own accord. He was now to be accompanied by Silas, (who is plainly designated by the phrase, "who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us,") and by a brother, who, if a member of the Corinthian church is intended, was probably Erastus, whom Paul had sent into Macedonia with Timothy before he left

Ephesus himself. The Apostle gracefully intimates, that he deems it quite superfluous to say any thing to them of the duty of ministering to the relief of the holy brethren, as, knowing the forwardness of their zeal in this respect, he had held up their example to the churches of Macedonia; but he had sent the brethren to ensure their being quite ready against his arrival, so as to justify his having boasted so confidently of their liberality. He declares, moreover, that liberality would ensure its recompense from God, who loves the cheerful giver, and is able to enrich those who are bountiful; and that this contribution from the Gentile churches would not only relieve the wants of the saints in Judea, but would also be such an evidence of their obedience to the Gospel and generous kindness as would call forth heartfelt thanksgivings to God on their account. He takes leave of the subject with a devout expression of thanks to God for his ineffable gift.

And here, there is some reason to think, the Ch. x. Epistle was intended to have been brought to a close. The remaining portion is in a strain observably different from that which the Apostle has thus far maintained, and has been thought to exhibit even more care and finish in the style*. We may suppose

* ' It is objected, how different is the tone of the first part, mild, amiable, affectionate; whereas the third part is severe, vehement, castigatory. But who would divide Demosthenes' Oration *pro Coronâ* into two parts, because, in the more general defence, placidity and circumspection predominate; while, in abashing and chastising the accuser, in the parallel between him and Æschines, words of bitter irony gush out impetuously, and fall like rain in a storm? Hug, Pt. II. § 102.

that, when he had written thus far, or had dictated, rather, the contents of the preceding chapters to Timothy, (whom he unites with himself in the opening salutation,) further information reached him from Corinth, with regard to the conduct of the false teachers, which induced him to resume the vindication of his apostolic authority and personal character against their injurious insinuations. Alluding evidently to what he had heard was said of himself, he commences this fresh portion of the Epistle with great spirit and dignity. “Now I, the same Paul, beseech you, in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who am said to be, when personally present, lowly among you, but, when absent, bold towards you; I entreat you that I may not be compelled to act with that boldness, when I am with you, which I shall deem it proper to shew in respect to those who now regard me as walking according to human passions and interests.” And he proceeds to intimate, that, feeble as he might be in body, he had the means of enforcing his authority by weapons of spiritual might, and was prepared to exercise the powers entrusted to him in the punishment of the contumacious. He will not stoop to measure himself against his self-sufficient and boastful detractors, but repels the charge of having exceeded the limits of his commission, or gone beyond his province, in exercising his authority over the Corinthian church. He had not, in preaching the Gospel, obtruded upon the field of another’s labours, but had advanced to Corinth in the regular prosecution of his ministry; and he hoped, when his work was done there, to extend the sphere

Or, mean in appearance.

Or, reckon on shewing.

of his labour to regions beyond ;—unlike the intrusive teachers who had followed him, and boasted as if they had achieved what they found ready to their hand. It was commanded, that they should glory only in The Lord ; and he alone was approved, who obtained the Divine approbation. Yet, jealous lest these his converts should be seduced from the simplicity of the faith by those who sought to undermine his authority, he begs them to bear with him in what might seem the folly of self-commendation. In no respect, in introducing the Gospel among them, had he shewn himself inferior, in point either of knowledge or of success, to the chief Apostles, whose followers some of the false teachers professed to be. Was it to be deemed a crime, that he had waived his right to have the charge of his maintenance defrayed by the church, working at his craft for his own support, and even accepting of pecuniary aid from his Philippian converts, that he might not be a burden to the Corinthians, or afford an excuse for the exactions of those counterfeit apostles, who set up for teachers only for the sake of gain? Again he begs that those among them who plumed themselves upon their wisdom, would bear with him in his foolishness of boasting, as they bore with and meekly submitted to the arrogance, extortion, and insolence of the false teachers. He could boast, as well as they, of his pure Hebrew descent ; and, as a minister of Christ, which they affected to be, he could boast of labours more abundant, of persecutions, perils, and sufferings endured in the cause of the Gospel, such as no one but himself had gone through, in addition to the constant

anxiety connected with the care of all the churches he had planted. If he must needs boast, it should be of his sufferings and tribulations for Christ's sake. He specifies one particular occasion, on which he had a very narrow escape of being apprehended and put to death by the governor of Damascus. It was unbecoming to speak thus of himself; yet, he must proceed to another subject connected with his Apostolic credentials,—visions and revelations from Heaven. And to avoid the language of egotism, he now speaks of himself in the third person. He knew a Christian man who, above fourteen years back, had, in a trance, been caught up into Paradise, where he heard things unutterable, and had abundant revelations made to him, of such a nature as might have elated him too much, had it not been for a sharp trial that was sent to chasten his pride and exultation. This "thorn in the flesh" was of so grievous a character, so mortifying, (evidently as affecting in some way his personal appearance, and tending to lower him in popular estimation,) that he earnestly and repeatedly besought The Lord to remove it; but he received for answer, a Divine promise of adequate support under his infirmities, which should but serve to illustrate the power of Christ. He could therefore take complacency in those personal infirmities and external trials and sufferings for Christ's sake, which were the occasion of his experiencing larger communications of supernatural strength and Divine energy. And now, if, in doing justice to his own qualifications for the Apostolic office, he had incurred the charge of the folly of vain boasting, it was their fault who had

rendered it necessary, when he ought rather to have looked to them for his vindication as not inferior in any respect to the chief among the Apostles, since all the signs and miraculous credentials of Apostleship had been manifested during his residence among them. In no respect, he repeats, could they complain of being inferior to the churches founded by other Apostles ;—unless it were that he had laboured among them gratuitously, without giving them the opportunity of contributing to his maintenance. This wrong he ironically begs them to forgive, as, now that he was purposing again to visit them, he intended to adhere to his resolution, not to be chargeable to them ; through no want of affection, but as willing to spend and sacrifice his health, strength, and very life for their sake. He then repels the insinuation that he had made any gain of them by means of those whom he had sent among them ; appealing to the conduct of Titus and his companion. Yet, it was not for his own sake, but for theirs, he deigned to notice the calumnies circulated against him. He was afraid that, when he came, he should find the church in such a state as would render necessary the judicial exercise of his Apostolic authority in a manner which would leave no doubt of his commission ; but he besought them to examine themselves, and to spare him this occasion for severity, as he was anxious not so much to establish his Apostolic claims as to promote their perfection. With a few brief admonitions, he bids them affectionately farewell, closing the Letter with the Benediction which was his signature to all the Epistles.

Date of the
prophetic
rapture.

§ 9. In the latter part of the Apostle's defence of himself against his calumniators, several particulars of his personal history are disclosed, of which, but for the charges they are adduced to repel, we should have had no intimation. The most remarkable is the prophetic rapture, or trance, which he states to have occurred about fourteen years before. If this Epistle was written, as there is reason to suppose, in the year 57, the circumstance referred to must have taken place in 43, or about six years after his Conversion; and the time at which it seems most likely that the Apostle should be favoured with that special revelation, corresponds to this date; namely, the interval between his return from Jerusalem to Antioch, with Barnabas, A.D. 43, and their setting out together on their first Apostolic circuit. It may reasonably be presumed, that the design of this extraordinary manifestation was, to prepare him for the mission in which he was so soon to engage, by strengthening his faith, assuring him of the Divine favour, and bringing vividly before his mind the glories of that Paradise which awaited the faithful. When, three years before, the Lord had appeared to him as he was praying in the Temple, and became entranced, the direction he received, was, to depart from Jerusalem, as he was to be sent far thence to the Gentiles. It is probable, therefore, that this more rapturous vision and revelation had a similar design, bearing upon his Apostolic mission. That it was intended for his personal consolation, is evident; for what he heard and saw, he was not authorized to disclose; and for fourteen years, it would seem, that, with singular

See p. 237.

See p. 236.

Acts xxii. 21.

modesty, he had refrained from mentioning the occurrence.

§ 10. With regard to the precise nature of the “thorn in the flesh” with which he was visited, various conjectures, some of them absurd and even ludicrous, have been hazarded by commentators, ancient and modern. By Whitby, Doddridge, Macknight, Rosenmüller, and other judicious critics, it is supposed to have been a paralytic and hypochondriac affection, occasioning a distortion of countenance and other distressing effects. That his nervous system was shaken from some cause or other, seems indicated by his own language in several places; more especially where he speaks of his coming before the Corinthians under bodily infirmity and with much tremor, which, as his moral courage was so conspicuous, could arise only from physical causes. Another ingenious supposition is, that it might be chronic ophthalmia, since, alluding to his infirmity, the Apostle says, that his Galatian converts would readily have parted with their own eyes, to give them to him. In support of this conjecture, it is urged, that the effect of the miraculous light which shone round about him on his way to Damascus, and produced for a time total blindness, might leave a chronic weakness of sight, liable to be aggravated by the state of his bodily health; and this personal blemish might expose him to the scorn he seemed to fear. This would also account for his usually employing an amanuensis. In styling this infliction, whatever was its precise nature, a messenger of Satan,—that is, sent by Satan, the Apostle must be understood to refer to its being a hinderance

Nature of
the thorn in
the flesh.

1 Cor. ii. 3.

Gal. iv. 15.

1 Thess. ii. 18. in the discharge of his work ; and in ascribing physical disease, as well as other obstacles to success, to the instrumentality of Satan, he uses language in perfect accordance with that employed by Our Lord himself.

Lukexiii.16.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Date and occasion of the Epistle to the Romans.

§ 11. Towards the close of the year in which the Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written, the Apostle came into Greece ; and at Corinth, where he probably spent the winter of 57, 58, he composed the most elaborate of all his Epistles,—that addressed to the Romans. That it was written from Corinth, is manifest (as Theodoret remarks) from the concluding part, in which the Apostle commends to their hospitality and care, Phœbe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, ‘ which was a borough of the Corinthians.’ ‘ Besides, he says, “ Gaius, my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.” By host, he means the person who entertained him. And that Gaius was a Corinthian, we learn from the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Ep. i. 14.) The Epistle to the Romans, therefore, is the last of the Epistles written from Asia, and Macedonia, and Achaia : the rest were sent from Rome.’ * As a further proof that this Epistle was written at Corinth, Lardner adduces the salutation sent to the Roman church from “ Erastus, the cham-

* Cited by Lardner, vol. vi. p. 27. Theodoret, including the Epistle to the Galatians among those written from Rome, makes the Epistle to the Romans the seventh in order of time, whereas it is properly the eighth.

berlain of the city ;” supposing, by the city, Corinth to be meant. But whether this Erastus be the same who is mentioned, Acts xix. 22, as one of St. Paul’s assistants, he professes himself unable to decide. The time at which the Epistle was written, is clearly indicated. The Apostle had completed his collections in Macedonia and Achaia, and was about to set out for Jerusalem. It was consequently near the end of the three months which he passed in Greece, and therefore early in the year 58. Ch. xv. 25
—31.

It appears from the Apostle’s own language, that he had for some time cherished a strong desire to visit Rome, and had even repeatedly purposed to do so, but had been prevented, partly by the call for his labours in Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, and the attention required by the churches he had planted, and partly by his intermediate visits to Jerusalem. It was with him a principle or rule of action, to leave nothing unfinished in the line of his Apostolic course, and not to proceed to a new region, till that to which he had extended his ministry had been fully evangelized. 2 Cor. x. 16. During the reign of Claudius, there would moreover have been a political obstacle in the way of his visiting the Imperial capital ; but this had ceased at the death of that Emperor, in A.D. 54, when great numbers of Jews returned to Rome ; as is evident from the fact, that Suetonius and Dion Cassius speak of their being very numerous under the following reigns. Among others, Aquila with his wife Priscilla had returned, probably with a view to settle some secular affairs ; and St. Paul might have naturally felt a wish to accompany them, had not the concerns

of the churches detained him. It is evident from the numerous salutations and the affectionate expressions employed by the Apostle, that in the church at Rome were included many of his countrymen and intimate acquaintance. Some are referred to as his kinsmen; others as his fellow-labourers or helpers; Epænetus, the first-fruit of Asia unto Christ, was probably his convert; but Andronicus and Junias are described as having become Christians before him, and as having, as well as himself, suffered imprisonment in the cause of the Gospel. It is, therefore, a credible supposition, that they were among the "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes," converted on the day of Pentecost; by whom, on their return, the knowledge of the Gospel would first be spread in the Metropolis of the Roman Empire. Rufus, also, a distinguished Christian, whose mother had shewn much kindness to Paul, may have been one of the first teachers of the faith of Christ at Rome: he was, possibly, the same Rufus whose father, a native of Cyrene, was compelled to assist in supporting the Cross of Christ.

That the Christian faith was planted at Rome at an early period, may be inferred from the fame which the reception of the Christian doctrine by the church at Rome had acquired throughout the world. Yet, there is no reason to suppose that that church had been either founded or visited by any of the Apostles. That the Jews were very numerous at Rome, there is abundant historical evidence. When Pompey, about sixty-three years before the Christian era, overran Judea with a conquering army, he caused many

of his Jewish captives to be sent to Rome, where they were sold into slavery; but their Roman masters found it so inconvenient to have servants who persisted in observing the Sabbath, and adhered to other Jewish rites and customs, that they chose to liberate them, in numerous instances, rather than keep them; and, as there was a large body of these liberated Jews, Augustus assigned them a region beyond the Tiber as their residence. There, Philo found them occupying a distinct town or quarter, just before the time of Paul. When the first impressions produced by the degradation of captivity began to wear away, the Roman citizens seem to have regarded this Jewish community with respect and interest. Ovid speaks of the synagogues as places of fashionable resort:

*Legatio ad
Caium.*

A. D. 17.

‘Cultaque Jude septima sacra Syro.’

Juvenal thus ridicules his countrymen for becoming Jews:—

*‘Quidam sortiti metuentem Sabbata patrem,
Nil præter nubes et Cœli numen adorant:
Nec distare putant humanâ carne suillam,
Quâ pater abstinuit, mox et præputia ponunt.
Romanas autem soliti continnere leges,
Judaicum ediscunt, et servant, ac metuunt jus,
Tradidit arcano quodeunque volumine Moses.’*

JUVENAL, SAT. XIV. 96.

Tacitus refers to the presents sent by Roman proselytes to Jerusalem; and represents the ‘execrable superstition’ (Christianity) as breaking out again after being repressed, and spreading not only through Judea, but through even the City (Rome). Seneca also, about the time that Paul wrote his Epistle to

*Hist. lib. v.
c. 5.*

the Romans, says, (in a fragment preserved by Augustine,) that so many Romans had received the Jewish (meaning the Christian) religion, that it was received through all lands, and the vanquished had thus given laws to the victors. It is clear, that the class of proselytes or devout persons among the Romans must have been numerous;* and of these, a large portion of the early converts to Christianity consisted. Thus, there arose in Rome a Christian church composed of Jewish and Gentile believers. The greater part of the Jews at Rome, however, when Paul arrived there as a prisoner, still adhered to Judaism, regarding the followers of Christ as “a sect everywhere spoken against.” And no doubt, the Christians still passed for a Jewish sect with the Roman authorities. After the banishment of all Jews from Rome by Claudius,† if any Christians remained, they must have been converts from heathenism; but it is doubtful whether, at that time, the Gospel had been openly preached at Rome to the Gentiles, except to such as had already become proselyted to the Jewish faith. When St. Paul addressed his Epistle to the church at Rome, in the fifth year of Nero, the Jewish Christians had returned, and formed, undoubtedly, the bulk of the community of believers.

Acts xxviii.
22.

* They were denominated *σεβόμενοι* and *metuentes*. Josephus (Antiq. xviii. 3) cites an instance in the case of Fulvia.

† The passage in Suetonius which attributes the banishment of the Jews by Claudius to their turbulence, ‘*impulsore Christo*,’ can scarcely refer to Christian Jews, but, more probably, to a tumult occasioned by one of the false Christs by whom the Jews were continually deceived and led into revolt.

The journey of Phœbe,—apparently a person of some wealth and influence, probably a widow, and, like Lydia of Thyatira, a trader,—who was proceeding to Rome upon business, afforded to the Apostle an opportunity, of which he gladly availed himself, to send to the Christians at Rome. His main object, in writing to them, appears to have been, to assert and vindicate that cardinal truth, so little understood and so reluctantly received by the Jewish believers, but which, as the Minister of Christ to the Gentiles, he felt more especially bound to insist upon ;—the Universality of the Christian Dispensation, as unfolding the only method of Salvation, and the essential Unity of the Church, as opposed to all national distinctions, and involving the common right of all believers of whatever race, rank, or condition, as equal before God, to the high privileges and spiritual blessings of the Gospel.

Ch. i, 5 ;
xv. 15.

§ 12. After the customary salutation, in which St. Paul asserts his apostolical authority, and announces the great subject of his mission, he intimates, that one motive of his addressing them was, the lively interest which he took in them as a body of Christians formed in the metropolis of the Empire. That the Gospel had reached to Rome, and obtained converts there, was a circumstance which could not fail to attract general attention ; and it was, he tells them, everywhere spoken of. It had long been his anxious wish, to visit them for their mutual benefit, in order that he might have at Rome also some fruit of his apostolic labours. Neither fear nor shame had deterred him from coming to proclaim the Gospel in that city, for he was prepared to preach alike to the

Analysis of
the Epistle.

polished and the rude, that message of Divine mercy which was addressed to all, and which was of saving efficacy to all, whether Jew or Greek, who embraced it by faith. He proceeds to insist on the necessity of this further Revelation, to both Jews and Greeks. The insufficiency of the law and light of Nature, was demonstrated by the awful moral condition of the heathen world. Nor could the superior knowledge which the Jew derived from the Written Law, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, avail for his justification: on the contrary, it aggravated his guilt in practising crimes which he condemned in the heathen. The corruption of morals among the Jewish people rendered them not less obnoxious than the Gentiles to the righteous sentence of Divine condemnation. Nor could the national privileges of the Jew avail him more than his superior knowledge as the ground of acceptance. Did God's chosen people, then, it might be asked, possess no advantage above the heathen? Was the promise to their great ancestor a nullity? No; but if, as this objection assumed, it were incompatible with the covenant made with Abraham, that God should punish the Jewish nation for their delinquencies, He would no longer be the righteous Governor of the world. If, however, the question were, In what respect are we Jews better than the Gentiles? the plain reply would be, In no respect. Here the Apostle lays the axe to the root of the self-righteous conceit of the Jews, and, in order to substantiate his bold and explicit declaration, adduces various passages from their own Scriptures, affirming the universal depravity and guilt;

which, being found in the Psalms and other prophetic writings, could not refer to the heathen, but described the actual state of morals among the Jews in the brightest period of their political history. Nor was this language, it is tacitly intimated, less applicable to the nation then. Thus is the ground cleared for the two cardinal propositions which it is the main object of the Epistle to establish: First, that, to the Jew, not less than to the Gentile, *a further Revelation was necessary*; since the Law, which had been superinduced upon the light of Nature, and of which the Jew boasted, served but to discover sin the more clearly, and to render the transgressor the more inexcusable: it made no provision for the remission of sins, and it had proved as ineffectual to produce obedience and sanctity, as to afford a ground of justification at the Divine tribunal:—Secondly, that, to both Jew and Gentile, *one and the same revealed method of salvation presented the only hope*; namely, a free pardon through the redemption of Christ,—an amnesty secured by his propitiatory sacrifice, extended to all who by faith embrace the proclamation of mercy. With this sovereign dispensation of forgiveness, this extra-legal justification of the guilty,—the Divinely superinduced method of attaining acceptance with God and eternal life,—merit could have no possible connexion, and any claim founded upon it was utterly incompatible. Therefore, the Jew and the Gentile stood on the same footing. Yet, this did not nullify; it rather established the Law.

The objection of the Jew to a representation so revolting to his national prejudices, is then put in Ch. iv.

this form : ‘ What did Abraham our father attain to ? Upon what ground did he find favour with God ? ’ If justified by works, he had a ground for boasting. But that he had no such ground before God, the Apostle proves from the declaration, that his believing God was counted to him for righteousness ; an expression tantamount to declaring that the acceptance which he found, was, on the part of God, gratuitous favour. And this view of the gratuitousness of the reward of faith, as opposed to the reward of merit, the Apostle confirms by the language of David, celebrating the blessedness of the man who, though consciously guilty, is graciously treated by God as righteous. What was there, then, to limit this blessedness of forgiveness and gratuitous acceptance to the Jew ? As regards Abraham, the declaration related to his faith while yet in uncircumcision, as the heathen still were ; and the rite was instituted afterwards. Again, the Divine promise made to Abraham was gratuitous, on the simple condition of faith, and, as such, belonged to all his spiritual children. And the record, that his faith was accepted by God as righteousness, was not intended simply to do honour to Abraham, but rather to instruct us into the only method of attaining to the promises of the Gospel ; namely, through faith in God as having raised Jesus Our Lord from the dead.

Ch. v.

The Apostle next proceeds to vindicate the holy tendency and efficacy of this scheme of justification, by shewing how faith in Christ introduces the believer into a state of conscious reconciliation to God, attended with a peace of conscience, a hope

unshaken by adversity, and a delight in God, which no other principle could originate. Nor was it to be regarded as more strange and mysterious, that all these blessings should accrue to believers from the death of Christ,—the fruit, not of our own obedience, but of the reconciliation effected for us by another,—than is the fact, that all evil has been introduced into our world by the disobedience of one man. The Apostle then draws a parallel between the First Parent and Head of our fallen race, and Christ as the Fountain of Spiritual life to all who stand related to him through faith as their head and vicarious representative, with a view to illustrate the glorious efficacy of his mediatorial intervention.

Lest, however, this representation of the sovereignty and plenitude of Divine Grace should seem to afford any encouragement to a continuance in sin, the Inspired Writer proceeds to show, that so licentious an inference would involve a moral contradiction. The believer has undergone a change which mainly consists in his becoming dead to sin. By our baptismal profession, we die and are buried with Christ to our former selves and to the service of sin, our old master; and being made partakers of the power of His resurrection, enter upon a new life, over which sin and death have no power. As enfranchisement, under the Roman law, in the case of a convict who had previously been in a servile condition, was the accompaniment of pardon or deliverance from his sentence, so, he who, by participation in the death of Christ, has died to sin, is at once judicially absolved and emancipated from its vassalage. But to

Ch. vi.

So Gal. iii.
27.

obey sin, is to become its vassal, and to take all the fearful consequences. There is no alternative but being either the slaves of sin or the servants of God. And the Apostle adduces the consideration of the willing obedience which the Roman converts had yielded to vice and impurity in their unregenerate state, as a strong motive to devote themselves with not less alacrity to the service of Righteousness, their new master.

Ch. vii.

A fresh topic is now introduced,—a point of peculiar delicacy in reference to the prejudices of the Jew; and the Inspired Writer shews his consummate skill in handling it. In virtue of his union to Christ, the believer not only stands discharged from the penalty, and released from the bondage of sin, but is placed in a new relation to the Law. It was an axiom with the Jewish Rabbies, that the obligations of law cease and determine at death. Now this may result, in the case of parties bound to each other, from the death of either, the law dying or determining in the person of the claimant, on the dissolution of the legal tie. Now Christ, by dying, became discharged from the Law; and Christians, participating in his death, become also dead to the Law, are freed from its rule, as an economy or covenant, so that no obligations which once attached to them as Jews, could stand in the way of their obedience to Christ. They had died to the Mosaic Law as a master, in order that they might enter into a new and spiritual service, one of filial obedience.

Chap. vii. 7.

To guard against any misconception of this allegorical language, as if it implied anything derogatory

to the Law of God itself, the Apostle explains, that it is through no fault of the Law that it stirs up man's sinful propensities, rather than produces holiness;—that, acting upon his corrupt nature, it serves only to detect, elicit, and even excite those propensities, furnishing occasion for their development, since, where there is no law, there is no room for disobedience, and sin remains latent. Such, the Apostle adds, was his own experience. He was once, as a Pharisee, leading a life of self-complacent freedom from actual transgression, till that commandment which forbids even covetous desire and envy, was so brought home to him as to lead to the detection of the latent and unsuspected sinfulness of his heart, and to destroy his fond hope of meriting salvation by perfect obedience, inducing a sense of self-condemnation. The Law, in itself, then, is holy, just, and excellent, though it is the bane of the transgressor; sin rendering that which is in itself good and tending to happiness, the instrument of death, and thereby shewing more emphatically its own character of essential evil. This consequence, the Apostle proceeds to shew, results from the contrariety of the Law of God, in its spiritual import, to man's earthly and corrupt nature, as sin's bondsman. For a man who approves not his own actions, who feels unable to act as he would do, and does what he hates, acknowledges, on the one hand, the excellence of the Law, to which his conscience and judgment assent; and, on the other hand, shews that he is not the master of himself, his free-agency being controlled by the indwelling principle of sin. And speaking of his own experience, the Apostle describes

the internal conflict occasioned by the desire after virtue, without the moral ability to act up to the convictions of the judgment; the conscience being subject to the law of God, while the will is dragged down by the law or dominant power of sin. Such a man was like a prisoner fastened to a festering corpse. Who could deliver him? An ejaculation of thanksgiving here bursts from the inspired Writer; but he pursues his description, and winds it up with the declaration, that a new principle of spiritual life, derived from Christ, had effected his emancipation from the law of sin and death. Thus, what the Law could not accomplish, not from any inherent defect, but through man's moral impotency, has been effected by the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God, which has procured our justification, and at the same time our spiritual emancipation, in virtue of the new principle of life imparted to the believer. Only as they gave evidence of being governed by this spiritual principle, could any individuals be regarded as belonging to Christ. But the truly regenerate have imparted to them a filial spirit, corresponding to their new relation as the adopted sons of God, co-heirs with Christ of the heavenly glory.

Ch. viii, 18.

Kindling at the thought of the felicity that awaits the heirs of salvation, the Apostle here rises into a strain of the noblest eloquence, in contrasting the transitory sufferings of the present life with the glory of that day of the public inauguration of the redeemed sons of God, to which all nature is represented as looking forward with eager expectation, as the hour of deliverance from the penal sentence, when all

things shall be renewed. This transporting prospect might well reconcile the Christian to patient endurance. But he is not left to his own strength; the Spirit of God comes to the aid of his weakness, as the promised Paraclete; and he is cheered with the assurance, that all his trials and afflictions shall subserve the ultimate purpose of God, the conformity of all his chosen people to the image of His Son. He may therefore defy every accuser, every foe, secure of triumphing over all calamities and imaginable evils, since nothing can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

This sublime rhetorical digression closes what may be considered as the first part of the Epistle. Ch. ix. Having now vindicated the cardinal doctrine of Justification by Grace from the misapprehensions and cavils of its Pharisaic opponents, (grounded upon its seeming to disparage or nullify the Law, and to lead to licentious inferences,) the Apostle returns to his primary subject, the main source of offence in the Gospel he taught; namely, the admission of converts from heathenism to an equality with Jewish believers in the Church of Christ, and their consequent exaltation above the greater part of the chosen nation as unbelievers rejected of God. In again approaching this repulsive topic, he solemnly professes his deep sorrow, as a Jewish patriot, at the guilt and doom of the sacred nation to which he gloried in belonging, and from which, in his humanity, the Messiah himself sprang. But their rejection involved no failure of the Divine promises, which had never, in their highest import, appertained to the whole of Abraham's pos-

terity. There had always been a chosen portion, a spiritual line, limited first to that of Isaac, and again to Jacob; and there was a rejection of Esau, though born of the same mother. God claimed as His prerogative to act thus sovereignly in the bestowment of His mercy. Nay, in the case of Pharaoh, the Scripture represents the Divine Being as raising up an individual for the purpose of signaling His power and justice. But if, in either case, His will or purpose takes effect, it may be asked, Why does He blame those who are but His instruments? The Apostle meets this objection, first by citing the language of Isaiah, rebuking the impiety of those who charged their guilt upon their Maker. He then shews the unreasonableness of the cavil. No injustice is involved in the exercise of the Divine sovereignty. God endures the wicked with much long-suffering, before He uses them to illustrate the terrors of His indignation, and not before they have made themselves meet for destruction. And so, with regard to the Jews as a nation, the Apostle shews, by numerous citations, that the sovereign limitation of the Divine favour to those who had embraced the call of the Gospel, and the extension of mercy to multitudes of every nation, were in accordance with the express language of Hosea and Isaiah, who had both predicted the calling of the Gentiles, and declared that only a remnant of the Jewish nation should escape destruction. And the cause of their ruin was also foretold; their unbelief regarding the Messiah,—their rejection of the Corner-Stone of the True Temple.

Chap. x.

Again, the Apostle expresses his fervent concern

for the salvation of his countrymen ; and he concedes, that their opposition to the Gospel arose from a mistaken zeal for the Law of Moses. But what the Jew aimed at attaining by his external observance of the Law, was now conferred as a free gift upon every believer in Christ without distinction of nation. It followed, then, that the Gospel, being thus free and unlimited in its tender of mercy, should be proclaimed to all mankind. The fact, that the Gentiles had heard and embraced the Gospel, was decisive as to the duty of preaching it to them. And the language of ancient prophecy shewed that their becoming the people of God in the place of disobedient Israel, was a fulfilment of the Divine warnings.

Still, God had not utterly rejected His chosen people ; Ch. xi. but, as in former times of national apostacy, had manifested His faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham, and His sovereign mercy, in reserving to Himself an Israel within Israel. Although the Jewish nation were now the victims of their own blindness and obduracy, there was still a reserve, who were indebted for their salvation, not to their merit or desert, but purely to Grace. And as the rejection of the Jews was not total, so neither is it final. Their rejection of the Gospel was the occasion of God's adopting the Gentiles into His family, and thus, their loss was the world's gain ; but this extension of the Divine mercy to the Gentiles, was both adapted and designed to excite the emulation of the Jews, when they saw other nations pressing into the Church. As the Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul extolled his office, in order that he might excite his own countrymen to emulation,

and prove the instrument of saving some. Addressing the Gentile believers, he instructs them, that they ought to desire with affectionate interest the restoration of the Jews as a nation to the Divine favour, looking forward to it as a moral resurrection, a glorious event in which the whole world would have reason to rejoice. To check any feeling of ungenerous triumph over the fallen Jewish Church, he reminds them, that they derived their ecclesiastical sanctity, as God's people, from union to the ancient Jewish stock, to which they imparted no inherent virtues of their own, for they were by nature wild and barren. And if, to make room for their being grafted in, some of the branches had been broken off, this penal excision, the punishment of infidelity, would befall the engrafted branches also in case of disobedience. And the Jewish nation, on renouncing their unbelief, should be re-instated. This event was not merely desirable, but predicted and certain, as the fulfilment of the Divine covenant with their ancestors. The Apostle bespeaks the respect and kindly concern of Gentile Christians for his own nation, upon the twofold ground, that it was for their sakes the Jews were now treated as enemies to God, and that still, for the sake of their forefathers, they were beloved, and therefore not cast off for ever; it being intended by God, that the conversion of the Gentiles should ultimately lead to the restoration of the Jews, and thus illustrate the glorious mercy of God to both. The Apostle closes this vindication of the Divine procedure with a sublime burst of devout admiration of the unfathomable

wisdom and self-originate goodness of the Creator, the source, sustenance, and end of all being.

The second part of the Epistle may be considered as closing with the Eleventh Chapter; the remainder being devoted to a series of practical injunctions.

And first, the Apostle adjures the believers by the manifold mercy which God had shewn them, to consecrate their own persons as a living sacrifice to his service, and not to conform to the manners and maxims of the world. Next, in virtue of his inspired authority, he enjoins upon them a sober and modest self-estimate; that, whatever were their several gifts and functions, every one should be careful to discharge the particular duty devolving upon him, contenting himself with his office or station in the Christian body. He then proceeds to inculcate those Christian virtues which it behoved them all to cultivate;—unaffected benevolence, combined with a discriminating love of excellence, and strong fraternal affection among themselves, such as would produce mutual emulation in respect and kindness; diligence, activity, and zeal, as The Lord's servants; cheerfulness, patience, and assiduity in prayer; liberality towards their needy brethren, generous hospitality to strangers; towards persecutors and enemies a disposition to return good for evil; a sympathizing and peaceable spirit, and true humility. He more especially cautions them against seeking to revenge themselves, if called to suffer injurious or contumelious treatment, retribution being the Divine prerogative. But, in reference to civil government, he especially enjoins it as a duty of general obligation, to be in subjection to magis-

Ch. xii.

Or of the
age.

tracy, as the ordinance of God: on this ground, political obedience is enforced by religious considerations. Tribute and taxes were, therefore, to be paid conscientiously and without scruple, even to heathen rulers, as their due. In a word, every social obligation is included in the principle of loving our neighbour as ourselves. Next, the Apostle appeals to them as persons upon whom the light of heaven had dawned, to cast away sleep and sloth, to renounce deeds that shun the light, and to clothe themselves with the Christian armour, as the soldiers and followers of Christ; not allowing their necessary care for the body to degenerate into intemperance or self-indulgence. This exhortation naturally connects itself with the subject of the existing disputes and scruples relating to the use of animal food. Josephus states, that there were certain Jewish priests at Rome who lived entirely upon fruit, from the dread of eating any thing unclean. St. Paul directs the Roman Christians to treat such scruples in their brethren with forbearance, and to waive all controversy. The Christian of more enlightened faith was not to despise his superstitious brother, nor was the scrupulous believer to constitute himself the judge or master of another's conscience. So, as to the sacredness attached to particular days, a difference of opinion ought to be mutually allowed, when both parties were equally conscientious, since it was the disposition of heart towards God that gave its character to the action. Besides, to assume to sit in judgment upon our brethren, is to entrench upon the prerogative of Christ as the appointed Judge of all. The Christian ought rather to forego any indul-

gence that might lay a snare in the way of another, by leading him to violate his conscience. Although no food was in itself unclean, yet, to one who deemed the ceremonial distinction between clean and unclean meats to be still in force, that became defiling which had no inherent impurity. That is to say, the conscience is defiled by any wilful opposition to the rule of duty, or what we suppose to be duty, even when the conviction that the thing is unlawful, is erroneous. Those of strong faith should therefore bear with the weak, denying themselves for the benefit of their brethren, after the example of Our Lord, who in nothing sought his own pleasure. The Apostle winds up this series of exhortations with a prayer that God, the author of all patience and consolation, would endue them with the spirit of mutual forbearance and concord, that they might admit one another to fellowship and kindly intercourse, as Christ had received them all into His family without distinction.

To enforce this motive to Christian union, the Ch. xv. 8. Apostle, by a natural, though somewhat abrupt transition, recurs to the cardinal doctrine he had been labouring to establish. What I maintain, he says, is, summarily, that Jesus Christ came as a Minister to the Jewish nation, in accordance with the Divine promises, that the faithfulness of God might be glorified; yet not for the sake of the Jews alone, since it had been equally the matter of prophecy, that the Gentiles were to unite with His people in glorifying God for His mercy. And he prays that they might all be filled with peace and joy through the hope of the Gospel. Hastening now to a conclusion, he explains

his motive for addressing them in his capacity as the Apostle of the Gentiles; adverts to the success which had crowned his labours; explains the course which he had adopted in publishing the Gospel where Christ had not been proclaimed; and gives that as the only reason of his not having visited Rome. Having no longer any thing to detain him in those regions, it was his intention, after he had gone up to Jerusalem, as the bearer of the contributions made by the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia, to visit Italy and Spain. And he earnestly bespeaks their prayers, that he might be preserved from the hands of his unbelieving countrymen in Judea, so as to come to them in gladness. He then subjoins his emphatic valedictory salutation.

Ch. xvi.

The remainder of the Epistle may be regarded as a sort of postscript. The Apostle commends to their sympathy and protection, the Sister who was the bearer of it; and sends salutations to Aquila and Priscilla, and other personal friends who were then at Rome. He cautions them to beware of those who would introduce among them any party divisions, to serve their own selfish and ambitious ends; and reminds them of the cheering assurance, that God would shortly crush the serpent's head beneath their feet; adding his accustomed benediction. Salutations follow, from some of St. Paul's companions at Corinth; among others, from Tertius, his amanuensis on this occasion; Gaius, his host; and Erastus, chamberlain of the city. The Apostolic benediction is then repeated; and the whole is wound up with a doxology. These were probably added by the Apostle with his

own hand, such being his “token in every Epistle.” ^{2 Thess. iii. 17.}
 The doxology is strikingly characteristic, its clauses exhibiting a rapid and natural succession of teeming thoughts, all converging to the grand idea which possessed and governed the Writer’s mind,—the calling of the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs with the people of God,—the long concealed mystery which prophecy had obscurely intimated, but which he was commissioned to divulge to all nations.*

§ 13. Much has been said about the obscurity and enigmatical character of this inspired master-piece of theology. It must, indeed, be admitted, that the Apostle’s mode of argumentation is often highly elliptical, and that there is, occasionally, a rhetorical abruptness which renders it difficult to supply the connecting links of thought. Yet, no other of St. Paul’s writings has the appearance of being more carefully composed; and there occur in it fewer of those digressions and divergencies which have been deemed characteristic of his style. Among “things hard to be understood” and liable to be wrested by the unlearned or indocile, might rank, perhaps, his bold personification of sin and righteousness as two masters, and of Law, under the same idea, in allusion to the peculiar conditions of Roman slavery; † and again,

* In some manuscripts, this doxology is found inserted at the end of the fourteenth chapter; but the internal evidence is strongly opposed to this transposition, which receives no sanction from either the more ancient Codices or the Versions. It probably originated with some Transcriber who imagined that the Epistle ought, like Paul’s other Letters, to close with the Benediction.

† ‘Every freeman who, under the Roman law, incurred a capital sentence (*diminutio capitis*), forfeited from that moment his civil cha-

his rhetorical description of universal Nature agonizing and waiting with eager expectation for the day of Redemption. But much of the phraseology which wears to us a technical and recondite character, was at the time familiar and plain, being strictly conformable to Jewish notions and current forms of expression. Thus, in the terms which he employs in this Epistle, to illustrate the Christian doctrine of Reconciliation, and to combat the Jewish notion of a legal righteousness, it appears from the extant writings of their most approved ancient authors, that St. Paul was accommodating himself to their constantly received opinions concerning the Law and the works of the Law, and was borrowing the language of their own schools.*

racter or personality. He ceased to be a citizen or subject, and became, in the language of English jurists, dead in law. So far, his new condition was that of the private slave, who had no civil existence, being regarded, not as a person, but as a *thing*. The Roman lawyers' (to distinguish their peculiar condition) 'denominated these convicts *servi pœnæ*, slaves of punishment; personifying, as it were, the vengeance of the law, and placing it in the relation of master. From this metaphor or fiction, several curious, and some humane practical consequences were deduced. The *servus pœnæ*, for instance, who had been a private slave at the time of his conviction, was, on any deliverance from his sentence, by pardon or otherwise, no longer in a servile condition, but entitled to freedom; for, the rights of his former master, having been transferred to punishment, could no longer be asserted by him; and a release from his new metaphorical master was enfranchisement. Thus, if he was sentenced to fight as a gladiator, or with wild beasts at the public shows, and escaped with life, or if, after being sent to the mines or mineral works, he was pardoned by the emperor, he became a free man.' Stephen's 'Slavery of the British West India Colonies Delineated,' vol. i. p. 329.

* See, for an ample illustration of this remark, the learned John Smith's 'Discourse of Legal Righteousness and of the Righteous-

The complaint which has been raised against the Apostle as "hard to be understood," and the objection taken more especially to this Epistle, relate not to his style, however, or to any recondite allusions, so much as to his doctrinal statements and their supposed tendency. That there should be any room for misapprehension upon this point,—that so important a portion of the recognized Rule of Faith should partake of an enigmatical or ambiguous character, (as the debates respecting the Pauline doctrine would seem to shew,) presents, at first view, a serious difficulty. The idioms of a foreign dialect, and the allusive language of familiar writing in remote times, may be expected to prove sources of difficulty in arriving at the precise meaning of particular phrases; but these rarely leave at all questionable a writer's drift. Obscure passages occur in the text of classic authors, which employ and baffle the ingenuity of critics; but it is not often that the sense of a paragraph is at all doubtful. There must be some other cause than lies in the mere style and diction of St. Paul's Letters, that renders his doctrine hard to be understood by learned divines and polemics, and capable of being made the subject of critical controversy.

ness of Faith.' (Select Discourses, 8vo. 1660.) 'It is not,' he remarks, 'merely a subtile school controversy which the Apostle seems to handle, but it is of a greater latitude; it is, indeed, concerning the whole way of life and happiness, and the proper scope of restoring mankind to perfection and union with the Deity, which the Jews expected by virtue of that system and pandect of laws which were delivered upon Mount Sinai, augmented and enlarged by the Gemara of their own traditions.' Ch. ii.

The very circumstance, however, which may, on a superficial view, appear a difficulty, will admit of an explanation that affords an argument in favour of the truth of the doctrine and of the inspiration of the Apostolic writings. The main source of the obscurity complained of is to be found in the originality of the Pauline, or, rather, of the Christian doctrine, and in its contrariety to the natural current of human opinions. No man who had wished to found a sect, or a new system of religion, that should meet with ready or general acceptance, would have chosen as its ground-work, doctrines so entirely repugnant to every Jewish prejudice and to all Gentile philosophy. Nor can it be plausibly explained, how such doctrines as Paul taught, should have originated with a Jew of Tarsus, a pupil of Gamaliel, unless we receive the Apostle's own declaration, that it was not after man,—that he “neither received it of man, neither was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The originality of the doctrine taught in the New Testament has been forcibly adduced by a learned Prelate as an important feature of the internal evidence of Christianity itself.* As the facility with

* ‘If it is thought that the anomalies of human nature make it impossible always to determine, from any ordinary rules of conduct, what enterprise man may or may not take in hand, then I look to another test, TO THE RELIGION ITSELF, instead of to the persons who introduced it. And I argue, that the main doctrines of Christianity, the condemnation of mankind as corrupt in the sight of God, and the atonement made upon the cross by Jesus as a Mediator between the offenders and their Judge, are doctrines which we cannot, on any rational or probable grounds, attribute to imposture. Taking them as maintained by the Apostles, with all their attending circumstances of the resurrection of the dead, the future judgment,

which we understand any subject, depends upon its relation to our previous knowledge, it naturally follows, that a slow reception will be given to doctrines of a character altogether original, and which do violence to the fixed associations of mankind. The same false assumptions that render it hard to *believe* the doctrines, render them also hard to be *understood*, because they come between the understanding and the only source of knowledge. The doctrines in question are to be learned solely from the New Testament: they originated in those writings; and the knowledge of them so absolutely depends upon the Book from which they are drawn, and upon the authority of which they rest, that it has uniformly been found to decline in exact proportion as the study of the Scriptures has been neglected. During the long eclipse of Scriptural light which preceded the Reformation, this knowledge appeared to be lost. When the Rule of Faith was rescued from the cells of monkish ignorance, and was once more allowed to speak for itself, the Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith, the '*Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*,' was re-discovered; and it has gained acceptance, and maintained its prevalence, in proportion to the

the final punishment of the wicked, and the eternal happiness of the redeemed, we cannot trace their origin to any known or accessible source in the belief of those times and countries. Neither can we account for their reception. There was nothing in the doctrines themselves to allure or conciliate, and the minds both of Jews and Gentiles were utterly unprepared to embrace a religion which had nothing in common with their former opinions, and directly opposed some of their strongest prejudices.' Bp. Sumner's '*Evidence of Christianity*,' ch. iii.

diffusion of the sacred Scriptures and the exclusive homage paid to their authority. The Scriptures may be made to furnish, by partial citation, a seeming proof of opposite doctrines; but what they really teach, can best be ascertained by the opinions which they exclusively originate;—that is, which the implicit and devout study of the Sacred Text is found uniformly, on the broad scale of general experience, to produce. Tried by this test, the Protestant doctrine must be admitted to be the true interpretation. It is the only one which can clearly be traced to the simple study of the New Testament as its source; and those who oppose the doctrine, are equally distinguished by their opposition to the unrestricted circulation of the Inspired Volume. The state of the case between the contending parties, is this. The one maintains, that St. Paul's writings are obscure, paradoxical, and difficult of interpretation: the other, that the genuine import of his expressions, and the whole drift of his arguments, are plain and unequivocal. Surely there is, *primá facie*, a probability that the Apostle is best understood by the latter. And yet, when the critical acumen and erudition of many who take the former view are considered, the only adequate explanation of the difficulty they complain of is, that they do not understand St. Paul, because they, *ab origine*, differ from him. 'The doctrine of Christian religion propounded to us by Our Saviour and his Apostles,' remarks one of the most learned English divines of the seventeenth century, 'is set forth with so much simplicity, and yet with so much repugnancy to that degenerate genius

and spirit that rules in the hearts and lives of men, that we may truly say of it, it is both the easiest and the hardest thing: it is a revelation wrapt up in a complication of mysteries, like that book of the Apocalypse, which both unfolds and hides those great arcana that it treats of; or as Plato sometimes chose to explain the secrets of his metaphysical or theological philosophy, ὥστε ὁ ἀναγνὸς μὴ γινῶ, that he that read might not understand, except he were a son of wisdom, and had been trained up in the knowledge of it. The principles of true religion are all in themselves plain and easy, delivered in the most familiar way, so that he who runs may read them; they are all so clear and perspicuous, that they need no key of analytical demonstration to unlock them, the Scripture being written *doctis pariter et indoctis*; and yet it is “wisdom in a mystery which the princes of this world understand not;” a sealed book which the greatest sophies may be most unacquainted with: it is like that pillar of fire and of a cloud that parted between the Israelites and the Egyptians, giving a clear and comfortable light to all those that are under the manuduction and guidance thereof, but being full of darkness and obscurity to those that rebel against it.*

* John Smith's Select Discourses, pp. 307, 8.

CHAP. IX.

THE FIVE EPISTLES OF PAUL WRITTEN FROM ROME.

SEQUEL TO THE TRAVELS OF ST. PAUL—THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS: TO WHOM ACTUALLY ADDRESSED—ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE—ITS CHARACTER AS ¹A COMPOSITION.—THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY: ITS TRUE DATE—SENT TO TIMOTHY AT EPHESUS—ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.—THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS: BY WHOM SENT—WAS PAUL PERSONALLY KNOWN TO THE COLOSSIANS?—ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE—POINTS OF COINCIDENCE BETWEEN THIS EPISTLE AND THAT TO ²THE EPHESIANS—NATURE OF THE HERESIES REFERRED TO.—THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON—CHARACTER OF THE ANCIENT DOMESTIC SERVITUDE—ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE—ITS CHARACTER AS A COMPOSITION.—THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS: ITS PECULIAR CHARACTER AND OCCASION—ANALYSIS OF ³THE EPISTLE—CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN.

Sequel to
the personal
narrative.

§ 1. WE must now resume and complete the personal narrative. According to the computation adopted by Lardner, St. Paul reached Jerusalem, agreeably to his purpose, just before the Pentecost of A.D. 58. Mr. Greswell contends, however, that it was the Pentecost of the second of Nero, A.U.C. 809, answering to A.D. 56. His main reason for this opinion is, that, when Paul was brought before the Sanhedrim, over which Ananias presided, there appears to

have been no regular high-priest; for so he thinks we are to understand St. Paul's declaration, that he did not know there was a high-priest. Ananias had been succeeded, in the first or second year of Nero, by Jonathan, the son of Annas, who, shortly after his appointment, was assassinated, at one of the Feasts, by the *sicarii* (assassins)* referred to by the chief-captain Lysias, in his conversation with Paul, by the subornation of Felix. The next high-priest of whom mention occurs, was Ishmael, who^m was appointed by Agrippa the Younger, previously to the removal of Felix; and as that removal cannot well be placed later than the fifth of Nero,† the appointment of Ishmael could not be later than the fourth, A.U.C. 811. It follows that, between the death of Jonathan, in the first or second of Nero, and the appointment of Ishmael, in the fourth, there was no regular high-priest. When Paul wasⁿ subsequently cited before Festus, Ishmael had been for some time appointed; and it is observable, that, while the name

Acts xxiii. 5.

Acts xxi. 37.
See Lardner, vol. i.
pp. 146, 147.

A.D. 58.

* 'After the tumults between the Samaritans and the Jews, during the administration of Cumanus, Ananias had been sent as a prisoner to Rome, to answer for the charges against his nation. After two years, he had been released by the interest of Agrippa, and allowed to return to Jerusalem. In the meantime, the high-priesthood had been filled by Jonathan, who was murdered by assassins in the Temple, employed or at least connived at by the governor. Ananias appears to have resumed the vacant authority, until the appointment of Ismael, son of Fabi, by Agrippa.' Milman's History of Christianity, b. ii. c. 2.

† The ground for this opinion is, that Pallas, the brother of Felix, whose interest at the Roman Court was employed to shield Felix from punishment, is stated by Tacitus to have lost his influence in the second year of Nero. There is a difficulty in reconciling here Josephus with Tacitus.

of the acting high-priest is not mentioned in the narrative, Festus speaks of the high-priests in the plural, doubtless including Ananias under that designation. St. Paul arrived at Jerusalem two years before the removal of Felix, at which time he had been many years in office; and if he was removed not later than the fifth of Nero, this would require us to suppose that Paul arrived not later than the third. Such is the substance of Mr. Greswell's ingenious argument, which is, however, far from conclusive as to the exact date. Admitting the correctness of the statement, that Felix was removed in the fifth of Nero, there is no necessity for taking the expression rendered "two years," as denoting two full years; and nothing, apparently, forbids the supposition, that Ishmael was appointed in the last year of Felix's government, shortly before his removal. If so, St. Paul may be supposed to have arrived at Jerusalem in the fourth of Nero, and yet, more than a year before Felix was superseded by Porcius Festus. The removal of Felix, however, may possibly not have taken place till the sixth or seventh of Nero.*

On the fourth day after his arrival, having been previously seen in company with Trophimus, an Ephesian, Paul was recognized in the Temple by some Jews from the province of Asia, and denounced to the enraged multitude as having preached against the Nation, and the Law, and the Temple, and polluted the sacred precincts with the presence of a Gentile,

* Hug makes Paul to have arrived at Jerusalem in the fifth of Nero, and Felix to have been removed in the seventh. Milman has followed Lardner.

Greswell,
vol. ii. pp.
2-11.

Acts xxiv.
27.

whom he was supposed to have introduced within the pillars on which an inscription, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, forbade the advance of any who were not of pure Jewish blood. He would probably have fallen a victim to the popular fury, had he not been rescued out of their hands by the Tribune Lysias, by whom he was secured in the castle of Antonia, bound to two soldiers. The next day, he was brought before the Jewish Sanhedrim to be examined; when the dissension which arose between the Pharisaic and Sadducean parties respecting him, assumed so violent a character, that the chief-captain sent soldiers to take him by force from among them, and bring him back. On receiving information from Paul's nephew, that a conspiracy had been formed by more than forty men to assassinate the prisoner, Lysias sent him by night, under a strong guard, to Cæsarea, the residence of the Roman provincial governor, about 60 miles from Jerusalem. Paul arrived there apparently the third day after his apprehension. Five days subsequently, his accusers, Ananias and the elders of his party, who were of the Sadducean faction, with the hired pleader Tertullus, came down to Cæsarea to appear against him. In his reply to their accusation before Felix, Paul stated, that but twelve days had elapsed since he came up to Jerusalem to worship; which accurately accords with the preceding calculation. Some days afterwards, Paul was again examined by Felix, in the presence of his wife Drusilla, a daughter of Herod Agrippa and Cyprus, and consequently by both parents a Jewess; and after this, he was repeatedly sent for by Felix, and con-

versed with, in the hope that Paul would offer to purchase his discharge. Mr. Greswell dates the beginning of Paul's two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea from his second examination by Felix, and makes it terminate about the end of June, A.U.C. 811. Between the arrival of Porcius Festus and his hearing the case of Paul, there was an interval of seventeen days; and a considerable time appears to have elapsed after the arrival of King Agrippa and Berenice, before Paul was examined in their presence. Some further time would intervene before the determination to send him to Italy was put in execution. The learned Author concludes, therefore, that Paul's departure for Rome could not take place before the beginning or the middle of August, A.U.C. 811, towards the close of the fourth of Nero. He supposes that he arrived at Crete about the time of the autumnal equinox; that the ship sailed from Lasæa, with a view to reach more convenient winter-quarters, in the middle or towards the end of October; that they were wrecked on the coast of the island of Melite,* some three weeks from that time; that in the fourth month after the shipwreck, (so he understands ch. xxviii. 11,) they sailed from that island,—consequently in February or March, A.U.C. 812; and that, in rather more than another fortnight, Paul arrived at Rome, that is, in the spring of A.D. 59. Dr. Lardner supposes it to have been the spring of A.D. 61. Both chrono-

* Whether the island of Malta, or a small island called Melite, in the Adriatic, is still an unsettled question. In support of the latter opinion, it is urged, that Malta is not 'in Adria,' though Melite is; that, in the latter island, there are snakes, in Malta none; and that the people of Malta were, in Paul's time, not barbarous, but civilized.

logists allow something less than three years for all that occurred between the arrival of Paul at Jerusalem at the Pentecost, and his reaching the Roman metropolis. Assuming, therefore, as most probable, that it was the Pentecost of 58, his arrival at Rome may be fixed in 61.

For two whole years (or an entire two years), Paul dwelt in his own hired house, apart from the other prisoners, but chained by the hand to a soldier who guarded him, according to what was deemed the most honourable custody.* In this state, he “received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus with all boldness, no man forbidding him.” Here the Apostolic narrative breaks off; and it has found no authentic continuator. Whether, at the end of the two years, he was released, and permitted to leave Rome, or whether he remained there till he suffered martyrdom, cannot be with any certainty determined. Lardner supposes, that the Apostle obtained his release in the year 63; that he returned from Rome to Jerusalem; † that he subsequently visited Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, and Corinth; and then again proceeded to Rome, where he was a second time imprisoned, and shortly afterwards called to resign his life for the name of Christ. The persecution of the Christians at Rome by Nero, on the pretext that they had been concerned in the conflag-

Acts xxiv.
31.

* This was the *custodia militaris*. From Josephus, we learn that even Herod-Agrippa, when a prisoner at Rome, was chained to a soldier, and that he was indebted to high interest at court for the visits of his friends. Ant. xviii. 6. § 7.

† The supposition that he went into Spain, Lardner rejects.

ration that destroyed great part of the city, broke out towards the close of 64; and both Paul and Peter are supposed to have suffered martyrdom in the following year, the twelfth of Nero. Lardner, with his usual modesty and caution, says: 'I do not presume to assign positively the year of the martyrdom of these two Apostles. I have mentioned the specious and probable arguments of two very eminent chronologers (Pagi and Basnage) in favour of the year 65. Nor do I think the Apostles survived that year. But I cannot say whether their martyrdoms happened in the year 64 or 65. Pagi says, that Peter and Paul were taken up and imprisoned in 64, and put to death in the year 65. But I know nothing of the imprisonment of the Apostles at this time. There may be, in late and fabulous authors, large and particular accounts of their imprisonment just before their martyrdoms. But there is little or no notice taken of it by the most ancient writers. If Peter and Paul were come to Rome before the city was set on fire, and before the persecutions of the Christians began, (which is not improbable,) they might be taken up, and soon put to death, before the end of the year 64.'

Lardner,
vol. v. p. 535.

Mr. Greswell, while treating as unquestionable the truth of the tradition, that both St. Paul and St. Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome, and under the reign of Nero, doubts whether they suffered in the same year; a statement of which 'no trace appears in the earliest and most authentic Christian writings,' but which 'begins to appear first, like many other precarious assumptions of the same kind, only in the

later and the least entitled to credit.' A very ancient tradition makes St. Paul to have preached the gospel thirty-five years after his conversion ; which, reckoning from A.D. 37,* would place his martyrdom in the third or fourth year of Vespasian, A.D. 72. Jerome makes both Apostles to have suffered in the thirty-seventh year after the Ascension, answering to A.U.C. 819, or A.D. 66. But Mr. Greswell shews, that no dependence can be placed upon these traditions. 'As to St. Peter,' he remarks, 'when he first came to Rome, before his death, and how long he had been there when that happened,—whether he was brought there as a prisoner, or whether he was apprehended in Rome itself,—before whom he was tried, and at what time of the year he might be executed,—these are points on which we are destitute of all positive information, and can advance only conjectures. The total absence of any allusion to him in the Epistle to Timothy, seems to me a strong presumptive argument that he was either not alive or not present at Rome, when that Epistle was written.' The hypothesis of the learned Writer is, that Peter suffered crucifixion in A.U.C. 818, a year before Paul, and that the latter Apostle was apprehended and tried in Asia, and sent a second time to Rome, where, as a Roman citizen, he suffered decapitation in A.U.C. 819 ; all which

Greswell,
vol. ii. p. 99.

A.D. 65.

A.D. 66.

* But his conversion was probably placed A.U.C. 784 (A.D. 31), thirty-five years from which would bring us to A.D. 66, agreeably to the date given by Jerome.

It only remains for us to see what light is thrown upon these points by the later Epistles of St. Paul, which were written from Rome during his imprisonment. Concerning four of these, there is no question that they were composed antecedently to the period at which the Book of Acts terminates; namely, the Epistles to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, to the Philippians, and to Philemon. Respecting the date of the Second Epistle to Timothy, there is much diversity of opinion; but it will be shown, that there is no solid ground for referring it to a later period.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

The Epistle to the Ephesians—to whom actually addressed.

2 Tim. iv. 12.

Ch. vi. 22.

Ch. iii. 13.

Ch. vi. 19.

§ 2. The Epistle to the Ephesians first claims examination, being, by general consent, considered as the earliest of those written from Rome. Lardner supposes it to have been composed very soon after his arrival there, before the summer of A.D. 61.* The immediate occasion of Paul's writing to the Asiatic believers was, the mission of Tychicus, whom he was sending to Ephesus for the purpose of explaining all that had befallen him. His object was, to exhort them not to be discouraged at his sufferings in their cause, and to bespeak their prayers on his own behalf, that he might discharge his commission with the freedom and boldness of an ambassador, though in bonds. At the time of its composition, therefore, he would seem not to have appeared before Nero; nor

* Neander contends, indeed, upon very fanciful and slender grounds, that the Epistle to the Colossians was first written. The evidence to the contrary will appear in the sequel.

were his bonds, as yet, “manifest in all the palace.” Phil. i. 13.
 It was natural that he should in the first instance address himself to the Christian church at Ephesus, as the metropolis of Proconsular Asia.

It has been made a question, however, in ancient as well as in modern times, whether this Epistle was actually addressed to the Ephesians. The name of that city, which occurs in the opening salutation according to the received text, does not appear in all the extant MSS.; and it is an ancient supposition, that it was originally addressed to the Laodicean church, being the Epistle referred to, Col. iv. 16.* The chief reason insisted on by those who adopt this opinion, is the absence of all allusion to the Apostle’s labours among those to whom he is writing, and the omission of any particular salutations. St. Paul had passed more than two years at Ephesus; yet, he does not speak as remembering, but as having heard of their faith and love. Yet, as some years had elapsed since he visited Ephesus, he may in this language be well understood as referring to the satisfactory accounts of their stedfastness, which had been brought to him by Tychicus. He had intended to revisit 1 Tim. iii. 14. them, but had been prevented, and, in his last voyage to Jerusalem, found it necessary to sail by Ephesus.

* Marcion is reproached by Tertullian with having altered the title of the Epistle to *Ad Laodicenos*, contrary to the received tradition. Dr. Lardner has shewn most satisfactorily, that no credit is due to Marcion’s opinion. Works, vol. vi. pp. 142—151. The learned Author has also replied to the arguments of Mill, Pierce, and Benson, who call in question the authenticity of the present designation. They have been followed, however, by Paley (*Hor. Paul.*) and by Greswell, vol. ii. p. 67.

Still, it may be deemed singular, that he should send no salutation to the bishops or elders of the church, with whom he had so affectionate an interview at Miletus. Another peculiarity is, that no colleague or companion is associated with the Apostle in the opening salutation, as in the Epistles to the Philip-
 pians, the Colossians, and the Thessalonians. This is explained, if we suppose, (with Lardner, Greswell, and Hug,) that Timothy was not among the Apostle's travelling companions to Rome, but that he joined him between the time of his writing the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the date of those to the Colossians and to Philemon; attended, probably, by Tychicus, Epaphras, from whom the Apostle received so cheering an account of the faith and love of the brethren at Colosse, and others. Of all that
 are named as having accompanied Paul into Asia, most of whom doubtless attended him in his journey
 to Jerusalem, Aristarchus of Thessalonica is alone mentioned as having embarked with him for Rome; although it is clear from the narrative, that he was accompanied also by the sacred Historian, whom we have identified with his faithful colleague Silas or Silvanus. The non-appearance of his name in the salutation might be explained by supposing that he was absent from Rome at the time; but another reason may be assigned, which seems more satisfactory. Silas does not appear to have shared the Apostle's labours at Ephesus, as he did in Macedonia and Greece. Now, in every case in which Paul associates the name of a colleague with his own, it will be found, either that they had laboured together in that region, as had

Lardner,
 vol. vi. p. 39.
 Greswell,
 vol. ii. p. 65.
 Hug, §§ 114,
 122.

Acts xx. 4.

Acts xxvii. 2.

Paul, Silas, and Timotheus at Thessalonica, or that the individual bore a special relation to the church addressed, as in the case of Sosthenes, whose name appears at the opening of the First Epistle to the church at Corinth. Silas was with the Apostle when he wrote the Epistle to the Colossiáns; but, if he had not visited Colosse, this will sufficiently explain why his name is not united with that of Timothy in the salutation.

There is reason to doubt, however, whether the Epistle to the Ephesians was addressed to any particular church or local community exclusively; and Archbishop Usher's opinion, that it was a circular Epistle generally intended for the several churches of Asia, while it removes every difficulty, is borne out by internal evidence. It is, on the one hand, in the highest degree improbable, that St. Paul would write to the churches of Philippi, Colosse, and Laodicea, and pass over the Christians at Ephesus, the most numerous and important church in Asia; and we must therefore adhere to the opinion, that the Epistle was primarily intended for the Ephesians, to whom Tychicus appears to have stood in close relation, as being either (like Trophimus) an Ephesian by birth, or a minister among them. On the other hand, if it was a circular Epistle, the name of the church might have been purposely left vacant by the transcriber in some copies which the Apostolic legate would be charged to deliver to the churches in his route. He would of course reach Ephesus first; whence, as he was especially deputed to visit Colosse, he must have passed through Ionia, and by way of Laodicea. In

like manner, an Epistle transmitted from Ephesus, must have reached the Colossians through the Laodicean church, the last in that direction towards Phrygia. It is, therefore, a very reasonable and natural supposition, that “the Epistle from Laodicea” referred to, meant the Epistle received from Laodicea; namely, that which had already been transmitted to that church by Tychicus; a copy of the Epistle to the Gentile believers of Ephesus and its province, Asia Colosse, which was in the neighbourhood of Laodicea, was in another province; and as an Epistle to the Christians at Ephesus was an Epistle to the churches of Asia,* so, an Epistle to those at Colosse was in fact an Epistle to the Phrygian churches. This affords a sufficient reason for their being separately addressed, and for the different topics of exhortation and warning.

See p. 5.

See Lardner, vol. vi. p. 141.

We are then to regard this as the Encyclical Epistle of Paul, the prisoner for the name of the Lord, to the Gentile Christians of Asia—Asiatic Greeks, for whose sake, and in whose cause, he had been apprehended and delivered to the Romans. It was by Jews of Asia, probably of Ephesus, who saw him in the Temple, that he had been denounced as having brought Greeks into the holy enclosure; “for they had seen before with him in the city, Trophimus, an Ephesian,” whom they recognized, and must therefore have been previously acquainted with. Emphatically, therefore, might the Apostle write: “I, Paul, the

Acts xxi. 29.

* Writing from Ephesus, the Apostle says:—“The churches of Asia salute you.” 1 Cor. xii. 19. So, the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is addressed to “all the saints in all Achaia.”

prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." It is observable, that there is no reference, in the Epistle, to the Jewish portion of the Ephesian church or to their Elders. The salutation is general,—to saints and believers, the holy and faithful in Christ. It was addressed, not to his own immediate converts, but to the numerous body of believers, "both Jews and Greeks," resident at Ephesus, or occasionally resorting thither from all parts of Asia. To a large proportion of these, the Apostle would be known only by reputation; but he assumes that they would all have heard of the specific commission entrusted to him as the Apostle of the Gentiles, in which character he writes to them. He might naturally feel some solicitude as to the impression which his apprehension and imprisonment had produced upon their minds, either as tending to lower his Apostolic authority and to detract from his reputation, or as adapted to discourage the timid, and to afford an advantage to the Jewish zealots, who were the great opponents of the mystery which he gloried in disclosing and proclaiming,—the Unity and Universality of the Church as the Body of Christ. The whole Epistle is admirably adapted to counteract this expression.

Acts xix. 10,
xx. 18—21.

Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 134.

Ch. ii. 10,
iii. 1—6,
iv. 17.

Analysis of
the Epistle.

§ 3. Immediately after the opening salutation, the inspired Writer begins by celebrating the exuberance and freeness of the Divine mercy and beneficence in the extension of the blessings of Redemption to the Gentiles, which he declares to be the development of an eternal purpose, self-originate and absolutely gratuitous, effected by the mediatorial intervention and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. The discernment

of this mystery to which he had attained, he ascribes to Divine revelation, thus tacitly disclaiming any pretension to superior natural wisdom, and intimating that he derived from Inspiration the sanction of his apostolic authority. And he addresses the Gentile believers as having obtained, through their reception of the Gospel, an inheritance in Christ in common with himself and Jewish Christians, of which they had the token and earnest in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. On this account, and because he had received satisfactory information of their steadfastness in the faith and affection towards the brotherhood, he gave thanks to God continually; and he prayed that they might be still more fully enlightened as to the glorious nature of the object of their hopes, the dignity to which they were called, and the wondrous display of Divine Omnipotence in their regeneration and adoption, in virtue and as the fruit of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ as his people's Head, the Administrator of all things, and the only Source of every perfection. That glorious intervention of Omnipotence on behalf of the Church in the person of its Divine Head, the Apostle proceeds to remind them, had taken place while they were still in a state of spiritual death, pursuing a sinful course in conformity to the age and to its ruler, the Prince of Darkness; hence, it could be ascribed only to the sovereign and abundant mercy of God. And this salvation being a gift, obtained by faith, and therefore unmerited, left no room for boasting; believers being, as such, the workmanship of God, created anew for the performance of good works, not saved as the reward of them.

The Apostle proceeds to exhort them to bear in remembrance the condition of moral degradation, helplessness, and alienation from God, from which they had been rescued by the Gospel. As heathens, they were at a greater distance from God than the Jews, who, as the worshippers of the true God, drew nigh to his chosen seat, and among whom, as a nation, Jehovah dwelt. But, in Christ Jesus, Jew and Gentile were brought into the same near relation to God; while, by the death of Christ, all those ritual observances which separated the Jewish nation from the heathen, and were both the symbols of division and the occasion of their repugnance to other nations, were abolished, their typical design being fulfilled. Thus had Christ died as well to remove the barrier to mutual union, as to reconcile both divisions of mankind to God. The proclamation of a Divine amnesty was therefore to be addressed by the ambassadors of Christ alike to those who were far off and those who were nigh. And through the One Mediator, under the guidance of the same Divine Paraclete, both enjoyed the like filial access to the Father. Now, therefore, they were, in all respects, fellow-citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and component parts of the Living Temple, the Church of God. For this reason, the Apostle proceeds to say, he addressed them in the character of a prisoner in the cause of Jesus Christ for the sake of the Gentiles at large; presuming upon their having heard of the special revelation and commission divinely vouchsafed to him, in reference to the calling of the Gentiles; and for this reason also, he made it the subject of his supplica-

tions, that they to whom he was writing might not be discouraged at what had befallen him, but might be strengthened by the Spirit of Christ, and enabled to comprehend the love of Christ to His Church in all its plenitude and extent.

Ch. iv.

In entering upon a strain of practical exhortation, the Apostle again adverts to his being then in bonds for the cause of Christ; in which character he beseeches them to maintain a conduct worthy of the exalted privileges to which they had been called; inculcating, first, the virtues of humility, meekness, and mutual kindness, and that fraternal union and concord which became them as members of one body under one Divine Head. That unity, the very limitation and diversity of the gifts bestowed upon them severally, was adapted and designed to promote, by rendering them needful and useful to each other; and these were to be exercised with a constant reference to the object for which they were bestowed, their progressive advancement in the knowledge of Christ, and the edification of the whole body. Resuming the strain of practical exhortation, the Apostle solemnly adjures them to maintain a course and conduct that should exhibit a broad contrast to that of the unconverted and unenlightened Gentile world, and to their former lives. Descending to particulars, he inculcates veracity, as opposed to all fraud and deceit,—placableness,—honesty and industry, with a view to being in a condition to succour the necessitous,—purity of speech, as opposed to all sins of the tongue,—kindness and generosity towards each other,—and an abhorrence of those sins of sensuality and

excess, and of that indecent jesting, which worldly men were prone to think of lightly, and even to palliate by immoral sophistry, as not deserving of Divine punishment. They were not only to abstain from such sins, but to avoid the company of all who practised them, and to rebuke the deeds of darkness by throwing upon them the light of truth and holiness in their example. In order to this, they are exhorted to observe great circumspection and temperance, and, instead of seeking exhilaration from wine, to cultivate the spirit of joyous devotion and thanksgiving.

The Apostle next enforces by motives peculiar to Ch. v. 21. the Gospel, an exemplary discharge of the relative duties. Those of the conjugal relation are enforced upon wives and husbands by the consideration, that the marriage tie had been employed to illustrate the relation between Christ and the Church mystical; and thus, the ineffable love of the Redeemer to his Church, represented under this analogy, becomes a model of that affection which the husband owes to his wife, while claiming, as her head and protector, deferential subjection and reverence. The honour due from children to their parents, is enforced by a reference to the fifth commandment of the Decalogue with the promise annexed to it. And parents are cautioned against the opposite errors of undue harshness and severity, and the neglect of instruction and discipline. The relation between masters and bond servants, is then referred to. As the servant of the Lord, the Christian slave was endowed with the spirit of a free man, though not emancipated from political thralldom, or released from the obligation of social obe-

dience ; and his master or lord is reminded, that he lies under the same moral obligation to act conscientiously towards his servants, and that his condition or rank makes no difference in the sight of Him who is the common Lord and Master of all.

Ch. vi. 10.

Finally, the Apostle exhorts his Gentile brethren to arm themselves with Divine strength, that they might be able to sustain the arduous contest with visible and invisible foes. He describes the spiritual panoply in which they must be arrayed in order to resist successfully the assaults of the Devil ; and enjoins upon them constant vigilance and prayer. He then gracefully bespeaks their prayers on his own behalf, that he might honourably acquit himself as an ambassador of Christ, though in bonds, when he should be brought up for a public hearing at Cæsar's tribunal. He informs them, that he had sent Tychicus to them, that they might learn how he was circumstanced, and receive comfort and assurance from the sight of their brother. And he concludes the Epistle with his Apostolic salutation and benediction.

Elevated
character of
this Epistle
as a com-
position.

§ 4. When we reflect upon the circumstances under which this noble Epistle was composed, the dignity of style and elevation of sentiment by which it is characterized, must appear the more striking.* Instead of being depressed by his position, the Apostle seems to have his whole mind occupied with the transcendent excellency of the privileges and hopes of the Christian fellowship and the anticipated triumphs of the Gospel. Nothing is more remarkable than the glowing

* Grotius speaks of this Epistle as surpassing all human eloquence. Cited by Lardner, vol. vi. p. 28.

language in which he expatiates upon the mystery or hidden doctrine that he glories in having had revealed to him, the doctrine of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," by the development of which the wisdom of God is declared to receive fresh illustration in the view of celestial intelligences; the discovery of the all-comprehensive character of the Christian economy, as embracing all nations, in contrast with the restricted nature of the Jewish dispensation. With a generosity as much above the spirit of his nation and age, as his conceptions transcended the worldly notions of the "natural man" or the political dream of the Jew, St. Paul exulted in the free proclamation of the Divine amnesty to all, in its anticipated diffusion throughout the earth, its assured triumph over every form of idolatry, and its beneficial results in subduing national antipathies and re-uniting the human family in one society. Next to the thought of the glory of Christ, he appears to delight in the idea of the glory of the Church; or, rather, these, in his conception, formed but two parts of one complex magnificent idea, the body corresponding to the Divine Head, the heritage or kingdom to the possessor or lord, as the fullness, the *πλήρωμα* of Christ. In contrast, moreover, with the ceremonial sanctity and external splendour of the Jewish Church in its most palmy days, he contemplated the moral regeneration effected by the Christian doctrine, the spiritual life which it conveyed, the purity, dignity, and blessedness which were, to each individual believer, the practical results. And with these characteristic features of catholicity and spirituality, in which the true grandeur and

beauty of the Christian economy consist, he connected its perpetuity as the final dispensation which was to last till all things should be subdued to Christ, and he should deliver up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father.

In all his Epistles, St. Paul insists more or less upon these topics—the oneness of the Church, the universality of the Gospel dispensation, and the boundless extent and freeness of the Divine grace; but in no other does he dwell with so much fervour upon the glorious character of the Christian calling. It seems as if he was particularly solicitous to guard the Ephesian and other Asiatic believers against thinking meanly of the religion they had embraced, because it was devoid of outward pomp and the splendour of a worldly sanctuary. In the Epistle to the Colossians, written so soon afterwards, and containing many parallel passages, the Apostle touches but slightly upon the unity and dignity of the Church, but discovers more anxiety to caution them against Rabbinical and Gnostical corruptions of the Gospel. In writing to the Romans, his main object is, to shew the universal necessity of the Christian Revelation and its adaptation to all mankind, as presenting to Jew and Gentile alike the only method of salvation; to vindicate on this ground the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to combat the pharisaic pride and national prejudices of Jewish Christians. In addressing the luxurious and polished citizens of the Achaian metropolis, he had to insist upon the unity of the Church as a society, in opposition to sectarian and party divisions, and to recal them from

the vain philosophy of human schools to the simplicity of the Christian doctrine. But, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, it would seem, that the aim of the inspired Writer was, to impress the Gentile converts with a deep sense of the inestimable privileges and honours to which they had been raised by the gratuitous favour of God, in order that, being “rooted and established by love,” they might be rendered proof against the seductive effect of the false glory attaching to the pompous worship, the wealth, and fame, and magnificence of the national Temple. The repeated comparison of the Christian body to an edifice, which occurs in this Epistle, has a peculiar force and beauty, if we suppose the architectural metaphor to have been suggested by the recollection of the Ephesian fane, the admiration of the world. In one instance, indeed, the Jewish Temple is more directly alluded to, where the Apostle speaks of the partition-wall which separated the inner inclosure or sanctuary from the Court of the Gentiles. But, when he compares the whole Church to a symmetrical structure rising up into a holy temple for the inhabitation of the Deity; and again, when he speaks of the immeasurable dimensions of the plan of Divine love,—it is natural to suppose that he intended to suggest a tacit comparison between the vast and magnificent fabric in which the Ephesians gloried, and the spiritual temple of living architecture, of which Christ is the corner-stone. It is as if St. Paul sought to arm the minds of these Gentile converts against the reproach cast upon Christianity, as a religion without altars, or temple, or priesthood,

and therefore without any visible bond of unity. Among the ancient heathen, the tutelary deity and the national temple or sanctuary constituted the strongest bond of national union or political federation. Thus, the temple of the Tyrian Hercules was the centre of the Phenician League, as that of Jupiter Latialis was of the Latin confederacy. The Grecian states, in like manner, though often at mutual variance, felt, at least for the time, to be members of one community, when assembled to celebrate the festival of the Olympian Jove. And of the great Goddess Artemis or Diana, the tutelary deity of Ephesus, and the protectress of the whole Ionic confederacy, it is said, "all Asia was a worshipper." Nothing, then, could be more appropriate or graceful than the metaphorical language in which the Apostle illustrates the essential unity of the Church, and inculcates the duty of concord, in allusion to what formed, among the Gentiles, a bond and centre of union. The followers of Christ had, it was true, no material temple, no local sanctuary; for this were not less incompatible with the universal character of Christianity as embracing all nations, than with the spirituality of its worship; but they were themselves component parts of a Divine superstructure, resting upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, and cemented by a living principle of union. And the oneness and universality of the Church are described as corresponding to the unity of the Godhead, and to the relation in which all mankind stand to their common Creator.

The passionate attachment of the Jew to his National Temple and worship, formed one of the greatest

impediments to his embracing the Christian faith. The national dispute with the Samaritans, which led to such rancorous animosity, related mainly to the Temple, the symbol of Jewish union. With the destruction of that Temple was inseparably associated the idea of the overthrow of their national polity. But this sentiment was not peculiar to the Jews: the attachment of the heathen to their national altars and sanctuaries, was equally strong. “Hath a nation changed its gods, which are yet no gods?” And if the national religion was a bond of internal union, it was also a source of international hostility, dividing race from race by antipathies which, if not originating in a difference as to the object of worship, yet borrowed from religion their strength and sanction. The religious institutions of the Hebrew people, by which their nationality was fostered, were designed, indeed, to keep them separate from the idolatrous nations. But the genius of the Gospel is wholly opposed to national distinctions, there being in Christ neither Greek nor Jew, “neither Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free.” The truth of Christianity is staked upon its universality. Claiming the homage and acceptance of all nations, it is designed to be a bond of international amity and concord throughout the world. Such is the sublime idea of the Divine purpose of the Gospel, which filled the mind of Paul with holy transport, and which he prays that these Asiatic believers might be taught to apprehend. In order to counteract the fascination of a pompous ritual, a gorgeous architecture, a national hierarchy, and the false glory of a spurious catholicity, there

Jer. ii. 11.

must be a spiritual illumination, an enlightenment of the heart, enabling the Christian to perceive the true grandeur in all its vast dimensions, the spiritual but essential unity under all internal diversities, the sacred dignity and moral glory under all circumstances of outward depression and meanness, of the only Church which can be universal or One; the "Body of Christ;" the Living Temple "built together for a habitation of God by the Spirit."

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

The Second Epistle to Timothy, written about the time of Paul's first appearance before Nero.

§ 5. The next Epistle, in the order of composition, appears, from internal evidence, to be the Second Epistle to Timothy, which Lardner supposes to have been sent away together with that to the Ephesians, or shortly after it, in the summer of A.D. 61. As this is a point which has been strongly controverted, (many learned Biblicists supposing it to have been written during a second imprisonment of the Apostle several years later,) it will be necessary to adduce the reasons for adopting the conclusion affirming its earlier date.

As it is evident, that Timothy was not with the Apostle when he composed the Epistle to the Ephesians, but that he had joined him before he wrote the other Epistles dated from Rome, it is a natural supposition, that the Apostle had sent for him in the interim. Now, in the Second Epistle to Timothy, we find St. Paul urging him to use diligence to come to him before winter, and to bring with him Mark,

because Luke alone remained with him. Demas had pusillanimously fled to Thessalonica; Crescens had departed for Galatia; Titus for Dalmatia; and Ty-chicus had been despatched to Ephesus. When, however, the Apostle was inditing the Epistle to the Colossians, not only had Timothy joined him, but Mark also; Luke was still with him; and Demas had returned and been restored to the Apostle's favour, for his name appears associated with those of Luke and Mark in the salutations sent to the Colossians, and also in the Epistle to Philemon.* Ty-chicus is referred to in the former Epistle as having been sent to Colosse with Onesimus; and he had, doubtless, already left Rome for Ephesus. These, it must be acknowledged, are coincidences which afford a strong presumption that the Second Epistle to Timothy was written between the dates of those to the Ephesians and the Colossians. The circumstances are such as are not likely to have attended a second imprisonment of the Apostle four or five years after. It would especially, as Lardner remarks, be unreasonable to say, that Luke was with the Apostle at Rome during a second imprisonment, since we see that his history of the Apostle terminates with his two years' imprisonment when sent thither by Festus. Other assistants and companions of St. Paul are referred to. Erastus is stated to have abode at Corinth, and Trophimus to have been left at Miletus sick. Now as Erastus is expressly mentioned as having been sent

Acts xix. 22.

* Grotius concludes from these passages, that Demas had repented of his fault; and if so, as Beza perceived, this Epistle to Timothy must have preceded his repentance.

Acts xx. 4.

by the Apostle from Ephesus to Macedonia, and his name does not occur among those of the company who attended him on leaving Macedonia for Asia, it is quite in accordance with probability, to infer that he returned to Corinth, and did not accompany the Apostle to Jerusalem. Trophimus, whom we might have expected to find attending him to Rome, though not mentioned as having taken his passage in the same vessel,* probably because he did not complete the voyage, may nevertheless have embarked with him, and have been put on shore at Miletus,† on account of illness; for the ship in which they sailed from Cæsarea, touched at Myra on the coast of Lycia; and that to which Paul and the other prisoners were there transferred, “sailed slowly many days,” which would doubtless afford an opportunity of landing on the coast of Asia.

Acts xxvii.
7.

2 Tim. i. 16.

The circumstances of the Apostle’s imprisonment at the time of his writing the Second Epistle to Timothy appear, moreover, to correspond precisely to those described by the Sacred Historian. He refers to his being bound with a chain; yet, he was evidently at liberty to “receive all that came unto him.” Thus, he sends salutations to Timothy from several individuals, who must have had free access to him. Otherwise, indeed, he would scarcely have desired Timothy to come to him. The cause of his imprisonment also was the same. Speaking of himself as an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, Paul

* Aristarchus is described as the Apostle’s fellow-prisoner.

† Beza’s conjectural reading of Melite for Miletus, approved by Grotius, is shewn by Lardner to be unnecessary.

adds: "For which cause I also suffer these things." If he was ever subjected to a second apprehension and imprisonment, it is not likely to have been upon the same account as that for which he was "delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."

Another strong argument that this Epistle was written when Paul was sent bound from Judea to Rome, is founded upon his language in the fourth chapter: "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." There can be no doubt that these expressions denote his having been brought before Nero, who must be intended by "the Lion." The very same metaphor, Mr. Greswell remarks, is applied, in Josephus, by Marsyas, the freedman of Herod Agrippa, to Tiberius. The force of the tense used in speaking of this deliverance ("I have been delivered") implies, that it was a recent event. He had escaped, for the time, from the Lion's jaws; but the phrase, "at my first answer," indicates that he expected to be again called upon for his defence,—that he had only been remanded. He evidently wrote this Epistle to Timothy soon after the result of this his first audience, under the impression of escape from imminent present danger, and in uncertainty as to the final issue. Now we can scarcely suppose that he would have been long at Rome, if Nero was there, without being "brought before Cæsar," agreeably to the angelic intimation given

Joseph.
Antiq. xviii.
ch. vi. § 10.

Acts xxvii.
24.

him in a vision during his voyage; and we thus arrive at almost a certainty as to the precise date of the Epistle and the circumstances under which it was written.

But there is another circumstance connected with his defence or apology, which shows that it must have been made at this time. He says: "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear." This we know to have been the result of his examination prior to his writing the Epistle to the Philippians, and could not be said (as Lardner remarks) of any supposed second imprisonment. "I would ye should understand," he writes, "that the things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places."

Phil. i. 13.

Among the reasons for assigning a later date to the Second Epistle to Timothy, it has been urged, that the Writer had a strong and lively presentiment that the time of his departure was come,—that his martyrdom was at hand.* But he had expressed a similar presentiment in his farewell interview with the Ephesian brethren at Miletus; and his state of feeling when he wrote to the Philippians, was precisely such as we might imagine to have been produced by

* Greswell, vol. ii. p. 86. Eusebius, Jerome, and Chrysostom were led by these expressions to infer, that this was the last Epistle of Paul, written shortly before his martyrdom; but Lardner and Hug, with Lightfoot, Baronius, and others, have shewn that this opinion has no solid foundation. Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 38, 72. Hug, Part II. § § 122, 123; 131.

the uncertainty of his fate. He expresses his confidence that Christ would be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death, while scarcely knowing which to desire, in precisely the spirit of one "ready to be offered up," and who felt that he had well-nigh "finished his course," although, at the date of that Epistle, the expectation of his being spared to revisit his beloved converts in Macedonia preponderated. 'That Paul had now no certain and prophetic view of suffering martyrdom immediately,' Lardner remarks, 'is apparent from several things in this Epistle; particularly from his desiring Timothy to come to him, and to bring Mark with him as profitable for the ministry. He supposed, therefore, that he should have an opportunity to employ him in the service of the Gospel. He likewise must have hoped to receive and use the things left at Troas, which he desired Timothy to bring to him.' 'The Apostle's words,' Ch. iv. v. 18. adds the learned Writer, 'to me it clearly appears, express faith in God and hope of the Divine protection in future difficulties and dangers; or that God would still deliver him and uphold him in His service, against all the designs of evil men; and when he had done the work still remaining for him to do, and fulfilled his testimony to the Gospel, he should be brought safe to the heavenly kingdom.'

There is another coincidence between the language of the Apostle in this Epistle and that which occurs in the Epistle to the Philippians, which has not obtained due notice. He says, in the former: "This 2 Tim. i. 15. thou knowest, that all they who are in Asia," (but which ought to be rendered, those of Asia, for so

See Lardner, vol. vi. p. 60.

Chrysostom, Theophylact, and the Greek writers generally understand the expression, as denoting the Asiatic Christians then at Rome,) “are turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” This agrees with and may partly explain what he says afterwards: “At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.” Dr. Hammond paraphrases the former passage thus: ‘Thou hast heard that, in my affliction, I have been deserted by all the Asiatic Christians at Rome, except only Onesiphorus.’ Beausobre and other learned critics suppose the Apostle to refer to some Asiatic believers who had unkindly left Paul, and returned to their own country. He complains, indeed, specifically, of Demas, as has already been noticed. But, among those who were turned away or alienated from him, it seems natural to include those who, actuated by a spirit of rivalry, stood aloof from the Apostle of the Gentiles, while they preached the Christian doctrine with a view to draw off his disciples or adherents, and form a party or school of their own, thinking thereby to “add affliction to his bonds.” Nothing is more likely than that this course should have been adopted by some of the Asiatic “false brethren,” and that Phygellus and Hermogenes were of the number. If so, well might the Apostle, in writing to Timothy, complain of their cruel desertion and treachery, and pray that “it might not be laid to their charge,”—that is, might be forgiven them.

Phil. i. 16.

Upon the whole, Lardner’s conclusion, expressed with his usual modesty, after a very careful examination of the evidence for and against the date which

he adopts, seems amply warranted: 'It appears to me very probable, that this Second Epistle to Timothy was written at Rome when Paul was sent thither by Festus. And I cannot but think, that this ought to be an allowed and determined point.'*

In the year 61, the seventh of Nero, Burrhus was the prefect of the *prætorium*, or commander of the prætorian guard, to whom Julius the Centurion gave up his prisoner; and, from his humane character, it is inferred, that Paul might be indebted to his good offices, as well as to the favourable report of the Centurion, for the mild character of his imprisonment. The *custodia militaris*, in which the prisoner was put under the care of a centurion, and chained to a soldier, was in itself a favour; but much depended upon the kind disposition of the centurion who had the charge of him, and of the alternate guard to whom he was chained. The free intercourse he enjoyed with his friends, was an exception to the general practice such as few could hope for. Had he been sentenced to the harder lot of the *carcer*, he would have been fortunate in not being obliged to renounce the light of day. At his audience before the Emperor, besides Burrhus, other courtiers and persons of distinction must have been present; and there, Paul

* Lardner, vol. vi. p. 64. The learned Author states, that he has followed Lightfoot, Baronius, Estius, Hammond, and Witsius. Cave also was of the same opinion when he wrote his Lives of the Apostles, though elsewhere he speaks as if he had changed his mind: if so, it must have been, Lardner thinks, in deference to Pearson, to whom the contrary opinion is chiefly to be ascribed, as well as the notion according to which 'Paul's lion' dwindles down into Helius, the emperor's freed man and favourite.

and Seneca may have met. On the death of Burrhus in the year 62, the eighth of Nero, the command was divided between Fenius Rufus and Sofonius Tigellinus, two men of very different character.* The death of Burrhus is mentioned by Tacitus as having occasioned great consternation, as little good was to be expected from the sluggish harmlessness of one of his successors (Fenius Rufus), and still less from the insatiable depravity of the other, who, in the end, acquired the whole confidence of the Emperor, and an exorbitant power. Seneca soon felt the altered air of the court, and retired after the death of his friend. Up to that time, the character of Nero had not been developed in all its atrocity, but was as yet almost unsullied. It was, therefore, a favourable period at which the Apostle arrived at Rome; and the overruling wisdom of Divine Providence is strikingly manifested in the singular concurrence of circumstances to which he was indebted for the indulgence extended to him. How long after the death of Burrhus this was continued, we have no means of ascertaining. That he was ever set at liberty, is not to be gathered from any thing in the New Testament. Chrysostom states, that Paul 'was at first brought before the Emperor, and escaped; but, when he had converted his cup-bearer, then he was beheaded.'

Hug, vol. ii.
p. 443.

Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 50.

The Epistle
sent to
Timothy at
Ephesus.

§ 6. We have next to consider where Timothy himself was, when St. Paul, in this Epistle, directed

* 'Had the command been divided at the time of St. Paul's arrival, the extreme accuracy of St. Luke would have induced him to write *τοῖς στρατοπέδρχαις*.' Greswell, vol. ii. p. 62.

him to come to him before the winter set in. He had accompanied the Apostle from Macedonia into Asia ; Acts xx. 4. after which, we hear no more of him in the History ; and as there is no intimation that he was with the Apostle at Jerusalem, it is probable that Timothy, as well as Tychicus, remained in Asia. A few years before, St. Paul had besought him to remain at Ephesus : for some reason, however, which we must suppose to have been good and sufficient, he made no very long stay, but soon rejoined the Apostle in Macedonia. That he should return to Ephesus the first favourable opportunity, where his presence was deemed of so much importance, it is but reasonable to conclude ; and such an opportunity was afforded when Paul and his companions touched at Miletus. Accordingly, Lardner supposes that Paul parted with him there, and that, ‘when the elders of Ephesus were come to Miletus, Timothy joined himself with them, and stood at the head of them, and consequently was one of those of whom it is said : “And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him ; sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.”’ Acts xx. 37. Of this, Paul takes notice in the most affectionate manner : “Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.” Doubtless Paul was much affected by the tears of all the rest, but especially with Timothy’s ; and was now “greatly desirous to see him,” who had been so deeply struck with the thoughts of never seeing his face any more. The observation that Paul refers to the tears shed by his friends at his parting with them at Miletus, 2 Tim. i. 4.

appears to me very obvious ; and it will directly lead us to the true date of the Epistle. It is a most proper beginning of a letter sent by Paul to Timothy at Ephesus, soon after his arrival at Rome from Palestine, at the time we suppose ; but it is very unlikely to be taken notice of in an epistle written several years afterwards, and after there had been an interview, as there certainly was, when Paul was at Rome.’

Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 40.

This is a happy instance of ingenious but solid induction ; and there is not less beauty than apparent truth in the conjecture. In the Epistle itself, there are several indications which confirm the opinion that Timothy was then at Ephesus. Paul directs him to salute the household of Onesiphorus, who was an Ephesian ; also Prisca and Aquila, who had probably returned to Ephesus. He warns him against Alexander the smith, who, if the same as the person referred to in the first Epistle, (i. 20,) was, probably, either an Ephesian or the Jewish Rabbi mentioned in the Acts as put forward by the Jews to address the Ephesian populace. Again, Timothy is directed to take Troas in his way to Rome, in order to bring the cloak and books which Paul had left there with Carpus. Now Troas was the place at which Timothy had met the Apostle in his last journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem ; and Paul writes to him as acquainted with Carpus, and aware that these things had been left with him,* From Troas,

Ch. i. 16—18.

Acts xix. 33.

* Lightfoot supposes that his cloak was his Roman garb, which, in going into Judea, he would lay aside for his Jewish habit ; or perhaps it was a winter garment, which he expected to require.

they had proceeded to Miletus, sailing by Ephesus ; and in leaving Asia for Italy, Timothy would find it the most convenient plan to adopt the same route. If this Epistle was sent away in May or the beginning of June, as Lardner supposes, Timothy would receive it in time to make his arrangements for reaching Rome before winter.

§ 7. The contents of this Epistle have been already to some extent anticipated, but they may be summed up in a brief analysis. The Apostle commences it with a strong expression of his affectionate regard for his son Timothy, and his ardent wish to see him, remembering the tears which he shed at their last parting. He exhorts him not to be ashamed of suffering for the Gospel, or of him, Paul, as the Lord's prisoner, for he was not himself ashamed of what he was suffering. He enjoins upon him stedfastness in the doctrine in which he had been instructed by the Apostle, reminding him of some who had proved unfaithful in his hour of trial. Timothy is then charged to provide for the transmission of the Apostolic doctrine and instructions, by committing what he had learned to faithful men who should be able to teach others. He is cautioned against entangling himself in worldly business and engagements ; and is exhorted to display in the service of the Gospel the fortitude of the soldier, the discipline of the wrestler, and the patience of the husbandman. The Apostle then reminds him, or rather bids him ever to bear in mind, what was the sum and substance of the Gospel he preached: "Jesus Christ raised from the dead, of the seed of

Analysis of
the Epistle.

Compare
Rom. i. 3.

David." Both parts of this statement had already been questioned or impugned; some denying the resurrection of Christ, and others his humanity. For preaching this Gospel, Paul was suffering as a criminal; but he was consoled with the thought, that the doctrine was obtaining a free and unfettered course, and with the assurance that those who suffered for Christ should be partakers of his heavenly reign. Upon these simple truths, the main facts of the Gospel, Timothy was to insist, in opposition to the logomachies of the sophists and the profane babblings of false philosophy. Such was the heresy of Hymenæus and Philetus, who, probably by resolving the resurrection into an allegory, maintained that it was past, and thus subverted the faith of some;* although, as the Apostle adds, the foundation-stone of God remained firm, bearing on it a double inscription: "God knows who are his own," and, "Let every one who bears the name of Christ depart from iniquity." The Apostle, then resuming the strain of admonition, enforces upon Timothy purity, self-government, uprightness, love and peacefulness towards all true Christians, gentleness and meekness towards opponents. He reminds him of the prediction, that, in the last days, perilous times were to arise, times of degeneracy; one prominent feature of which would be, seducing teachers and perverse opponents of the faith. But he expresses his confidence in his son Timothy, as having been fully conversant

See pp. 206,
311.

* To those who had embraced Gnostic notions respecting matter as the cause of evil, the re-union of the soul to the body must have been a doctrine very repulsive.

with his own teaching, example, fortitude, and sufferings, and as being well grounded and established in the Christian doctrine, having from childhood been acquainted with the Holy Writings, upon which he pronounces a striking and emphatic eulogy. Finally, he solemnly charges him to be indefatigable, courageous, faithful, and vigilant in the discharge of his ministry, and the more so as his own course was nearly run, and the time of his departure was at hand. In conclusion, the Apostle urges Timothy to join him at Rome, adding some particulars with regard to his own situation which have already been noticed, and closes the Epistle with salutations and his usual valediction.

Between the First Epistle to Timothy and the Second, there is a very marked coincidence, both in the topics of admonition, and in some of the expressions, so as to identify them as the composition of the same Writer, yet with a perceptible difference in the tone and character, such as was perfectly natural under the varied circumstances, but which no imitator of the Apostle's style could have imparted to a spurious Epistle.* The former Epistle, it was remarked, was in effect addressed to the church at Ephesus, and was designed as much to sustain Timothy in the discharge of the commission entrusted to him, by the sanction of Apostolic authority, as to convey to him personally any information or directions. Although the Second Epistle partakes somewhat more of the character of a personal communication from

* See the sound observations, on this point; of Hug, vol. ii. §§ 107, 123.

the Apostle to his son Timothy, there can be no doubt that it was equally intended for the instruction and admonition of the Ephesian church. And if, as has been shewn to be probable, it was sent at the same time as the Epistle to the Ephesians, which was addressed to the Asiatic converts from among the Gentiles or Greeks, we seem to have a reason, in addition to the explanation already given, for the omission, in the latter, of any direct counsels or instructions to the elders of Ephesus or the Jewish portion of the Christian body. These were addressed in the public charge to Timothy; as, in the message from Our Lord to the church of Ephesus, which John was commanded to write, they were also addressed through the officer styled the *ἄγγελος* (minister). In both the Epistles to Timothy, we find the same remarkable phraseology employed in reference to heretical teachers and their doctrines, of which, it has been observed, the Apostle speaks more unreservedly and distinctly than in his letters to the churches. In both, he speaks of their myths or fables, profane and vain babblings, and logomachies. In both, he refers to Hymenæus by name, joining with him, however, Alexander in the First Epistle, and Philetus in the Second. This variation is easily explained by supposing that Alexander had not maintained the same heresy as Hymenæus, although, having "made shipwreck concerning faith," he had incurred the same exemplary punishment. In both Epistles, we find the same earnest admonitions to Timothy upon the subject of his own conduct, and with reference to his youth. Still, the Second Epistle is in no part a duplicate of the First.

1 Tim. i. 4;
iv. 7; vi. 4,
20.—2 Tim.
ii. 16, 23;
iv. 4.

See p. 312.

1 Tim. iv.
12; vi. 11.—
2 Tim. ii. 22.

Considering the interval which had elapsed since the former Epistle was written, (not less than five years,) it is perfectly natural that the Apostle should reiterate the admonitions and cautions he had given to him. Yet, it may be observed, that Timothy is addressed, in the later Epistle, not as “the youth” who had yet to qualify himself, by study and meditation, for the discharge of his function as a teacher, but as an adept in the Christian doctrine, fully competent to transmit it to others, discharging the work of an Evangelist. Even these exhortations, however, would scarcely have been appropriate, had the Second Epistle been written five or six years later.

1 Tim. iv.
12, &c.

2 Tim. ii. 2;
iv. 2, 5.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

§ 8. The next Epistle that claims our attention is that addressed to the Christians at Colosse, written after Timothy had joined the Apostle at Rome, and sent, together with the Epistle to Philemon, who was one of the Colossian brethren, by Onesimus. Tyehicus is also mentioned as having been sent to Colosse, to inform them of the Apostle's situation, and to comfort their hearts; as, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, he is stated to have been sent with the same commission to Ephesus. Hence it has been inferred, that he was the bearer of both Epistles; and it is supposed by Lardner and Hug, that he undertook two journeys into Asia for this purpose, having returned to Rome in the interim. It seems more likely, however, that he was followed by Onesimus, who joined him in Asia, bearing the later Epistle.

The Epistle
to the Co-
lossians—
by whom
sent.

The Apostle had heard, by Epaphras, of the faith and charity of the brethren at Colosse; and he had we may therefore infer, been sent to Rome by the Colossians. Mr. Greswell suggests, that he may have accompanied Timothy; and he supposes, with Grotius, that he is the same person as Epaphroditus, mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians.* In that to Philemon, he is styled by the Apostle, his fellow-prisoner; which we are not, perhaps, to understand literally, but as implying the companion of his imprisonment. If, however, Epaphroditus is referred to, the Apostle may elegantly allude to his imprisonment by sickness, “because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death.”

Phil. ii. 30.

Was Paul personally known to the Colossians?

§ 9. A question has been raised, whether St. Paul was personally known to the Colossians; those critics who adopt the negative, grounding their opinion upon the words: “I would that ye should know what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.” Theodoret, in the fifth century, suggested the proper explanation of this passage: ‘They should consider that the meaning of the words is this: “I have not only a concern for you, but I have also great concern for those who have not seen me.” And if it be not so understood, he expresses no concern for those who had seen him, and had been taught by him.† Moreover, the blessed Luke says, in the

Col. ii. 1.

* Beausobre and Lardner admit the name to be probably the same, while doubting the identity of the person.

† That this is the meaning, appears from what follows—‘that their hearts’ (not your) ‘may be comforted.’ Theod. *in loco*.

Acts, "And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia, and of Phrygia in order." Colosse is a city of Phrygia; and Laodicea, the metropolis of the country, is not far from it. How was it possible for him to be in Phrygia, and not carry the Gospel to those places? And in another place, the blessed Luke says: "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia." As Dr. Lardner remarks, after citing this passage, St. Luke has not named any places in Galatia visited by St. Paul, yet he must have planted divers churches in its cities and towns; and so, 'the accounts given of his journeys in Phrygia, are sufficient to assure us that he preached the Gospel there, and made converts, and planted churches in the chief cities.' In fact, it is evident from the whole tenor of the Epistle, that the Apostle is writing, not to strangers, but to his personal friends and disciples, those whose order he had witnessed, though he was now absent from them in body, and present with them only in spirit, and who were also well acquainted with his beloved son and colleague Timothy, and with the other companions of the Apostle whose names occur in the salutations. Philemon of Colosse was at all events St. Paul's convert.* Had Epaphras been, as some have conjectured, their first instructor in Christianity, and the founder of the church, his name would doubtless have appeared in the opening salutation, in the place of

In Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 151.

* Mr. Greswell's conjecture, that Paul might have converted Philemon at Rome, is strangely forced and improbable.

Timothy's, or in addition to it; but, in that case, the Apostle would not have used such an expression concerning him as, "who is one of you;" nor have deemed it necessary to recommend him so strongly to the esteem and regard of the Colossian brethren.*

Analysis of
the Epistle.

§ 10. After the customary Apostolic salutation, St. Paul commences the Epistle with declaring, that he gave thanks to God in his constant supplications for them, having been informed of their fidelity and charity, on account of the heavenly inheritance which was laid up for them, according to the Gospel which they had embraced; and that he had never ceased to pray that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will and all spiritual wisdom, so as to maintain a conduct worthy of the Christian name; being endowed with Divine strength to endure every trial with patience, and rendering thanks to God for their redemption from the Power of Darkness, and translation into the kingdom of the Son of God. The mention of the Redeemer leads the Apostle to break off into one of those sublime digressions by which his writings are characterized, in order to expatiate upon the Divine attributes and mediatorial glory of the "Word made flesh," as the head of the Church, and to advert to the purpose of the Father to reconcile all things to himself by Christ. He then reminds them (as he had done the Ephesian believers) of their former condition of alienation and wickedness, in which the Gospel had found them,—that Gospel,

* Lardner has with minuteness insisted upon the internal evidence, in a chapter entitled, 'That the churches of Colosse and Laodicea were planted by the Apostle Paul.' Works, vol. vi. p. 151.

addressed to every creature, which he had been commissioned to preach, and for which he was now suffering in their cause; it having been especially committed to him, to publish the long-concealed mystery of the extension of Divine mercy to the Gentiles. The aim of all his labours and efforts in the discharge of this ministry, was this,—to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; and he wished them and all their fellow-believers in Phrygia to know what intense solicitude he felt, that they, by an experience of the consolations of the Gospel, might be so fully assured of its truth, as to adhere to the doctrine they had been taught,—the mystery of God the Father and of Christ, as comprising all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He thus expresses himself, he says, in reference to the danger of their being seduced by plausible but false representations; and he exhorts them to adhere with stedfastness and gratitude to what they had received and been taught.

The Apostle then proceeds to counsel and admonish them with more direct reference to the particular errors against which it was necessary to put them on their guard; a fallacious and vain philosophy, having its origin in human opinions, and framed of worldly elements, incompatible with the simplicity of the Christian doctrine. In opposition to the dogmas alluded to, they are instructed to bear in mind, that in Christ the true *πλήρωμα* or fullness of the Godhead dwelt personally and really, his body being the very Temple of Deity; and that in Him, therefore, believers had everything requisite for their perfection; in Him, their only Head, they were consummate or

Ch. ii. 8.

complete, who is the Head of every order of intelligence exercising authority and power. United to Him by faith, they needed no ritual circumcision, being morally sanctified,—having, in their baptism, stripped themselves of their old nature, and buried it in the grave of Christ, that they might rise to a new life. The same Divine power which had raised Christ from the dead, had raised them from spiritual death ; all their sins being forgiven through the satisfaction made to the Law by His death, who had cancelled its penal claims by paying the ransom, and, as a victor, had spoiled the rulers and powers of darkness of their prey, triumphing openly over them.

Ch. ii. 16.

Such being their privileged condition, they are exhorted not to allow any one to impose upon them the ordinances of the Mosaic law, in regard to diet or the Jewish festivals and sabbatical years, which belonged to an emblematic economy ; or to seduce them by Gnostic errors incompatible with allegiance to Christ as the vital head of his body. As having, in virtue of their union to Christ, died to the world, and risen the partakers of a heavenly life, they are exhorted to refuse conformity to worldly institutes and human traditions, and to set their affections upon heavenly objects and the hope of glory. Those earthly lusts and vices which drew down the Divine displeasure upon the heathen, and in the indulgence of which they had once lived, they are exhorted to slay ; to divest themselves of all the evil dispositions which belonged to their old sinful nature, and to put on the Christian character, consisting in a resemblance to Christ, borne by all his true disciples, of whatever

nation or condition. Above all, they are enjoined to cultivate mutual love and concord as one body, and to give expression to their gratitude to God in social worship and hymns of praise, performing all in the name of The Lord Jesus, and presenting through Him their thanksgiving to the Father.

After these general admonitions, the Apostle sub-joins brief exhortations to wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters. He then exhorts them to be constant in prayer and thanksgiving; and bespeaks their intercessions for himself, that he might be assisted to acquit himself as an ambassador of Christ in bonds. Finally, he enjoins upon them circumspection towards those without the Church, and recommends them to be prepared with an apt answer to all who should question them respecting their faith or hope. Ch. iii. 13.

The Apostle, in conclusion, mentions his having sent to them Tychicus and Onesimus, who would inform them more fully of his circumstances; he sends salutations from his fellow-labourers, with a special commendation of Epaphras, as having a very affectionate concern for them and the brethren in Laodicea and Hierapolis, to whom he desires to send salutation also; he directs that this Epistle should be publicly read among the Colossian brethren, and then in the church of the Laodiceans, sending a special message to Archippus, to discharge his ministry with care; and then adds with his own hand (the rest having doubtless been written by an amanuensis) the touching farewell,—“Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.” See p. 368.

Points of coincidence and difference between this Epistle and that to the Ephesians.

§ 11. Between this Epistle and that to the Ephesians, there are numerous coincidences of sentiment, and some of expression; yet, in most of the parallel passages, the phraseology is different; and in many instances, the correspondence is not more close than may be observed between passages in this and in other Epistles.* For instance, the remarkable expressions, "buried with Christ in baptism," and "being dead with Christ," as well as the general strain of thought in Col. ii. 12, 13; iii. 3, are found in the Epistle to the Romans. In the latter Epistle, also, we find the "mystery" relating to the calling of the Gentiles spoken of in terms similar to those used at Col. i. 26. Again, the declaration, that in Christ there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, bond and free, occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians. Still more striking is the correspondence between the caution against submitting to the imposition of Jewish ordinances, and the Apostle's remonstrance with the Galatians for turning again to worldly elements, and "observing days, and months, and times, and years." Other coincidences might be pointed out between passages in this Epistle and in other parts of the Apostolic writings; but, in all that have been now referred to, the Epistle to the Ephesians presents no corresponding expressions. In fact, although there is a general resemblance in the plan of the two Epistles, with many exhortations in common, yet, as formerly remarked, the aim and drift of the Apostle in the one addressed to the Asiatic believers, are very dif-

Rom. vi. 3
—11.

Rom. xvi. 25.

Col. iii. 11.
Gal. iii. 28.

Col. ii. 16.
Gal. iv. 9.

See p. 366.

* A table of the corresponding passages is given by Horne (vol. iv. p. 381), who makes them extend to 66 verses out of 95!

ferent; the main topics upon which he there expatiates, are different; and so is the character of the composition, which is at once more copious and more finished, more fervid and more elevated. Yet is the Epistle to the Colossians highly valuable, not only for the practical instruction which it embodies, but especially for those inspired testimonies which occur in it, to the proper deity and mediatorial glory of the Son of the Father, “the Image of the Invisible God.”

§ 12. With regard to the specific heresies to which the Apostle refers in this Epistle, as well as in those to Timothy and to the Ephesians, there has been much learned debate. The inquiry is one of considerable historical interest, though of small importance to the plain Bible reader, except as it may serve to give a more precise meaning to some of the phrases employed by St. Paul in opposing those false doctrines. There is, in particular, one remarkable form of expression frequently occurring in the Pauline writings, which may receive some light from this investigation; namely, that in which the Apostle refers to superhuman intelligences under the names of “principalities and powers, thrones and dominions.” It is manifest, that, when Our Lord is represented as having “spoiled principalities and powers,” and again, when the Christian soldier is admonished that he has to wrestle against them, and “against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,” evil intelligences are referred to. Now in the demonology of the Oriental school, these same expressions are employed to denote the different orders of spirits to whom was assigned the

Nature of the heresies referred to in this Epistle.

Rom. viii. 38.
Eph. i. 21;
iii. 10; vi.
12. Col. i.
16; ii. 10,
15.

office of governing the world. In the book "On the Mysteries of the Chaldeans and Egyptians," attributed to the Syrian Philosopher, Jamblichus of Chalcis, a sketch of this extraordinary system is given, of which the learned Professor Hug has furnished the following abstract:—

Hug, vol. ii.
§ 125.

‘ The nature of the gods is a pure, spiritual, and perfect unity. With this highest and perfect immateriality, no influence on matter is conceivable; consequently, no creation or dominion of the world. Certain subordinate deities must, therefore, be admitted, which are more compounded in their nature, and can act upon gross matter. These are the creators of the world (*δημιουργοι*) and the rulers of the world (*κοσμοκράτορες*). The superior deities are, however, the real cause of all that exists; and from their fullness (*πλήρωμα*) it derives its existence.

‘ The succession from the highest deities down to the lowest, is not by a sudden descent, but by a gradation from the highest, most pure, and spiritual nature, down to those which are more substantial and material, and which, as the most nearly related to the gross matter of the creation, consequently possess the property of acting upon it. In proportion to their purer quality or coarser composition, they occupy different places as their residence, either in a denser atmosphere or in higher regions. The highest among these classes of spirits are called *ἀρχαι* or *ἀρχικον αἶτιον*. Others among the divine natures (*θεῖαι οὐσiai*) are intermediate beings (*μέσαι*). Those which occupy themselves with the laws of the world, are also called *ἀρχοντες*, rulers; and the ministering spirits are *δύναμεις*

(powers), and ἀγγελοι (angels). The ἀρχαγγελοι (archangels) are not generally recognised in this theory: they are said to have been first introduced by Porphyry. If we take also into consideration the ἐξουσίαι, of which Justin Martyr speaks, we shall have enumerated the greater part of the technical appellations of this Demonology.’

Hug, vol. ii.
§ 125.

In this system, there is obviously something more than a resemblance to that of the Magian philosophy. The μέσαι, or intermediate beings, are the *furuher*s* of the Persian mythology, the subordinate agents of Ormuzd (or Oromazes), the author of all good, who keep watch against Ahriman, the author of evil, and his agents, as connected with the human soul: they are the suggesters of all good principles, the genius or external conscience which deters man from evil. Other Magian notions may also be distinctly traced in the account given by Jamblichus of the superior and inferior deities. This Oriental system, commonly known as the Babylonian or Chaldæan, had long been familiar to the Greeks. It had extended to Rome before the reign of Augustus, and was in the full progress of its extension during the Augustan age. The practical part of the system was occupied with the precepts, by observing which, a person might enter into communication with the intermediate spirits or demons, through whose assistance its votaries aspired to the acquisition of superhuman knowledge, the power of predicting future events, and of performing supernatural works. The philosophers of this school were

* The *furuher*s or *feruers* correspond in many respects to the ideal archetypes of Plato and the good demon of Socrates.

known under the names of Magi and Chaldeans, terms used interchangeably. They had found their way to the Imperial palace. Tiberius had received instruction in their philosophy, and was a believer in their magical powers :—

“ *Principis Augustâ Caprearum in rupe sedentis
Cum grege Chaldæo.*”—JUVENAL, Sat. x. 93.

Nero caused a great number of them to be brought over from Asia, not unfrequently at the expense of the provinces. The Magi or Chaldeans, as we learn from Tacitus, Suetonius, and Juvenal, were the persons consulted in all great undertakings. ‘ When conspiracies arose, they predicted the issue ; they invoked spirits, prepared offerings, and, in love affairs, were obliged to afford aid from their art. As they found access to and favour with people of all classes in the Metropolis, so did they also in the Provinces. Paul found a *magus** at the court of the proconsul at Paphos. (Acts xiii. 6.) Such was that Simon in Samaria (Acts viii. 9), who was there considered as a higher being of the spiritual class. The expression is remarkable, as it is a part of the technical language of the Theurgists : they called him, *δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ μεγάλη*, a great power of God. So, also, Pliny calls some of the demons and intermediate spirits by whose co-operation particular results were effected,—*potestates*. Justin Martyr, the fellow-countryman of Simon, has preserved to us some technical expressions of his followers : he says, that they ascribed to him the

* ‘Ο *Μαγος* appears, as Dr. Wait suggests, to be the translation of the title, ‘*Ἐλυμας*.

high title, Ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀρχῶν, καὶ ἐξουσίας, καὶ δυνάμεως—
 ‘Above every principedom, authority, and power.’

Hug, vol. ii.
 § 125.

To the magical arts professed by these philosophers, (although the pure Magian philosophy is supposed to have been free from these pretensions,) we find numerous references in the New Testament. It is mentioned as one result of the Apostle Paul’s labours at Ephesus, that many who were addicted to such arts, brought a quantity of their magical and theurgic books, and burned them publicly. That city had long been celebrated for its magi; and the Ephesian amulets (*ἀλεξιφάρμακα*) and Ephesian charms (*γράμματα*) were spells highly extolled for obtaining authority over the demons.* Now, in his First Epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul expressly refers to these “doctrines of demons,” or demonological tenets; and, in the Second Epistle, he compares the opponents of the Gospel to Jannes and Jambres, the magicians who withstood Moses by their arts. In the Epistle to the Colossians, he speaks of a “worshipping of angels,” in connexion with intrusive speculations concerning the invisible world; which also seems to point to similar notions. In the Zend-Avesta, the only extant fragment of the Magian sacred books, there are given liturgical services and prayers for all sorts of occasions; some addressed to the guardian angels of the Sun and the Planets; some to the various good genii

Acts xix. 19.

1 Tim. iv. 1.

2 Tim. iii. 8.

* Hug, vol. ii. § 126. The learned Author cites an inscription found among the ruins of Miletus, proving the prevalent belief, in those regions, of the theurgic doctrines. As late as the fourth century, the Synod at Laodicea instituted severe edicts against angel-worship, magic, and incantations. See Neander’s History of the Church (by Ryland), vol. i. p. 382.

who preside over the different elements of nature and productions of the earth. The leading duties of the Parsee religion are, accordingly, first, to adore Ormuzd, the author of all good; and, next, to reverence all the angels and subordinate spirits, his agents, with which Nature swarms in all her elements, and to pay them honour and worship. The prayers which are to be recited, are considered as a sort of charms or incantations. The whole system, as it still survives in the creed of this remarkable race, is founded on the supposition of a continual warfare between good and evil spirits, which fill all nature; and religion is but the art of gaining the aid of the former, and, by observance of the law, of inducing them to assist the votaries of Ormuzd, against the powers of evil.*

With the mystical philosophy of the Magian school, which identified the Evil Principle with matter, was closely connected an asceticism having for its professed object to disengage the soul from servitude to the body. According to Jamblichus, to eat meat or partake of any slain animal, nay, even to touch it, was held to be contaminating. Matrimony was deemed incompatible with the attainment of perfection. Bodily exercises and purifications, though not productive of the gifts of prophecy, were supposed to be conducive to them. To these notions,† rather than to the Jewish laws respecting food, the Apostle

* Conder's 'View of all Religions,' p. 610. In the public prayers, much use is made of the consecrated water, which is supposed to be powerful in repelling demons.

† No Parsee can eat or drink out of the same vessel with a person of a different religion. As to their diet, all birds and beasts of prey,

may be thought to refer under the expression, worldly elements, at Col. ii. 20, where he speaks of such ordinances as forbade touching this and tasting that, which had a semblance of wisdom in a neglecting or punishing of the body. To the same dogmas he alludes, when he tells Timothy, that “bodily discipline profiteth little ;” and mentions, in immediate connexion with demonological doctrines, the forbidding to marry, and the commanding to abstain from meats ; conditions insisted upon in the Magian philosophy, as necessary to a communication with the spiritual world. Moreover, what he says of the seared consciences of these apostates, their deceptions and their avarice, is certainly, Professor Hug remarks, more applicable to that class of men, than to any other. None, according to the testimony of all antiquity, were more chargeable with such immoralities, than the pretended confidants of the Occult Powers.

¹ Tim. iv. 8.

¹ Tim. iv.
1—3.

Some learned writers have supposed that, in the heretical teachers to whom the Apostle refers, we may recognize the distinguishing features of the Jewish sect of the Essenes. What is said of abstinence, of chastising the body, of observing the ceremonial law, and of the reverence paid to angels, it has been remarked, might suit that sect, in common with other ascetics. But there is no ground for imputing to the Essenes the extreme immorality with which St. Paul charges these seducers ; since the contemporaries of that Jewish sect mention them with honour and respect, and extol the leading men as the most

with the dog and hare, are forbidden ; and in India, they generally abstain from beef.

Hug, vol. ii.
§ 125.
Neander,
vol. i. p. 374,
note.

virtuous of their age. It is probable, however, that both the asceticism of the Essenes, and the grosser mysticism which sought to blend itself with the Christian doctrines in the Gnostic heresy, had a common source in the Oriental school of philosophy,* which had its followers among the Jews as well as among the heathen. 'We here see,' remarks Neander, 'a tendency, first germinating in the circle of Judaism, from which, in the following century, manifold branches proceeded, of a Gnosticism that corrupted the simple Gospel. Paul probably had cause, from his experience during his long sojourn in the Lesser Asia, to apprehend the springing up of a tendency so injurious to the Gospel; and hence we may account for his warnings addressed to the elders of the Ephesian church. His apprehensions were now verified. Jewish false teachers of this tendency had made their way into the church at Colosse. In a country like Phrygia, where a propensity for the mystical and the magical was always rife, (as is evident from the forms of religion peculiar to that country,—the worship of Cybele, and afterwards Montanism,) such a tendency would be peculiarly dangerous to Christianity.'

Neander,
vol. i. pp.
376, 378.

In the example of Paul, the learned Writer proceeds to remark, 'we recognize the peculiar character of the Apostolic mode of refuting error, by seizing the root of the doctrine in its fundamental religious tendency, and opposing to it the spirit of the Gospel.'

* Gnosticism combined the Platonic theory of Emanations with the Magian demonology and the doctrine of two original principles, good and evil. In the Manichean heresy, the mixture of the Magian philosophy with Christian ideas, is still more palpable.

Thus, he repressed the boasting of a pretended superior wisdom and a delusive acquaintance with spirits, without setting himself to oppose each separate particular error, by exhibiting a truth that marks the central point of Christianity; that, by communion with Christ alone, we receive all the fulness of the Divine life; by Him alone we are introduced into the kingdom of God; and we belong to that same kingdom to which all higher spirits belong, by union with Him as the common head of the whole; in Him we have all things which are needed for the development of the internal life; and hence we need no other Mediator.'

Neander,
vol. i. p. 382.

There is one difficulty, however, which the learned writers above cited have overlooked, in pointing out the apparent allusions, in the language employed by St. Paul, to the Magian demonology. If, under the terms, 'principalities or primacies, powers, rulers,' he refers to the spiritual agencies, the gods or demons of the Chaldean philosophy, does he not thereby recognize their existence, and so far sanction a belief in the system? We cannot for a moment suppose that the Apostle meant to represent the Christian as warring against fabulous or allegorical enemies, where he speaks of wrestling not against flesh and blood, but against the principedoms, the powers, the world-rulers of this darkness, the spiritual agents of wickedness in the heavens. Does he, then, in thus referring to real existencies, to mighty intelligencies, hostile to Christ and his servants, borrow the language of popular superstition, in accommodation to notions absolutely false and antichristian? Such a conclusion

seems utterly inadmissible. Upon this principle of accommodation, the sacred Writer might, with as little impropriety, have spoken of having to wrestle against the gods of Greece and Rome, against the Artemis of the Ephesians, the Aphrodite of the Corinthians, the Pallas of the Athenians, in sacrificing to whom, he declares, that the Gentiles sacrificed to demons, and not to God. But, if his language is not to be understood allegorically or in accommodation, it denotes his belief in the actual existence and agency of the powers and orders which seem to correspond to those of the Magian system. And of course, assuming the Apostolic inspiration, the belief so expressed, must be held to establish the fact, that they do exist as real and potent adversaries.

1 Cor. x. 20.

The only satisfactory way of solving the difficulty is, by supposing, that, instead of Truth borrowing the language of Fiction, Fiction had appropriated that of Truth, in blending the discoveries of Revelation with its own puerilities; in the same way as, subsequently, the doctrine of the Logos was accommodated to the reveries of the Neo-Platonists. The Magian religion was itself essentially a corruption of the Mosaic. The notion of a Good and an Evil Principle warring against each other, and opposed as Light and Darkness, bears an obvious relation to the revealed fact, that our world is the theatre of an awful conflict between the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman, the Destroyer and the Redeemer of our race. Like all other heresies, this primitive error arose from the endeavour to accommodate truth to the speculations of philosophy or to the gross corrup-

tions of the vulgar. Zoroaster, who is supposed to have been of Jewish origin,* appeared as a reformer, professing to bring back the religion of the Persians to the purity of the Abrahamic faith; and his object seems to have been, to graft the doctrine of One Supreme Being upon the national superstition. In the message to Cyrus, which Isaiah was commissioned to deliver, there is an evident allusion to the Magian doctrine of Two Eternal Principles: "I am Jehovah, and there is none else: I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Zoroaster is supposed to have borrowed his emblematic worship of Fire from the Shekinah; and his mythology seems to have been compounded of the Jewish doctrine of angels with the ideal creations of a mystical Pantheism, such as, from the earliest historic times, has been cherished by the Indian schools from which Pythagoras, Plato, and Zeno drew their Oriental wisdom.

Isa. xlv. 6, 7.

* 'Hyde and Prideaux laboured to prove that Zoroaster had been a pupil of Daniel, and derived those notions which seem more nearly allied to the purer faith, from his intercourse with the Hebrew prophet, who held a high station under the victorious Medo-Persian monarchy. But, in fact, there is such an originality and completeness in the Zoroastrian system, and in its leading principles, as clearly to indicate an independent and peculiar source, at least in its more perfect development.' Milman's *Hist. of Christianity*, b. i. c. 2. The 'hypothesis' maintained by Hyde, Prideaux, Anquetil du Perron, Kleuker, Herder, Malcolm, and Von Hammer, which places Zoroaster under the reign of Darius Hystaspes or Gushtasp, is, however, perfectly reconcileable with the supposition, that the Magian faith had its origin in more remote antiquity, and that Zoroaster, like Buddha, had his predecessors, if, indeed, the appellation itself was not given to more than one personage. See *Mod. Trav. Persia*, vol. i. pp. 46—61.

Some Biblical interpreters of the neological school have contended, indeed, that the Jews borrowed their notions of Angels from the old Persian mythology, during their long exile in the East.* Professor Moses Stuart has ably refuted this notion. 'A superficial observer,' he remarks, 'is struck with wonder, when he sees an Ormuzd corresponding in many respects to John's Logos; then, an Ahriman tallying so well, in a variety of ways, with Satan; then the Amshaspands or seven good archangels,† seemingly correspondent to the seven archangels of the New Testament; and, last of all, the Izedes, their subordinates, seeming to correspond to the secondary angels or subordinate spiritual agents disclosed in the Scriptures.' But the points of discrepancy are not only more numerous and more striking than those of resemblance: they are such as can leave no doubt which system borrowed from the other. 'What have we now in the Scriptures?' continues Mr. Stuart. 'One only living and true God, the Creator of all things by His Logos. There

* Mr. Milman speaks of it as generally admitted, that the Jewish notions about the Angels, and what may be called their demonology, received a strong foreign tinge during their residence in Babylon. 'The transition from the primitive,' (we would rather say the scriptural,) 'to the Babylonian belief, may be traced,' he remarks, 'in the apocryphal book of Tobit, no doubt of eastern origin.' But the learned Author lays himself open to just censure, when he seems to confound the doctrines of Revelation with the reveries of the Talmud, and speaks of Our Saviour as 'condescending to the popular language' in sanctioning the Magian doctrine of Guardian Angels.

† 'They are usually, however, reckoned six; Oromasd (or Ormuzd) being sometimes included to make up seven. Six seems to have been the sacred number with the Persians, as seven was that of perfection among the Jews.' Milman.

is no *Dualism* ; no created gods ; no equality between Satan and the Logos of God ; no power in Satan to create ; no worship of angels, for this is most absolutely forbidden ; no annihilation of evil angels at the end of the world ; no penitence and submission of Satan ; no distinction of sex among the angels ; above all, not a trace of the *feruers* ; no worship or homage paid to these simply ideal existences. Well may we ask, how comes it that the Hebrews, if they derived all their Angelology from the Parsees (or Magians), should have admitted only so few particulars, and excluded, yea, proscribed all the rest ? . . . If Zoroaster obtained from the exiled Jews* a knowledge of their Angelology, he might incorporate this with his own and the Parsee system already extant, and thus compound a system different from either of the others, and yet partaking in some measure of all. Parsee Angelology looks very much as if it were made up in this way. The *feruers* must be of heathen origin. Dualism must be of heathen origin. But some of the attributes of Ormuzd and Ahriman, the different orders of angels, good and bad, and the like, look very much like being taken from the Jewish notions.'

*Bibliotheca
Sacra*, No. I.
pp. 149, 153.

That the Magian philosophy, which, like Mohammedism, borrowed from Jewish sources, should, like that in later times, have gained converts among the Jewish rabbins, and blended itself with a corrupt Judaism, is not surprising. The Romish corruption of Christianity has derived some of its 'beggarly elements' from the same source. Hence, the admo-

* The Ten Tribes were carried away captive into Assyria B.C. 678 ; and the birth of Zoroaster took place, according to Kleuker, B.C. 589.

nitions and cautions of the Apostle, relating primarily to the Magian and Gnostic heresies, are not less applicable to the angelolatry and asceticism of Popery. Even among Protestants, there is exhibited a tendency to opinions respecting the power and agency of Satan, bordering on the Magian superstition and the old Dualism, and requiring the correction of more scriptural ideas.* Falsely and calumniously, indeed, has the Augustinian or Evangelical school of theology been charged with an approach to Manichean notions. The Pauline doctrine, while recognizing and establishing the fact, that the Christian has to sustain a contest with the powers of darkness, arms him against the terrors of superstition, by representing all the principalities and powers of the invisible world as subject to the Son of God, the Head and Lord of the Universe, by whom and for whom all things, whether in heaven or on earth, were created, and in whom resides the fulness of Deity.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

The Epistle to Philemon: who was Onesimus?

§ 13. The short but very elegant Letter to Philemon of Colosse, was evidently written and sent at the same time as the Epistle to the Colossian church. Onesimus, to whom it relates, was a fugitive slave or bond servant, who had found his way to Rome, and was there converted by the Apostle. How he became introduced to St. Paul, we are not informed.

* The Swedenborgian heresy is a curious illustration of this tendency of mysticism, and strongly partakes of a Magian character.

It seems most likely, that Onesimus had attached himself to the service of some of the Asiatic brethren who were visiting Rome, and that by this means he became known to the Apostle. Jerome imagines, that he had robbed his master of money sufficient to enable him both to reach Italy, and to support himself at Rome in luxury; a supposition for which there is no authority. The language of St. Paul, "If he has done thee any wrong, or owes thee any thing," by no means warrants such an inference, but rather implies the contrary. Tradition, upon this as upon most other points of fact, supplies no certain or credible information. We do not even know of what nation or race Onesimus was, for his Greek name was doubtless given to him by his master. It is not improbable, that he was a Scythian, belonging to one of those tribes who are addicted to selling their children into slavery; and if so, we may suppose that St. Paul alludes to him when, writing to the Colossians, he introduces the words, "whether Barbarian or Scythian, bond or free," in asserting that all national distinctions are merged in the Christian fellowship.

§ 14. Whether a bond servant by birth or by purchase, Onesimus was evidently in domestic servitude; a condition essentially different from that of predial slavery, which was a penal bondage, though often confounded under a common term. Among the Romans, whose slave-code was more severe than that of any other ancient nation, the mere *servus* or private slave was subject, indeed, to the judicial authority of his master, the *pater-familias*, which extended

Character of
the ancient
domestic
servitude.

See p. 349,
note †.

also to his own children; but the *servus* was always distinguished from the *ergastulus* or convict slave, and from the *servus pænæ* or public slave. The condition of the *ergastuli* more nearly resembled that of the field negroes of Colonial Slavery, with this material difference, that it was ostensibly penal. The domestic servitude into which numbers entered by voluntary contract,* and the *penal* servitude which was a criminal punishment, must, in the nature of things, have been essentially different. The Roman slave, it has been clearly established by a learned Civilian, was, even under Tiberius and Nero, in a state less degraded and less wretched than that of our Colonial negroes under Slavery; and the dreadful severity of the English Colonial law was in melancholy contrast to the comparative mildness of the Roman, in reference to criminals and fugitives. At Rome, the civil magistrate was not authorized to punish the offence of flight in a slave, but was directed merely to send the fugitive home to his master; except in the case of desertion to a public enemy. The flight of a convict slave from the mines or public works was punished with severer labour, a stricter mode of confinement, and an extension of the term of penal servitude; but was not, as in the British West Indies, punished with death. Again, the redeemable condition of the ancient domestic

Stephen's
Slavery of
the British
West India
Colonies,
vol. i. p. 357.

* Roman citizens, in the better times of the Republic, were not permitted to sell themselves into servitude; but the Apostle Paul evidently refers to this practice, when he writes to the Corinthians, "Be ye not the slaves of men." Again, he enjoins upon those in bondage: "If thou mayest be made free, use it rather." 1 Cor. vii. 21, 23.

slavery, distinguished it not less broadly and essentially from the modern predial bondage of the Colonies. At Athens, the slave, when possessed of property enough to redeem himself, could, by paying the value of his servitude, compel the master to accept it as the price of his enfranchisement. At Rome, the practice of permitting slaves to purchase their freedom was so common, that, according to Cicero, the sober and industrious slaves who became such by captivity in war, seldom remained in servitude above six years. Besides the facility given to self-redemption, there were numerous modes of manumission by the Roman law, as well as of public enfranchisement. ‘The reformation of the servile code of Rome,’ it has been remarked, ‘was attended with no civil disorders, because manumissions, through the benign influence of Christianity, became so numerous soon after that reformation commenced, that the slaves speedily ceased to bear a dangerous proportion in number to the free citizens and libertines of the Empire.’

Stephen,
vol. i. pp.
377-9.

It is important to have a correct idea of the ancient domestic servitude, on account of the numerous allusions to it in the Apostolic writings, which otherwise cannot be understood; and also because, on the toleration of that description of slavery by the inspired Founders of the Church, an argument has been built in vindication of the lawfulness of consigning a whole race of men to abject, hopeless, brutal bondage as predial slaves. Even the milder domestic slavery of ancient heathenism was so far incompatible with the spirit of Christianity, that it disappeared before it. The Apostles, disclaiming all political authority,

could not adopt any more direct course for bringing about its abolition, than by proclaiming the equality of the bond and the free in the Christian brotherhood, by discouraging voluntary servitude, and by teaching the Christian slave to deem himself the Lord's freeman, and, if he had the power, to obtain his enfranchisement. Any direct interference with social institutions would have been unsuitable to their office as ministers of Christ. But, in the Epistle to Philemon, who has been, by an absurd abuse of terms, styled a slave-holder, St. Paul has pronounced a more emphatic condemnation of slave-holding by Christians, than could have been conveyed by more direct prohibition. We may assume, that Onesimus felt it his duty to return to his master, and that St. Paul sanctioned this view, which was in accordance with the Roman law directing that the fugitive should be sent home. The Apostle would have been glad of his services, but would not retain him without his master's consent. He therefore sends him back with this Letter.

1 Cor. vii.
21—23.

Analysis.

§ 15. After an affectionate salutation from himself, as Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ, and from Timothy his brother, to Philemon, Apphia his wife, and Archippus, a Christian teacher at Colosse, with their household, the Apostle expresses his devout thankfulness and joy at hearing of Philemon's faith and liberality, which gracefully introduces his requesting as a favour, what he might have been bold, as a minister of Christ, to enjoin. There is deep pathos in the language he employs: " Yet, for love's sake, I rather beseech thee, being such a one as Paul,

aged, and now also a prisoner for Jesus Christ, I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." He then hints, that the change produced in his character, had converted an unprofitable servant into a valuable one, and that thus his flight had been overruled for the benefit of his master, who is exhorted to receive him back as no longer a mere slave or servant, but a Christian brother, and as such to be beloved; nay, as a part of the Apostle himself, being his spiritual offspring. For any wrong or debt chargeable upon him, the Apostle undertakes to be answerable; yet, he tenderly appeals to Philemon as his own convert, who owed to him even his own self; and he expresses his confidence that his Colossian brother would do more than comply with this request. He then begs him to prepare a lodging at Colosse, as he hoped, in answer to the prayer of his friends, to be soon set at liberty. Salutations from Epaphras and from the Apostle's fellow-labourers then with him, and the Apostolic benediction, conclude the Epistle.

§ 16. If, at the date of the martyrdom of Stephen, Paul was between thirty and forty, he must now, A.D. 62, have been upwards of threescore, and with propriety, therefore, might refer to his venerable age. Dr. Paley has remarked, how characteristic the tenderness and delicacy of this Epistle are, of the ardour and sensibility of the Writer's mind. ' Without laying aside the apostolic character, he softens the imperative style of his address, by mixing it with every sentiment and consideration that could move the heart of his correspondent. St. Paul's discourse at Miletus, his speech before Agrippa, and, indeed,

Its character
as a composition.

See p. 227.

some part or other of almost every Epistle, exhibit examples of a similar application to the feelings and affections of the persons whom he addresses. And it is observable, that these pathetic effusions, drawn for the most part from his own sufferings and situation, usually precede a command, soften a rebuke, or mitigate the harshness of some disagreeable truth.'

Horæ Paul.
c. 14.

Of the successful result of his appeal to Philemon, we cannot doubt. When Ignatius wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians, about the year 107, their bishop's name was Onesimus; and Grotius supposes him to have been the same as the convert of St. Paul; but, remarks Dr. Lardner, 'that is not certain.' Indeed, as five and forty years must have intervened, it is scarcely probable. In the 'Apostolical Constitutions,' Onesimus is said to have been bishop of Beroëa, and Philemon to have been ordained by the Apostles, bishop of Colosse; a fair specimen of the silly legends which supplied the place of historical records. Colosse was overthrown, together with the neighbouring cities, by an earthquake, in the latter part of Nero's reign. Yet, if we may believe Theodoret, the house in which Philemon dwelt, was still remaining there when he wrote. It is just possible, that local tradition might have preserved the knowledge of the site; but, concerning the city itself, there are few traces in history; and its ruins are, with some uncertainty, identified with those found near Khonos, about three hours from Laodicea.

Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 77.

Mod. Trav.
Syria, vol. ii.
p. 152.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

§ 17. We now come to the latest of the Epistles bearing St. Paul's name, written during his imprisonment at Rome; that to the church at Philippi, the first of the European cities in which he preached, and towards the inhabitants of which he appears to have cherished a peculiar affection, on account of their exemplary and generous character. In no other portion of his writings does the Apostle disclose so much of his personal feelings, or unbosom himself with such affectionate confidence. The strain in which he addresses the Philippian believers, moreover, is one of unqualified commendation, his admonitions being unmingled with reproof; an observation which will not apply to any other Epistle, except those to the Macedonian Christians of Thessalonica, written ten years earlier. In their grateful attachment to the Apostle, and their liberal spirit, the Philippians appear to have excelled even the Thessalonian church.

Character and occasion of the Epistle to the Philippians.

Philippi is described by St. Luke as a chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony. It was situated beyond the Strymon, in the part of the province, extending from that river on the southwest to the Nestus (or Kara-su), which originally belonged to Thrace. It was inhabited by the *Edones*, and was conquered by Philip, who added it to Macedonia, and it was thence distinguished as *Macedonia Adjuncta*. Amphipolis claimed to rank as the capital of the district; but Philippi was probably at this

Acts xvi. 12.

See p. 247.

Mod. Trav. Turkey, p. 301.

time the more considerable. The appellation *πρώτη πόλις* (principal city) occurs so often on coins, as to indicate that it was assumed by two or three cities of the same province, and is not to be understood exclusively of a capital. Dion Cassius states, that Julius Cæsar planted a Roman colony at Philippi; and by Augustus, it was enlarged and endowed with peculiar privileges. Its magnificent ruins are found about ten miles from Cavallo, which represents its ancient port, Neapolis. A small stream, formed by the fountains from which it derived its first name, *Crenides*, flows by the ruins into the Strymon. Philippi, in modern times, has given title to a Greek prelate, who is styled Archbishop of Philippi and Drama. The latter is the capital of the modern pashalic, and may therefore be considered as having succeeded to the honours of the Roman city, amid the ruins of which a fair is said to be still annually held.

See p. 396.

Ch. ii. 30.

The immediate occasion of this Epistle was the return of Epaphroditus to Philippi, who, subsequently to his arrival at Rome, had been seized with a dangerous illness, which had nearly proved fatal, and who was now anxious again to see his friends. If he was the same person as Epaphras, we must suppose that, in his route from Colosse to Rome, he had passed through Philippi, and had been charged by the believers in that city with their contributions for the support of their spiritual father under his protracted imprisonment. From the expressions used by the Apostle, “not regarding his own life,” it has been inferred, that the illness of Epaphroditus was brought on by his hastening to reach Rome, in the execution of

his commission, or that previous indisposition had been so aggravated by this exertion, as nearly to have proved fatal. Mr. Greswell suggests, that his sickness was probably a fever, originating in the peculiar unhealthiness of Rome towards the close of the summer quarter; and he supposes it to have occurred after the Epistle to the Colossians, in which Epaphras is so honourably mentioned, had been sent off by Onesimus. The Philippians had heard, however, of his having been taken ill; and Epaphroditus was aware of this circumstance; which implies, that some brethren from Rome had passed through Philippi, who had communicated that intelligence; and this was probably the route taken either by Tychicus or by Onesimus.

§ 18. The Epistle opens with the customary Apostolic salutation, in which St. Paul associates with himself his son Timothy, who shared in his strong regard for the Philippian brethren; and to them his zeal and affection were well known. There is one peculiarity in the salutation; it is the only instance in which the bishops and deacons of the Church are distinctly mentioned; a circumstance which seems to indicate that those terms of office had not yet come into universal use, in application to the elders and ministers of the churches. The term *ἐπίσκοπος* originally designated persons holding secular offices among the Greeks, like our word superintendent or overseer; and it was probably first extended to religious functionaries in the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Asia, in lieu of the Jewish terms, presbyter, or elder, and chief ruler of the synagogue (*ἀρχισυνάγωγος*). The bishop was evidently the pastor (*ποιμήν*), and the same,

Analysis of
the Epistle.

Compare
Acts xx. 28,
1 Pet. v. 2.

perhaps, as the *ἡγουμένους* of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was, probably, by degrees that these general terms acquired their more specific ecclesiastical import.

The Apostle commences with expressing the devout thankfulness and joy with which he bore in recollection their reception of the Gospel and their exemplary constancy from the first; a joy and satisfaction heightened by his assured persuasion that the Author of that good work in their hearts, would carry it forward to its consummation at the day of Christ's second coming. And it was but right he should cherish these favourable opinions and hopes concerning them, inasmuch as, in his bonds and in his public defence of the Gospel, they had all been joint contributors of the gift he had received by the hand of Epaphroditus. He calls God to witness, how strong were his paternal yearnings towards these his spiritual children; and he expresses the sum of his prayers on their behalf, to be, that their spiritual knowledge and discrimination might keep pace with their increase of love, and that their conduct might be guileless and irreproachable to the end, abounding in the fruits of piety.

Ch. i. 12.

After this introduction, he mentions the immediate object of his writing to them. He was anxious that they should know that his imprisonment had not obstructed, but rather promoted the cause of the Gospel, by the notoriety which his imprisonment on such a charge had acquired in the Imperial Court and elsewhere, and by the encouragement which had been thereby afforded to others to preach the Christian doctrine boldly and fearlessly. Among those who

were thus emboldened by his example, some were influenced by sinister motives. It would seem that the fame or popularity of the Apostle, the crowds attracted by his eloquence, and the success of his teaching, had inspired with envy some of the Jewish teachers who had embraced Christianity, and stirred up in them an ambitious zeal to make converts among the population of Rome. Hitherto, probably, no Christian teacher had ventured to address himself to the Roman people, for the church at Rome was composed exclusively of Jewish converts. But now, St. Paul's example, and the *éclat* which his sufferings and heroism threw around his person, had provoked emulation and jealousy in some who were ill-disposed towards him, and who, by drawing off attention from him, and making a party of their own, desired to add distress to his bonds.* There were others, however, who, in preaching Christ, were actuated by sincere zeal, and who acknowledged that it was simply for the defence of the Gospel he was placed in his present position. The Apostle expresses his magnanimous joy that, in either case, the Gospel was more boldly and widely proclaimed, and his confidence that this circumstance would turn to his advantage; for, with the special aid of the Holy Spirit, in answer to their prayers, he felt assured of clearing his character from every charge, so that, by his boldness of utterance

* Either by bringing suspicion on his character, as if he owed his imprisonment to some other offence, or, perhaps, by depriving him of succour, and reducing him to actual straits for his own support; for he speaks of the supplies sent him by the Philippians as most seasonable.

(*parrhesia*) when called upon for his defence, the honour of Christ might be promoted, whatever were the issue to himself, whether life or death. But, living or dying, Christ was his portion,* the source of his felicity. The end for which he laboured and was willing to labour, was, that Christ might be magnified; but, looking forward to death as a release which should introduce him to the immediate presence of The Lord, he knew not whether to deem life or death more desirable. Conscious, however, that his life was of importance to the Church, and that he might be of further service to his converts, he indulged a confident expectation that he should yet be spared to promote their spiritual advancement and joy, and, by returning to them, on his liberation, excite their gratitude and triumph on his account. Yet this was uncertain; and all he had to request was, that, whether he lived to see them again or not, he might have the joy of knowing that they were maintaining a conduct worthy of the Gospel; steadfast, united, strenuous, and courageous, undismayed by threats or persecution, counting it an honour to suffer for the cause of Christ. This request he urges with a pathetic adjuration: "If you would offer me any Christian consolation or any comfort arising from love, if there is any communion of spirit between us, if you have any feeling and compassion for my sufferings, act so as to make me perfectly happy, by cultivating unanimity, mutual affection, simplicity of motive, a modest estimate of yourselves, a generous

* So Calvin construes the passage: '*Mihi enim vivendo Christus est, et moriendo lucrum;*' i.e. "*tam in vitâ quàm in morte.*"

regard for each other, a spirit of condescension and self-sacrifice after the example of the Lord Jesus." In illustration of the condescension of Christ, the Apostle introduces one of the noblest and most remarkable confessions or declarations of the proper deity of Our Lord in the whole compass of his writings. Referring, evidently, to Our Lord's having made himself equal with The Father, for which he was charged by the Jews with blasphemy, St. Paul declares,* that, subsisting as God, He deemed it no usurpation to make himself equal with God; yet, divesting himself of his Divine glory, assuming the character of a servant of the Father, He appeared in the shape of sinful man, subject to all the conditions of humanity, even to death, and, of all deaths, the most ignominious and painful. As the reward of this stupendous self-sacrifice, Christ, as Mediator, is exalted to the right-hand of the Father, according to the language of Jehovah by Isaiah, "Unto me shall every knee bow;" the universal empire and supremacy of Christ redounding to the glory of the Father.

Resuming the strain of affectionate exhortation, the Apostle enjoins his spiritual children, who had always been obedient to his instructions, not only while he was with them, but more exemplarily still in his absence,—to labour with awe and reverence to secure their own salvation, remembering that both the will or desire, and the strength or ability to perform,

* See page 94. *ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ*, and *μορφὴν δούλου*, are evidently antithetical, and imply, in each reference, not *semblance*, but essential or actual capacity or character as God and as a servant.

were of God, working in them according to His sovereign mercy. They are then cautioned against indulging envy or a contentious spirit; in order that, being both inoffensive (or blameless) and guileless, God's children in the midst of a depraved and sinful world, they might shine like lamps or stars in the surrounding darkness, holding forth the Christian doctrine in all its refulgence; and that so, in the day of Christ, he might rejoice in them as the fruit and crown of his labours. Should he be called to shed his blood as a victim in the service of the Gentiles, he was prepared to rejoice even then, and to call on them to rejoice with him. He hoped, however, shortly to spare Timothy to visit them, as soon as his own fate was determined; and he hoped that he should also come again to them himself. Meantime, he had deemed it necessary to despatch Epaphroditus, who, having been dangerously ill, was anxious to return, and whom he commends to their affectionate regard.

Ch. iii.

Again resuming the strain of admonition from which he had digressed, he exhorts them to rejoice in their Christian privileges, and to be on their guard against false teachers, whom, for their rapacity and uncleanness, he stigmatizes as dogs; at the same time marking them out as of the Jewish school, sticklers for the rite of circumcision, by styling them, "the Excision" or "the Schism," and by claiming for the spiritual worshippers who gloried only in Christ, the honourable title of the True Circumcision or Israel of God. In all upon which these Jewish teachers prided themselves, the Apostle intimates,

that he could more than compete with them ; but he had learned to regard all his advantages of birth and his personal pretensions as valueless or detrimental, for the sake of the surpassing excellency of the knowledge of Christ, justification through faith in Him, and participation in the power and glory of His Resurrection. And he describes himself as a racer in the stadium, who had not yet reached the goal, but was stretching on towards the mark, eager to grasp the prize. This was what became those who were the most advanced in the school of Christ ; and whatever were their several degrees of attainment, their rule and aim should be the same. The Apostle then more explicitly proposes to them his own example, in contrast with the conduct of the false teachers against whom he had repeatedly warned them,—men of sordid motives and corrupt minds. The true Christian is a citizen of the heavenly kingdom, and his expectations are directed to the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of The Saviour and the resurrection of the body. By this consideration, he affectionately enforces upon them stedfastness in their Christian profession. To this exhortation he subjoins special admonitions to two of his female helpers, to act in cordial cooperation ; and to his faithful colleague, (by whom, possibly, Epaphroditus is intended,) to aid them both, as they had been of great assistance to himself and his fellow labourers in the ministry.

And now he reiterates the exhortation which seems Ch. iv. 4. the burden of the Epistle,—to rejoice in the Lord ; with which he connects the duty of exhibiting to-

wards all men mildness and suavity of deportment ; and, as an antidote to anxiety about the future, he enjoins them to commit all their cares and wants to God, uniting thanksgiving with prayer, by which their minds would be fortified by a peace indescribable. Finally, he exhorts them to study all that is true, and venerable, and just, and pure, and reputable, virtuous or praiseworthy, all that they had learned of him or witnessed in his example. So would they secure the presence of the God of Peace.

Ch. iv. 10.

In conclusion, he tells the Philippians what joy their renewed demonstration of affection and care for him had inspired. Not because he stood in need of the supply they had transmitted to him, for he had been disciplined to the endurance of want ; but because it was an expression of sympathy in his sufferings which was creditable to them. They were the only church to whom, at his first preaching among them, he had been indebted for support ; for, even at Thessalonica, he had maintained himself by the labour of his hands. It was not, therefore, that he coveted the gift itself, but that he rejoiced in it as what would redound to their own benefit. The ample supply he had received, was an acceptable sacrifice in the sight of God, who would richly remunerate them with every needful blessing. The subject is wound up with a brief doxology. Then follow salutations, in which it is remarkable that the names of no individuals occur ; and the Apostolic benediction, as usual, seals the Epistle.

Circumstances under which the Epistle was written.

§ 19. It is evident, that St. Paul, at the time of writing this Epistle, was expecting to be summoned

before the Emperor for his final hearing, and that he considered life or death to be staked on the issue. He had once been delivered out of the mouth of the Lion, but could not with any certainty calculate upon the Tyrant's decision. Nothing can be more admirable than the magnanimity which, under such circumstances, he displays in this Epistle, the calmness with which he contemplates martyrdom, as a victim ready for the offering, and the absorption of self in fidelity to the cause and service of Christ. His sole anxiety is, that he may acquit himself honourably as the ambassador of Christ. In vain we wish that some record had been preserved of his defence before the Emperor, similar to that which the faithful pen of the Evangelical Historian has recorded of his eloquent oration before Felix and Agrippa. Where the narrative of Luke breaks off, all historical information ends, and the rest is mere conjecture.*

But the question naturally arises, Why did the sacred Writer carry the history no further? At the time of Paul's sending off the Epistles to Philemon

* 'At this instant,' says Milman, 'we pass at once from the firm and solid ground of authentic and credible history, upon the quaking and insecure footing of legendary tradition. The last fact which we receive from the undoubted authority of the Writer of the Acts, is, that two years passed before the Apostle left Rome.' (Milman, b. ii. c. 2.) But nothing is said of his leaving Rome; and the two years, for any thing that appears to the contrary, may have elapsed previously to his being summoned for a hearing before the Emperor. Mr. Milman's unqualified assertion has already been noticed at p. 63, that the abrupt termination of the Book of the Acts *could not* be caused by the death of the Writer. The learned Author assumes, that Luke "*probably* survived St. Paul," of which he offers no proof; and the reference to Luke in the Second Epistle to Timothy, points to no later date than that at which the History breaks off.

and the Colossians, Luke was still with him ; but, in writing to the Philippians, he speaks of Timothy alone. He says indeed, “ The brethren who are with me greet you ; ” which may intend those who are specified by name in the previous Epistles ; but surely he would not have described himself as having no companion like-minded, except Timothy, had Luke still been with him. Yet, how can we imagine that Luke would have deserted the Apostle at such a juncture ? And if he had left Rome upon any mission, the circumstance would assuredly have been adverted to, as explaining his absence. More especially, in addressing the Christians of Philippi, where Paul and Silas had laboured together, might we have looked for some mention of his distinguished and faithful colleague, either in the opening salutation, if with him, or in some other part of the Epistle, if not. The conclusion to which all these considerations conduct us, is, that the silence observed by the Apostle respecting one whom he must have held so dear, arose from his removal by death. And it is by no means improbable, that he was carried off by the same distemper to which Epaphroditus had nearly fallen a victim ; which would well accord with the language of St. Paul, that, in the event of his death, he would have had “ sorrow upon sorrow.”

See p. 63.

The history of the Acts has all the appearance of an unfinished narrative ; and it breaks off where no writer who had survived the Apostle could have thought of terminating the narrative, without giving any account of his being brought before Cæsar, agreeably to the angelic declaration. Now, “ at his first hearing,”

Luke was still living, and with the Apostle; nor is ^{2 Tim. iv. 11.} it possible to suppose that he was of the number who, on that occasion, timidly or faithlessly forsook St. Paul.* If, then, Luke did not stand by him, it must have been owing to some sufficient cause which prevented it; and what but illness could have been that sufficient cause? Before the Apostle was summoned to that second and final hearing which he was anticipating when he wrote to the Philippians, at which time he was yet uncertain how it would go with him, Epaphroditus had fallen sick; and, as we suppose, Luke (or Silas) had died. The pen had fallen from his hand before he could record whether the Apostle was at that time delivered from the mouth of the Lion; and thus, the History leaves us in the same suspense as the latest of St. Paul's Epistles; a striking mark of its authenticity. The reverence felt for the Writer's memory might possibly withhold any surviving disciple from adding to the precious record.

But must we not recognize a Divine purpose in this? All that it concerns the Church to know, has been preserved to us; and if an impenetrable veil has been drawn over the closing scene of the Apostle's labours, as over the martyrdom or death of all the other Apostles, James alone excepted, it may be intended to check the fond disposition which too soon discovered itself in the Church, to lay an undue stress upon martyrdom, to honour the martyr above the saint, to ascribe to suffering in the cause of Christ

* 2 Tim. iv. 16. The *πάρτες* may be understood of the witnesses on whose testimony the Apostle had relied to rebut the charge brought against him.

even an expiatory virtue. In reproof of a superstitious curiosity respecting the death or sepulture of either Paul or Peter, we seem to hear the living voice of the Apostle, issuing, not from the tomb, but from the sacred page, “Was Paul crucified for you?”

CHAP. X.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

ANCIENT OPINIONS RESPECTING THE OMISSION OF THE WRITER'S NAME—ORIGIN OF THE DOUBTS RELATING TO ITS PAULINE AUTHORSHIP—EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF ITS CANONICAL AUTHORITY—CHARACTERISTIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE APOSTOLIC AND THE PATRISTIC WRITINGS—CONFLICTING CRITICAL DECISIONS RESPECTING THE STYLE OF THE EPISTLE—UNCERTAINTY OF THE VERBAL CRITERION OF AUTHORSHIP—ORIGIN OF THE DOUBTS ENTERTAINED IN THE WESTERN CHURCH RESPECTING THE APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY OF THE EPISTLE—MODERN GROUNDS OF HESITATION IN RESPECT TO ITS PAULINE AUTHORSHIP—TO WHOM WAS THE EPISTLE ADDRESSED?—ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENTS—PECULIARITIES OF PHRASEOLOGY—ITS CANONICAL AUTHORITY NOT AFFECTED BY THE SUPPOSITION THAT IT WAS A JOINT COMPOSITION—PROBABLE DATE OF THE COMPOSITION.

§ 1. THERE remains for distinct consideration, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which Origen, in the third century, says, 'the ancients, not without reason, have handed down as Paul's, although who wrote it,' he adds, 'God only knows certainly.' The doubts which existed at that early period, related to its authorship, not to its canonical authority, and could have arisen only from its being anonymous; but it is a striking proof of the unfaithfulness of Tradition, that what must have been originally well known to all

Ancient opinions respecting the omission of the Writer's name.

See p. 19.

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 225.

who received the Epistle, should have become so soon a matter of uncertainty. Clement of Alexandria, receiving the Epistle as the work of St. Paul, supposes that, in writing to the Hebrews, who were prejudiced against him, the Apostle did not prefix his name through precaution, lest he should deter them from reading it. He also cites the opinion of his master Pantænus, whom he styles ‘the blessed Presbyter,’ that Paul omitted the customary salutation because, as his mission was especially directed to the Gentiles, he was too modest to style himself an Apostle in writing to the Hebrews. The more probable explanation is, that, as it is a treatise or homily, rather than a familiar Epistle, the Writer deemed the customary salutation unsuitable. It was, perhaps, undertaken and commenced for the instruction of the churches of the Hebrew stock, without respect to any particular occasion. Undoubtedly, however, as Lardner remarks, ‘they to whom it was sent, and by whom it was received, knew very well from whom it came.’ How is it possible that they should not have known the Writer, when he promises shortly to visit them in company with Timothy, and sends salutations to them from the Italian brethren? The notion, that the Apostle concealed his name from policy or prudence, must therefore be discarded; and equally untenable is the supposition, that any uncertainty originally attached to its authorship.

Origin of
the doubts
relative to
its Pauline
authorship.

§ 2. Among the Apostolic writings, two important and invaluable treatises, the Epistle in question and the Catholic Epistle of John, have been transmitted to us under the same predicament: the Writers not

having prefixed their names, it can be gathered only from internal evidence, or from fallible tradition, which of the Apostles was the writer. The historical evidence that the Apostle John was the author of the Catholic Epistle, is not much stronger than that which may be adduced in favour of the Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The precise date of the Epistle of John cannot be determined with any more certainty; nor has any information been preserved as to the church or the persons to whom it was addressed. But the tradition which ascribed it to the Beloved Disciple, was sustained by such indubitable internal evidence, that no reasonable doubt could arise respecting its authorship. In the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the genuineness, authenticity, and canonical authority of the book were equally well attested; but the testimony of Tradition, even in the second century, was not uniform as to its author; and the internal evidence was deemed less decisively in favour of its Pauline origin. After stating, that not without reason had the ancients handed it down as the production of Paul, Origen adds: ‘If I was to speak my opinion, I should say, that the sentiments are the Apostle’s, but the language and composition another’s, who committed to writing the Apostle’s sense, and, as it were, reduced into commentaries the things spoken by his master. . . . But the account come down to us is various; some saying, that Clement, who was bishop of Rome, wrote this Epistle; others, that it was Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts.’ That it was not written in the usual style of Paul, and that it

Lardner,
vol.ii. p.495.
Marsh’s
Michaelis,
vol.iv.p.214.

wanted his name, were the only reasons for doubting it to be his; yet, so firmly fixed was the belief in its canonicity and inspiration, that neither circumstance was allowed to detract from its authority, or to cast uncertainty over its being the genuine production of the Apostolic age. It was not acknowledged as Apostolic on the ground of being Paul's, but was ascribed to Paul as unquestionably Apostolic and worthy of the chief of the Apostles.

External evidence of its canonical authority.

§ 3. That, during the first century after the Apostolic age, it was generally received as Apostolic Scripture, is clear from the fact, that it was inserted among the canonical books of the churches, both in the East and in the West, that it was comprised in the Peshito-Syriac and Old Latin Versions, and that it was certainly admitted by the Alexandrine and Palestine churches. Clement of Rome, who wrote his Epistle towards the close of the first century, repeatedly cites or alludes to the language of this Epistle, although he does not name its author. The copious use which he makes of its language, in a manner precisely similar to that in which he refers or alludes to passages in the other Apostolic Epistles, proves that it must have been written by one for whom he had such deference as it is not conceivable that he would entertain for any one but an Apostle. The only Epistle which he expressly names, is the first Epistle of Paul to the church at Corinth, to which his own Epistle was addressed: 'Take into your hands the Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle.' The Epistles to other churches might, possibly, not as yet be in their hands. Considering the relation in

A. D. 96.

Lardner, vol. ii. pp. 46—50.
Forster's 'Apostolic Auth.' pp. 575, *et seq.*

which Clement stood to the Apostle Paul, the references he makes to the Epistle to the Hebrews, whether regarded as direct citations or as mere allusions, would afford a presumption in favour of its Pauline origin. Still, as the Epistles of James and Peter are referred to by him in the same manner, all that can be inferred with certainty, is, that he regarded the Epistle to the Hebrews as Apostolic Scripture, not that he knew it as the work of Paul.

In the Epistle of Barnabas, which, whether the genuine production of the Companion of Paul, or not, is allowed to be certainly as ancient as the latter part of the first century,* there are some apparent allusions to the Epistle to the Hebrews; although, in Lardner's opinion, the Writer often argues like the Author of that Epistle, without borrowing from him. In that of Polycarp, A.D. 108, there occurs a more distinct and formal reference to a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as a precept of Apostolical authority, together with some slighter and less unequivocal allusions. Similar coincidences have been pointed out in the Epistles of Ignatius, about A.D. 107. The writings of all the Apostolic Fathers (as they are usually styled) are mainly 'a *catena*, or *tessera* rather,' it has been remarked, of sentiments and phrases taken from the New Testament. Thus, the whole Epistle of Polycarp is made up of these, though but few books are cited or expressly named. 'So many exhortations in the words of Christ and his Apostles, in so short a letter, are,' remarks Dr.

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 27.
Forster, pp.
599—613.

Forster's
'Apostolic
Auth.' pp.
546—567.
Ib. pp. 599
—613.
Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 88.

* Lardner supposes it to have been written soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, or A.D. 71.

Lardner, 'a lively evidence of the respect which Christians had for these books, and that these things were deeply engraved on their memories. For it is from thence chiefly, as I apprehend, Polycarp borrowed these expressions, without looking into the books themselves.'* Had the Epistle to the Hebrews been of non-apostolical authorship, or of post-apostolical date, we may safely assume, that it would have abounded in like manner with citations or allusions to the books of the New Testament. The absence of these must, therefore, be regarded as a clear proof of its early date and apostolicity. And, inasmuch as all the citations or references found in the writings of the early Fathers, relate to the canonical Scriptures, we have the strongest reason for concluding, that those portions which correspond to passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews, were not simply taken from that Epistle, although the Epistle is not expressly named, but were cited or referred to as canonical Scripture. Thus, Justin Martyr (A.D. 140), speaking of Our Lord, says: 'This is He who, after the order of Melchisedec, is king of Salem, and eternal priest of the Most High;'—a reference to the declarations contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which cannot be mistaken, and which shows the light in which the Epistle was regarded both by Justin himself and by those whom he is addressing,

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 136.

* Lardner, vol. ii. p. 109. The Epistle of Polycarp contains quotations from 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Words spoken by Our Lord are quoted, which are found in Matthew and Luke; and undoubted references occur to Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and 1 John.

since he assumes that they were acquainted with the passage alluded to. It is obvious, that an indirect reference of this description to the books received by the churches as Holy Scripture, is as satisfactory a testimony as a formal citation.

§ 4. The striking difference observable between the canonical Epistles and the earliest of the patristic writings, in the respect above adverted to,—that is, the absence of citations, with one or two remarkable exceptions, in the former, and the frequent references to Apostolic Scripture in the latter,—seems to form a safe criterion of the claim of any particular book to be received as genuine and authoritative. Upon the strength of this marked difference of character alone, were there no other reason, we should be warranted in concluding, that the Epistle to the Hebrews could not have been the production of either Clement, Barnabas, or Polycarp. But it is impossible for any competent reader not to be struck also with the obvious inequality and inferiority of style in the post-apostolic writers, the moment they quit the ground of Scripture, or deviate from the Apostolic track of thought and expressions. Whether the difference be ascribed in part to the superior genius and intellectual power of the authors of the books of the New Testament, or be referred purely and entirely to the Divine inspiration under which they spoke and wrote, it is too strikingly evident to be mistaken or questioned.*

Character-
istic differ-
ence be-
tween the
Apostolic
and the
Patristic
writings.

* ‘The venerable fragment which bears the name of Barnabas, is allowed to be an exposition of Scripture little less weak or mystical in some parts than the wildest comments of the Talmud. St. Clement records as a fact, the natural history of the phoenix; Hermas

When, therefore, Origen decided that the ancients had not without reason handed down the Epistle to the Hebrews as the writing of Paul, he must have meant, that the internal evidence forbade the supposition of its being the work of any uninspired pen, at least as regards the subject matter.

Conflicting critical decisions respecting the style of the Epistle.

§ 5. Clement of Alexandria, who flourished in the latter years of the second century, is the earliest writer who cites the Epistle to the Hebrews as St. Paul's. In his *Stromata* or various Discourses, there occurs the following decisive reference: 'Nor does Paul appear to have blamed philosophy in his Epistles, though he would not have the more perfect return to it. Wherefore, writing to the Hebrews who were declining from the faith to the law, "Have ye need," says he, "that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat?"' And in many other places of these works, pointed out by Lardner, Clement quotes this same Epistle as the Apostle's, the Divine Apostle's, and Paul's. In

Lardner, vol. ii. p. 239.

is a Platonist; Justin trifles strangely about the derivation of the word "Satan;" Clemens Alexandrinus and Jerome are equally fond of an internal and figurative sense in the historical parts of Scripture; and the tales of Antony and Hilarion, as recorded by the latter, are neither more probable nor more ingenious than the miracles of Rabbi Chanina. But, as evidences of the contemporary faith and existing tradition of their brethren, all these have kept, and always must keep, their weight with candid men; and we should no more think of disbelieving their testimony on points where they were likely to be well informed, because on others they were apparently credulous, than we should fling Livy to the moths, because he has filled his book with prodigies.' Bishop Heber's Reply to the British Critic, p. 13.

his Institutions, according to the testimony of Eusebius, giving a short explanation of all the canonical Scriptures, he says, 'that the Epistle to the Hebrews is Paul's, and that it was written to the Hebrews in the Hebrew language; that Luke, having carefully translated it, published it for the use of the Greeks; and that this is the reason of that conformity of style which is found in this Epistle and in the Acts of the Apostles.' And he proceeds to assign the traditional reason, that Paul did not prefix his name to the Epistle, lest he should offend the Hebrews who had conceived a prejudice against him. It is obvious, however, that the explanation given of the omission of the Writer's name, could rest upon nothing more than conjecture; and the notion, that the Epistle was written in Hebrew, because it was written to Hebrews, must also be regarded as a gratuitous assumption, since there could be no stronger reason that Paul should write to the Hebrews in Hebrew, than that Peter and James, in writing to the Twelve Tribes, should employ the same language. It does not appear certain, that this notion originated with Clement; though it has been thought that he adopted the theory of a Hebrew original in order to meet the imaginary objection to the received tradition respecting its author, arising from the style. On the other hand, Origen, while deeming the style much more elegant and finished than that of Paul's other Epistles, appears to have had no suspicion of its having been written originally in Hebrew or Syriac; and therefore he inclines to the supposition, that the matter or substance of the instructions contained in the Epistle, was dictated by

Lardner,
vol. ii. p. 225.

Forster,
p. 617.

St. Paul, but that the composition was from the pen of one of his disciples or companions.* He does not drop a hint of its being a translation; but his argument implies a belief, that the Epistle was originally written in Greek. Eusebius, in referring to the use made of this Epistle by Clement of Rome, mentions the tradition, that, 'Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own tongue, some think that Luke, others, that this very Clement translated it; which last,' he adds, 'is the more likely, since there is a great resemblance between the style of the Epistle of Clement and the Epistle to the Hebrews, as well as between the sentiments of those writings.' But this remark shows only how little confidence can be reposed in the judgment of Eusebius. There is no reason to suppose, Lardner remarks, that Clement understood Hebrew or Syriac, though perhaps Luke might. Besides, unless the style of Clement's Epistle can be deemed very superior to that of the Pauline Epistles in general, what ground is afforded for supposing the Epistle to the Hebrews not to have been the composition of St. Paul? The internal evidence is entirely opposed to the notion that the Greek text is a translation; and the mis-directed ingenuity which has been employed to make it appear to be not simply a translation, but, in some places, even an inaccurate one, affords a striking in-

Lardner,
vol. ii. pp. 32,
506.

* 'The style of the Epistle to the Hebrews has not the Apostle's rudeness of speech, who has confessed himself rude in speech, that is, in language, 2 Cor. xi. 6. But this Epistle, as to the texture of the style, is elegant Greek; as every one will allow, who is able to judge of the differences of style.' Origen in Eusebius, b. vi. c. 25. See Lardner, vol. ii. p. 495.

stance of the rash and licentious application of conjectural criticism. The modern critic who has most strongly maintained this opinion,* (Michaelis,) admits at the same time, that the Greek style of this Epistle 'is superior to that of every book of the New Testament, with the exception, perhaps, of the speeches of St. Paul recorded in the Acts. But, though the language of these speeches is equally good and fluent with that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is still of a very different kind.' In direct contradiction to the judgment of Clement of Alexandria, who detected a conformity of style between this Epistle and the Acts, the German critic affirms, that, 'instead of there being any similarity, there is really so considerable a difference that they cannot have proceeded from the same writer.' Lardner's judgment, in some degree, accords with this. 'There may be,' he remarks, 'more art and labour in the writings of Luke, than in those of the other Evangelists, but not much elegance that I can discern. The Epistle to the Hebrews is bright and elegant from the beginning to the end, and surpasseth as much the style of St. Luke, as it does that of St. Paul in his acknowledged Epistles. In short, this is an admirable Epistle, but singular in sentiments and language; somewhat different in both respects from all the other writings in the New Testament; and whose is the language, as seems to me, is altogether unknown: whether that of Zenas, or Apollos, or some other of the Apostle Paul's

* See Michaelis by Marsh, vol. iv. p. 242. This opinion is ably controverted by Hug, as well as by Bertholdt, though the latter does not admit its Pauline origin.

assistants and fellow labourers.’* Professor Hug thinks the difference in tone and dissimilarity of language, in comparison with St. Paul’s other writings, which he recognizes in this Epistle, may be accounted for by the circumstances under which he imagines it to have been written. ‘It is Paul’s language, but it is his more dignified language. The more I become acquainted with the writings of the Apostle,’ remarks this accomplished Critic, ‘the more I am tempted to account the Epistle to the Hebrews as his master-piece. It bears the seal of perfection, just as the Epistles to the Thessalonians denote the commencement of his career as an author.’† On the other hand, Professor Stuart, in his zeal to establish the Pauline authorship of the Epistle, labours to prove, in opposition to every critic, ancient and modern, that it abounds with Hebraisms, and that ‘Greek more elliptical, more involved, more intricate and dark,’ is not to be found in the writings of Paul. Yet, he thinks the style of Luke approximates much nearer to that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, than the style of Barnabas, to whom Tertullian ascribes it.

See p. 19.

Uncertainty
of the verbal
criterion of
authorship.

§ 6. These conflicting critical judgments prove, at least, how difficult it is to identify any writer by his style. So varied is the character of Paul’s acknowledged compositions, that the authenticity of the First Epistle to Timothy has been rashly impeached

* Lardner, vol. vi. p. 107. Luther conjectured that Apollos was the author of the Epistle, founding his supposition on the character given of him, Acts xviii. 24, 28.

† Hug, vol. ii. § 143. He deems the supposition admissible, that Luke may have ‘influenced the expressions,’ by co-operating in the treatise.

by a German critic of no mean name, principally on the ground, that the language cannot be that of Paul; and the remarkable difference of tone and style between the latter part of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians and the preceding portions, has been thought sufficient to furnish an objection against its genuineness. That the Epistle to the Hebrews is not written in the usual style of the Apostle's fervid, vehement rhetoric, that the diction is more carefully rounded into elegance and beauty, must be admitted, unless we would go against the general sentence of the most competent judges of ancient and modern times; but the instances are too numerous of a writer's having departed from his usual manner, to allow of our regarding that difference of style as conclusive evidence. Between the speeches of Paul and the style of this Epistle, there is assuredly not so striking a contrast as between the Speeches of Charles James Fox and that philosophical Statesman's Historical Fragment. The result of a very close and minute collation of the terms and phrases which occur in this Epistle and in the acknowledged writings of Paul, has established, that, in the use of particular words, and in certain peculiarities of style, (such as the use of the paranomasia, the sudden digression suggested by a word, and the recurrence to the same word or phrase,) there is a much nearer approach to identity of manner, than has generally been recognized, or than consists with the confident denial of its Pauline authorship.* At the same time, this

Schleiermacher.
See p. 310.

See p. 321.

* See especially Mr. Forster's 'Apostolical Authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews,' *passim*.

species of evidence fails to demonstrate that the Epistle could not be the composition of any other Apostolic writer. Some of the coincidences adduced might be paralleled by Pauline phrases occurring in the Epistles of Peter; and a still more marked resemblance is perceptible between the diction of the Epistle to the Hebrews and that of the Acts. How could it be otherwise than that the companions and fellow-labourers of the Apostle should, in the inculcation of the same truths, employ a similar phraseology, and, being alike Hebrews, exhibit, in the use of the Greek language, common peculiarities?

See p. 193.

Origin of the doubts entertained in the Western Church respecting the Apostolic authority of the Epistle.

§ 7. Assuming that the Apostle's thoughts had been clothed with the polished and flowing diction of this Epistle by the hand of one of his disciples or companions, the Alexandrian critics did not deem that a reason for questioning its canonical authority. It would have been strange, indeed, had the very beauty of the composition been made a ground for depreciating its intrinsic value and authenticity. But, at a later period, other objections were raised against the authority of this Epistle, which appear to have been occasioned by a misinterpretation or rejection of some of its doctrines. Eusebius, referring to a disputation held at Rome by Caius, a most eloquent man, in the time of Zephyrinus, with Proculus, a patron of the Cataphrygian heresy, states, that, in reproving the rashness and audaciousness of his adversaries in composing new Scriptures, Caius makes mention of but thirteen Epistles of Paul, not reckoning that to the Hebrews with the rest. 'And indeed,' adds the venerable Historian, 'to this very time, by some of

the Romans, this Epistle is not thought to be the Apostle's.' In a Catalogue of the canonical books discovered by Muratori at Milan, and supposed to belong to the commencement of the third century, or the close of the second, not only is the Pauline authorship of the Epistle denied, but it is absurdly described as having been forged in the name of Paul by the Alexandrians, to favour the heresy of Marcion.* Yet, before the time of Caius, or the date of this Catalogue, the Epistle was included in the old Italic Version as an apostolic writing; a proof that no suspicion was then entertained of its being the forgery of an Alexandrian. The opposition to its authority appears to have been confined (at least till the rise of Arianism in the East) to the Roman Church, and to have been grounded purely upon doctrinal objections to certain passages; in particular to Heb. vi. 4, 5, † by which the Montanists (and afterwards the Novatians) defended their dogma, that those who had become guilty of grievous crimes, could no more be admitted to the communion of the Church. Strange as it may appear, for no better reason than the seeming countenance which the authority of this Epistle gave to the so deemed heretics, the public and ecclesiastical use of it was interdicted, and its authenticity questioned or denied.

* 'Thus,' remarks Hug, 'that a self-opiniated man might maintain his orthodoxy, the Apostle himself must submit to become a heretic.'

† Tertullian vigorously defended, from this text, the Montanist tenet referred to, in his book *De Pudicitia*. Augustin, Theodoret, Macarius, and others, notice and refute the Novatian interpretation of this passage. See Hug, pt. ii. § 140.

The arguments by which the Latins attempted to justify their objections, were drawn from its being anonymous, contrary to Paul's practice, from its greater elegance of style, and from other supposed internal criteria, but no appeal was made to any traditional or historical ground for denying its Pauline authorship; a proof that no such ground could be taken by those who would gladly have availed themselves of it. On the other hand, Jerome and Augustine, who, with their extensive literature and reading, outweighed all the West, were satisfied that it was the genuine composition of Paul; and it is inserted in the Catalogue of the third Council of Carthage in 397, over which Augustine exercised great influence. From that time, the Greek and Latin Churches generally concurred in acknowledging its canonical authority. This, indeed, may be considered as established, beyond all reasonable question, by the external evidence, independently of the internal criteria of authorship.*

Modern grounds of hesitation in respect to its Pauline authorship.

§ 8. There have been learned critics and commentators in modern times, who, while fully satisfied as to the claim of this Epistle to the character of Apostolic Scripture, have felt a difficulty in coming to the conclusion, that St. Paul was the writer. Thus, the judicious Calvin declares, 'that he could

* Lardner has cited a chain of testimonies, Greek and Latin, from A.D. 107 to 1070. Vol. vi. pp. 88—91. In Lower Egypt, it ranked immediately after the Epistle to the Galatians, till about the fourth century, as appears from the *Codex Vaticanus*. In the time of Athanasius, it was placed after 2 Thessalonians. In the version of Upper Egypt, it stood between 2 Corinthians and Galatians.

not be brought to acknowledge Paul to be the author; the very manner of teaching and style sufficiently indicating it to be the composition of another.* Yet, he says, 'I receive it without controversy as ranking among the Apostolic writings.' Erasmus addresses his readers in similar language: 'I would have you value this Epistle none the less because it has been doubted by many, whether it is Paul's or another's. Certainly, whoever was the author, it is on many accounts worthy of being read by Christians; and while it differs far and wide from the style of Paul, as regards the phraseology, it as closely approaches to the Pauline spirit and sentiments.' †

The strongest reason for questioning its being the writing of St. Paul, and that on which Calvin lays the greatest stress, is founded upon a passage in the second chapter, in which the Writer seems to rank himself with those who had received the Christian doctrine from the Apostles. ‡ Many passages may be adduced from the Epistles of St. Paul, in which he gracefully joins himself with those he is addressing in the language of caution and admonition; but, jealous as he always is of the independent source of

* 'Ego ut Paulum agnoscam authorem adduci nequeo: . . . ipsa docendi ratio et stylus alium quàm Paulum esse satis testantur: . . . Ego vero eam inter Apostolicas sine controversiâ amplector.'

† 'Optime lector, nihilo minoris velim esse tibi hanc Epistolam, quod à multis dubitatum sit Pauli esset an alterius. Certè cujuscunque est, multis nominibus digna est quæ legatur à Christianis: et ut à stylo Pauli, quod ad phrasim attinet, longè latèque discrepat, ita ad spiritum et pectus Paulinum vehementer accidit.'

‡ So also Luther, Grotius, and Le Clerc. Wetstein, Lardner, and Stuart combat this objection.

Eph. iii. 8.
1 Tim. i. 12.

2 Cor. xii. 11.
Gal. i. 12.

his Apostolic commission and instructions, he is never found associating himself with those who were indebted to the Apostles for their knowledge of Christ. Upon every other point he discovers an unaffected humility, acknowledging himself as "less than the least," unworthy of the honourable commission entrusted to him, because he had been a persecutor of the Church; but, with regard to his knowledge of "the mystery of Christ," he deemed himself "not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles," and professed to be not indebted to any human instructor. The passage in question strikingly corresponds, however, to the language of Luke in the introduction to his Gospel; and it would be strictly appropriate as proceeding from the *companion* of St. Paul. It is, indeed, remarkable, how every thing seems to favour the idea, that that Evangelist had some hand in its composition. In answer to the objection above referred to, it has been urged, that, writing to the Hebrews of Palestine, St. Paul would not stand so much on his apostolic character, the church being there under the direction of the Apostles of the Circumcision. But it is by no means certain that it was addressed to the churches in Judea; and it is equally questionable whether, at the date of this Epistle, any of the Apostles remained behind at Jerusalem. Again, it has been said, that the passage in question no more implies that the Writer was exclusively indebted to others for his knowledge of the Gospel, than it denotes a consciousness that he was under a temptation to apostatize. Allowing to this explanation its utmost force as the best way of reconciling the

mode of expression with what St. Paul insists upon in writing to his own Galatian converts, it must still be considered as one of those deviations from the Apostle's usual style, which may justify the doubts entertained respecting the authorship of the Epistle by critics who, like Calvin, have no bias against the opinion that it is Paul's, and no hesitation in admitting its Apostolic authority.

Gal. i. 12,
17; ii. 6.

§ 9. Our next inquiry is, To whom was this Epistle addressed? The general superscription, "to the Hebrews," is supported by the prevailing opinion of Antiquity. Chrysostom states, that it was sent to the believing Jews of Palestine; an opinion adopted by Theodoret and Theophylact, and, among modern writers, by Lightfoot, Whitby, Mill, Pearson, Capellus, Beza, Hallet, Lardner, and Hug. Yet, in the Roman Catalogues from the end of the second century, it is described under the title of *Epistola ad Alexandrinos*, probably from the notion that it was directed to the Christians at Alexandria. Wetstein conjectured, that it was written by Paul to the Jewish believers at Rome, soon after he had been released from his imprisonment in that city; an opinion which has found a recent advocate in the late Bishop of Meath (Dr. Dickinson), who supports it by remarking: 'Hence, the writer, in his concluding words, mentions those from Italy as particularly joining in the Apostle's prayers for the welfare of those to whom the Epistle is addressed.' Michaelis and Eichhorn also contend, that the salutation indicates that the parties referred to had come from Italy, and were out of that country when the Epistle was despatched.

To whom
was this
Epistle ad-
dressed?

Dr. Cooke
Taylor's
'History of
Christi-
anity,' p. 153.

Lardner and others, on the contrary, adduce it as a proof that the Writer was then *in Italy*; and Stuart contends, that the phrase may be rendered simply, 'the Italians.' In either case, we must suppose Italian brethren of the Hebrew stock to be intended by the designation; Italian Jews, not Romans, that is, not Roman citizens. All that can be with certainty inferred, perhaps, is, that *either* the Epistle was written from Italy, or it was sent to parties in Italy; so that, if we reject the latter explanation as unsupported by any other reason, it seems to leave no room for doubt that the Epistle was written from Rome.*

In A. D. 65.

Cited by
Lardner,
vol. vi. p. 79.

That it was addressed to the Hebrews of Palestine, there is, however, strong ground for questioning. Sir Isaac Newton thought, that 'this Epistle was written to Jewish believers who left Jerusalem about the time that the war broke out, and went into Asia.' Dr. Wall agrees, that the Epistle was written to Hebrews; but, 'for the place or country,' he thinks, 'they were rather the Hebrew Christians of Asia, Macedonia, Greece, &c., where Paul had spent most of his time, than that they were those of Jerusalem.' It is, indeed, scarcely conceivable, if the Epistle proceeded from St. Paul, that he should bespeak the prayers of the Hebrews of Palestine, that he might be restored to *them* the sooner. 'One would think,' Dr. Wall remarks, 'that Paul should have prayed and purposed to go any whither, rather than to Jeru-

* Had it been sent to Jewish believers at Rome, it is morally impossible that its authorship should have been a question in the Roman Church.

salem, where he had been so ill used, and where he fell into that five years' imprisonment.' It is no sufficient answer to this objection, that 'Paul might now desire to see his countrymen in Judea.' The expression, "restored to you," denotes more than this; implying a closer relation between the Writer and those whom he was addressing, than existed between the Apostle of the Gentiles and the churches of Judea; such as bound him to those whom he regarded as his spiritual children. But, further, the mention of Timothy, while it accords with the Pauline authorship of the Epistle, forbids the supposition that it was addressed to the Hebrews of Judea. Timothy was a native of Lycaonia, the son of a Greek; and we have no reason to suppose that he was even personally known to the churches of Palestine. He was not among those who accompanied Paul in his last journey to Jerusalem; and it does not seem likely that the Apostle would announce an intention to revisit Judea in company with him, for whom he found such constant occupation in visiting the churches which he had planted in other regions. Once more, if we suppose this Epistle to be specifically referred to by the Apostle Peter in his Second Epistle to the Jews of the Dispersion in the Asiatic Peninsula, we must conclude that it was addressed to the same communities; that is, to Hebrew Christians out of Palestine; including, perhaps, the Galatians, to whom some critics have conjectured that it was specifically sent.

See 1 Cor.
iv. 15; Gal.
iv. 19.

See p. 198.

In support of the opinion, that it was addressed to the believers in Judea, Lardner refers to such expres-

sions as the following :—“ has spoken *unto us* by His Son,”—“ and was confirmed *unto us* by those who heard him,”—“ for *unto us* was the Gospel preached,” &c. ; which he deems especially suitable to those living in Palestine, where Christ himself first taught, and then his disciples, confirming their testimony with numerous miracles. But the sacred Writer may surely be understood as referring to the Jewish people, to whom the Gospel was everywhere first addressed, irrespectively of the country which they inhabited. The phrase, “ was confirmed to *us* by those who heard him,” seems rather to imply, that these Hebrews were *not* among those who had themselves heard Our Lord. Again, the reproof conveyed to them in the remark, that, in point of time, they ought to be qualified to be the teachers of others, the same learned Writer thinks, may most properly be understood of Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, to whom the Gospel was first preached. Yet, we find St. Paul reproving the Corinthian believers in similar terms, as being but novices, “ babes in Christ.” Once more, the circumstances of suffering and persecution which these Hebrews had passed through, “ the great fight of afflictions” in former days, and the references to their deceased rulers or pastors, are insisted upon by Lardner, Hug, and other learned writers, as clearly pointing to Palestine and Jerusalem. Some had been made a gazing-stock by reproaches and persecutions ; others had sustained the spoiling of their goods ; but they had not yet resisted unto blood. If this may have been applicable to the churches of Judea at the date of this Epistle, (although, in the

Ch. i. 2 ; ii.
1—4 ; iv. 2.

Ch. v. 12.

1 Cor. iii. 1.

Heb. x. 32
—34 ; xii. 4.

cases of Stephen and James, blood had been shed in the cause of the Gospel,) it was not less applicable to Jewish believers in the adjacent countries. Thus, the Thessalonians had “suffered like things” of their own countrymen, even as the churches of God in Judea had of the Jews. No massacres of believers in Christ had as yet taken place, either in or out of Palestine. The passages referred to furnish no evidence, therefore, that the Epistle was written to the Hebrew Christians in Judea; and the reasons against that supposition, are accordingly left to operate in all their force. The reference to their liberality in ministering to the saints, though susceptible of a different explanation, seems best to agree with the generosity shown by the churches out of Judea in contributing to the poor saints of Jerusalem, especially in the years of scarcity. Once more, the allusions to the contests of the *stadium* favour the opinion, that the Epistle was addressed to Hebrews of the Dispersion, rather than to those of Palestine, who were not familiar with such spectacles.

It is at all events sufficiently clear, that the Inspired Writer addresses Christians thoroughly conversant with the Jewish ceremonial and all the Levitical institutes, who were in peculiar danger of falling back into Judaism, the temptation to apostatize arising from the persecutions to which they were exposed on the part chiefly of their Jewish brethren. To fortify their minds against this fiery trial of their faith and constancy, he sets before them the supreme authority, the peculiar sanctions, and the transcendent glory of the Christian Dispensation, as concurring to render

See p. 182.

1 Thess. ii.
14.

Heb. vi. 10.

unbelief the more inexcusable, and apostacy the more criminal and fatal.

Analysis
of the
Epistle.

§ 10. In the very exordium of this homiletical discourse, the sacred Writer argues the superiority of the Christian dispensation from the higher character of the Mediator of the New Covenant as the Eternal Son of God ; greater than all the Prophets, higher than the Angels ; superior to Moses, superior to Aaron. And he shews that the death of Christ, far from diminishing His Mediatorial glory, was the great means of accomplishing the work of expiation and redemption, to fulfil which the Son of God assumed humanity. Having cited from the prophetic Scriptures the declaration respecting the supreme priesthood of the Messiah, the Writer shews in what sense Melchisedek was a type of Christ ; and argues, that the abrogation of the Levitical institutes was implied in the prediction announcing the appointment of a new priesthood in the person of the Messiah. He then expatiates upon the transcendent glory of the Christian dispensation, and cites Prophecy as a witness to its superior excellence and perpetuity. He next illustrates the emblematic and temporary nature of the Levitical institutes and ritual ; and shews how all the emblems of the Old Covenant are realized in Christ. The death of Our Lord, as a sacrifice, is shewn to be the necessary ratification of the New Covenant ; and its intrinsic and perpetual efficacy is contrasted with the typical and ceremonial virtue of the emblematic sacrifices, as being a real propitiation, absolute and final.

Ch. vii. 7.

Ch. x. 19.

The Inspired Writer then proceeds to shew, how

these views supply the ground of holy confidence, and motives to constancy. He points out the aggravated guilt and awful issue of apostacy from the Christian faith. And, reminding the Hebrew believers of their cheerful fortitude and faithful adherence under former trials, he admonishes them that their only security lay in maintaining the life of faith. Faith, he shews to have been the main principle of Religion in every age; and he illustrates its operation and triumphant efficacy in the instances of the Patriarchs, of Moses, and of the long line of heroes, martyrs, and confessors, whom he represents as looking down upon those who were engaged in prosecuting the same contest for the heavenly prize; Christ Jesus being at once their leader and great exemplar, and the final arbiter and distributor of the rewards. As a further antidote to discouragement under their trials, he reminds them, that these were but the parental discipline by which they were to be trained for immortality. He enjoins upon them a tender mutual consideration and watchfulness; and hints at the danger of their bartering, like Esau, spiritual privileges and eternal hopes for present gratifications. He then draws a vivid contrast between the awful circumstances which attended the delivery of the Law at Sinai, and the transcendent glory of the Celestial Jerusalem; and infers the greater danger of turning away from the voice of the Son of God speaking to us in the Gospel.

At this point, the argument is brought to a close; Ch. xiii. and what follows is in a hortatory strain, so different as to appear to have been added as an epistolary

postscript. To this portion of the Epistle, bearing more strongly than any other part the marks of the Pauline manner, the language of the Writer seems alone applicable: "I beseech you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for *briefly* I have written to you." Understood of the entire Epistle, it seems scarcely to accord with the character of the composition, as one of the longest and most elaborate writings in the New Testament. The Apostle exhorts them to cultivate both fraternal affection and hospitality; to sympathize with those who were suffering persecution; to hold in honour the marriage relation; to study contentment; to cherish the memory of their deceased pastors; and to be on their guard against novel tenets, mingling ritual observances with the faith they had received; reminding them, that, as Christ suffered without the gate of Jerusalem, so they ought to be prepared to go forth to Him, renouncing, for His sake, their interests as members of the Jewish community, being citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. He enjoins upon them, as their only acceptable sacrifices, constant thanksgiving and acts of beneficence. He admonishes them to yield obedience and deference to their pastors; entreats their prayers on his own behalf, that he might the more speedily be restored to them; and finally commends them to the grace of the Supreme Pastor of the Church. The Epistle concludes with the customary salutation and benediction.

Peculiarities of phraseology in the Epistle.

§ 11. From this outline of the argument, it will be seen at a glance, that the matter of the Epistle, as regards the leading topics, the strain of argument,

the very similies and images employed, is truly Pauline; yet, not more so than might be expected in the composition of one who was constantly associated with him in his Apostolic labours; while there is observable in the exhibition of the same doctrines, and in the use of the same words, a certain peculiarity of phraseology. For example, in the Epistle to the Romans and other of his writings, St. Paul speaks of the believer as justified by the blood of Christ, and as redeemed by his blood; employing, in the former instance, a forensic term; in the second, a metaphor alluding to the state of slaves and captives. But, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the same doctrine is conveyed under a form of expression borrowed from the Levitical ritual; and, instead of justified, believers are said to be purified or sanctified by the blood of Christ; the terms, ἀγιάζειν, καθαρίζειν, and τελειῶσαι taking the place of δικαιῶν. In one passage of St. Paul's writings, we find, indeed, these different but equivalent forms of expression associated:—1 Cor. vi. 11. ἀλλὰ ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλὰ ἡγιασθητε, ἀλλ' ἐδικαιώθητε. The use of ἀγιάζειν in the sense of to purify from sin, or to cleanse by expiation, is so rare, however, in the Pauline writings, and so marked in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as to amount to a characteristic difference. Not less peculiar is the use of the term τελειῶσαι, "to perfect," in relation to the conscience or the state of the worshipper as justified. In an agonistic sense, the term occurs both in this Epistle and in the Pauline writings, but not in any other Epistle in the former acceptation. Again, in the Pauline Epistles, the believer is represented to be justified by *faith*, to be

Heb. x. 14.

Ch. xi. 7.

saved or preserved by *hope*: in the Epistle to the Hebrews, although we find a reference to “the righteousness of faith,” yet, faith, considered as the confident expectation of what we hope for, is insisted upon, as the principle upon which the perseverance to salvation depends, rather than as the ground upon which the undeserving are admitted to the gratuitous mercy of God. We find the same quotation from Habakkuk introduced in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; but, on examining this apparent coincidence, it is found to present a remarkable difference in the use made of the passage cited.

Canonical authority of the Epistle not affected by the supposition that it was a joint composition.

§ 12. These peculiarities may be thought to weigh, more than any perceptible difference in the structure of the sentences, or than the number of *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα* found in this Epistle, in favour of the opinion, that some other hand than that of Paul himself had a share in its composition.* Nor does this seem a very improbable supposition, when we recollect, that several of St. Paul's Epistles were sent in the joint name of the Apostle and one or more of his colleagues; as, for instance, the Second Epistle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to the Philippians and the Colossians, in which he associates Timothy with him-

* Mr. Townson has remarked, incidentally, that ‘ Paul has one mode of citing the Old Testament to the Hebrews, and another to the churches of which the Gentiles were members.’ In other words, the formula used in this Epistle, is peculiar to it and to Matthew's Gospel. *Γραφω* is never used, but such words as *λέγει, μαρτυρεῖ, ἐίρηκε, φησι*. But this peculiarity is explained by its being addressed to Hebrews, who were accustomed to this use of the term *said* prefixed to a quotation. Davidson's *Hermeneut*. pp. 451—454.

self in the opening salutation, and those to the Thesalonians, in which that of Silas, as well as of Timothy, is united with that of the Apostle. In these Epistles, it is probable that Timothy acted as his amanuensis, while the composition was dictated by St. Paul; yet, had the substance only been dictated, and the Epistle actually composed by Timothy or by Silas, in fulfilment of his instructions, the Apostolic signature, which was "the token in every Epistle," would have been sufficient to stamp it with all the authority of Apostolic inspiration. In the supposition that the treatise or homily in question was composed by one of St. Paul's immediate colleagues, there is nothing, therefore, which detracts in any degree from its claim to be regarded in the light in which it would be received by the churches, if it came to them in his name and with his sanction. With regard to Silas, we know that he was recognised as endowed with the prophetic gift; and we should be warranted, therefore, in regarding any writing of his as bearing the authority of prophetic inspiration. But if, in addition to its being of inspired authorship, it was put forth under the superintendence and direct sanction of the Apostle himself, it must have had precisely the same claim to be received as authoritative, that would attach to any Apostolic composition. The close connexion between Paul and Luke has been considered as imparting an Apostolic sanction to the writings of the Evangelist; and this ancient opinion would have appeared to rest upon far stronger grounds, had the identity of that Evangelist with Paul's chosen colleague, Silas, been understood. In like manner, the

Acts xv. 32.

tradition, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was composed by Luke, would have seemed to carry with it a higher degree of probability, had it come down to us in another shape, the name of Silvanus being substituted for that of Luke, or rather the true character of Luke having been recognised. The Epistle to the Hebrews, had it opened with the customary salutation, might then have borne with the utmost propriety the joint names of Paul and Silvanus, like those to the Thessalonians.

If, however, it was not the composition of St. Paul, although, in its subject matter, a faithful transcript of his doctrine, we may account at once for his not prefixing his name to it, when, with the addition of the Apostolic injunctions subjoined in the last chapter, he sent it forth to the churches. It is possible, that his faithful colleague had, by that time, been removed by death, and that Paul had to put his finishing hand, as well as his Apostolic seal, to what Silas had prepared. These, it may be said, are mere conjectures; an hypothesis is, however, of some use, if it serves but to show how, upon a given supposition, objections and difficulties would be removed, or conflicting opinions reconciled. The conclusion to which these remarks are intended to conduct the reader, is, not that the Epistle could not have been written by Paul himself, notwithstanding the deviation it exhibits from his usual style, but that, if it was not written by him, both internal and external evidence would lead us to refer its composition to Silas or Luke; that its canonical authority is not affected by that supposition; that not only are the matter and doctrine Pauline,

but it comes to us with the authority of Paul stamped upon it, having been sent forth by the Apostle himself; and, finally, that not without the strongest reason, therefore, the ancients have, as Origen testifies, handed it down as Paul's. The churches, in fact, received it from him, and upon his authority.

§ 13. The precise date of the composition cannot be with certainty determined. The prevailing opinion is, that it was written by the Apostle Paul at Rome, towards the close of his imprisonment, or shortly after he had obtained his liberty. Lardner, adopting this opinion, supposes that Timothy was sent to the Philippians, agreeably to the Apostle's intention intimated in the Epistle to that church, on his having gained good assurance of being speedily released; and that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written during his absence. The learned Critic interprets the reference to Timothy at ch. xiii. 2, of his having been "sent abroad."* He concludes, further, that this Epistle was written at Rome, or somewhere in Italy, in the beginning of the year 63, and that it was the last written of all St. Paul's Epistles. Mr. Greswell assigns the same date (A.U.C. 816) to the composition of the Epistle,† although he makes the Apostle's imprisonment to have terminated two years before (A.U.C. 814), and imagines that he visited Spain in the interim. We may assume, then, as at

Probable
date of the
Epistle.

Phil. ii. 19.

Greswell,
vol. ii. p. 78.

* So Mill also interprets the expression; and Beausobré.

† Mill, Wetstein, and Tillemont assign the same date to the Epistle. Hug also supposes it to have been written by the Apostle after his liberation, in the beginning of the tenth of Nero. Neander (following Bleek) supposes it to have been written in the last year of Nero's reign, by 'an apostolical man of the Pauline school.'

least highly probable, that the Epistle was finished and sent from Italy in the year fixed upon with the general concurrence of these learned Writers. It may nevertheless have been undertaken and partly composed some years before. The marks of care and polish which it exhibits, indicate that it had been not hastily written. Considering how much Paul wrote during his imprisonment at Rome, under circumstances far from favourable to such employment, and recollecting too, that he passed two years at Cæsarea, during which we cannot imagine him to have been idle, (although we have no record how he was employed during that interval,) one is tempted to conjecture, that this Epistle, if indeed his actual composition, had been begun at that time, when he enjoyed a considerable degree of liberty. Or, if it was undertaken at his dictation, and Silas or Luke had any hand in its composition, since the Historian of the Acts appears to have remained in Judea while the Apostle's fate was yet in suspense, no time would seem to have afforded a better opportunity for undertaking such a work; and yet, no suitable occasion could have presented itself for sending it forth, till after they had together reached Rome. The unfinished composition, which seems brought to a close, so far as regards the main argument, at the end of chapter xii., might have been so far prepared, in readiness for an opportunity of transmitting it to the Asiatic Brethren of the Circumcision by a trusty brother, and finished, at length, by the Apostle's own hand, when the occasion presented itself. If this Epistle is referred to (as has been shown to be

probable) by the Apostle Peter, we cannot assign to it a later date than a year or two prior to his Second Epistle. Had we not reason to conclude that it was sent from Italy, this consideration would even lead us to fix upon an earlier date. But, if sent from Rome, subsequently to Timothy's arrival there, and yet during his absence, it must have been finished after the Epistle to the Philippians, and may consequently be regarded as the latest communication from the Apostle's pen.

Here then we reluctantly take a final leave of this great Champion of the Faith and of the Freedom of the Gospel. To a certain extent, the Epistles of Paul form a sort of autobiography, and, in addition to their Divine instructions, are invaluable as exhibiting an example worthy, next to that of Our Lord himself, of being studied as a model. The singleness of purpose and self-devotion, the entire disinterestedness and enlarged benevolence, the moral courage and fortitude, the combination of a lofty spirit with a most entire resignation of will, which are the prominent features of the moral portrait, attest the power of Divine Grace, that, in an instant, transformed the proud, impetuous, malign, fanatical Pharisee into the very image of Christ, an ardent zeal for whose glory became thenceforth the all-absorbing master passion of his soul. Such was the character of the great Apostle of the Gentile world.

CHAP. XI.

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN.

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JOHN: ITS UNDOUBTED GENUINENESS—ALLUSIONS TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN—OPINION THAT IT WAS SUPPLEMENTAL TO THE GOSPEL—ITS DATE ANTECEDENT TO THE OVERTHROW OF JERUSALEM—THE LABOURS OF JOHN STRICTLY CONTEMPORANEOUS WITH THOSE OF PAUL—HERESIES COMBATED BY JOHN SIMILAR TO THOSE REFERRED TO IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES—COINCIDENCES BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JOHN AND THE PAULINE WRITINGS—THE EPISTLE OF JOHN PROBABLY SENT TO CORINTH—THE EPISTLE TO GAIVS—THE EPISTLE TO THE ELECT LADY—CHARACTER OF THE GENERAL EPISTLE AS A COMPOSITION—ANALYSIS—PECULIARITIES OF EXPRESSION IN REFERENCE TO UNION WITH THE DIVINE NATURE—CONTROVERTED PASSAGE ON THE THREE HEAVENLY WITNESSES.

The Catholic Epistle of John: its undoubted genuineness.

§ 1. LIKE the Epistle to the Hebrews, the sacred book which bears the title of the First Epistle General of John, partakes of the homiletic, more than of the epistolary character. The writer has not deemed it necessary to prefix his name; there is neither general nor personal salutation, nor any indication of the persons to whom it was addressed. Yet, even had there been no traditional testimony respecting its authorship, the internal evidence would have been sufficient to establish its genuineness, not only as an

Apostolic writing, but also as the composition of the same inspired pen that wrote the Gospel of John.

There has never been, in fact, any difference of opinion upon this point. Origen says: 'John, besides the Gospel and the Revelation, has left us an Epistle of a few lines. Grant also a second and a third, for all do not allow these to be genuine.' Eusebius uses similar language, echoing the testimony of Origen: 'Besides his Gospel, his first Epistle is universally acknowledged by those of the present time, and by the ancients; but the other two are considered doubtful.' It is difficult to discover any reason for the doubt entertained as to the genuineness of the two shorter Epistles, which so closely resemble the first in sentiment, phrase, and manner. Of the thirteen verses contained in the Second Epistle, eight are found in the First, either in words or in substance. If not the genuine Letter of the Apostle, it must have been the forgery of an imitator of his style; and one would be at a loss to conceive of a motive for the imposition. These two Epistles, it has been said, are not worth contending about; and they may be of small doctrinal importance; yet, as they probably owe their preservation among the canonical Scriptures to their having been written at the same time as the First Epistle, and sent with it, their genuineness is a point of some interest, as they may assist us in determining with some probability to whom the First Epistle was addressed.

Lardner,
vol.vi.p.275.

Lardner,
vol.vi. p.276.

§ 2. Throughout the General Epistle, there is a marked reference to the Gospel, to which, indeed, it is regarded by some critics as forming a kind of supple-

Allusion in
the opening
of the
Epistle to
John's
Gospel.

ment. The very opening appears to refer to a former work; and, although the language may be understood as relating generally to the Apostolic testimony, yet, it acquires a peculiar emphasis and appropriateness, if taken as referring to the Gospel: "That respecting the Word who is Life, which took place from the first, of which we were eye-witnesses, which we contemplated and palpably handled,—for the Life was manifested (in the flesh*), and we beheld and bear witness, and announce to you, that Eternal Life which was with The Father, and was so manifested to us,—what we beheld and heard, we announce to you, in order that you may partake with us of that fellowship which we have with The Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Or, the life-giving Logos. 'De Sermone Vivifico.' Calv.

1 Ep. i. 1, 2.

Now as this declaration cannot be understood of the subsequent contents of the Epistle, if it refers to any written communication or record, it must be intended to describe the Gospel, the commencement of which so strikingly corresponds to that of the Epistle: "In the beginning was the Word. . . In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men. . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." Moreover, supposing the declaration to refer to the book concerning the Logos or Life-giving Word, (which had been written expressly that those to whom it was sent might believe Jesus to be the Son of God, and that, believing, they might have life through his name,) there seems to be a more apparent object or purpose in the Writer's so solemnly affirming his personal knowledge of the events he had

John xx. 31.

* ἐν σαρκί is plainly to be understood, as it is expressed, 1 Tim. iii. 16; and ἐφανερώθη may be regarded as synonymous with *σαρξ ἐγένετο*.

recorded, and the certainty which attached to his testimony. And this introductory reference to his own Gospel might be intended to serve instead of any personal designation of himself, to stamp authority upon the exhortations which he was about to deliver to them, in order that they might attain to the full measure of the joy of faith. The inspired Writer bespeaks their dutiful attention, by describing himself as that Apostle and Evangelist to whom they were indebted for the precious document alluded to.

§ 3. The opinion, that the Epistle was designed to accompany the Gospel, has been advanced by Professor Hug; and he imagines that they were originally placed together in the canon. No scholar, he remarks, can be ignorant, that a different division and arrangement of the sacred books were adopted by transcribers at different times from different views, and that the earlier arrangement soon became obsolete and forgotten. Thus, in some ancient Alexandrian Codices, the Epistle to the Hebrews occupied a place immediately after that to the Galatians, and, in others, after the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Now, it is remarkable, that, in the Cambridge Codex, the last verses of the Third Epistle of John are written upon the front side of a page on the back of which is the beginning of the Acts, together with this inscription: ‘*Epistolæ Johannis III. Explicit—Incipit Actus Apostolorum.*’ Thus, continues the learned Critic, we have documentary evidence that the transcriber had before him an ancient book, in which the Epistles of John were placed after the Gospel, immediately before the Acts of the Apostles. Assuming the Gen-

Opinion
that it was
intended to
accompany
the Gospel.

eral Epistle to have been originally an accompaniment to the Gospel, inseparable from it, a sort of dedication of it to the community to whom it was sent, he would assign to the composition of the Gospel and of the Epistle the same date; one so late, however, as to be at variance not only with tradition, but with all reasonable probability.*

The Epistle written before the overthrow of Jerusalem.

§ 4. Without embracing the learned writer's hypothesis, that the Gospel and the Epistle were published at the same time, and intended to accompany each other, we may regard it as at least highly probable, that they were sent to the same Christian community, and at no very distant interval. If, then, the Gospel of John was published as early as about A.D. 62, we shall be led to assign to the Epistle a date not many years later. This must have been the case, if, as there is reason to conclude, it was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem.

See p. 90.

This opinion, which has been adopted by many Biblical critics of high authority,† is naturally deduced from the emphatic declaration in the second chapter: "Little children, *it is the last hour*:" that is, of the Jewish polity. Whatever other construction may be put upon the phrase, its apparent reference to Our Lord's prediction, that many Antichrists should arise before the overthrow of the Temple and Nation, taken in connexion with the Apostle's argument,

See p. 208.

* See p. 90. Thus, the publication of John's Gospel has been strangely assigned to the first year of Nerva, A.D. 97, when the Apostle was upwards of ninety!

† By Grotius, with whom, as to the date of the Epistle, agree Hammond, Whitby, Benson, Hales, Michaelis, and Macknight.

that they might know it was the last hour, because many Antichrists had already appeared,—seems to put it almost beyond question, that this is the true interpretation. Indeed, had the destruction of Jerusalem taken place, we might surely have expected to find some allusion to that awful catastrophe of the Jewish nation, by which so signal a confirmation was afforded of the truth of Christianity.

Another reason for rejecting the hypothesis of a much later date, has been deduced from the Apostle's language in addressing those who ranked in the Church as fathers from their age or standing: "Because ye have known Him who is from the beginning." That Our Lord, The Word who "was in the beginning," is designated by this phrase, can scarcely be doubted; and if, by the knowledge ascribed to these fathers, a personal acquaintance with Christ is implied, between thirty and forty years from the Ascension, there might be many surviving who had personally conversed with him; but this could hardly be the case fifteen years later. The interpretation upon which this argument rests, is, however, questionable. The knowledge of Christ which is spoken of, like the knowledge of The Father, may be understood of a spiritual apprehension derived from Divine illumination. A stronger argument may be built upon the Apostle's language (ch. ii. 8): "A new commandment I write unto you." In whatever sense we take the expression, we can hardly suppose that St. John would have couched his exhortation in this form, had he been writing, as some have imagined, fifty or sixty years after the first promulgation of the Gospel.

The notion, that St. John should have found no occasion for addressing this Apostolic charge to the churches during the lapse of more than half a century, and that he should have written his first Epistle at the age of eighty or ninety years, is, indeed so improbable, that one is astonished to find it entertained by learned critics without the shadow of proof.* Nothing short of positive testimony or the clearest internal evidence could render it credible, that James, Peter, Jude, and Paul should severally have addressed Epistles to various portions of the Church, during the twenty years ranging from A.D. 45 to 65, and that John should not have followed their example till between twenty and thirty years afterwards. The only reason for such an opinion appears to be the gratuitous assumption, that he wrote this Epistle, if not his Gospel, after his exile in Patmos, which is supposed to have terminated at the death of Domitian, A.D. 97. There is not the slightest ground for this assumption, or for supposing them to have been composed during his exile. On the contrary, if the latest of the other three Gospels was written about 62, even if we regard the Gospel of John as supplemental to all of them, it is not likely that it would be sent forth many years later. But there is no clear evidence of its having been even of later date than that of Luke.

See p. 86.

§ 5. There has been a strange propensity in Bibli-

* Milman and Le Clerc place it in A.D. 91 or 92; Whiston in 82 or 83; Basnage in 98; Baronius in 99; Hug in 96; Lardner inclines to 80, or later; Michaelis in 70; Whitby, Grotius, Hammond, and Macknight, some years earlier.

cal critics, to post-date all the Apostolic writings. On examining the Epistle before us, we shall find no indications of its having been written at an era posterior to that of Paul's apostolic labours, with which those of John were strictly contemporaneous. When Paul went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas (A.D. 50), to confer with the Apostles, John was one of the three who entered into the agreement, that Paul and Barnabas should prosecute their mission to the heathen, and they, James, Peter, and John, theirs to the Circumcision. This agreement was doubtless adhered to; and it affords a reason for supposing that the Epistles of Peter and John, like that of James, were addressed, as well as their oral ministry, to believers of the Jewish race.

The labours of John strictly contemporaneous with those of Paul.

Of the personal history of the Apostle John, from the latest reference to him in the New Testament, (as present on the occasion above referred to,) till the closing years of his life, we have not even any traditional account. It is inferred from the Apocalypse, that the Roman Asia was the sphere of his apostolic labours towards the close of the first century; and a writer of the second century mentions his tomb as then to be seen at Ephesus. What countries he visited during the intervening forty years,—whether, with other Christian fugitives, he took refuge at Pella beyond the Jordan, when the Roman armies encircled Jerusalem, and subsequently returned with those who took unmolested possession of the ruins,—or whether he quitted Palestine for ever, previously to the destruction of the city and the Jewish polity,—whether, like Peter, he visited the Jewish communi-

See p. 88.

Lardner, vol. v. p. 411.

A.D. 66.

ties at Antioch and Seleucia, Alexandria and Cyrene, extending at length his circuit to the cities of the Asiatic Peninsula and Greece,—or whether he fixed his abode in the midst of a chain of Jewish colonies in the Lesser Asia,—Tradition has left us to conjecture, without affording the slightest aid to the inquiry.

See pp. 18,
88.

Heresies
combated
by John,
similar to
those re-
ferred to in
the Pauline
Epistles.

§ 6. That his Epistle was addressed to Christians of some standing, is evident; that they were of the Hebrew stock, ‘the Circumcision,’ may also be assumed; and it is further obvious, that they were residing in countries in which idolatry prevailed: hence, the admonition with which the Epistle concludes, “Keep yourselves from idols;” and which has its exact counterpart in the warnings addressed by St. Paul to the Corinthian church: “My dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” Indeed, on comparing the Epistle of John with the Pauline writings, we may discover references, in both, to the same corruptions of the faith, the same heresies, and the same moral evils. It has been supposed, that St. John wrote to combat certain Gnostic heresies which did not spring up till towards the close of the Apostolic age,—those of Cerinthus and Carpocrates. But, if we find Paul, as early as A.D. 56, plainly pointing to the same description of errors, we must conclude that there can be no such ground for inferring that the Epistle of John belongs to a later period.

1 Cor. x. 14.

See p. 84.

Simon Magus has been considered as the founder or leader of the Gnostics called *Docetæ*, from a Greek word implying their belief that the body of Jesus was a phantom; to which notion John appears

to allude. Now this impostor had been encountered by the Apostle in his native city, Samaria, before the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, about A.D. 36. Having professedly embraced Christianity, the Samaritan heresiarch appears to have attempted to graft upon it the system of the Magian philosophy, and to have represented Christ as a Divine Emanation too pure to have been really incorporated with the gross matter of a human body. Hence, the notion afterwards maintained by one branch of the Gnostic heretics, that Jesus was a mere man, but that the Christ was an Emanation from God, which became united to the man Jesus at his baptism, and continued so united to him till his crucifixion, when the Christ returned to heaven. The Ebionites,* who adopted this notion, are said to have first appeared as a sect in the neighbourhood of Pella, about the time that the Christians of Jerusalem took refuge there; and they were probably disciples of the Samaritan impostor. If so, their tenets must have been making progress during many years; and at any time posterior to the year 36, there may have been occasion to warn believers against this pestilent heresy.

See p. 406.

See Burton,
p. 146.

§ 7. In the Epistle of Paul to the Colossian believers, there occurs a very distinct reference to the Magian philosophy. The Ephesian exorcists and magicians, mentioned, Acts xix., were probably Jewish Gnostics; and, in writing to Timothy, at Ephesus, the Apostle reminds him of the prediction, that many should be seduced from the faith by doctrines

Coincidences between this Epistle and the Pauline writings.

* Their name signifies in Hebrew, *poor*, but may have been derived, as Dr. Burton suggests, from an individual named Ebion.

See pp. 407,
408.

of demons,—those of the Oriental demonology. In the Epistles to the Corinthians, if we meet with no distinct allusions to Gnostic tenets, there occur admonitions very similar to those which we find in the Epistle of John, in reference to the Gnostic spirit. The following are instances of striking coincidence of sentiment and expression :—

1 JOHN.

“ Every one that loveth . . . knoweth God : he that loveth not, knoweth not God.” Ch. iv. 8.

“ Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God : every spirit that confesseth not, &c., is not of God.” Ch. iv. 2, 3.

“ Who is a liar but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ?” Ch. ii. 22.

“ He that knoweth God, heareth us.” Ch. iv. 6.

“ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.” Ch. ii. 17.

“ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” Ch. v. 21.

“ The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth : he that saith, he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.” Ch. ii. 8.

“ Sin is the transgression of the law.” Ch. iii. 4.

1ST EPIST. TO THE COR. A.D. 56.

“ But if any man love God, the same is known of him.” (Or, by him God is known.) 1 Cor. viii. 3.

“ No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. No man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed.” 1 Cor. xii. 3.

“ If any man think himself to be spiritual, let him acknowledge what I write to you to be the commandments of the Lord.” 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

“ For the fashion of this world passeth away.” 1 Cor. vii. 31.

“ My dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” 1 Cor. x. 14.

EPIST. TO THE ROMANS, A.D. 57.

“ The night is far spent, the day is at hand ; let us cast off the works of darkness.” Rom. xiii. 12.

[“ We are not of the night, nor of darkness.” 1 Thess. v. 5.]

“ For where no law is, there is no transgression.” Rom. iv. 15.

1 JOHN.

“Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.” Ch. iv. 13.

“He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.” Ch. v. 10.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” Ch. iii. 2.

“But . . . when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Ch. iii. 2.

“He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk even as He walked.” Ch. ii. 6.

EPIST. TO THE ROMANS, A.D. 57.

“If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Rom. viii. 9.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” Rom. viii. 16.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God . . . and if children, heirs.” Rom. viii. 14, 17.

EPIST. TO THE COLOS. A.D. 61.

“When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Col. iii. 4.

[“Fashioned like unto His glorious body.” Phil. iii. 21.]

“As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” Col. ii. 6.

In some of these parallel passages, the phraseology is so closely similar as to suggest the idea, that the Apostle John might have a designed reference to the language of St. Paul; which, considering that St. Peter expressly refers to his Epistles, is by no means an improbable supposition; nor would it require us to assign a later date to this Epistle, than to the Second Epistle of Peter. The comparison will at all events render it evident, that both Apostles not only taught the same doctrines, but also found occasion for addressing to the churches the same admonitions.

§ 8. It will be observed, that the First Epistle of Paul to the church at Corinth furnishes the most

The General Epistle of John probably sent to Corinth.

striking instances of coincidence with the language and doctrine of John ; and there is this further coincidence between them, that both Epistles were addressed to communities whose outward circumstances were apparently prosperous. The warnings and exhortations in both, point to love of the world and conformity to its sinful manners as the dangers to which Christians were chiefly exposed. We find no reference to trials arising from persecution, as in the First Epistle of Peter, or in that to the Hebrews. Now it is a little remarkable, that Paul wrote that Epistle to the Corinthian church from Ephesus, and that John is supposed to have been residing at Ephesus when he wrote this Epistle. Between Ephesus and Corinth, there was so constant an intercourse, that we cannot suppose the Apostle would have taken up his abode in the former city, without opening a communication with the numerous Jewish Christians in the Achaian metropolis. To whom then would he be more likely to have occasion to address an Epistle reiterating those exhortations and admonitions which they had received from the Apostle of the Gentiles some eight or ten years before ? And if he had not yet visited Corinth, what is more natural than that he should have intended to follow up his Epistle by a personal visitation ?

The Epistle
to Gaius of
Corinth.

§ 9. Now in the shorter Letters to Gaius and the unknown Lady, the Apostle expresses his hope of shortly seeing them and speaking face to face. Those Letters bear every mark of having been written at the same time as the General Epistle, and were probably transmitted with it. There was a Gaius re-

siding at Corinth when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans; but, as the name was a common one, no stress could be laid upon that circumstance, if we had nothing more than a mere name. But Paul speaks of Gaius of Corinth as being his host and that of the whole church; an honourable record of his generous hospitality; and we find John bearing testimony to the beloved Gaius whom he is addressing, in precise accordance with this: "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to strangers, who have borne witness of thy love before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well; because for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles: we therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." Now to whom can St. John here allude, but to those who went forth preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, and, like the Apostle Paul and his immediate associates, preaching it freely? In writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul lays especial stress upon his not having been burdensome to them; and he appeals to them, whether Titus and the brother who accompanied him, did not walk in the same spirit, in the same steps,—that is, "taking nothing of the Gentiles." That Paul himself, and Titus or Timothy, are personally referred to in the Epistle to Gaius, it might be rash to affirm without more positive evidence; yet, we cannot but regard it as at least a striking coincidence, that we have extant the witness borne before the church, by the Apostle Paul, to the hospitality of an individual of this name; and with that testimony, we must suppose

Rom.xvi.23.

3 John 5
—8.2 Cor.xii.17,
18.

John to have been acquainted. There is nothing to forbid the supposition, that Gaius the Corinthian is the person referred to; and, if so, there is some ground for concluding, that the General Epistle of John was primarily addressed to the Jewish portion of the Christian church at Corinth, and that it was written not long after Paul's last visit to that city.* At all events, the language addressed to Gaius does not comport with the notion of a much later date.

The Epistle
to the Elect
Lady.

§ 10. The Second Epistle of John is addressed to a Christian matron whose name is not given, unless we render the words of the salutation, with Grotius, Wetstein, Middleton, and others, "The Elder to the Lady Eclecta;"—or, with Benson, Heumann, and Neander, "The Elder to the Elect Kyria."† But to either interpretation it is a sufficient objection, that Kyria occurs in the fifth verse, evidently in the sense of "lady;" and Eclecta in the last verse, where it can be translated only as an epithet. The only reason assigned for rejecting the common interpretation ‡ is, the absence of the definite article in the original; but this grammatical peculiarity may be accounted for by the occurrence of the relative pronoun in immediate sequence. Thus, in our own

* It is scarcely worth notice, that the venerable Bede, on the authority of some Latins, styles it, 'the Epistle of John to the Parthians;' a mistake which Professor Hug thinks may have arisen from an ancient subscription to the Second Epistle: *προς Παρθενους* (*Virgines*), abbreviated into *Παρθους*.

† The fantastic notion, that a church, not a person, is intended by the designation, (embraced by Whiston,) is disproved by what is said in the conclusion of the Epistle.

‡ This, the common opinion, is supported by Beza, Mill, Lardner, and the best ancient authorities.

language, we are accustomed to employ the indefinite article, even in speaking of God, when the Divine name is connected with the relative pronoun, or with a qualifying sentence : *e. g.* “Thou art a God ready to pardon.” (Neh. ix. 17.) “Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness.” (Ps. v. 5.) “A God that hidest thyself.” (Isaiah xlvi. 15.) “A Son whom He hath made heir of all things,” (Heb. i. 2,) may be cited as an example of the same construction. We should accordingly be justified in rendering the address in this Epistle: “The Elder to a Chosen (i. e. Christian) Lady and her Children whom I love in truth.” In fact, we cannot suppose there was any person who would have been entitled to be addressed as *the* Chosen Lady, by way of pre-eminence. The proper name of this Lady may have been inscribed on the outside of the Epistle: it was at all events known to the bearer of it. As the Writer suppresses his own name, it is not surprising that he should not have deemed it necessary to mention either that of the party addressed, or that of the Chosen (or Christian) Sister who, with her children, sent salutations. If, as is most probable, this Epistle was transmitted at the same time as the Epistle to Gaius, we may conclude that the Lady was resident at the same place; that is, at Corinth. Now St. John’s eulogistic language forcibly recalls the high character given by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, of a deaconess of the church at Cenchræa, who had been a protectress of many, and of the Apostle himself. In the same Epistle, honourable mention is

also made of many Christian matrons to whom the churches were greatly indebted ;—Priscilla the consort of Aquila, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, and the Mother of Rufus,—all probably of Jewish family, and personally known to the Apostle previously to their settling at Rome, or during the period that all Jews were banished from the Imperial Capital by Claudius. In like manner, this Corinthian lady was doubtless of the same nation as the Apostle John, and personally known to him, although he might not yet have visited Corinth. It may have been no other than “Phœbe our sister” herself: at all events, she was one of kindred character and excellence,—answering to St. Paul’s requirements: “well reported of for good works, having brought up children, having entertained strangers, having relieved the afflicted, having diligently followed every good work.” This short Epistle is interesting, therefore, as a memorial of the exemplary character of a Christian matron and mother, honoured and beloved by that Disciple whom Jesus loved. May not this be one reason that it has been preserved, together with the Epistle to Gaius, as an accompaniment of the General Epistle?

1 Tim. v. 10.

Character of
the General
Epistle as a
composition.

§ 11. Let us now examine the construction and contents of this remarkable Epistle, which, though not of so late a date as some critics have been led to imagine, was probably the last production of an Apostolic pen, with the exception of the Apocalypse. As a composition, the Epistle is singularly inartificial, and is strongly marked by the sententious, antithetical style of the Hebrew school, although it differs

very remarkably from that of the Epistle of James, which partakes more of the Greek elegance.* The sentences, for the most part, are apparently but slightly connected, often reading like detached paragraphs; yet, two leading ideas govern and connect the entire train of thought. The whole Epistle may be summed up in two propositions, with the practical deductions connected with them: "God is light—walk in light: God is love—walk in love." The former, answering to the "Be ye holy, for I am holy," of St. Peter, is styled an old commandment, for it had been given them from the beginning by Moses: the latter was the new commandment received from Christ. To enforce these two fundamental precepts, the foundation of all practical godliness and benevolence, is the main design of this Apostolic address; but with this is interwoven a strain of cautionary remarks in reference to antichristian corruptions of the faith. John xiii. 34.

§ 12. The Epistle opens with declaring the purpose for which the Gospel had been preached to those who had received it from the Evangelist and his fellow Apostles; namely, that they might be brought into a state of communion with God and with His Son Jesus Christ. In order that they might realize all the blessedness of this communion, it was necessary that they should have wrought into their minds this Analysis of
the Epistle.

* It is distinguished by some remarkable philological peculiarities, in common with the Gospel of John; *e.g.* the use of all the Greek tenses as aorists; the use of *καί* for *γάρ* and *δέ*; the emphatic use of *ὁὗτος*; the pleonasms and metonymical use of words,—as "the victory which overcometh," "sinneth a sin," &c.; "we have the petitions," *i.e.* things petitioned for, &c.

cardinal truth with all its practical consequences: God is pure, unmixed light. To pretend to communion with Him, while our course is one of darkness or impurity, is to be guilty of falsehood and hypocrisy. But, to fit us for this high and holy communion, the blood of Jesus Christ must have cleansed us from sin. To say that we have no guilt to expiate, no moral defilement to wash away, would be to deceive ourselves fatally, and to show that we have not embraced the truth: those only who confess their sins, can obtain the Divine forgiveness and sanctifying grace. To deny that we are sinners who need a Saviour, is to contradict God Himself by impugning His word. These things the Apostle insists upon, to guard them against a sinful course on the one hand, and, on the other, that, if any had fallen into sin, they might be brought to confession and repentance; encouraged by the consideration, that they had Him for an Advocate before the Father, who has offered up Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice to take away the sins of the world.

So Rom. x. 10.

Ch. ii. 3.

The Apostle proceeds to show, that the true test of that knowledge of God to which so many pretended, is, the keeping of the Divine commandments: by this rule, the pretension of abiding or dwelling in God must be tested; and one who used this language, was bound to walk after the Divine example. And this, the Apostle adds, was no new precept, but one which they had had from the beginning. But he proceeds to lay down a further rule or test, which was a new precept, nevertheless it was the truth, because the darkness of the old economy had passed

was a proof that they never really belonged to the body of Christ. But those whom the Apostle was addressing, had received from Christ the gift of the Spirit as a spirit of discernment; and he wrote to them as to those who knew the truth, out of which nothing false could spring. Who then could bear more broadly marked the character of a liar and an impostor, than he who denied Jesus to be the Christ? Such a one was emphatically the Antichrist, who in effect denied both The Father and The Son. But, by adhering to the Gospel they had been taught from the beginning, they would abide both in The Son and in The Father, and obtain that eternal life which God had promised. While the Apostle deemed it needful to give them this caution respecting the false teachers who sought to seduce them from the faith, he expresses his confidence that they had been so taught by the Spirit of God, that they stood in no need of being instructed in the faith by human teachers bringing a new doctrine; and he exhorts them to hold fast the truth, and to abide in Christ as they had been taught by the Spirit, that so they might not be ashamed to meet The Saviour at His coming.

Ch. ii. 29.

The Apostle now, with some apparent abruptness, lays down another position or rule, which seems intended further to explain what abiding in Christ practically involves; namely, that, as Christ is righteous, so must every one be characterized by righteousness who is born of God. Kindling at the thought suggested by this expression, (which receives its explanation from what is more fully declared in the first chapter of his Gospel,) the Apostle breaks forth

Vers. 12, 13.

into a devout exclamation of wonder and gratitude at the transcendent love of God in admitting believers to the glorious privilege of sonship. But, as the world did not recognize Christ as the Only-begotten Son of The Father, His followers cannot expect to be recognized as the sons of God, there being at present no apparent tokens of their glorious distinction, as destined to be conformed to the image of Christ. Every one who possessed this hope, however, would seek to resemble Him now in moral purity. All sin is a violation of law, and therefore a crime; and the very design of Christ's manifestation in human nature was, to take away our sin. He was sinless; and no one who abides in Him, can wilfully sin; nor can any one who lives in sin have known Him. The Apostle winds up this train of argument by emphatically reiterating the proposition they are adduced to establish, and which was practically denied by the "deceivers;" namely, that he whose deeds are righteous, is alone righteous, his character corresponding to that of Christ. The sinner, on the contrary, shows himself to be a child of the Devil, the author and parent of sin, to destroy whose works the Son of God appeared on earth. Again, the child of God has within him a Divine principle which is in its very nature opposed to, and incompatible with sin. Thus are the children of God and the children of the devil respectively distinguished. No one is truly the child of God, who does not practice righteousness. Nor can any one have claim to this character, who is devoid of love to his Christian brother. The latter position, the Apostle supports by referring to Our Lord's

Comp. John
i. 10, 11.

Comp. Rom.
viii. 29.

Rom. iv. 15.

Ch. ii. 29.

injunction to His disciples to love one another; by adducing the example of Cain, the first murderer, as an illustration of the malignity of hatred in the unregenerate; and by laying it down as the broad distinction between the world, by which the children of God must expect to be hated, and the regenerate, that the latter are united by mutual affection, while he who is actuated by a spirit of hatred, and persecutes his brother, is at heart a murderer. But this love to the brethren must be practically demonstrated; and, as Christ manifested His love by laying down His life for us, we ought to be prepared to make a similar sacrifice for the sake of our brethren. How could this love, then, dwell in one who, possessing wealth, could see his brother in distress and close his heart against him? It is only when our actions correspond to our professions, that we can have any assurance, in approaching the Searcher of Hearts, that we are His children, and that our prayers will be heard. The sum of what God has commanded is, that we should believe upon His Son and love one another; and only he who keeps His commandments, abides in Christ, and Christ in him; and His abiding in us is to be ascertained by His having bestowed upon us His spirit.

John xv. 7.

John xv. 4.

Ch. iv.

But they were not, the Apostle proceeds to say, to give credit to the pretensions of all who laid claim to having received the Spirit. Many false prophets were abroad. He especially warns them against those false teachers who denied the real humanity of Jesus Christ, (the heresy of the *Docetæ*,) that being a mark by which they might recognize the

predicted Antichrist. They had been proof against those seducing spirits, and had triumphed over them, because they were taught and sustained by a mightier Spirit than that which works in the children of this world. The world listened to these false teachers, because their doctrine was suited to worldly minds: the children of God would listen to the voice of the Apostles. By this test, the spirit of truth was to be discriminated from the spirit of error. Ch. ii. 13.

Again the Apostle returns to the theme from which he had digressed for the purpose of warning them against heretical teachers; and in reiterating the exhortation to mutual love, he traces up the principle of love to its Divine source. Love proceeds from God, who is Love, pure benevolence; and the love of The Father has been manifested to us by His sending forth His only-begotten Son to become a sacrifice for sins. The consideration of this the highest expression of the Divine love, affords the strongest reason why we should, by loving one another, show ourselves to be the children of God. God is invisible, but He dwells in those whose hearts are the seat of this Divine principle; and we may know that we are abiding in God, and that He dwells in us, because He has endowed us with the Spirit. Although no one has seen God, the Apostle repeats what he had declared at the opening of the Epistle, that he had himself beheld that to which he had borne testimony,—that The Father had sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. Only he who confessed belief in this truth, could attain to the privilege of union with God. Ch. iv. 7.

Moreover, the Apostle had an assured knowledge and Compare
John i. 14.

belief of the love which God had displayed towards us. As the conclusion, then, he reiterates the cardinal proposition, "God is love;" whence it follows, that it is by love we must become united to God.

Ch. iv. 17.

The Apostle now proceeds to show how this love to God will operate. When it is perfected in us, it will give us assurance of our being approved in the day of judgment, because we are conformed to Christ here; and it will exclude all slavish terror; for, if we love God, He must have first loved us. Next, this love is incompatible with an evil disposition towards our brethren, since love to an Unseen Being is a higher attainment than love to our fellow creatures whom we see and converse with. Moreover, the same authority commands us to love God and to love our brother. Again, as every true believer in Christ has been born of God, love to God Himself, the Author of their regeneration, will produce love to the Divine offspring. The conclusion is, that we shall love all the children of God, when we truly love God and keep His commandments. Keeping the commandments is a further test of love to God, since to His children they will not be burdensome or grievous, inasmuch as a principle of faith has been implanted in them, adequate to overcome the temptations of the world. The believer in Christ as the Son of God can alone attain to this moral conquest.

Ch. v. 7.

Here the Apostle again digresses from his hortatory strain, to oppose the erroneous and heretical notions maintained by some respecting the Person of Our Lord. The passage has occasioned much perplexity

and difference among commentators, owing to the uncertainty of the precise allusion. As there were some who acknowledged Christ to be a teacher sent from God, but denied His Atonement, we may understand the Apostle as intending to declare, that Jesus not only came baptizing with water, but also purifying or making atonement by his blood. Or, since some held, that Jesus was by birth a mere man, and that the Æon, Christ, became united to him at his baptism, it may be intended to intimate, that, as He then first came forth as the Messiah, when He was declared to be the Son of God, commencing His ministry with water; so, by His death, He was declared to be the Son of God in the flesh, shedding His blood on the Cross as an expiation for sin, which attested His partaking of the real nature of man, at once Jesus and the Christ.* And to this truth respecting His Son, God had borne witness by the gift of the Spirit. The Apostle speaks of the Water, the Blood, and the Spirit as three concurrent witnesses to the same truth;† which he subsequently explains to be in substance, that God has given to us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. This three-fold witness is interpreted of the miraculous effusion of the Spirit, the water of baptism, emblematic of regeneration, and the blood represented in the Lord's Supper. He who believes in the Son of God has moreover within himself the witness of God, the Holy Spirit; whereas

Marsh's
Michaelis,
vol. iv. p. 401.
Neander,
by Ryland,
vol. ii. p. 68.

* ' *Probat se non phantasma, sed verum hominem esse, qui ex spiritu, sanguine, et aquâ seu humore constaret.*' Wetstein on John xix. 34, 35.

† In this analysis, verse 7 is passed over upon critical grounds.

he who rejects the Divine testimony respecting Christ, makes God to have set his seal to a falsehood, and, not holding the truth concerning The Son, cannot be a partaker of that eternal life which is in Him.

Ch. v. 13.

The Apostle, now drawing his Epistle to a conclusion, tells those believers to whom it is addressed, that his object has been, to confirm them in the assurance that they were partakers of eternal life through faith in Christ, and to strengthen their confidence in Him as their Mediator and Advocate. He adduces this consideration as an encouragement to pray for each other, especially in the case of a brother who had fallen into sin, yet not into hopeless and fatal apostacy. No child of God, however, it is intimated, will fall under the dominion of sin, but will so keep himself that the Evil One shall not have power to harm him. Finally, the Apostle reminds them, by a strong affirmation, of their distinguished position with its high responsibilities, as the sons of God in the midst of a world still subject to the Power of Evil; God having imparted to them understanding to embrace the Truth, and that spiritual knowledge of the True God and His Son Jesus Christ, which is eternal life: as such, he affectionately exhorts them to guard against being implicated in the sin of idolatry. As if concluding a discourse, rather than an Epistle, the Inspired Writer adds to this parting exhortation an emphatic Amen.

Peculiar phraseology in reference to union with the Divine nature.

§ 13. The analysis of this unique portion of the Apostolic writings, has insensibly expanded into exposition, in the attempt to illustrate its plan and scope, and to trace the unbroken, but scarcely perceptible

chain of thought which connects the several propositions and varied reiterations of the same general idea. The phraseology of the Apostle is sometimes enigmatical from its very simplicity and conciseness ; while it is distinguished by a sort of emphatic tautology, both in the construction of the phrases and in the repetition of the same words, similar to what we find occasionally in the teaching of Our Lord himself. These peculiarities may be considered, perhaps, as belonging less to the individual Writer, than to his age and country. Yet, John's early and intimate acquaintance with Our Lord's teaching, may be supposed to have naturally produced a resemblance to it in his style. With regard, however, to some remarkable modes of expression which are repeatedly introduced, and which wear a mystical character,—in particular, the phrase, dwelling in God, and having God dwelling within us,—we may safely assume, that such phraseology did not originate either with the Apostle or with the Christian school, but was current among the Gnostic pretenders to union with the Deity. The Apostle employs these phrases only to refute the false notions of which they were the vehicle.

The cardinal doctrine of that Pantheistic mysticism which has from time immemorial maintained itself in the schools of the East, Indian, Persian, and Magian, is, that, by mere knowledge and the efforts of contemplation, man may attain to a beatific absorption into the Divine Essence. This mysticism sought to ally itself to Christianity, but found in it, as embodied in the Apostolic teaching, an uncompromising antagonist. Some doctrines might seem to be com-

mon to the two systems. Thus, the Apostle may be understood as tacitly conceding to the mystic school, that the knowledge of God is the Supreme Good; that by this knowledge we are to seek re-union to God, a participation of the Divine nature; and that to have God abiding in us implies the highest virtue, as dwelling in God expresses and constitutes the highest bliss. But then, in direct opposition to the vain speculations of the ascetic philosophy, he teaches, that the true knowledge of God consists in a spiritual apprehension of the Divine character, not in a barren intellectual speculation; that it has respect to what God has revealed, and involves a belief of the Truth; that it is, in fact, faith, not the boasted knowledge of things, which re-unites to God, and overcomes the world. He insists, that all pretensions to religion are vain, which will not endure the practical test of a holy life; and that the moral deification of man is to be attained by conformity to the Divine Perfection, not by absorption into the Divine Essence. By this practical doctrine, he cuts up mysticism by the root, charging it with making God Himself a liar, and declaring, that no man could either know God, or have communion with Him, who did not believe upon His Son, in whom alone we have eternal life.

The force and propriety of the Apostle's language and strain of argument will appear still more evident, if we consider their precise adaptation to the doctrines and pretensions which are to this day maintained by the Buddhic and other sects. After the lapse of eighteen centuries, this Apostolic Epistle is as admirably fitted to counteract the extant Gnosticism of

the heathen world, as it was originally to check the progress of any ancient heresy. No portion of the New Testament would be so suitable, translated into the sacred language of India, to put into the hands of a Buddhist, or to be circulated, in a Persian version, among the Sooffee sectaries of the Mohammedan world. ‘Genuine Buddhism,’ says a learned Orientalist, ‘never seems to contemplate any measures of acceptance with the Deity, but, overleaping the barrier between finite and infinite Mind, urges its followers to aspire by their own efforts to that Divine perfectibility of which it teaches that man is capable, and by obtaining which man becomes God. Genuine Buddhism has no priesthood: the saint despises the priest; the saint scorns the aid of mediators, whether on earth or in heaven.’ Buddhism knows no sin, no repentance, no fear, no hope; it regards knowledge as the only virtue, and apathy as the highest bliss. Such was the source from which Pythagoras, Plato, and Zeno derived their oriental wisdom; and the Gnostic adulterations of Christianity flowed, through a different channel, from the same corrupt fountain. In opposition to all such “false philosophy and vain deceit,” the Apostle John declares: “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God; for this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”

Hodgson's
Sketch of
Buddhism.
Trans. of
R. Asiatic
Society,
vol. ii. p.254.

§ 14. It would scarcely be proper to close this examination of the Epistle, without adverting to the critical controversy which has divided Biblical scholars of the greatest eminence in erudition, acumen, and

The contro-
verted pas-
sage on the
Three Hea-
venly Wit-
nesses.

piety, respecting the passage in the Authorized Version, declaring that “there are Three that bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.” That this passage forms no part of the genuine Greek text, may now be considered as put almost beyond controversy. There is, indeed, no ground to believe that the interpolation (which originated, probably, in some ancient gloss grafted upon the sacred text by a transcriber) dates from an earlier period than the fifth century. The learned Dr. Scholz* sums up the evidence which compels him to reject the clause from his critical edition of the New Testament, in the following annotation: ‘After the words, Three Witnesses, the Vulgate has the addition as follows: *in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one: and three witnesses are upon the earth.*—But no Greek manuscript, except three which are quite modern; no Ancient Version, except the Latin [Vulgate], and that only subsequent to the fifth century; no Greek, Syriac, or Latin Fathers (except a few Latin, beginning with Vigilius of Tapusus, in the fifth century); have this addition. Also, internal evidence, from the want of connexion, speaks against it; as there is no occasion furnished for introducing the Heavenly Witnesses.’ A striking proof that the passage is spurious, is afforded by the form in which it appears in some modern Greek manuscripts,

* As a Roman Catholic, the learned Critic might have been expected to defer to the authority of his Church; but he has shown that ‘his critical integrity is superior to his papal predilections.’ See Dr. J. P. Smith’s *Scrip. Test.* vol. iii. p. 128.

where the absence of the Article before the words, *πατήρ, λόγος,* and *πνεῦμα,* betrays a translation from the Latin, a translation into *bad Greek*. Bishop Horsley and some other writers, assuming the genuineness of the clause, have endeavoured to furnish a coherent exposition of the whole context, in accordance with this hypothesis. But, even if the difficulty of satisfactorily interpreting the testimony of the “Three in Heaven” could be removed, this process would not prove the words to be Apostolic Scripture. ‘Internal evidence,’ remarks the learned Translator of Michaelis, ‘may shew that a passage is spurious, though external evidence is in its favour; for instance, if it contain allusions to things which did not exist in the time of the reputed author. But no internal evidence can prove a passage to be genuine, when external evidence is decidedly against it. A spurious passage may be fitted to the context, as well as a genuine passage. No arguments, therefore, from internal evidence, however ingenious they may appear, can outweigh the mass of external evidence which applies to the case in question.’* To contend for the genuineness of a clause found in no Greek manuscript of any authority, is, indeed, to adopt a course tending to shake confidence in the integrity of

See Horne’s
Introd.
vol. iv. p. 448.
et seq.

* Marsh’s Lectures, part vi. Cited by Horne, vol. iv. p. 470, who has given a fair abstract of the arguments *pro* and *contra* the genuineness of the clause. Bishop Burgess, the latest biblical critic of note who has contended for the affirmative, argues at considerable length in favour of the superiority of internal evidence, even when external evidence is decidedly against a passage; but has been ably replied to, and his arguments refuted, by Crito Cantabrigiensis (Bishop Turton).

the sacred text. No supposed theological or polemical advantage that could be gained from the reception of the passage as Inspired Scripture, could compensate for the uncertainty which would be introduced into all critical investigations, by a departure from the rule of abiding by the results of a collation of the ancient codices, which, with all their innumerable minor variations, exhibit so wonderful an accordance as mutually to attest their substantial fidelity. Hitherto, the result of all the indefatigable labours of Biblical critics, of various countries and religious communions, not always prosecuted in a spirit favourable to the genuine doctrine of Scripture, has tended only to establish, even by means of the various readings, the authority and uncorrupted genuineness of the Greek text. The few instances of apparent interpolation, which may easily be accounted for as ancient glosses incorporated with the text by a transcriber, are immaterial in themselves, and do not affect the sense;* so that, whether rejected or retained, they cannot be considered as adding anything to, or aught diminishing of Holy Scripture.

The first eleven verses of the eighth chapter of John's Gospel, furnish the only instance of a passage of any length, which, being wanting in some ancient manuscripts, has been considered as of doubtful authenticity.† Of the disputed readings to which a

* Such as the clause marked in the Authorized Translation as doubtful or spurious, 1 John ii. 23, which is nevertheless considered by the best critics as genuine; and the last clause of Rom. xi. 6.

† A brief summary of the evidence, external and internal, is given in Bloomfield's Greek Testament; and it is shown, that there is no sufficient ground for questioning its genuineness.

controversial importance has been attached, two only are really of importance; those which occur at Acts xx. 28, and at 1 Tim. iii. 16. With regard to the former, the preponderance of evidence is in favour of the reading, "the Church of *the Lord*;" but this phrase denotes, quite as unequivocally as the reading of the Received Text, the divinity of the Proprietor and Redeemer of the Church, the Object of its worship, who has "given Himself for it, that He might sanctify it and present it *to Himself*, a glorious Church."* That the Son of God should be styled absolutely God, according to the received reading, (as at Tit. ii. 13,) is not so decisive a testimony to His true and proper Godhead, (since the Arian might contend that the word is to be taken in a lower sense,) as is furnished by passages which clearly ascribe to Our Lord the attributes, the acts, and the peculiar relations of Deity.

Smith's
Script. Test.
vol. iii. p. 66.

In the other case, the received reading, "God manifest in the flesh," is supported by preponderating evidence; while those critics who prefer the various reading $\tau\varsigma$ to $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, by connecting the relative pronoun with $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\tilde{\nu}$ $\zeta\acute{\omega}\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$, give the same sense to the passage. Its import is fixed, indeed, beyond all controversy, by John i. 14, and 1 John i. 2, as relating to "The Word

Smith's
Script. Test.
vol. iii. p. 322.

* Eph. v. 27. In this remarkable passage, Dr. Burton remarks, 'we should rather have expected $\tau\phi$ $\Theta\epsilon\phi$; but St. Paul uses $\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu\tau\phi$ on account of the union of the Father and the Son.' And the use of $\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu\tau\phi$ in such a connexion is a more direct and striking proof of the deity of Christ, than the occurrence of the word $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\tilde{\nu}$ at Acts xx. 28. Athanasius, in a passage cited by Dr. J. P. Smith, speaks of such expressions as 'blood of God,' as unauthorized by Scripture, and 'the daring attempts of *Arians*.' Script. Test. vol. iii. p. 65.

who was made flesh,"—the "great mystery of the faith." Thus, whichever reading is preferred, the sense is unequivocal.

The time was, and not very far back, when any critical emendations of the Received Text were viewed with suspicion and alarm. It could not but be known, indeed, though it was reluctantly acknowledged, that the Received Text was faulty, that the various readings were numerous, that no standard text, in fact, existed. And infidelity and heresy took advantage of this undeniable fact, to insinuate the possible corruption and uncertainty of the Text, and to predict discoveries favourable to their own wishes. Hostile criticism, conducted by the most assiduous ingenuity grafted upon the most profound learning, has since then done its worst. And what is the result? The ten thousand variations, instead of lessening the certainty of the record, only confirm it. We have, what is even better than any standard text, the ascertained fact, that the most corrupt text exhibits no variation affecting a single doctrine or sentiment of the Inspired Writers. After collating almost innumerable manuscripts of all ages, versions in different languages, and citations of the New Testament by Greek and Latin Fathers, it has been found, that the variations inevitable in multiplied transcriptions during the long succession of centuries, numerous as they are, do not present a single instance of serious discrepancy. Thus has critical collation placed beyond all scepticism the inviolability of the Sacred Scriptures; while the proposed and admitted emendations have restored the sacred text to almost undisputed purity,

so that it is now in a far more satisfactory state than the text of any other ancient writing.* 'It must be regarded,' remarks an eloquent Writer, 'as a circumstance of peculiar significance, that the documents of our faith have just passed through the severest possible ordeal of hostile criticism, at the very moment when they are in the course of delivery to all nations.' The same age has witnessed the application of a stupendous amount of labour, erudition, and critical skill to the illustration of the Sacred Scriptures, and the unprecedented multiplication of editions in all the languages of the Earth. Nor is it the least important result of the critical controversies which have arisen respecting disputed texts, the system of Recensions, the use and force of the Greek Article, and the principles of Biblical interpretation, that they have tended to substitute, as the basis of theological science, for the vague and dubious authority of prescription, the legitimate authority of inductive evidence.

Taylor's
Nat. Hist.
of Enthusiasm,
p. 299.

* The probability of restoring the genuine text of any author, Michaelis remarks, increases with the increase of the copies; and the most inaccurate and mutilated editions of ancient writers are precisely those of whose works the fewest manuscripts remain. 'In profane authors,' says Dr. Bentley, 'whereof one manuscript only had the luck to be preserved, (as Velleius Paterculus among the Latins, and Hesychius among the Greeks,) the faults of the scribes are found so numerous, and the defects so beyond all redress, that, notwithstanding the pains of the learnedest and acutest critics for two whole centuries, those books still are, and are likely to continue, a mere heap of errors. On the contrary, where the copies of any author are numerous, though the various readings always increase in proportion, there, the text, by an accurate collation of them made by skilful and judicious hands, is ever the more correct, and comes nearer to the true words of the author.' (Remarks on Free-thinking.) Horne's Introduction, vol. ii. part i. ch. iii. § 6.

CHAP. XII.

THE APOCALYPSE.

TIME AT WHICH THE APOCALYPSE WAS COMMUNICATED—HYPOTHESIS OF AN EARLIER DATE UNTENABLE—WHO ARE INTENDED BY THE SEVEN KINGS—INTERNAL EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF THE TRADITIONAL DATE—RETROSPECT OF THE PREVIOUS FIVE-AND-THIRTY YEARS—PRIMARY DESIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE—PARALLEL DESIGN OF OUR LORD'S PREDICTIONS—HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE PERIOD COMPRISED IN THE FIRST SIX SEALS—PERIOD OF THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS—THE THIRD AND LAST WOE—DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE APOCALYPSE PROVED BY THE HISTORIC FULFILMENT—ORIGIN OF THE DOUBTS ENTERTAINED, AND OF THE CONFLICTING SCHEMES OF INTERPRETATION—DESIGN AND IMPORT OF THE SERIES OF VISIONS RELATING TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST—VISIONS OF THE SEVEN-HEADED AND THE TWO-HORNED BEASTS—VISIONS RELATING TO THE FUTURE—A PRIORI INTERPRETATION UNAUTHORIZED—PRACTICAL USE AND FINAL PURPOSE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

Time at which the Apocalypse was communicated to St. John.

§ 1. WITH the exception of the Apocalypse, all the Books of the New Testament appear to have been given to the Church between the years 42 and 66 of the Christian Era. The generation of the Jewish people who had witnessed Our Lord's ministry and miracles, must, during that interval, have nearly passed away. For forty years, as with their ancestors in the Arabian Wilderness, the Divine patience had been exercised towards the rebellious nation who had rejected the Son of God, when, at length, Jerusalem

was taken and destroyed by the Roman General. As early as A.D. 66, before the city was surrounded by the Roman army, most of the Christian inhabitants had left it; and a company of these refugees took up their abode at Pella on the eastern side of the Jordan. Before that time, probably, Peter had glorified God John xxi. 19. by his martyrdom; Paul had also finished his course; and although nothing is certainly known of the personal history of the other Apostles, subsequent to the time at which the sacred narrative closes, we have no reason for supposing that, with one extraordinary exception, they survived the destruction of Jerusalem.* Assuming them to have been about the age of thirty when they were called and sent forth by Our Lord, (and some of them were certainly above that age,) they would, if living at the fall of the City, have been between seventy and eighty. Now it is scarcely within probable calculation, that, even if they escaped martyrdom or any fatal casualty, they would reach that age. At all events, their peculiar mission to the Jewish people would have been fulfilled. They had gone forth from Judea into all the adjacent countries, preaching the Gospel to all nations, from Scythia and Parthia in the East to the extreme bounds of the West. "Their words had gone to the ends of the world." But their message was every where directed Rom. x. 18. in the first instance to the Dispersed of Israel; and in fact, although the honour had been conferred upon

* The reference which occurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 7), to the deceased rulers of the Church, can be understood of none so naturally as of the Apostles.

Peter, of opening the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles, the Apostles seem always to have felt that their personal mission was to those of the Circumcision. Peter was, probably, one of the latest survivors of the Twelve; and his death, according to the varying testimony of Tradition, occurred between A.D. 65 and 69. The protracted life of the Apostle John was evidently altogether extraordinary. Even if Tradition had been silent, Our Lord's words, "If I will that he tarry till I come,"—would have afforded ground to conclude, that he was destined to outlive all his brethren. Those words had been misunderstood, at the time, as an intimation that he was not to die; but, understanding Our Lord's coming in the sense in which it must elsewhere be taken, as denoting His judgments upon Jerusalem, we are warranted in inferring, that John alone, of the Twelve, did tarry or survive till that event. According to the general consent of ecclesiastical writers, his life was extended five and twenty years afterwards, beyond the close of the first century; at which period he must have been a hundred years of age, still retaining, if the composition of the Apocalypse be correctly assigned to a few years before his death, the vigour of his faculties. Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who flourished towards the close of the second century, speaking of the name and number of the Beast in the Apocalypse, says: 'For it was seen no very long time ago, but almost in our own age, towards the end of the reign of Domitian;'—words which cannot without violence be interpreted otherwise than as referring to the vision

See pp. 195,
362.

John xxi. 22.

Lardner,
vol. v. p. 415.

itself. And Victorinus, in a Commentary upon the Apocalypse, written towards the close of the third century, expressly states, that the Apocalypse was seen by the Apostle John in the Isle of Patmos, when banished thither by the Roman Emperor Domitian. Eusebius cites two passages from Irenæus, in which the Apostle is stated to have lived in Asia till the reign of Trajan; and Jerome repeats the same statement; adding, that, dying at a great age, in the 68th year of Our Lord's Passion (answering to A.D. 100, the third of Trajan), he was buried near the city of Ephesus. In fact, with the solitary exception of Epiphanius,* (whose authority is of no weight,) all ancient testimony is in accordance with the tradition, that St. John was banished into Patmos in the reign of Domitian, and in consequence of the edict against the Christians issued by that Emperor, towards the close of his reign. After the death of that Tyrant, his edicts having been repealed by the senate on account of their excessive cruelty, John returned

Lardner,
vol. iii. p.
179; vol. v.
p. 415.

Lardner,
vol. v. p. 411.

Ibid.

* Epiphanius is not only too late a writer to be of authority, having flourished in the fourth century, but, unless the text is corrupt, he has committed a chronological error which at once disproves his statement, in making John to have been ninety years of age in the reign of Claudius, the date to which he ascribes both the Apocalypse and the Gospel. Lardner, vol. iv. p. 190; vol. v. pp. 416, 429. Of still less authority is the opinion of Arethas, the author of a Commentary on the Revelation, who states that it was composed before the destruction of Jerusalem. The earliest date assigned to this writer is the sixth century. See Lardner, vol. v. p. 103. But Mr. Elliott points out a clear mark of his belonging to the eighth, in a reference which occurs to the Saracenic capital of Bagdad, founded A.D. 762. Elliott, vol. i. p. 39.

to Ephesus. Domitian was assassinated, Sept. 18, A.D. 96; and as the persecution which he originated, began in the fourteenth year of his reign, if St. John's exile took place in that year, it could not have lasted more than two years, if so long, at the accession of Nerva. This Emperor, after a reign of little more than a year and four months, died Jan. 27, A.D. 98; and was succeeded by Trajan. If St. John survived till the third year of Trajan's reign, he must have lived three years after his return from Patmos, and have died, A.D. 100 or 101, when upwards of a hundred years of age.

Lardner,
vol. v. p. 426.

Hypothesis
of an earlier
date un-
tenable.

§ 2. The subscription to the Syriac Version of the Apocalypse affirms, indeed, that it was written by the Apostle John in the reign of Nero;* but, as the Apocalypse was not translated into Syriac till the sixth century, (it is not included in the Peshito Version,) the subscription is of no force. The opinion which assigns to its composition this early date, has been espoused, in modern times, by Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Dr. Tilloch, Dr. Lee, and Moses Stuart, and, among Continental writers, by Wetstein, Grotius, Bertholdt, and Vogel.† The arguments in support of this opinion are founded partly upon as-

* 'The revelation which was made by God to John the Evangelist in the Island of Patmos, whither he was banished by the Emperor Nero.' The Syriac of the Apocalypse is now known to be part of the Philoxenian version made by Polycarp at the beginning of the sixth century. Elliott, vol. i. p. 39.

† This is not given as a complete enumeration. On the other side, it may be sufficient to mention Mill, Le Clerc, Basnage, Spanheim, Lowman, Lampe, Lardner, Burton, Woodhouse, and Elliott.

sumptions which have been shewn to be at variance with historical evidence ; * partly upon supposed allusions, in the Apostolic Epistles, † to passages in the Apocalypse, from which Dr. Tilloch has gone so far as to argue the chronological priority of this Book to the earliest of the Pauline writings. Some commentators, moreover, in support of the hypothesis that the Revelation was written before the Jewish war, have applied its symbolic predictions to the calamities about to come upon the Jewish people, and to the destruction of Jerusalem ; ‡ but the fanciful or violent interpretation of the prophetic language, which is required by this hypothesis, is sufficient to demonstrate its utter improbability.

§ 3. The only direct argument from internal evidence in favour of the opinion, that the Apocalypse was composed in the reign of Nero, rests upon the construction which some modern expositors have put upon Rev. xvii. 10, as referring to the emperors who

Who are
intended by
the Seven
Kings.

* Of this description is the alleged early existence of *pseudo* Apocalypses ; especially that of Cerinthus, who is asserted to have died before St. John. But there is no authority for assigning to the false Revelations so early a date ; and it is doubtful whether Cerinthus flourished in the first or in the second century. Lardner, vol. viii. p. 409. Elliott, vol. i. p. 41. An able refutation of Tilloch's hypothesis will be found in Eclectic Review, second series, vol. xxiii. p. 343.

† Dr. Tilloch refers to 1 Thess. i. 10 ; iii. 13 ; iv. 16 ; v. 1 ; compared with Apoc. vi. 16 ; xix. 14 ; xi. 15 ; xiii. 5, &c. See Elliott, vol. i. pp. 41, 42, notes.

‡ Lardner, vol. vi. p. 325. ' If the Revelation was written before that war,' Wetstein remarks, ' it is likely that the events of that time should be foretold in it.' This may be granted, but the converse will be as good an argument. If there is no clear prediction of the kind, it is likely the Revelation was *not* written before the war.

had reigned up to that time. Reckoning from Julius Cæsar, as the founder of the monarchy, Nero would be the sixth; hence, it has been contended, that this passage fixes the composition in his reign.* Eichhorn, however, and some other recent critics, adopting a similar exposition, but reckoning from Augustus, pass over Galba and his two successors, and place the Apocalypse in the reign of Vespasian as the sixth Emperor.† Professor Lee again, following the still more fanciful conjecture of Lactantius, interprets the seven kings of those emperors who were remarkable for the part they took in the persecutions of the Church; namely, Domitian, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, Diocletian, Maximianus, Galerius.‡ To any construction of the passage, however, which requires us to suppose the seven hills of Rome to be symbolical of as many individuals, there would attach the strongest improbability. In a figurative description of a city, we should expect that a much larger portion of its history would be taken into account, than a single dynasty or form of government, not reaching

* It has also been adduced as an argument in support of this hypothesis, that *Δαρεινος*, in which the mystical number of 666 is to be found, was the cognomen of Nero; an assertion for which there appears no good authority.

† See Dr. Wait's Preface to Hug's Introduction, pp. clxxxvi, cxcii. Bolten, who contends that the Apocalypse was composed in Hebrew, finds a fanciful proof of this in his notable discovery of the mystical number in *Titus Flavius Vespasianus*, written in Syriac characters. *Ib.* p. cxcvi. Professor Benary, of Berlin, finds the number in the value of the letters in Hebrew which form the name, *Nero Cæsar*, as given in the Talmud; while Professor Ewald would reduce our choice to *Δαρεινος*, with the received reading of $\chi\xi\epsilon'$, or *Cæsar Romæ* in Hebrew letters, with the reading $\chi\iota\varsigma'$.

‡ Lee's Sermons and Dissertations, p. 335.

further back than a century; nor would it be congruous to interpret the foundations of the city which is represented as the local seat of the personified Power, as denoting historical personages. The seven heads of the Beast are stated to be at once seven hills and seven kings. That is to say, they denote topographically the Seven-hilled City,* which, politically, had existed, or would exist, under seven forms of government, the foundations, successively, of its greatness. The language of Livy and Tacitus forms the best commentary upon this part of the symbolical description.† The former enumerates Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, and Military Tribunes, as the five previous forms of government. The latter, with more precision, while noticing the *interregna* which occurred between the distinct constitutional forms, still makes these the same in number: ‘Kings first had possession of the City of Rome. Brutus established civil liberty and the Consulship. Dictator-

* The following are instances, from the classic writers, of the familiar designation of Rome by this topographical feature:—

‘*Sed quæ de septem totum circumspicit orbem*

Montibus, imperii Roma Deûmque locus.—Ovid.

‘*Dîs quibus septem placuere colles.*’—Horace.

‘*Septem urbs alta jugis, toti quæ præsidet orbi.*’—Propertius.

† ‘*Quæ, ab conditâ urbe Româ ad captam eandem urbem Romani sub regibus primum, consulibus deinde, ac dictatoribus, decemvirisque, ac tribunis consularibus gessere.*’—Livy, lib. vi. c. 1.

‘*Urbem Romam à principio Reges habuere. Libertatem et Consulatum L. Brutus instituit. Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur. Neque Decemviralis potestas ultra biennium, neque Tribunorum militum consulare jus diu valuit. Non Cinnæ, non Sullæ longa dominatio: et Pompeii Crassique potentia cito in Cesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere: qui cuncta discordiis civilibus fessa, nomine Principis sub imperium accepit.*’ Tacit. Annal. lib. i. c. 1.

ships were for a time assumed. The power of Decemvirs did not flourish above two years; and the consular power of Military Tribunes for only a short time. Not long did the domination of Cinna or that of Sylla last. The power of Pompey and Crassus soon merged in Cæsar; the armed domination of Lepidus and Antony in Augustus, who, with the title of Prince, took under his sway the whole State, wearied of civil discords.' Understanding, then, the expression βασιλεῖς in the sense of *potestates*, governing powers or heads, the sixth would date from the supremacy of Augustus, or, including the twelve years of his joint reign as the chief of the second triumvirate, from A.U.C. 710. This sixth head, the Imperial power, remained unchanged till Diocletian (in A.D. 284) once more altered the form of government, assumed the Persian diadem, with the robe of silk and gold, and the title of despot, and became, as Gibbon bears witness, 'like Augustus, the founder of a new empire.' Under this form, the dragon power of Paganism received its "deadly wound" from Theodosius, who first surmounted the globe on the Roman coins with a cross; and, 'like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth,' as the seat of empire, had not an eighth form arisen out of the seven; or, in the words of the Historian, 'if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honour and dominion,' under the Pontificate.*

Elliott,
vol. ii. pp.
850—859.

* Gibbon, ch. xlv. In corroboration of this remark, Mr. Elliott cites (after Vitringa) the remarkable testimony of two learned pontifical writers of the middle age. Augustin Steuchus (who was

The striking correspondence of historical testimony to the symbolic description in the prophecy, leaves no room for reasonable doubt as to the true import; and that mistaken interpretation which has afforded the most plausible argument for referring the composition to the reign of Nero, may be dismissed as not merely improbable and incongruous, but also manifestly erroneous. We have thus the ground cleared for inquiring how far the internal evidence favours the tradition which assigns it to the reign of Domitian.

§ 4. Now, in the first place, the Epistles to the seven Asiatic churches evidently describe or imply a state of things denoting the lapse of a considerable time from the first planting of Christianity by the Apostles; during which the Ephesian church, though it had withstood the seductive influence of false teachers, had nevertheless declined from its "first love;" that of Sardis had sunk into a death-like formalism; and that of Laodicea into lukewarmness and spiritual pride. But the church at Ephesus was

Internal evidence in favour of its traditional date.

librarian to the Pope) thus writes: 'The Empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the Pontificate, Rome resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable, and been a most foul habitation thenceforth of cattle. But, in the Pontificate, it revived as with a second birth; its empire in magnitude not indeed equal to the old empire, but its form not very dissimilar: because all nations, from East and from West, venerate the Pope not otherwise than they before obeyed the Emperors.' Flavio Blondus, a celebrated antiquary of the fifteenth century, says: 'The Princes of the world now adore and worship as Perpetual Dictator, the successor, not of Cæsar, but of the Fisherman Peter; that is, the Supreme Pontiff, the substitute of the aforesaid Emperor.' Gibbon styles Gregory the Great, 'the Saviour of Rome.' His pontificate lasted from A.D. 590 to 604.

not founded by St. Paul till the latter part of the reign of Claudius, A.D. 54; and, in writing to the Ephesians from Rome seven years later, he commends their fidelity and love to all the saints. The other Asiatic churches were, probably, planted by the Apostle about the same period. The rise of the Nicolaitans as a sect, may also be thought to mark a later era than that of the first propagation of the Gospel. Moreover, it is evident, that those churches had been exposed to external trials, and had sustained persecution. More stress has been laid, than sober criticism will warrant, upon another supposed mark of later date, in the circumstance, that the Epistles which St. John was directed to write, are addressed to the "Angels" of the several churches. It has been imagined, that this appellation implies an Episcopacy different from that which was exercised by the presbyters or bishops of the Pauline churches. But there is no ground for this assumption. The term rendered Angel, taken by itself, conveys the idea of service or ministry, not of rule or dignity; and appears to be borrowed from the synagogue,* having been employed to designate an officer to whom letters intended for the whole congregation (as these Epistles obviously were) would properly be addressed. It is observable, that no charge is given, in these Epistles, to any individual as bearing rule or office: it is the entire church as a collective body, that is, in

* 'Neither the *chazan* or angel of the synagogue, (which was a purely ministerial, comparatively a servile office,) nor the heads of the assembly, possessed any peculiar privilege, or were endowed with any official function as teachers of the people.' Milman, b. ii. c. 4.

each case, the subject of admonition and warning. There is nothing to forbid the supposition, nevertheless, that there existed in the several churches, pastors and teachers agreeably to the primitive model.

At the time at which these Epistles were written, persecution, whether proceeding from the Jewish authorities or from heathen governors, had ceased or been suspended: the churches were at rest, although an approaching day of trial is predicted. This state of things agrees with the tradition which assigns the composition of the Apocalypse to the bright interval between the death of Domitian and the reign of Trajan. But a very striking chronological mark has been detected in one of the early visions, by the learned and ingenious Author of the '*Horæ Apocalypticæ*,' which fixes with certainty the composition at this precise epoch; that is to say, just before the accession of Nerva. When the First Seal of the prophetic scroll was opened, the Apostle beheld the representation of a white horse, the rider upon which "*had a bow*, and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer." The Rev. vi. 2. white horse is obviously the symbol of martial triumph; the laurel crown (*στέρφανος*) is the imperial badge worn by all the Roman Emperors till the assumption of the Oriental diadem by Diocletian; but the bow, the national weapon and emblem of the Cretans, is a distinctive symbol, and receives its only satisfactory explanation from the fact, that Nerva, who was the first Emperor of Colonial extraction, was of a Cretan family. Trajan was adopted by Nerva, Hadrian by Trajan, Antoninus by Hadrian,

Aurelius by Antoninus; so that, according to the Roman law of adoption, all this line of Emperors would be reckoned as of Nerva's family; and the Cretan bow would thus form the appropriate designation of a dynasty under which the condition of the human race is affirmed by Gibbon to have been the most happy and prosperous of any period in the history of the world.* So far as regards the date of the Apocalyptic vision, there seems, then, a concurrence of evidence, external and internal, fully establishing the correctness of the tradition which assigns it to the closing years of the reign of the last of the Flavian family.

Retrospect
of the pre-
vious five-
and-thirty
years.

§ 5. Here let us pause and cast a retrospective glance over the preceding five and thirty years of the first century, during which the aged Apostle remained the only depositary of the plenary Apostolic inspiration and authority. Upon this interesting period, however, as Dr. Burton has remarked, 'the Christians of the third and fourth centuries appear to have been almost as much in the dark as ourselves. Traditions must have been extant in the second century, connected with the history of the Apostles, and collections of them are stated to have been made by

* Elliott, vol. i. pp. 47—50. A Greek epigram or epitaph is cited from the '*Anthologia Græca*,' in which the emblematic meaning of the bow is actually explained to signify, that the deceased was a Cretan—*Ταν κρησσαν δε τα τοξα*. Vitringa, correctly interpreting the emblematic picture in other respects, stumbled at the bow as deeming it an 'Asiatic and barbarous weapon.' '*Sub bonis et laudatis principibus à Nerva usque ad Commodum, facies Romani Imperii satis fuit æquabilis. et emblemate albi equi cùm sessore victorioso figurari potuisset.*'

writers of that period; but they have not come down to our day, except, perhaps, amidst a heap of extravagant fictions which make it impossible for us to ascertain whether any of the stories are genuine.' Nor is this so much to be wondered at, when we recollect, that, while the secular history of this period relates chiefly to the affairs of Western Europe, the principal scene of the Apostolic labours, and of the early history of the Church, was laid in Eastern Europe and Western Asia; countries of which the literature and historic records have for the most part perished.

Burton,
p. 134.

The persecution of the Christians under Nero, which commenced about the middle of Nov. 64, appears to have ceased only with the death of that tyrant in 68; so that, for four years, the followers of Christ must have been exposed to every species of insult and outrage under the sanction of the Imperial authority. Strange to say, ancient authors leave us in doubt as to the extent of this persecution; whether it was general throughout the Empire, or limited to those who, from their residence at Rome, might be considered as implicated in the crime of setting fire to the city. Dr. Burton remarks, that 'the rapid progress of Christianity may have led to the same results in different countries, and provincial magistrates may have been encouraged in any acts of cruelty, by knowing that the Emperor allowed the Christians to be tortured; but there is no evidence that Nero published any general edict which made Christianity a crime, or which ordered the magistrates to suppress it.' Mosheim, however, has adduced a passage from Tertullian's Apology, which strongly

Burton,
p. 123.

supports the opinion, that Nero, as well as Domitian, promulgated edicts against the Christians; and if such edicts were promulgated, not a question can remain of their having been carried into effect throughout the provinces.*

The three successors of Nero in the Empire held their disputed titles for only eighteen months; and in the year 69, Vespasian was declared Emperor, while still engaged in prosecuting the Jewish war. In the fourth year of that memorable contest, the command of the besieging army having devolved upon Titus, the city of Jerusalem was taken, after a six months' siege, attended by unparalleled horrors and calamities; and the Temple, contrary to the wish of the Roman

* ' At the time when Tertullian wrote his Apology, that is, before the end of the second century, and before the Emperor Severus had enacted any new laws against the Christians, the Roman magistrates were accustomed to reply to any who might come forward on behalf of the Christians, that in this respect nothing was left to their discretion; that, however desirous they might feel to spare these unfortunate people, it was impossible for them to do so, since the laws were peremptory to the contrary. This pretence, Tertullian attacks with great eloquence, and exposes its weakness and fallacy by various arguments, of which the following is not one of the least forcible. " Those laws to which you refer, as not permitting you to suffer the Christians to exist, were enacted by princes whose cruelty, impiety, and mad frenzy, ye cannot but regard with detestation; namely, by those monsters of the human race, the Emperors Nero and Domitian. Their successors in the government of the empire have all been too deeply impressed with the sentiments of justice and benevolence to follow their example." Now if this statement of Tertullian be deserving of credit, and there is certainly no reason whatever to suspect its accuracy, there can be no doubt that Nero as well as Domitian promulgated edicts against the Christians; and if those edicts were promulgated, not a question can remain of their having been carried into effect throughout all the provinces.' Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. i. p. 189.

general, was consumed by fire. More than a million of Jews are calculated to have perished during the siege; and, in the course of the seven years' war, according to Josephus, the numbers who fell victims either to the sword, to famine, or to pestilence, amounted to 1,337,490. This awful catastrophe does not appear to have produced any effect upon the external circumstances of the churches planted in Gentile lands. The reigns of Vespasian and Titus present no instance of the molestation of Christians on account of their religion; and the Jewish persecution of believers having been finally arrested by the calamities of the nation, the churches must have enjoyed outward peace, while Christianity continued to make triumphant progress. That peace does not appear to have been disturbed during the earlier part of the reign of Domitian. His persecution of the Christians, as atheists and enemies of the State, began in the latter years of his reign; when Flavius Clemens, who had not only been consul the preceding year, but was even nearly related to the Emperor, and whose sons had been destined to succeed to the Empire, fell a victim to the jealous accusations of the heathen priesthood and the cruelty of the Tyrant. Arraigned on the charge of atheism and Jewish manners, Clemens was put to death, while his wife, Domitilla, the niece of the Emperor, was banished to a desert island. Banishment to distant islands was at that time a common punishment; and, as this second persecution of Christians, as atheists, was felt in various parts of the Empire, the banishment of the Apostle John to the Isle of Patmos, is in accordance

A.D. 94 or
95.

Pontia, or
Pandataria.

with what is known to have taken place in numerous instances at this period*. The Epistles to the seven churches, it has already been remarked, afford sufficient evidence that the Christians to whom they were addressed, had been suffering persecution; and Antipas, of Pergamos, has had the honour conferred upon him, of being especially named by the pen of Inspiration, or, rather, by Our Lord himself, as a faithful martyr. That the Apostle John was sentenced to penal exile on account of the Christian doctrine and testimony, is clearly implied by his own declaration; and it has even been inferred from the strength of the phrase "tribulation," that he was condemned to labour in the mines or quarries. The scene of his exile renders it probable that it took place under the authority of the proconsul of Asia, although in consequence of the Imperial edict, and that the Apostle had been previously residing at Ephesus. Ancient writers are not agreed as to the authority by which this persecution was stayed. According to Hegesippus and Tertullian, Domitian relented before his death, and retracted his edict; while Lactantius and others represent the revocation as the act of the Senate, upon Domitian's death. At all events, the Apostle's recal may be supposed to have followed immediately upon the accession of Nerva. This second persecution appears to have

Rev. i. 9.
compared
with vi. 9.

'*Metallo
damnatus.*'
Primasius,
cited by
Elliott.

Mosheim's
Comment.
Cent. i. § 36.

* The story of his having been sent to Rome, and plunged into a vessel of boiling oil, from which he came out unhurt, rests on the insufficient authority of Tertullian, and is generally rejected as one of the many fabulous legends of the age. Mosheim suggests, that Tertullian may have converted a metaphor, intended to express the Apostle's escape from a fiery trial, into a literal fact.

been both much shorter and less severe than that under Nero.

§ 6. Such, then, were the historical circumstances under which the Apocalypse was imparted to the beloved Disciple. Sixty-five years had elapsed since Our Lord had ascended to The Father; and the terrible day of The Lord to the Jewish world, with which a mistaken expectation had identified His personal return, had at once explained and fulfilled the Divine prediction. Jerusalem was lying in ruins; the Jewish polity had been finally overthrown; and the Lesser Asia was filled with the remnants of the dispersed nation.* Of these, the seven Asiatic churches to whom the Divine communications were primarily addressed, chiefly, if not entirely consisted. Within a circuit of less than four hundred miles, were situated the seven flourishing commercial cities containing these Christian synagogues, all of which had probably been favoured with the personal instruction

Primary design of the Apocalypse.

See Rev. ii. 9; iii. 9.

* 'As the aged Apostle looked round from the rocky summit of Patmos, and followed with his eye in the distant horizon the indented coast of Asia, and then of Thrace and Greece, with its bays, and gulfs, and islands, and far-stretching capes and promontories, it would rest ever and anon on the sites of Christian churches: first, those of proconsular Asia, where Timothy had fallen asleep, and Antipas recently suffered martyrdom, and Polycarp yet remained a faithful witness for Christ; churches under St. John's own immediate superintendence:—then the Macedonian and Greek churches of Philippi, and Thessalonica, and Berea, and Athens, and Corinth: while yet further, beyond where the eye might penetrate, he knew that alike in the distant West on the one side, and the South and East on the other, Christian churches existed there too, instinct with spiritual life, in holy fellowship; whence the daily incense arose of prayer and praise and adoration to the same Saviour-God and to the Lamb.' Elliott, vol. i. pp. 53, 54.

and ministry of the last surviving Apostle. Together with the neighbouring churches, they constituted the most numerous and important portion of the Christian community, in the very centre and heart of civilization. It was doubtless for reasons connected with the "tribulation" under which they had been suffering, and with the further trials impending over them, that the Apostle was directed to shew to them, for the confirmation of their faith, the things that should "shortly come to pass." The primary design of the prophetic disclosure was, evidently, to prepare the minds of the generation living at the commencement of the second century, for "the hour of temptation" or trial that was at hand,—for events which they were personally to witness; events which were the commencement of the long series of calamities more obscurely unfolded in the subsequent parts of the prophecy, and which, from their very nature, could not be completed shortly.* It may be safely assumed, that this inspired book, as a whole, was delivered to the Asiatic Christians, as fraught, in the first instance, with important instruction to *them*, in the same manner as the Book of Isaiah or that of Ezekiel was, as a whole, committed

* Michaelis contends, that 'if we consider the Apocalypse as a divine work,' we must, in reference to the time at which it was written, 'confine our choice to those dates which precede the commencement of the Jewish war; for thus only shall we be enabled to shew that its first prophecies were fulfilled *in a short time*.' Marsh's Michaelis, vol. iv. p. 503. It is a sufficient reply to this rash assertion, that the events in which the seven churches were immediately interested, *did* shortly come to pass, though these were but introductory to a chain of events extending indefinitely into the future.

to the Jews of their day, primarily for their own admonition and instruction, although not to the exclusion of a further and permanent purpose; and it is by placing ourselves in their position, that we shall be best enabled to appreciate the value as well as the express design of the Revelation.

With regard to the events which were shortly to come to pass, there can be no question that the design of the prophetic warning was, to incite them to watchfulness, repentance, zeal, and steadfastness in the prospect of the approaching day of trial. And we cannot err in supposing, that the intimations vouchsafed respecting the history of the Church in succeeding ages, were intended to confirm their faith in the *ultimate* triumph of that "kingdom which cannot be shaken." It is difficult for Christians in the present happy era, which throws its light back upon the darkness that then rested upon the future, adequately to appreciate the consolatory effect of such intimations, how general or obscure soever they might be. 'General notions and assurances,' as Dean Woodhouse remarks, 'are sufficient to support our faith, if not to gratify our curiosity.' Such general assurances, the Christians of the second century would be at no loss to deduce from the Divine communications made to the Apostle; for much of the symbolic imagery and figurative idiom which are obscure to us, and a source of perplexity to commentators, would to them convey an obvious and unequivocal meaning. That is to say, the enigmatic phraseology would be a source of as little difficulty to the contemporaries of St. John, as the language of

Heb. xii. 28.

heraldry or of numismatics is to us;* although the precise nature and time of the events predicted, would remain in designed mystery till interpreted by the event; agreeably to Our Lord's declaration, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power."

Acts i. 7.

The general subject of the Apocalypse is, the sufferings of the Church of Christ, and the eventual punishment of its adversaries. It is, in fact, St. Paul's prophetic disclosure to the Macedonian Christians, *written large* for the benefit of the Asiatic churches. The argument of the Book might be summed up in the language of the brief prediction delivered more than forty years before: "The day of Christ shall not come, till there shall have taken place an apostacy, and the man of sin, the son of perdition, be revealed, whom The Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the

* We cannot suppose, for instance, that the Christians of the first century could be at any loss to decipher the complex symbol of the quadriform ζῶον or living creature, respecting which such absurd reveries have been put forth by commentators, ancient and modern; any more than, in the present day, an educated person would be at a loss to understand the symbol of the Russian Eagle, the British Lion, or the Horse of Hanover. The bow in the hand of the Triumphant Horseman would probably be interpreted as readily then, as the trident in the hand of Britannia is now. The allusions, again, to the scenery and service of the Temple, which it now requires much learned labour to illustrate, must have been understood at once by the Jewish Christians, conveying distinct ideas which, to us, are shrouded in enigma. Thus Time, while the true interpreter of Prophecy as regards the event, may but render the prediction darker and less certain, as respects the precise import of the phrasology in which it is conveyed; a fact and distinction too generally overlooked.

brightness of His coming." As Our Lord appealed to the Old Testament predictions in proof that all that had taken place concerning Himself, was in accordance with what was written—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"—so, of the prophecies of the New Testament, a similar use might be made, to confirm the wavering or perplexed faith of believers in a day of darkness and declension, or of fiery persecution, whether from Pagan or from Papal Rome:—Ought not the Church to have suffered these things, and through such tribulation to enter into glory? How obscurely soever the precise nature and origin of those calamities were intimated, enough would be gathered from the prediction to satisfy the believer, that their occurrence was not at variance with the purpose, or inconsistent with the fidelity of God; that Christ had not abandoned His Church; but that all the wrong and suffering were permitted, in pursuance of the determinate counsel of God, though effected by wicked agency, and for a final purpose that would redound to the Divine Glory.

§ 7. It has always been one design for which the Almighty has vouchsafed to the Church prophetic intimations relating to the undeveloped schemes of His providence, to correct misapprehensions or to rectify erroneous anticipations as to the future,—to repress impatience or to prevent discouragement, under apparently adverse dispensations. Thus, the original promise made to Abraham, that his posterity should possess Canaan, was accompanied with the intimation, that its fulfilment would not take place for above

2 Thess. ii.
3—8.

Parallel
design of
Our Lord's
Predictions.

four hundred years, because “the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.” A similar lesson accompanied Our Lord’s prediction respecting the overthrow of Jerusalem, in which we have a striking exemplification of two descriptions of prophecy; one clear and definite, intended to warn the disciples of the coming events; the other purposely indefinite, and designed to check and regulate their hasty anticipation of the final issue. The double question of the Disciples, which gave occasion to the twofold prediction, evidently betrayed mistaken views respecting the consequences of the overthrow of the Temple and Jewish polity. Their first inquiry, “When shall these things be?” referred to the preceding prediction relating to the destruction of the sacred edifice. But, with that event were associated, in their expectations, the second coming of Our Lord and “the end of the world.” Having as yet no correct conception of the spiritual nature of the kingdom which He came to establish upon earth, they expected his speedy return for the purpose of restoring the Jewish commonwealth to more than its pristine glory. Instead of giving at once a direct answer to their question, Our Lord commences by cautioning them against becoming the dupes of those impostors who should come in His name, or assume His character. To such rumours of His return, they must pay no attention, because a series of events were first to take place, which would try their faith, and many of His professed followers would be seduced into apostacy; but the Gospel would triumph over all opposition, and spread through the known world; and *then* “the end” of

the Jewish polity should come. Having thus instructed them, that the predicted event was not to ensue immediately, or “yet,” Our Lord proceeds to communicate to them the unequivocal signs which should precede the horrors of the siege, in order that, warned by the presage, they might effect their timely escape. So specific was the event foretold, so distinct the token, that the Christians were at no loss how to understand the application, but, when the circumstances took place, profited by the prediction, and were saved from the miseries which befel their unbelieving and infatuated countrymen. At ver. 29

of the chapter which contains the prophecy, the prediction respecting the “tribulation of those days” terminates; and Our Lord then proceeds, in language as highly figurative as the former part is distinct and literal, to indicate the changes and revolutions which were to occur subsequently to the overthrow of Jerusalem, “till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled;” in order, we may conclude, to teach his disciples *not* to identify with that day of tribulation His final coming in the clouds of heaven, and to lead onward their anticipations to a far more glorious period, when they should indeed behold their Master and Lord on the throne of His glory, and themselves partake of that glory. With regard to the first train of events, which were to ensue in the time of the generation then existing, or before it had passed away, a specific sign was given: “When ye shall see all these things,”—the predicted signs and visible presages of the approaching destruction,—“know that it is near, even at the doors.” And it has been

Matt. xxiv.

Lukexxi.24.

remarked, that the budding of the fig-tree might itself serve as a presage; for the siege commenced precisely at the same time of year as that at which the prediction was uttered; just before the Passover, when the fig-tree was putting forth its leaves. But, with regard to the Second Advent of Our Lord, the subject of the second part of the prophecy, no specific sign is given. On the contrary, “of *that* day and hour,” when “heaven and earth shall pass away,” no man knoweth, no, not the angels in heaven: it is among the times and seasons which The Father has “put in His own power,” and which the Son of Man was not commissioned to reveal.

ἐκείνης.
And of St. Paul's prediction.

Comp. Matt. xxiv. 4.
2 Thess. ii. 3.
See pages 206—210;
257—259.

Now, on turning to the Apostolic Epistles, we find the same combination of explicitness as to the preliminary signs, and reserve as to the ultimate events, the same blending of caution and consolation in the prophetic references or disclosures. In language which forcibly recalls our Lord's admonition, if it be not a direct citation, St. Paul cautions the Macedonian believers against being deceived by false alarms, as the end could not be, till an existing hinderance or restraint, the nature of which he had orally explained, should be removed, and, as the result, the mystery of iniquity be developed, which, for a time, should usurp the Divine prerogative, and produce a fearful apostacy. The Thessalonians, it is clear, must have known to what the Apostle alluded: the removal of the hinderance was to be a specific sign, although the subsequent events were veiled in obscurity.

It is reasonable to conclude, that the Revelation made to the Asiatic churches would partake of the

same mixed character; the proximate events being clearly indicated, to guide and sustain their faith; the sequel left in mystery, to repress and baffle curiosity. And such appears to be the fact. Whether they comprehended distinctly the precise import of the emblematic representations in the early visions, or not, they would have no difficulty in gathering from them, that a long series of events, the general complexion of which was dark and disastrous, had to take place;—that the period of triumph and prosperity would be succeeded by times of political conflict, oppression, and suffering; that the swordsman on the fire-coloured charger, the holder of the scales of administration on the black horse, and the ghastly spectre on the livid-green horse, must each pass; and that still, the cries of martyred saints would continue for a season to ascend: “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?” But “it was said unto them, that they should rest yet a time.” If the symbols were mysterious, the lesson was plain, nor could the *general* import of the prophetic representation be mistaken.

We have assumed, that the symbols which constitute the cipher of Prophecy, would be better understood at the time, than they are likely to be in the present age; and it was in some respects more important that those who were immediately concerned in what was shortly to take place, should understand the emblematic language of the prediction, than that we should be able to detect the precise correspondence of the figurative representation in every particular to the historical counterpart. A glance,

however, at the times which formed, to the prophetic eye of the Inspired Apostle, the proximate futurity, will enable the reader to perceive the appropriateness of the imagery, and to realize in some faint degree, how wisely it was adapted to prepare the anxious or too sanguine minds of the Christians of the post-apostolic age, for the unlooked-for and prolonged struggle between Paganism and the Kingdom of Christ.

Historical sketch of the period comprised in the first Six Seals.

§ 8. From the accession of Nerva, in the year 96, to about the year 107, the spirit of persecution appears to have been restrained. In that year, Ignatius, who is stated to have presided over the church at Antioch from the year 70, and who must therefore have escaped the storm which broke over the Church in the latter years of Domitian's reign, was denounced to the Emperor Trajan, then on his way to make war against Parthia; and the Emperor consented to send the aged bishop to Rome, to be exposed to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre. The revived persecution appears to have been, at this time, local as well as temporary. It was not till four years later, that the Emperor, in reply to the Letter of Pliny the Bithynian Pro-Prætor, was called upon to give a public decision upon the propriety of dealing with Christianity as a capital crime. In consequence of that decision, there can be no doubt, the spirit of persecution would be more active than before; but it does not appear that, during the reign of Trajan, the progress of the Christian faith was impeded by any systematic opposition on the part of the Government. The latter years of that Emperor's reign were occu-

A. D. 111.

pie'd with political disasters and reverses, which must have diverted attention from the affairs of the Christians. Before his death, which occurred at Selinus in Cilicia, in A.D. 117, nearly all his conquests in the East were lost. The reign of his successor, Hadrian, which extended over the ensuing twenty years, was not unfavourable to the Christians; and the persecution to which they were in various parts of the Empire exposed, under Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138—161), and in the first part of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, his successor, proceeded from the instigations of the pagan priests and philosophers, and the savage hostility of a barbarous populace, more than from imperial edicts. In 165, Justin Martyr sealed his "Apology" for the Faith with his blood, at Rome; and about the same time, Publius, bishop of Athens, suffered martyrdom. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, suffered in 163; and the aged and apostolical Polycarp was burned in the amphitheatre at Smyrna, in 167. The cruelty and fury of persecution appear to have been unabated till the accession of Commodus, in 180.

The reign of this Emperor ushered in an era of civil war and bloodshed, to which the symbol of the red horse fitly corresponded, characterized by the power of the sword in the hand of the Prætorian prefect.* 'The licentious fury of the Prætorian

Era of civil
bloodshed.

* 'It was the Prefect of the Prætorian guard that, with others, conspiring against and murdering Commodus, first introduced the reign of the sword. It was the Prætorian guard that, after setting up Pertinax as his successor, a month or two afterwards assassinated him. It was the Prætorian guard that sold the empire to the highest

guards,' says Gibbon, 'was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman Empire.' Under Commodus, and during the first nine years of Septimius Severus, however, the churches continued to enjoy an exemption from serious molestation. It was not till the year 202, that the latter Emperor adopted a contrary policy. By the end of the second century, the Christian Religion had extended itself from Persia and India on the East, to Spain and Britain on the West. The church of Carthage was now rising into importance; and even in the interior of the African continent, there were communities of Christians. Tertullian, who flourished at this period, states, that the army was filled with Christians; that they held offices in provincial towns, transacted business in the Forum, held seats in the Senate, and were found residing in the very palace of the Emperor. The circumstances which led to the issuing of the intolerant edict of Septimius Severus, prohibiting all persons from embracing the religion of either the Jews or the Christians, are not clearly ascertained. Dr. Burton suggests, that it might be owing, in some measure, to the increasing unwillingness of the

bidder, Julian, and so kindled the flames of the civil war, through which the first Severus fought his way to the throne. It was the Prætorian guard that, after an enlargement of their numbers and power by Severus, returned almost immediately after his death to their former deeds of blood, and, generally with civil war following, massacred Caracalla, Heliogabalus, Alexander Severus's chief minister, and then, after a brief respite during the remainder of that prince's reign, his successors, Maximin, Maximus, Balbinus.' Montesquien and Denina aptly describe the Prætorian Prefects as the Grand Viziers of those times; and their guards resembled the Janissaries. Elliott, vol. i. pp. 50, 51.

Christians to serve in the army. ‘Some of them had objections, on religious grounds, to all military service; and as they grew bolder by their numbers and the temporary cessation of persecution, they would more openly show their dislike to the religious ceremonies which soldiers were required to attend. A warlike emperor like Severus, who owed his throne to military activity, and who was constantly engaged in wars, was likely to have this conduct of the Christians pointed out to him, if he did not feel the effects of it in the diminution of his forces. The very weakness of the Empire, which was beginning to show its inability to resist barbarian incursions, was likely to increase the prejudices against the Christians.’ Although the letter of the edict has not been preserved, it is evident, that death was the penalty of its being violated; and the property of the sufferers became confiscated. During the seven years from 202 to 208, a cruel persecution appears to have been the result, both in the capital and in the provinces; and under its severity, Christian writers, misled, perhaps, by political indications of the weakness of the Empire, began to predict that the end of the world was at hand.

Burton,
p. 230.

Burton,
p. 237.

Era of fiscal
oppression.

From the death of Severus, in the year 211, to the accession of Decius in 249, with the exception of the short reign of the savage tyrant Maximin, the churches enjoyed a season of comparative security. It was, perhaps, fortunate for the Christians, that Caracalla and Geta, the two sons of Severus, were jealous of each other; and that Caracalla, after murdering his brother, that he might have the Empire

to himself, was a tyrant to all his subjects. Such conduct, as was the case in the reign of Commodus, drew off the attention of the heathen from persecuting the Christians. Caracalla, in his childhood, had had a Christian nurse, and, whether this circumstance had any influence upon him or not, he commenced his reign by allowing all exiles, whatever had been the cause of their banishment, to return home; and many Christian refugees availed themselves of the edict. The reign of Caracalla, though favourable to the progress of Christianity, marks, however, another stage in the decline of the Empire. By the memorable edict with which his name was associated, the Roman city was made co-extensive with the Empire; and the provincials thus admitted to the honour of Roman citizenship, were thenceforth required to pay both their provincial tributes, as before, and, in addition, the distinctive taxes of the Roman citizen. As the edict was compulsory, the weight of taxation thus forced upon the provinces was so intolerable, that, in the language of Gibbon, 'every part of the Empire was crushed under the weight of Caracalla's iron sceptre.' Alexander Severus, who, after the short reigns of Macrinus and Elagabalus, succeeded the latter Emperor, (his cousin,) attempted to reform the abuses and mitigate the injustice of this system of exaction; and he greatly reduced the proportion of the provincial tribute. But 'his prudence was vain; his courage fatal.' His assassination was owing to the dissatisfaction of the troops accustomed to have lavished upon them, the corn, wine, and money of the provinces; and after his death, the

evil soon became as oppressive as before. To this state of things, and to the misery resulting from the fiscal oppression of the provincial presidents or pro-consuls, the symbol of the black horse, having for its rider one whose office was to hold the balance or administer equity, appears chronologically, and with exact propriety, to correspond. It was an era in which justice itself would raise its voice in vain for the oppressed.* The charge which accompanied the graphic symbol, “See that thou wrong not in regard to the oil and the wine,” may be supposed to be addressed to the power personified, (that of the provincial pro-prætors,) not to defraud or oppress. By their exactions, the agriculture of the provinces was ruined, and preparation was made for the famine, pestilence, and desolation which ensued during that era of terrible mortality symbolized by the fearful emblem of the livid horse and its ghastly rider.

μη ἀδικήσης.

Within twelve or fifteen years after the death of Alexander Severus, commenced that dark period of complicated calamity, when, says Gibbon, ‘the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution.’ In the course of a few

Era of mortality.

* Mr. Elliott, to whom we are indebted for this solution of the prophetic enigma, has illustrated it from ancient medals exhibiting the balance, an ear of wheat, and a corn-measure, as the emblem of Roman pro-prætors and procurators; and he cites from an old Apocalyptic expositor, Tichonius, a similar view of the symbol:— ‘Habebat stateram in manu,—libram,—id est examen æquitatis; quia, dum fingit se justitiam tenere, per simulationem lædit.’ See Ezek. xli. 10. Mr. Elliott has shewn, by a very elaborate deduction, that the price implied by a denarius for a Roman *chaenix* of wheat, which was equal to a quarter of a *modius* or peck, was an equitable, not a scarcity price. Elliott, vol. i. pp. 56—75. See Gibbon, ch. vi.

months, six princes had been cut off by the sword, when the third Gordian, at a tender age, was raised to the throne as a pageant sovereign, the real power being in the hands of his minister. His reign and life were cut short by the usurper Philip, who had risen from the obscurity of an Arab robber to the dignity of Prætorian prefect. From his elevation to the death of the Emperor Gallienus, 'there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants.' 'Our habits of thinking,' continues the Historian, 'so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies, fictitious or exaggerated. But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes, however, must have contributed to the famous plague which, from the year 250 to the year 265, raged without intermission in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman empire. During some time, 5,000 persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated. . . . Could we venture to extend the analogy of Alexan-

dria' (where above half the people appear to have perished) 'to the other provinces, we might suspect, that War, Pestilence, and Famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human race.' It is impossible for language to supply a more striking and emphatic commentary upon the Apocalyptic emblem: 'And the name of his rider was Death; and power was given to him to kill, on the fourth part of the earth, with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with the wild beasts of the earth.' That is, each of the four terrific agencies had its part allotted in the desolation of the Empire. Within a few years after the death of Gallienus, the multiplication of wild beasts in some parts of the Empire, had become a crying evil, of which Christians were upbraided with being the guilty cause.

Gibbon,
vol. i. c. 10.

Elliott,
vol. i. p. 81.

The history of the Church during this calamitous period, affords little relief to the gloomy picture. The forty years of tranquillity (so far as regards persecution) which had followed the death of Septimius Severus, had allowed the Christians to multiply their churches, and promulgate their doctrines, without fear. 'But, though Christianity had been gaining ground for so long a period,' remarks Dr. Burton, 'it had not in every respect the same pure and heavenly aspect as in its earlier days, when the believers were of one heart and one soul. It now numbered in its ranks many wavering and timid disciples, who were little prepared to stand the fiery trial, and to come out unhurt. Prosperity and security were beginning to show their usual effects. The difference between heathens and Christians, as to the performance of

Corruption
of Chris-
tianity.

their moral and social duties, was no longer so strongly marked. Religious speculations had more than disturbed the unity of faith; and a contemporary writer, himself a bishop and martyr in the cause, informs us, that the manners of the Christians, and even of the clergy, had been becoming gradually corrupt. He speaks of a secular ostentatious spirit being very apparent. Marriages were formed with heathens; and even bishops were seen to neglect their flocks, and employ themselves in the most ordinary occupations, with a view to getting money. The honest recorder of his brethren's shame looked upon the conduct of the new Emperor, Decius, as a chastisement from Heaven, intended mercifully to correct the increasing corruption.' At the end of A.D. 249, or early in 250, he issued an edict by which Christians were to be compelled to sacrifice to the gods; and every quarter of the Empire soon presented scenes of suffering and slaughter.* The persecution continued and renewed by Gallus and Valerian, was checked by the captivity of the latter Emperor, who, in 259, was taken prisoner by the Persians; and, from the accession of his son, Gallienus, dates the commencement of another period of peace; marked, however, as former intervals of security had been, by the growth of dissensions and the appearance of new heresies.

Burton,
p. 324.

* Origen was imprisoned, and continued in that state till the death of Decius. The storm raged severely in Asia Minor; and Eudæmon, Bishop of Smyrna, is mentioned as having been terrified into a denial of the faith. Others had the courage to suffer martyrdom. The whole of Egypt became once more a scene of cruelty and outrage.

At length, in the year 284, commenced the reign which restored, under a new constitution, the Roman Empire to a considerable degree of its former strength and grandeur ; but no sooner had the restoration been consummated, than, in the very year in which Diocletian celebrated the last triumph that Rome ever saw, a persecution began, the fiercest, the most general, and the longest that the Christian Church had yet encountered. At the instigation of his son-in-law, Galerius, the Eastern Cæsar, who was the inveterate enemy of the Christians, Diocletian had been prevailed upon to issue an order in 298, that all persons holding office about the court or in the army should be required to be present at sacrifices. Early in 303, under the same sinister influence, the Emperor issued a more decisive edict, ordering the churches of the Christians to be pulled down, and their sacred books to be burned. This was followed by another edict, directing, that all Christians who held any public stations should be removed ; that inferior persons should be subject to torture and imprisonment ; that no Christian should be allowed to be plaintiff in any cause ; that their religious meetings should be strictly suppressed ; and that the houses in which they were held, should be forfeited for the use of the State. In this series of cruel edicts, Diocletian declared his intention of abolishing the Christian name. The demolition of the great church at Nicomedia, (Feb. 24, 303,) and the burning of the sacred books in it, by the soldiery, were the signal for commencing the persecution ; and there, also, the example was set, of punishing with death those Christians in office who

Era of
martyrs.

Gibbon.

refused to attend the sacrifices. Diocletian is supposed to have been roused to more vigour by a fire having twice broken out in his palace at Nicomedia, which was maliciously attributed to Christian incendiaries. The first objects of his severity were, his own wife Prisca, and, what is still more extraordinary, her daughter Valeria, the wife of Galerius, both of whom had embraced Christianity, and both of them were compelled to join in a sacrifice. Copies of these Imperial orders were sent to all the provinces; and in some places, we are told, they arrived in time for the heathen to have the special gratification of destroying the churches on Good Friday. Edicts still more decisive and barbarous followed; and Christian blood began to flow in all parts of the Empire. The abdication of Diocletian in 305, occasioning a new partition of the Empire, led to the cessation of active persecution in Western Europe and Africa; but, in the Eastern provinces, the cruelty of Galerius was seconded by Maximinus, till, in 311, the dying persecutor, conscience-smitten, issued an edict, which bore the names of Licinius and Constantine as well as his own, rescinding the intolerant Edicts, and restoring to Christians liberty of religious worship.*

* 'As Decius by the Gothic sword, so Valerian had his reign cut short by the Persian; and Gallienus, his son and successor, trembling under God's sore judgment, though still, as before, unconverted, sensual, hard-hearted, issued for the first time, A.D. 261, an edict of toleration to Christianity.' Elliott, vol. i. p. 100. In like manner, Galerius was suddenly arrested by the Divine vengeance; and 'the whole Roman world was witness of the public and humiliating acknowledgment of defeat extorted from the dying Emperor.' 'It is certainly singular,' remarks Mr. Milman, (whose language we

It is remarkable, that the accession of Diocletian forms a chronological era, instituted for astronomical purposes, and, until the introduction of the Christian era in the sixth century, of general use among Christian writers, by whom it is called 'the Era of Martyrs.' Throughout the two centuries subsequent to the death of the last of the Apostles, Christianity had to sustain a precarious sufferance on the part of the Imperial authorities, alternating with seasons of cruel persecution, of which the most protracted and severe were, under the Second Antonine between 160 and 180; under Septimius Severus, from 202 to 208; under Decius and his successors, A.D. 249—259; and under Diocletian, A.D. 303—312.* During this whole period, from the time of Trajan's celebrated Rescript, (the first law against Christians *as such*,†) the aspect of the political world presented

have just cited,) that the disease vulgarly called being eaten of worms, should have been the destiny of Herod the Great, of Galerius, and of Philip II. of Spain.' A deep and fetid ulcer preyed on the lower regions of the Emperor's body, and ate them away into a mass of living corruption. The Edict not only condescended to apologize for the past severities against the Christians, but, what was still more remarkable, closed with an earnest request to the Christians to intercede for the suffering Emperor in their prayers. Milman, b. ii. c. 9.

* The notion of ten distinct persecutions, though it may be traced back to the fifth century, Mosheim has shown to be wholly built on popular error, and to have probably originated in the silly fancy of some ancient commentator, that the Ten Plagues of Egypt were typical of the persecutions which the Christians suffered before the reign of Constantine. Lactantius enumerates only six. Including the Neronian and that under Domitian, those referred to in the text make up that number.

† The Edicts of Nero and Domitian were directed against them as atheists, and as plotting treason against the State.

a contest between the Imperial delegate of the Prince of this world, the head of the kingdom of Pagan darkness, and the Divine Founder and Head of the Church, the King of kings. But, under the severity of the last prolonged persecution, the voice of "those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held," seemed "to wax louder and louder,"—the voice of their blood crying to Heaven, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" The correspondence of the historical record to the symbol of the Fifth Seal, is too exact to be mistaken.

Era of Constantine.

What the vision of the next Seal typified, the highly figurative language employed renders less obvious; yet, there can be no reasonable doubt that it describes the historical sequel,—the final overthrow of Paganism by Constantine. This was not less signally the accomplishment of Divine predictions, than the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus had been. The import of the metaphorical description, as denoting political judgments and revolutions, could scarcely be mistaken by those who were familiar with the parallel passages in the prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel, referring in similar terms to the overthrow of Babylon, of Egypt, and of other powers symbolized by the heavenly luminaries. In fact, Our Lord's own language in the prediction relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, which appears to be a citation from Joel, strikingly corresponds to the imagery of the Apocalypse. As to what is said of the Antichristian host hiding themselves in the dens

Isa. xiii. 9, 10; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Joel ii. 30, 31; iii. 15; Jer. iv. 23.

and rocks, and calling on the mountains to fall on them, we find language strictly parallel employed by Hosea, by Isaiah, and by Our Lord himself. Nor will there appear to be any want of correspondence between the prediction and its historical fulfilment, when the death-bed terrors and agonies of Galerius and Maximin,* and the consternation and flight of the vanquished Pagan hosts are considered. 'It was not,' remarks Mr. Elliott, 'the terror of their earthly victor only, that oppressed them. There was a consciousness of the powers of Heaven acting against them; above all, Christ, the Christians' God. For the war, in each case, was felt to be a religious war. When Maxentius went forth to battle, he went fortified by heathen oracles, and relying on the heathen gods; the champion of heathenism against the champion of Christianity. When Maximin was about to engage with Licinius, he made his vow to Jupiter, that, if successful, he would extirpate Christianity. When Licinius, again, was marching against Constantine, he, in public harangue before the soldiers, ridiculed the Cross, and staked the falsehood of Christianity on his success.' 'Licinius,' says Gibbon,

Hos. x. 8;
Isa. ii. 19;
Luke xxiii.
30.

Elliott,
vol. i. p. 115.

* Maximin, after his defeat by Licinius, 'is said to have revenged his baffled hopes of victory on the Pagan priesthood who incited him to the war, by a promiscuous massacre of all within his power.' His last imperial act was the promulgation of an edict restoring to Christians the confiscated property of their churches. 'His bodily sufferings completed the dark catalogue of persecuting Emperors who had perished under the most execrating torments: his body was slowly consumed by an internal fire.' Milnan, b. ii. c. 9.

Gibbon,
ch. 20.

enthusiasm, and scattered terror and dismay through the ranks of the adverse legions.' With Maximin, the last hope of Paganism had expired. The hierarchy which he had established, fell at once. The chief magistrates of almost all the principal cities, under whose authority Paganism had renewed its more imposing form, were executed as his adherents by Licinius; who, again, on his perfidious apostacy to the Pagan cause, after sustaining a series of defeats, humbly sued for mercy at the feet of the conqueror, and perished ignominiously.

The first
six Trum-
pets.

§ 9. Passing over the intermediate vision of the Sealing of the servants of God, which is obviously not referrible to any historical transaction, we come to the Seventh Seal, which opens with an interval of stillness in the political firmament,—a respite from the threatening tempests about to desolate the Roman world.* This chronological intimation, Mr. Elliott considers as corresponding to the state of things during the seventy years that intervened between Constantine's final victory over Licinius, A.D. 324, and Alaric's invasion of the Empire, A.D. 395. The death of the Emperor Theodosius was the signal for the first bursting into action of the 'Gothic woe.' He died in January, 395; 'and before the end of winter,' says Gibbon, 'the Gothic nation was in arms.' From this period to the establishment of the Lombards in 565, a century and a half of calamities almost unexampled, fulfilled the denunciations of the

* Mr. Elliott would render the passage, "there *had been* stillness," &c.; and he cites from Pliny, the phrase *silente celo*, as illustrating the expression, Rev. viii. 1.

first four trumpets, terminating in the overthrow of the Western Empire. It belongs to the province of the expositor, to trace minutely the correspondence of the symbolic figures to the historical event. Interpreted by their use in other prophetic Scriptures, they would naturally be understood as prefiguring the ravages of some terrible invaders from the frozen regions of Northern Germany, who should first desolate the European continental provinces of the Western Empire; then, its provinces, coasts, and fleets in the Mediterranean; a fresh and dreadful scourge being superadded on the Illyrian river-frontier and præfecture, and on the Alpine regions also, the local source of the European waters; with, finally, the extinction of the Imperial dynasty of the West, and, soon afterwards, of the subordinate offices and government also. Not only did the successive invasions of Alaric and Rhadagaisus, of Genseric, Attila, and Odoacer, occur in this order, and take this geographical course; but the able Writer to whom we have so often referred, has shewn, that, in the exposition of this part of the Apocalyptic prophecies, as well as in the preceding visions, the language of the infidel Historian often supplies the best commentary upon the symbolic description, as well as the true solution of the prophetic enigma.

Thus, describing the formidable emigration of the Vandals, Suevi, and Burgundians, which issued from the coast of the Baltic under Rhadagast or Rhadagaisus, he says: 'The dark cloud which was collected along the coast of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the Upper Danube.' Speaking of the

Claudian compares the invasion of Alaric and his Goths to a hail-storm.

Elliott, vol. i. p. 214.

First irruption under Rhadagast and Alaric.

Gibbon, ch. 30.

invasion of Gaul by the remains of the same great army, he uses this striking language: ‘On the last day of the year (A.D. 406), in a season when the waters of the Rhine were probably frozen, they entered, without opposition, the defenceless provinces of Gaul. This memorable passage of the Suevi, the Vandals, the Alani, and the Burgundians, who never afterwards retreated, may be considered as the fall of the Roman Empire beyond the Alps; and the barriers which had so long separated the savage and the civilized nations of the earth, were from that fatal moment levelled to the ground. . . . This scene of peace and plenty (the banks of the Rhine) was suddenly changed into a desert; and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. . . . The consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul.’ The invasion of Italy by Alaric was attended by the remarkable circumstance, that, when encountered by ‘an Italian hermit,’ who denounced the indignation of Heaven against the oppressors of the earth, ‘the saint himself,’ says the Historian, ‘was confounded by the solemn asseveration of Alaric, that he felt a secret and preternatural impulse, which directed, and even compelled, his march to the gates of Rome.’ When at length he appeared, for the third time, with his forces under the walls of the capital, treachery gave him an easy conquest. ‘At the hour of midnight, the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sounds of *the Gothic trumpet*. Eleven

hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of A.D. 410.
 Rome, the Imperial City, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia.' But this woe passed away; and 'in Gibbon, ch. 31.
 less than seven years, the vestiges of the Gothic invasion were almost obliterated.'

To the Vandal Genseric was allotted the conquest Genseric.
 of the maritime provinces of Africa and the Islands,—all that belonged to the Western Empire in the Mediterranean. During the eighteen years preceding, no new invasion had broken on that portion of the Empire, when, in A.D. 429, '*on a sudden*, the seven fruitful provinces from Tangier to Tripoli, were overwhelmed by the invasion of the Vandals.' In 430, Hippo was taken and burned. Eight years afterwards, Carthage fell into their hands, and the lands of the proconsular province were divided among the barbarians. Issuing from this ancient port, the Vandal fleets again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean. Sicily was conquered by them, and Sardinia; the coasts of Spain and Gaul, and of Italy up to the head of the Adriatic, were mercilessly ravaged; and twice, in the harbours of Carthage and Bona, the Roman navies, collected for the destruction of the Vandal power, were utterly destroyed. 'The fire of the Vandal volcano,' observes Mr. Elliott, 'might not spend itself, until not only what was habitable in the Western sea was destroyed, but "the third part of the ships" also; those that navigated the *sea-third* of the Western Empire.'*

* All that was in the "third part of the sea,"—that vast basin of

Attila.

Long before the death of this ‘tyrant of the sea,’ Attila, ‘the scourge of God,’ crossing the Rhine at Basle, A.D. 450, had converted its valley into a scene of desolation and woe; burning the cities, massacring the inhabitants, and laying waste the country. Repulsed at Chalons, he retraced his steps, and directed his ravages to the “fountains of waters” in the Alpine valleys of Italy. Aquileia, Pavia, Verona, Mantua, Milan, and Turin, felt his vengeance. His retreat was as sudden as his appearance. The meteor was extinct. Attila was suddenly cut off by apoplexy, A.D. 453; and the empire of the Huns passed away.

Odoacer.

It was reserved for Odoacer, chief of the Heruli, one of the remnants of the host of Attila, to abolish the very name and office of Roman Emperor of the West. The submissive Senate *sent away the imperial insignia to Constantinople*, professing that one Emperor was sufficient for the whole Empire; and thus, ‘of the Roman Imperial Sun, the third which appertained to the Western Empire was eclipsed, and shone no more.’ In the course of the events which rapidly followed, the subordinate luminaries were also extinguished. About A.D. 550, the name and functions of Consul and Senate, ‘the last rays of the old government of Rome,’ were extinguished by the generals of Justinian.

Era of
Justinian.

An awful pause of gloom and dire presage ensued, symbolized by the vision of the Angel denouncing a triple woe by reason of the other three trumpet-voices yet to sound; and this period forms the boundary

the Western Mediterranean between the Straits and Sicily, and the Adriatic Gulf. Elliott, vol. i. p. 220.

line between the ancient and modern divisions of Roman History. It is remarkable, that the historian commemorates ‘the comets, earthquakes, and plagues which astonished and afflicted the age of Justinian;’ in whose reign, according to Procopius, by the triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine, a hundred millions of the human race are computed to have perished. And now the Eastern third of the Roman world becomes the scene of the Divine judgments upon the apostate Church. That the fifth woe is to be referred to the Saracenic irruption, has been so generally admitted, that it can only be necessary to illustrate the beauty of the characteristic symbols, and the chronological precision which designate this event,—distant from the age in which the vision was presented to the eye of the Apostle upwards of six centuries. As to the emblematic representation, the locust clearly indicates the Arabian desert as the quarter from which these devastations were to proceed; their horse-like appearance implied that they were hordes of cavalry; their lion-teeth, that they would be destroyers; the apparently incongruous combination of masculine faces with the hair of women, is explained by the national characteristic of the Arab,—the moustache and beard with hair long and uncut, as described by St. John’s contemporary, Pliny; * while, in the turban and iron cuirass of the Saracen warrior, we have the diadem and breast-plate of the symbolical figure. Not less distinctive is the re-

The Saracenic Woe.

* ‘*Arabes mitrati degunt, aut intonso crine. Barba abraditur, præterquam in superiore labro. Aliis et hæc intonsa.*’ Nat. History, vol. vi. p. 28.

striction put upon the destructive career of the locust warriors, not to hurt the grass, or any green thing, or any tree; which finds its precise counterpart in the Koran. In the invasions of the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, the desolation of the trees and herbage was a striking feature; and hence it is expressly referred to in the prediction. In that of the Saracens, an extraordinary contrast was exhibited. The order of the Khalif Aboubeker, issued to the Arab hordes on their first invasion of Syria, was: 'Destroy no palm-trees, nor any fields of corn; cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle.' If the correspondence of the prediction to the historical fulfilment be denied, it would seem impossible to establish the true application of any prefigurative language. Then, as to the limitation of their commission to five months, i. e. of years; reckoning from A.D. 612, when Mohammed first publicly announced his mission, to the removal of the seat of the Khalifate to Bagdad in 762, the interval is just 150 years. The latter epoch is with propriety fixed upon as the termination of the woe,—the *settlement* of the locusts far eastward, away from Christendom, being the era from which historians date the decline of the Saracenic power. About the same time, in the West, the Christian remnant in the mountains of Spain began to roll back the tide of war upon the Moorish conquerors.*

The Turk-
ish Woe.

After this woe had past, another pause ensued, before, at the sounding of the sixth trumpet, a new army of horsemen rushed forth from the Euphratean

* Elliott, vol. i. pp. 283—292. It has been remarked, that five literal months is the term of the ravages of locusts.

boundary, to accomplish the Divine judgments upon the Greek Empire. In the year 1057, Togrul Bey, the head of the Seljookian Turkmans, having deposed and imprisoned the last khalif of the Bowid dynasty, was publicly proclaimed protector and governor of the Moslem empire. In 1063, his successor, Alp Arslan (the 'valiant lion'), 'passed the Euphrates, at the head of the Turkish cavalry; and the loss of the kingdom and frontier of Armenia was the news of a day.' In the fatal field near Malazgerd, A.D. 1071, the Greek Emperor, who had advanced to meet the invader, was defeated and taken prisoner; and the fate of the Asiatic provinces was irreversibly sealed. The conquest of Asia Minor, and the foundation of the Turkish principality of Roum, under Suleiman, with Nice as his capital, were achieved in 1074; 'the most deplorable loss that the Church and the Empire had sustained since the first conquests of the Khalifs.' For two centuries, the Crusades served to stay the further progress of the Turkman power, and even rolled back for a while the tide of conquest; till the Seljookian kingdom revived under the Ottoman dynasty, and the victorious army of Sultan Murad (or Amurath), crossing the Hellespont, overran the European provinces from the Danube to the Adriatic. Constantinople, 'surrounded both on the Asiatic and the European side by the same hostile monarchy,' at length, after a siege of fifty-three days, was subdued by the Ottoman artillery, the fortifications which had stood for ages being dismantled on all sides by this new and terrible engine of warfare, and 'her religion was trampled in the dust by the Moslem

Gibbon.

conquerors.' The accomplished and execrable Mohammed II. united under his sceptre all the provinces in Europe which had formerly belonged to the Eastern division of the Roman Empire, and the whole of Asia on this side of Mount Taurus. From the first loosing of the Turkish power, in Jan., 1057, to the fall of Constantinople, May 29, 1453, there is an historical interval of 396 years and 130 days; to which, if we interpret the prophetic term,—“an hour, a day, a month, and a year,” upon the *year-day* principle contended for by Mr. Elliott and other expositors, the chronology of the prediction will precisely correspond. Nor has any other satisfactory explanation of the chronological formula been proposed.* The descriptive traits of the Turkish horsemen are not less characteristic than those of the Saracenic hordes. From their first appearance, the Ottomans have shewn a fondness, in their warlike apparel, for the colours described in the vision,—fire-colour, hyacinth, and sulphur-like,—red, blue, and yellow. When it is added, that, out of their mouths issued, as if in correspondence to their tri-coloured breast-plates, fire, (blue) smoke, and sulphur, the allusion to the newly-invented artillery used by the Ottomans in the siege and capture of Constantinople, is so obvious, so exact, and so striking, that it is astonishing any difference of opinion should have existed as to its being the true interpretation.

* A recent writer (Mr. Habershon) has explained this hour, month, day, and year as intended to mark the appointed time for the Turks retaining their capital and empire; which, reckoning 396 years from the fall of Constantinople, will terminate in 1849. See Elliott, vol. iii. p. 1150.

The precise duration of the Turkish woe is not indicated by any chronological mark, for there is no propriety in regarding it as co-extensive with that of the Ottoman Empire itself. The most brilliant period in the annals of that Empire is the reign of Soliman I., the contemporary of Charles V., under whom the Ottoman assumed the novel attitude of a maritime power: Rhodes was now wrested from the Knights of St. John, while, on the continent, Hungary was added to the dominions of the Sultan. The decline of the Ottoman power dates from the accession of Murad III., A.D. 1574. From that time, the Ottomans were continually engaged in destructive hostilities with Persia, which at once diverted their attention from their European neighbours, and exhausted their treasury; while, in their occasional wars with Austria, though attended by varying fortune, every campaign tended to weaken the opinion which had been entertained, that their armies were invincible. In 1683, the Turkish forces penetrated to Vienna, and laid siege to that capital, but were defeated by the allied army under Sobieski with great slaughter, and their disgraceful flight and subsequent reverses unveiled their weakness to Europe. The peace of Carlowitz, in 1698, confirmed the humiliation of the haughty Mussulman power, whose armies had once made all Christendom tremble. It was not, however, till 1774, that, after a war against Austria and Russia united, signalised by victory after victory on the part of the allied forces, the terms of peace dictated by Prince Romanzoff, proclaimed that its day of power was past.

Elliott,
vol. ii. p. 760;
vol. iii. p.
1040.

The third
and last
Woe.

§ 10. Between the commencement of this woe, ushered in by the sixth trumpet, and the third and last woe, there intervenes a series of visions (occupying chap. x. and xi. to ver. 13.), in part retrospective and synchronizing with the events predicted under the fifth and sixth trumpets. Reserving our notice of these predictions, we pass on to where, at chap. xi. ver. 14, the prophetic history takes up the series of judicial calamities announced by the trumpet-bearing angels: "The second woe is past, and, lo! the third woe cometh quickly." This is the last of the three woes denounced previously to the sounding of the fifth trumpet, and is evidently the subject of the seventh; and as the seventh seal comprised the events predicted under the successive trumpets, so, the woe ushered in by the seventh trumpet appears to consist of the seven last plagues symbolized by the vials or bowls of the wrath of God. On comparing chap. xi. 19, with chap. xv. 5, it will be seen, that the intermediate visions (like those between chap. x. 1, and chap. xi. 13) are an interruption of the chain of predictions; yet, they occur in their proper order, filling up a chronological interval.

The Seven
Vials.

In interpreting the symbolic language of the Vials, consistency requires that we should adhere to the meaning which the same or corresponding expressions bear in the previous visions. Now, between the first four vials and the first four trumpets, there is a striking similarity, indicating, apparently, the same local scene. The first vial is poured upon the land—the continent of Roman Christendom; the second, upon the sea,—the maritime countries, or the maritime power and

commercial wealth of the nations who are the subject of the predicted judgments; the third, upon the rivers and fountains of water,—the basins of the great European rivers, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Po, and the Alpine and sub-Alpine provinces; the fourth, upon the Sun,—the symbol of the Imperial Power; the fifth, upon the seat of the Beast,—Rome; the sixth, upon the great river Euphrates, the original seat and eastern frontier of the Turkish power; the last into the air, the political atmosphere,—producing social convulsions, symbolized by a tremendous earthquake. Whether these several calamitous visitations have already taken place, is a question which the reader may determine for himself, by reflecting upon the whole series of events connected with, or rising out of, the French Revolution;—upon the frightful and grievous eruption which overspread the face of society, diffusing a moral contagion,—the naval wars and fierce continental struggles,—the desolating conquests and cruel spoliation,—the subversion of empires and breaking up of old political systems,—events corresponding in order as well as in locality to the symbolic description,*—which the history of Europe during the last half century exhibits. If the interpretation given of the sixth trumpet is correct, the burden of the seventh must relate to times not very distant from our own. Nor is it a questionable position, that events not less momentous in their results, while equally terrible in their nature, than the final overthrow of the Greek Empire, have taken place on the broad stage of the European world within the last fifty

* See Appendix (C).

years. That the seventh trumpet *has* sounded, seems, then, a reasonable conclusion; and if so, the only question that remains will be, whether the third predicted woe is past, or remains at least partially to be fulfilled.

Divine authority of the Apocalypse attested by the historical fulfilment of the predictions.

§ 11. Here, then, on the verge of the undeveloped future, we pause to review the evidence supplied by the historic fulfilment of the long chain of predictions, that the Apocalypse is what it purports to be, a Revelation from Heaven;—not simply the composition of an inspired Apostle, as it is regarded by those critics who speak of it as if the scenic visions were the offspring of poetic invention, and the language borrowed from the ancient prophets,* but much more than this;—a Revelation made by Our Lord Jesus Christ unto His servant John, and a *record* of “all things that he saw,” as manifested to him by the Angel sent as the bearer of the Divine communications, and commissioned to shew to the Apostle “the things which must be hereafter.”† Either it is a

Rev. iv. 1.

* Thus, Bertholdt and Eichhorn, while *vindicating* the Apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse against the audacious and trivial objections of Cludius and other critics of the neological school, speak of the materials of the book as certainly mere fiction. ‘John had not really the visions, but himself invented them.’ (Wait’s Preface to Hug, p. clxxxviii.) The learned Translator of Hug speaks himself of the author of the Apocalypse as having been ‘well versed in the Rabbinical, if not the Cabbalistic writings of his day,’ and as forming his style upon the Prophetic and other Jewish writings, and alluding to Jewish opinions, traditions, and phraseology.

† Rev. i. 1—3. The first three verses of the received text form the title, and are no part of the book itself, which begins at verse 4. This is evident from the variations of the title in different codices and ancient versions. In the Codex Ephrem it is entitled, ‘The Revelation of John.’ See Horne’s Introd. vol. iv. p. 478. The title

Divine book, in substance a revelation from God, written for the benefit of the Church of Christ by Divine command, or, whatever genius, Rabbinical learning, or sagacity may be ascribed to its Author, the Apocalypse must rank, as a work of fiction, with the Visions of the Shepherd of Hermas, the apocryphal prophecies of the *pseudo* Esdras, the Book of Enoch, and other supposititious writings of the same age. To some of these works, the Book of Revelation presents so close a resemblance in its phraseology and imagery, as to suggest the explanation, that either the Author was acquainted with these fictitious writings, and borrowed from them, or that those Writers must have imitated the Apocalypse.* It would not be difficult to adduce evidence that all these apocryphal writings are of later date, and cannot have been imitated by the inspired Author. Yet, in establishing the originality of the Apocalypse, we shall have gained nothing, if it must still be regarded as a human composition, or if it cannot be shewn to be truly a prophetic history, bearing internal evidence of proceeding from the Spirit of Christ. “The spirit of prophecy” is expressly declared in this book to be, “the witness or testimony of Jesus,” whether as having Our Lord for

Rev. xix. 10.

in the Authorized Version is, however, borne out by ch. iv. 1 ; xix. 10 ; xxii. 6, 16.

* ‘It is very probable,’ remarks Dr. Lardner, ‘that Hermas had read the Book of St. John’s Revelation, and imitated it. He has many things resembling it.’ (Lardner, vol. ii. p. 69.) The Book of Enoch mentions a vision of seven stars, which are explained to be angels. ‘That either John had seen this book, or that this part was borrowed from John, is evident,’ says Dr. Wait, ‘from the similar effect produced by the vision.’ See other coincidences in the notes to Hug’s Introd. part ii. § § clxxvi, vii.

its author or for its object. It is true in either sense ; and regarding the prophecy as foreshewing the grand outlines of the Divine administration of Him who has ascended on high "that he might fulfil all things," having had committed to Him all power in heaven and on earth, its accomplishment furnishes the strongest conceivable evidence of the ascension, glory, and deity of Christ.

This purpose, it is obvious, the Apocalypse can subserve, only so far as it can be shewn to have been historically and precisely fulfilled. The ultimate object of the Old Testament prophecies was not answered till they had been fulfilled in the manifestation and work of the Son of God. Then, and not till then, was the prophetic testimony clearly understood, as furnishing the credentials of Our Lord's mission, the identification of His person, the explanation of the grand stumbling-block of His sufferings, and an irrefragable evidence of the truth of Christianity to the end of time. In the same manner, the ultimate design of the New Testament predictions cannot be answered, till their truth is attested by their fulfilment. Whatever instruction may be derived from unfulfilled prophecy, it cannot answer *this* purpose. Yet, strange to say, some modern 'students of prophecy' have described it as a 'a thing most stupid and preposterous, to study the prophecy with reference only to the part which is fulfilled, which has become history, and is no longer prophecy;' and have asserted, that he who uses prophecy only with application to the past, doth merely confess that he useth no part of it in the way in which it ought to be

used. According to this rash and pernicious notion, the prophecies of Isaiah have become spiritless and useless to the Church of Christ, because they have been fulfilled. We cannot wonder that, pursued in this spirit, the study of the Apocalypse should tend only to fanaticism.

§ 12. Nothing has contributed to bring the authenticity of this Inspired book into question, so much as the mistaken practice, too early fallen into, of interpreting events by the prophecy, instead of deciphering prophecy by the key of history. It is a remarkable fact, that the authority and genuineness of the Book were generally, if not universally, acknowledged during the second century, yet, in the third, they had already been called in question; not on the ground of any deficiency of external evidence, but because the notions of the Millenarians, professedly founded on the Apocalypse, were gross, extravagant, and mischievous. A prophetic mania, a sort of Fifth-monarchy madness, had arisen within the Church; and at Arsinoë in Egypt, that land of plagues and heresies, the chimera of a Millenary reign had gained such hold upon the minds of Christians, as to banish from their thoughts the most important precepts of their religion. The adversaries of these Millenarian fanatics were therefore induced, for reasons which are now allowed to be weak and trivial, to deny that St. John was the author, and, in defiance alike of probability and of tradition, to ascribe its composition to Cerinthus.*

Ancient doubts respecting the authority of the Apocalypse attributable to fallacious schemes of interpretation.

Marsh's Michaelis, vol. iv. p. 475. Lardner, vol. ii. p. 691.

* The Apocalypse is referred to by Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) as the writing of the Apostle John; was so received by Papias (A.D. 116); by Melito, Bishop of Sardis (A.D. 177); and is repeatedly

In ancient, as in modern times, the Book of Revelation has had its Divine authority impugned by infidels, and doubted by the pious, owing to the presumptuous speculations of fanatical expositors, from Papias and Nepos, down to Frere, Irving, and Miller.

Sources of
erroneous
interpreta-
tion.

That its true historic interpretation should not have been discovered in the early times of the Church, affords no cause for surprise; since, although the symbolic language would, as has been remarked, be less enigmatical to those who lived near the time of St. John, they could infer from it only the general character of the impending events. It is in vain, therefore, to look to Irenæus, or Victorinus, or Athanasius, for aid in determining the historical application of the visions to events and eras which were to them future. It is more perplexing to find modern expositors so widely at issue with regard to the import and chronology of those portions of the Revelation which confessedly relate to past events. Yet, some of the obvious sources of error have already been pointed out. For instance, it is not surprising that expositors who adopt the hypothesis, that the Revelation was written in the time of Nero, and that its earlier predictions describe the destruction of Jerusalem, should, by their own confession, find it impossible to attach any definite meaning to its symbolical imagery. Thus, Professor Hug tells us, that very many of the indi-

cited as the Revelation of John, by Irenæus (A.D. 178), by Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 194), and by Tertullian (about A.D. 200). By Caius, about the year 212, it was first ascribed to Cerinthus. (Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 313, 319.) Dr. Lardner, in his account of Dionysius of Alexandria, has examined and refuted the ancient objections to its apostolic authority.

vidual delineations and images in this great work are by no means significant, but simply ornamental; that the numbers are seldom to be accepted arithmetically; that seven is the sacred number, serving merely for embellishment; that the round numbers, and times, and half-times admit neither of a chronological nor of a numerical calculation; and finally, that there are, in the whole, but two historical events which are even thus capable of interpretation, exclusive of the triumph of Christianity; the destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction of Rome! No wonder that the erudition of Grotius and Wetstein, and of their modern followers, should have failed to throw any light upon the mystic pages to which they applied so forced and false a scheme of interpretation. Starting from a fallacious theory, they inevitably became bewildered in the attempt to harmonize the prediction with the fact. In the same manner, expositors of the school of Mede have lost their way through forsaking the clew of history, and trying to make the mysterious announcements of Prophecy square with their anticipations of events yet future. A third source of erroneous interpretation has been, the scheme which has deserted the historical interpretation for the allegorical or mystical. To this school of expositors we must refer the learned and excellent Dean Woodhouse, who adopted the theory which regards the Apocalypse as a prophetic history of the fate and fortunes of the Christian Church, and interprets the emblematical representations of spiritual conditions and judgments. This erroneous scheme has naturally arisen, as all errors breed their opposites, out of the feeling of dissatis-

Hug, part ii.
§ clxxx.

faction with the Rabbinical reveries and political speculations of a certain class of literal expositors.

Regarding the Apocalypse as a prophetic disclosure of the scheme of Divine Providence, intended to be understood only as developed by events, we find a correspondence so exact, when the key of history is applied with competent skill, that even an infidel must be struck with the marks of preternatural foreknowledge stamped upon the sacred record.* Who could have predicted, at the time when St. John beheld these visions, the four stages of prosperity, gradual declension, and calamitous ruin, through which the Roman Empire was to pass? And if it had been possible for human sagacity to anticipate the Divine judgments upon the persecutors of the Church, and the pro-

* Very striking is the testimony borne to the internal evidence of the Divine origin of the Revelation, by the Father of modern Unitarianism. 'Indeed,' says Dr. Priestley, 'I think it impossible for any intelligent and candid person to peruse it, without being struck, in the most forcible manner, with the peculiar dignity and sublimity of its composition, superior to that of any other writing whatever; so as to be convinced that, considering the age in which it appeared, none but a person divinely inspired could have written it. Besides, notwithstanding the obscurity of many parts of this book, enough is sufficiently clear; and the correspondence of the prophecy with the events, so striking as of itself to prove its Divine origin. These prophecies are also written in such a manner as to satisfy us, that the events announced were really *foreseen*; they being described in such a manner as no person, writing without that knowledge, could have done. This requires such a mixture of clearness and obscurity as has never yet been imitated by any forgers of prophecy whatever. Forgeries, written of course after the event, have always been too plain. It is only in the Scriptures, and especially in the Book of Daniel, and this of the Revelation, that we find this happy mixture of clearness and obscurity in the account of future events.' Notes on Scripture, vol. iv. pp. 573, 4.

tracted struggle which the Christian Faith had to endure with Paganism, prior to its final political overthrow, who could have imagined that the secular establishment of Christianity would be succeeded, at no distant interval, by a series of calamities not less indicative of the Divine displeasure against the general apostacy of the Christian world? Once more, who could have predicted, that “the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues,” would yet “not repent of the works of their hands,” of their idolatry, their murders, their sorceries, their fornication, and their thefts?—that, upon this account, yet another series of plagues should be poured out upon the same geographical localities that had been made the theatre of the preceding convulsions and calamities? Yet, such is briefly the history of political Christendom, viewed in relation to the moral government of God, during the seventeen centuries embraced by the Apocalyptic visions. With regard to those portions of the Apocalypse which comprise the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials, there seems scarcely room for rational scepticism as to the true interpretation.

Rev. ix, 20,
21.

§ 13. But might we not expect to find, running parallel with this series of Divine judgments, some prophetic notices of the preservation, in unbroken succession, of a faithful reserve, a true Church in the midst of the prevailing apostacy,—to relieve, as it were the darkness of the picture, to sustain the faith of the pious, and to illustrate the fidelity of the Redeemer to his promise, that He would be with His followers to the end of the world? Although the

Design and
import of
the inter-
mediate
visions.

Apocalypse is, mainly, a history, not of the Church, but of the kingdoms of the world, of the fortunes of political society, yet we do find interwoven with the prophetic narrative, a series of visionary representations, not to be interpreted of historical events, but full of mystical meaning; sometimes, like the Greek chorus, suspending the action to declare the purpose of the drama; at other times, partaking of a supplemental character, and synchronizing with the preceding predictions. In interpreting these visions, to which secular history presents no exact counterpart, there is, of course, greater difficulty and more room for difference or mistake. Yet, Mr. Elliott, in his recent work, has cleared up so much of the obscurity which fanciful and conflicting comments had thrown over these portions of the Apocalypse, that it seems no longer difficult to read aright their general import.

Vision of the throne and the four living creatures.
Ch. iv.

Previously to the unsealing of the prophetic scroll, the Apostle had had presented to him, while in a trance, an emblematic vision of the Divine Majesty, in which a form of glory was beheld upon a throne, canopied by a rainbow, with a crystal pavement before the throne; around it were seated four and twenty venerable crowned forms; and in front, four figures of complex shape, studded with eyes, to indicate their ever-wakeful activity, day and night. The close resemblance between this representation and the description of the quadriform living creatures in the first vision of Ezekiel, has led various expositors to speak of the imagery employed by St. John as selected from that Prophet, or as formed upon his

vision. Were we to admit this, we must, of course, view the Apocalypse as a fiction. St. John affirms, that he *saw* what he describes; nor is there any more reason to suppose that his description is fictitious, than to regard that of Ezekiel as mere poetic invention. On comparing the two descriptions, however, we find a difference between them, which affords a convincing proof that St. John did not copy from Ezekiel, but described the appearances presented to him. By Ezekiel, the living creatures were seen in motion, and he perceived them to be quadriform. To St. John, it would seem that only one face of each figure was visible, so that each appeared to him to have a different form, although, from the parallel vision, we may suppose them to have been quadriform. In neither vision can we imagine that the true forms of actual existences are portrayed; but it might be expected, that the emblematic *appearances* would be similar, as having a corresponding import. The true meaning, we venture to believe, was perfectly well understood by the ancient Jews, although to us the hieroglyphic has become an insolvable enigma. It evidently expressed, however, or included, the idea of universality or totality; and one of the most probable conjectures derives the complex emblem from the banners of the four tribes who occupied the outermost posts of the encamped host of Israel. In the vision of Ezekiel, the appearances are supposed to refer to the angelic hosts: in the Apocalypse, it is clear that they denote the general company of the redeemed; although, as the scene is

See chap. v.
ver. 9.

the heavenly temple or the invisible world,* we must suppose the spirits of the departed just to be intended. By them, and by the four and twenty elders, homage and worship are rendered to The Lamb; and by them the chorus of praise is sustained, which ever and anon breaks upon the ear of the rapt Apostle in the intervals between the historic visions.

In a human composition, these elders and living creatures, together with their angelic associates, might be termed the machinery; but, apart from the impropriety of applying that term to the visions of Inspiration, there is a most essential distinction between the allegories of poetic invention and the hieroglyphical combinations which are intended to exhibit what is not ideal, but real, though by an emblematic medium. The distinction is not merely between truth and fiction, because allegory and fiction may be the vehicle of truth, but between what is pictured to the imagination, and what is both in form and in substance unimaginable,—an idea addressed to the understanding. An emblem is not a picture: it is a sign of what really exists, but not of any appearance in nature. For example, the representation of “a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes,” would not form a picture, any more than the monstrous combinations of mythology or the red lions or two-headed eagles of heraldry; but

Ch. v. ver. 6.

* Compare Rev. xi. 19; xv. 5; xvi. 17. The same idea of the heavenly abode of Christ as a temple, is conveyed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. ix. 11, 12, 24; and in the words of Our Lord himself: “In my Father’s house” (the temple) “are many mansions.” John xiv. 2.

the symbol cannot be mistaken as descriptive of the character and attributes of The Lord Jesus Christ. All the appearances of the Apocalyptic visions are, in like manner, symbolic, not pictorial; embodying ideas, but not images; what is revealed as truly existing, being left as unimaginable as ever. Thus, in the visions of the new heaven and new earth, all that is symbolical,—the city with its twelve foundations, the river of the water of life, the tree of life on either side of it,—baffles conception. Those passages which convey the most distinct and impressive ideas of the heavenly felicity, are all literal and negative: “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.”

Ch. xxi. 4.

It might seem superfluous to insist upon what is so obvious, were it not that many critics have spoken of the poetical imagery of the Apocalypse, and some have even found fault with its incongruous images as poetry; whereas, there is, properly speaking, no imagery, no scenery, nothing addressed to the imagination, throughout the book. In order to understand its design and construction, this must constantly be borne in mind. Every thing in it is literal truth, conveyed in symbolic language or ideographic cipher.

At chap. vii., between the opening of the sixth and of the seventh seal, there occurs an account of the command which the Apostle heard given to the four destroying angels, to suspend the execution of their commission* till a certain number from all the twelve

Vision of
the sealing.

* ‘The threatening tempest of barbarians, which so soon sub-

tribes of Israel had been sealed in their foreheads. The familiar language of Oriental metaphor is here turned into symbolic action; from which St. John would be at no loss to infer, that, in the times to which the vision pointed, of the great body of the professed Israel of God, (which must denote the Christian body,*) a small elect number only would be found holy and faithful, "sealed unto the day of Redemption." Wherefore such a commission of wrath against the Empire, after the glorious revolution which had established Christianity, but because a wide-spread apostacy had already commenced? But as, in ancient days, God declared to Elijah, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal;" so, at this period of general defection from pure Christianity, there would be "a remnant according to the election of grace." Such appears, clearly, to be the import of the vision, to which the historical fact precisely corresponds. After the overthrow of the Pagan supremacy by Constantine, the Roman people in multitudes, and at length in the mass, embraced Christianity; and the laws passed, constituting heathen worship illegal, must have tended still further to extend the Christian profession at the expense of its purity and distinctive

Compare
Eph. iv. 30;
i. 13. 2 Cor.
i. 22.

Rom. xi.
4, 5.

verted the foundation of Roman greatness, was still repelled or suspended on the frontiers.' Gibbon, ch. 30.

* That they were among the inhabitants of the countries about to be visited with Divine judgments, is evident: that is, of Roman Christendom. The Christian Israel must therefore be intended; and the proportion, estimated by the numbers of the Twelve Tribes under David and Solomon, would be about *one in fifty*. See Elliott, vol. i. pp. 129—135.

character. The baptismal rite now came to be regarded as a spiritual preservative and safeguard, and to be styled, accordingly, ‘*the seal*, the Lord’s mark, the illumination, the phylactery (or charm), the investiture of incorruption, the salvation;’ and ‘the Religion of Sacraments’ was substituted for the Apostolic doctrine. Those times of apostacy had also their Elijah, in Augustine. To his writings, in which the doctrines of Grace stand out in broad contrast to the corruptions of the age, the preservation of scriptural light is chiefly attributable, during the dark night which preceded the dawn of the Reformation.* Although the number of the sealed formed a small proportion of the general body, (that is, in relation to the existing generation,) yet, the Apostle afterwards beheld, prospectively, their future numbers, as gathered out of all nations and tribes, to be beyond calculation. It is observable that, in the vision, he does not witness the sealing, but only hears the number of the sealed. But he afterwards beholds them as having triumphed over all the sufferings and persecutions to which they had been exposed, “a multitude which no man could number,”—in a state of beatitude before the throne of God.

Bingham,
cited by
Elliott,
vol. i. p. 142.

Between the sixth and the seventh trumpets, occur a series of symbolic visions, relating in like manner to the history of Religion or of the True Church. At chap. x., the descent of a mighty Angel with an open

Vision of
the Angel
with the
open book.

* Elliott, vol. i. pp. 168—178. Augustine was born near Hippo, A.D. 354, during the reign of Constantius; was converted at Milan by the preaching of Ambrose, about 386; was ordained Presbyter in 391, and Bishop of Hippo in 395; and lived till A.D. 430.

Ezek. ii. 8 ;
iii. 3.

book, denotes some remarkable Divine intervention, at a period corresponding to the time of the Reformation of Luther. The book in the Angel's hand, St. John is commanded to take and eat ; as the Prophet Ezekiel was directed to eat the inscribed roll which contained the burden of his message to the House of Israel. The contents of this open book were also to be proclaimed "before many people, and nations, and languages, and kings." It seems, therefore, no violent interpretation of this part of the vision, to apply it to the revival of Evangelical preaching, in connexion with the translation and publication of the Sacred Scriptures,—so long closed to the people.*

Vision of
the measur-
ing of the
Temple.

The succeeding but continuous vision of the measuring of the Temple (chap. xi.) appears to answer, in its general import, to the selection and sealing of the faithful servants of God in the viith chapter ; denoting a separation of the true from the nominal and apostate Church,—a period at once of reform and of suffering. The Two Witnesses who are described as prophesying or bearing testimony during forty-two months of years, or 1260 mystical days, and which are also designated as two olive-trees, supplying with oil the two lamps burning before The Lord,—are interpreted most satisfactorily as signifying the twofold succession, in Eastern and Western Christendom, of churches or communities with their

The Two
Witnesses.

* Had the little book constituted, as Mede supposes, a new division of the prophecy ranging through chapters xi, xii, xiii, &c., it would, Mr. Elliott remarks, have appeared closed in the first instance, and been gradually unrolled.

pastors, adhering to the faith of the Gospel amid the general apostacy. At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the Papal crusades against the heretics, and the bloodhounds of the Inquisition, had apparently extirpated these witnesses for Christ.* At the Fifth Lateran Council, held at Rome from A.D. 1512 to 1517, under the pontificates of Julius II. and Leo X., a fresh bull was issued against the remnant of the Bohemian Hussites, who were summoned to appear to plead before the Council; but no answer was returned; no movement was made. ‘The Orator of the Session ascended the pulpit, and, amidst the applause of the assembled Council, uttered that memorable exclamation of triumph, “*Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistet!*”—There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule: opposers there exist no more.’ The joy and self-gratulation which were expressed, at the closing of the Council, strikingly answer to the Apocalyptic picture. In the language of an elegant historian, ‘the pillars of the Papal strength seemed visible and palpable; and Rome surveyed them with exultation from her golden palaces. The assembled princes and prelates separated from the Council with complacency, confidence, and

May, 1514.

* See authorities in Elliott, vol. ii. pp. 714—716. ‘At the commencement of this (xvith) century,’ says Mosheim, ‘no danger seemed to threaten the Roman pontiffs. The agitations previously excited by the Waldenses, Albigenes, Beghards, and more recently by the Bohemians, had been suppressed by counsel and the sword; and the wretched surviving remnant of Bohemian heretics were an object of contempt rather than fear.’ See also Waddington’s History of the Reformation, vol. i. pp. 8, 9. The repose of the church ‘was disturbed by no aggressions from without, by no discord from within.’ ‘The power of the pope was *de facto* paramount.’

mutual congratulations on the peace, unity, and purity of the Church.' Thus, literally, did "they who dwell on the earth rejoice and make merry, because those two prophets had troubled them that dwell on the earth." But short was their triumph. On the 31st of October, 1517, precisely three years and a half from the day in which the Orator of the Lateran Council pronounced his pæan of exultation, Luther posted up his thesis at Wittenberg, and thereby struck the first blow of the Reformation. Six years afterwards, Pope Adrian, in a brief addressed to the Diet at Nuremberg, wrote : 'The heretics Huss and Jerome are now alive again in the person of Martin Luther.' Not only did the Witnesses revive, and obtain a firm political standing, to the consternation of their enemies, under the adopted name of Protestants ;* but, as the language of the prediction is supposed to indicate, they were soon raised, at the Imperial call, to secular ascendancy. By the celebrated treaty of Passau, Aug. 12, 1552, (confirmed at Augsburg in 1555,) Protestants, equally with Romanists, were admitted to sit as judges in the Imperial chamber. At the same time, there was a great political convulsion ; England, one of the ten kingdoms of the Papacy, was divorced from "the Great City ;" and the Seven United Provinces,† after a protracted and sanguinary war of seven and thirty

Rev. xi. 10.

Elliott,
vol. ii. pp.
732, 3.

* A word signifying, according to its Latin etymology, Witnesses.

† Mr. Elliott shews, that *ἑπτα χιλιάδες* may properly be interpreted, seven principdoms or provinces ; and that their political slaughter must be intended. Vol. ii. pp. 746—751.

years, were wrested from Spain and Rome, and formed into the Protestant Republic of Holland.

In this rapid sketch, it has only been attempted to indicate the general correspondence of the history of the Reformation to this remarkable prophecy; referring the reader to Mr. Elliott's elaborate researches for further illustration.* No other interpretation of this vision has ever been proposed, having the slightest pretension to credibility or consistency; and if any reader, after making himself acquainted with the whole of the historic evidence adduced in that work, can resolve the marvellous correspondence into fanciful accommodation or accidental coincidence, he must be possessed of a most credulous incredulity.

§ 14. The next vision, which is introduced abruptly, appears to be the first of a new and distinct series, extending through the twelfth and following two chapters. That of the Woman clothed with the sun, being evidently introductory to the vision of the seven-headed monster rising out of the sea, must therefore relate to an antecedent period, and appears to describe the final struggle between the Christian Church and the Pagan dragon. The symbolic language is, however, more enigmatical than that of any other portion of the Apocalypse; and, in order to justify the explanation of which it is susceptible, it

Vision of
the Sun-
clothed
Woman.

Elliott,
vol. ii. pp.
779—783.

* The illustration of this portion of the Apoccalypse (ch. xi.) occupies 246 pages of Mr. Elliott's second volume, and forms one of the most interesting and valuable sections of his work. The political establishment of the Reformation, he remarks, synchronizes with the termination of the Turkish woe, so exactly as to verify the chronological precision of the intimation, (ch. xi. 14), immediately after the political earthquake,—“The Second Woe is past.”

The Seven-headed and Ten-horned Beast.

The Two-horned Beast.

Compare Rev. xix. 20 and xiii. 14.

would be necessary to go too much into expository details. For the same reason, it will be proper to refrain from entering upon the discussions connected with the characteristics of the two bestial monsters, one rising from the sea, and the other from the earth. The former, which is described as having seven heads and ten horns surmounted with diadems, and as deriving its power from the Pagan dragon, has been, almost by general consent, interpreted as denoting the Western Empire revived, or the Romano-Gothic of the sixth century, comprising ten kingdoms,* which acknowledged the Bishops of Rome as their spiritual head, having no other bond of union. The other wild beast, two-horned like a lamb, is represented as exercising all the power of the first wild beast that preceded him, and is subsequently described more unequivocally as “the False Prophet” which wrought miracles before the Beast. This seems to identify the second beast with an ecclesiastical power, such as that of the Papacy, related to the Western Empire, yet distinct from it. To this second beast is applied

* At the epoch of A.D. 532, which is fixed upon by Mr. Elliott, there existed, on the platform of the Western Roman empire, the following ten kingdoms: the Anglo-Saxons, the Franks, the Allman Franks, the Burgundians, the Visigoths, the Suevi, the Vandals, the Ostrogoths, the Bavarians, and the Lombards. Notwithstanding many intervening revolutions and changes in Western Europe, ten has been generally noted as the number of the Papal kingdoms. Thus, Gibbon, speaking of Roger, first King of Sicily, A.D. 1130, says: ‘The nine kings of the Latin world might disclaim their new associate, unless he were consecrated by the authority of the Supreme Pontiff.’ The nine kings were those of France, England, Scotland, Castile, Aragon, Navarre, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary. Elliott, vol. ii. pp. 865—870.

the arithmetical enigma which makes his designation to comprise the numerals 666; an enigma which, after all the ingenuity that has been exercised upon it, has received as yet no satisfactory solution.* In immediate contrast with this pretended Lamb or False Prophet, the Apostle beheld, "standing on Mount Sion," The Lamb of God surrounded with the chosen number of his true followers, who had been sealed with the Divine name; indicating the contemporaneous persecution of the True Church. From them ascends a chorus of rejoicing and praise, as upon the occasion of some great deliverance; or, as suggested by Mr. Elliott, analogous to the choral harpings and songs which attended the re-dedication of the Temple in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and denoting the joy of true Christians at the time of 'the Glorious Reformation.' †

See Ezra iii.
10. Neh.
xii. 27.

§ 15. And now a new series of visions commences. An angel is seen flying through mid-heaven, bearing a copy of the Everlasting Gospel which was to be promulgated to every nation and people. He is followed by a second angelic herald, announcing the impending fall of the mystic Babylon; and by a third, warning all against receiving the mark of the Beast,

The Gospel
bearing
Angel.

* See page 512. Mr. Elliott adopts the ancient solution which finds the number in *Δαρεως*. We must confess our doubts are not removed.

† Mr. Elliott understands the "new song" as meaning 'the new and blessed doctrines of the Reformation.' It might be deemed fanciful to consider the harpings as symbolical of the very remarkable rise and spread of psalmody at the time of the Reformation; and yet it is certain, that this formed a very marked feature of the great Protestant revival.

and thereby participating in the Divine judgments to be inflicted upon his worshippers. After this, a voice from Heaven commanded the Apostle to write: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;" either in contrast to the fate of the followers of the Beast, or as pre-indicating the fearful nature of the coming judgments; for, immediately afterwards, was seen a symbolical representation of a mystical harvest and vintage, which evidently denote a time of judgment and tremendous destruction. Of the latter part of this series of visions, no satisfactory interpretation has been, or probably can be given, since they relate, apparently, to what is still future, and subsequent to the overthrow of the mystic Babylon. It is startling to find them ushered in with a symbol of the wide diffusion of the Gospel, which has been supposed to mark the present era of evangelical missions.

Elliott,
vol. iii. pp.
1171—1182.

The Seven
Vial-bearing
Angels.

Another great and marvellous symbol is next exhibited; that of seven angels prepared to pour forth from their bowls the seven plagues of the last predicted woe; preparatory to which, the Apostle beholds the victorious company of the faithful standing by a sea of lava,* and singing a song answering to that of Moses and the children of Israel on the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. The prophetic history here takes up the series of events which had been brought down to the close of the sixth trumpet; and, the seventh angel having already sounded, the pouring fourth of the seven vials, which form the burden of that trumpet, is described.

* "A vitreous sea mingled with fire," Rev. xiv. 2; an expression strikingly descriptive of a flood of burning lava.

Under the seventh vial, or as immediately subsequent to the convulsions of that period, the doom of Babylon the Great is fulfilled. In a distinct vision, the Apostle is shewn a symbolical representation of the City so designated—"the great city which reigneth over all the kings of the earth;" a harlot richly attired, seated upon a beast with seven heads and ten horns, with a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations. That Rome is the site intended by the seven heads, symbolical at once of seven hills and of seven successive forms of government, cannot be doubted: the only question that can be raised is, whether Pagan or Papal Rome is here portrayed. We have already seen, however, that the enigma of the seven kings, the Beast himself being an eighth, receives its exact historical solution from the fact, that the Imperial head existing in the time of St. John, was the sixth; that the altered form of government under Diocletian, corresponds to the seventh; and that the eighth head, occupying the place of one of the seven, which had been "wounded to death," accurately answers to the Papal Empire, the ten horns denoting the ten Western European kingdoms. Besides which, the regular chronology of the visions forbids our referring the description to the Rome of the Cæsars. It follows, then, that the predicted destruction of the City, and of the Polity identified with it, must still remain to be fulfilled; and the language employed suggests the idea of a sudden destruction effected by the tremendous agency of volcanic fire. 'The Mistress of the World, in the decrepitude of her power, still retains the style of royalty, and sits

Babylon the Great.

See p. 513.

Ch. xiii. 3.

as a queen, clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; having in her hands that golden cup of intoxication;—the very personification of all the splendours of the present world; and the catalogue of her merchandize may still be emphatically summed up with “slaves and the souls of men.” On the other hand, that seat of hers is continually trembling with the slight but fearful indications of the subterranean fires which lurk beneath, ready to renew those ravages of which the whole region exhibits traces, in the formation of the hills and the character of the soil. It is impossible not to be struck with this fact, in connexion with the evident allusion, in the language of the prediction, to volcanic phenomena. It is at least possible, that the craters of the Alban hills may again open their dreadful artillery upon the city, or that the Curtian Gulf may itself become the mouth of the furnace, and in one day all this glory, and pomp, and riches, “come to nought.”

Conder's
Italy, vol.iii.
p. 411.

Final de-
struction of
the Beast
and False
Prophet.

The fall of the Great City is not immediately attended by the destruction of the Papal polity. The subsequent vision represents the Beast or Imperial power, and the False Prophet or Papal power, with the confederate kings, arrayed in war against “The Word of God” and the army of his faithful followers, from whom they receive their final overthrow.* After this, the Apostle beheld the vision of the binding of

* It is deserving of notice, that the destruction is effected by the sword proceeding out of the mouth of the Conqueror, Rev. xix. 21; a representation strikingly agreeing with 2 Thess. ii. 3, and illustrated by Heb. iv. 12.

the dragon, and his imprisonment in the bottomless abyss for a thousand years, during which those who are represented as "having part in the first resurrection," live and reign with Christ. Upon this brief and mysterious intimation, what is termed the doctrine of the Millennium entirely rests. At the close of this Millennium, Satan is loosed, and gathers the nations once more to battle against "the beloved City." Fire from heaven consumes the rebellious hosts; and Satan is cast into the lake of fire. The visions of the Final Judgment, the new Heaven and new Earth, and the Heavenly Jerusalem, close the wondrous history. To the unfulfilled predictions may be applied the emphatic words of Cowper's noble hymn:—

‘ God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.’

§ 16. In the preceding rapid review of the Apocalyptic visions, the Writer's aim has been, to throw out the grand outlines of the prophetic narrative by the light which History casts upon the mystic scroll, in order that the full evidence of its Divine Inspiration and authority may be at once perceived. Many persons who have been perplexed by the erroneous and conflicting theories of commentators, will doubtless be surprised at finding how large a proportion of the Apocalypse is plainly legible by means of the historic key to the prophetic cipher. More especially will they be struck with the very subordinate importance of those questions which have occupied the principal attention of expositors, and given rise to interminable speculation and controversy,* and, above

A priori
interpretations un-
authorized.

* Such as, the name and number of the Papal Beast; the precise

all, with the slender foundation afforded by the sacred text for the visionary schemes of ancient and modern Millennialians. Those who adopt the hypothesis, that the Millennium, whether understood of a period of earthly happiness or of calamity to the Church, is past,* are bound to show by historical evidence, when it

commencement and termination of the 1260 days; the year-day principle; the time from which the Millennium is to be computed; whether the thousand years are to be taken literally, or as denoting an indefinite period, or as extending to 360,000 years, &c. &c.

* There have been four principal solutions of the "Millenary First Resurrection." The earliest (which might on that very account be presumed to be erroneous) is the literal interpretation adopted by Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and the early Chiliasts,—founded less upon the Apocalypse than upon the Old Testament prophecies and Jewish tradition,—which supposes a pre-millennial resurrection of saints and martyrs, to reign upon earth. This theory, revived by Mr. Mede in his *Clavis Apostolica* (1627), has been espoused by Daubuz, Bishop Newton, Dr. Thomas Burnet, Dr. Gill, Mr. Bickersteth, and other expositors of the same school, to whom must now be added Mr. Elliott himself. The second theory, which prevailed from the days of Augustine to the Reformation, interprets the First Resurrection as a spiritual one, that of dead souls from the death of sin; dating the commencement of the Millennium from Our Lord's public ministry. This view has been advocated by Lightfoot, Usher, and more recently Professor Lee, who closely follows Arethas and some other ancient expositors. The third solution, that proposed by Grotius and Hammond, supposes the First Resurrection to be ecclesiastical, and to have had its commencement from the overthrow of Paganism by Constantine, extending from the fourth to the fourteenth century. This hypothesis requires us to suppose Rome Pagan, not Papal, to be intended by the Apocalyptic Beast; which is the explanation adopted by all the Romish expositors, and insisted upon with unbecoming positiveness by Dr. Lee. Lastly, by Whitby, Vitringa, Lowman, Faber, and Archbishop Whately, the First Resurrection is understood to be symbolical of a resurrection of the principles, doctrine, and spirit of the martyrs,—a spiritual revival in the church; the time still future. Witsius considers those who were beheld sitting on thrones (Rev. xx. 4), as being, not the souls of the martyred, but their oppressors. Adopting

commenced and terminated. But, if it be still future, it is not within the legitimate province of the Biblical expositor to supply the interpretation. It is, indeed, strange, that it should not be at once perceived, that the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy *is* prophecy; nay, that to interpret what is mysteriously indicated, requires a preternatural knowledge of the future, on the part of the expositor, even superior to that of the prophet himself, who may be unconscious of the precise import of his own predictions. Thus, we find the Prophet Daniel unable to understand the visions which were presented to him, till he was “made to know the interpretation of the things.” There would seem to be no difference, in this respect, between a vision or dream, and a recorded prediction. Respecting both, the question put by Joseph to Pharaoh’s officers seems equally pertinent, “Do not interpretations belong to God?” In those cases, then, in

Dan. vii. 16.

Gen. xl. 8.

this view, an American writer (Prof. Bush) has endeavoured to shew, that the thousand years are to be understood of a period most calamitous to the church; *i. e.* from A.D. 450 to 1453. By those expositors who regard the Millennium as a definite period still future, its commencement has been confidently dated from various periods, ranging from A.D. 1370 (*Johannes de Rupescissa*) to 2036 (Sir Isaac Newton). Mede dated the Millennium from 1716; Ness, in 1679, from 1865, the period adopted also by Faber; Dr. Hales, from 1380; Bishop Newton, from 1987. It may reasonably be doubted, however, whether the thousand-years is to be understood of any *definite* period, which would ill accord with all the prophetic notices of time in the Apocalyptic visions. According to an ancient expositor (Arethas), it denotes an indefinite duration,—‘*aut multitudinem aut perfectionem.*’ Other questions might be raised; for instance, whether the reign of the risen martyrs is to be on earth or in heaven. But the whole subject, if the prophecy remains to be unravelled by the event, may be regarded as one of mere speculation, and beyond the province of the biblical expositor.

which the interpretation has not been given, it surely ought to be presumed, that it is reserved to be unfolded by the event, and that all attempts at *à priori* explanation are alike unauthorized and fallacious. Experience tends to establish the same conclusion. There cannot, perhaps, be adduced a single instance in which a prediction relating to a future event has been correctly interpreted before its fulfilment. Were all the volumes that have been put forth upon unfulfilled prophecy, and every word that has been written upon the subject of the Millennium, committed to the flames, not a scintilla of scriptural light would be extinguished, not a particle of real information lost. The design for which the Apocalypse was given, does not require that its undeveloped mysteries should be expounded by predictive speculations; nor can the evidence of its Divine authority be strengthened by anticipating what time alone can interpret.*

But ought not the Church to concern herself about unfulfilled prophecy? Most assuredly, so far as regards the general intimations intended to conduct the eye of faith to the great terminal event. It is the business of the Church, to watch the unfolding of the scheme of Divine Providence, but not to pre-interpret it. The Revelation was intended to minister instruction and consolation to the Christians of the second, third, and fourth centuries, who could not possibly understand the precise nature of the events sym-

* Mr. Elliott apologizes for venturing on the awful and mysterious subjects of unfulfilled prophecy, as having acted 'only under a sense of the necessity laid on' him 'as an expositor.' Vol. iii. p. 1338. It is certainly a duty of very imperfect obligation.

bolized by the visions ; and we know as a fact, that all their attempts at interpretation proved fallacious. One event, indeed, stood out broadly revealed, the destruction of Rome ; but how little could the Christians of the eighth or tenth century anticipate the revival of the city under an eighth form of government, and the glory of the Papal empire ! To a devout student of the sacred page in the time of Justinian or Phocas, how inscrutable an enigma, too, would the symbolical description of the Saracenic locusts or of the Turkish horsemen have presented ! The computation of the 1260 days would have been at that time not less inexplicable. The application of the year-day principle to the prophecy would, *à priori*, have been incapable of proof, and might seem scarcely compatible with probability ; nor would it have been possible to fix upon the time from which the calculation must commence.* Those parts of the Apoca-

* It is admitted, that, for the first four centuries, the days mentioned in the prophecies of Daniel and in the Apocalypse were interpreted literally by the Fathers of the church ; but, from the fifth to the twelfth century, a mystical meaning came to be attached to the period of 1260 days, though not the true one. At the close of the fourteenth century, Walter Brute first suggested the *year-day* interpretation, which was fully espoused by the Magdeburg Centuriators, and applied to the Papacy. Elliott, vol. ii. pp. 965—972. That the true solution of the enigma should not have occurred to the earlier writers, is not surprising. It was not intended, and was scarcely possible, that it should be shewn, *à priori*, that such was the principle of interpretation. As Mr. Elliott remarks, while the period was yet distant, a moral purpose was answered by a temporary veil of mystery being thrown over the prophetic period ; for the church was not to know the times and seasons, that she might be kept from the earliest age in the attitude of watchful expectation. It was, accordingly, not till the time drew near, that the solution of the chronological enigma began to be perceived. Nor does it form any

lypse which are to us the most clear and certain in their import, would at that period have been shrouded in the deepest mystery. Yet, even then, "the sure word of prophecy" was as "a light shining in a dark place," by means of which enough might be seen of futurity to prevent erroneous anticipations or utter despondency. The end of the world, so frequently supposed to be at hand, the dial of prophecy shewed, was not yet. The kingdom of Christ, which there has always prevailed so strong a tendency to identify with outward pomp and political ascendancy, was, for long ages, to be visible only in the loyalty, and faith, and patience of the scattered flock who witnessed against the surrounding apostacy. How do we trace the true Church of Christ in the prophetic history? Under what position and circumstances is it to be recognized? First, we are shown the souls of the martyrs crying aloud, "How long, O Lord, holy and true?" Next are seen the sealed number, saved out of great tribulation. Then, the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. And again they appear as a select number, "the redeemed first-fruits unto God and the Lamb." All this, apart from any foreknowledge of the events predicted, would be fraught with important instruction. The proof afforded by the Revelation, that the militant and suffering condition of the True Church was in accordance with the intimations of the Divine purpose, and implied no unforeseen

2 Pet. i. 19.

Ch. vi. 10.

Ch. vii. 14.

Ch. xi. 3.

Ch. xiv. 4.

objection to its truth, that the *à priori* evidence scarcely amounts to probability, when the *à posteriori* demonstration is all but irresistible. It seems to be the Divine intention, that the discovery of the prophetic mystery should wait upon the facts, not anticipate them.

failure or reversal of the dispensations of Heaven, must powerfully have contributed to fortify the faith of the pious, and to check the risings of infidelity.

§ 17. This valuable purpose, the Apocalypse is still not less adapted to answer. While History furnishes the key to its symbols, the Prophecy, as developed, throws back its light upon the events recorded, and shows the meaning of History itself. Nothing has furnished the infidel with so plausible a ground for assailing the Christian faith, as the transactions which form the matter of ecclesiastical annals; and even upon ingenuous minds, the perusal of Church history is likely to leave a very painful and injurious impression. To the poisonous influence of Antichristian works of this description, the Apocalypse supplies a Divine antidote. Let the Prophetic history be collated with the Providential, and it will then be seen, to whom the controversies and bitter contentions, the heresies and scandals, the cruelties and wrongs falsely charged upon the Church of Christ, are truly to be ascribed; namely, to a regnant Apostacy, from which, throughout the visions of this sacred book, the True Church is carefully discriminated.

Practical
use and
final pur-
pose of the
Apocalypse.

Another most instructive lesson, the prophetic revelation was adapted to convey to the early Christians, not less than to those of the present day. As extending to the end of time, and comprising the sequel of this world's sad history, it seems designed to exclude the expectation of any future revelation, and to put a definite bound to all hopes relating to this sublunary scene. It is the last Oracle of Pro-

phesy, the last Divine communication to the world. With the life of St. John, the apostolic age was about to close; and the canon of inspiration was now to be completed for ever. The Church had entered on the last time, the final dispensation; and was thus shut up to the "blessed hope" of the glorious appearing of the Redeemer, and the manifestation of the sons of God.

The Book is commonly styled, "The Revelation of John;" but this is really a misnomer. The Revelation was made *to* the Apostle John, and by him recorded for the Church in all ages; but it is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ." "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his Angel, to show unto His servants the things that must shortly be done." . . . "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." If we receive its sayings, we must regard it as, in substance, the actual communication of Our Lord, comprising a disclosure of the scheme of His providential administration; the character he bears, being not only that of Head of the Church, but also that of the Sovereign Prince of all the kings of the earth, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." For, while the visible kingdom of Christ, composed of His true disciples and followers, is "not of this world," in respect to either its origin or its policy, the supreme dominion of Our Lord, to which he is exalted, is no figurative or spiritual, but an actual empire; and in the visions of this Book, the affairs of earthly kingdoms, the revolutions of political society, are exhibited as subordinate to His all-controlling purpose. As the administrator of all

Rev. xxii. 6,
16.

power and rule in heaven and on earth, the reign of Christ is as strictly personal, as if the throne of His glory was visibly established in this province of the Divine empire, instead of being at the right-hand of The Father. Those writers who speak of the personal reign of Christ on earth as *future*, seem, by identifying that reign with a future manifestation of His personal glory, to overlook the cardinal fact, that He who is to be the future Judge, is *now* the "Lord of all," in his own person "upholding" and governing "all things by the word of his power." Heb. i. 3.

Of this truth, the Apocalypse seems designed to furnish constantly accumulating evidence, in the correspondence between the prophetic outline and the long succession of events. It is the history of that heavenly reign, that final dispensation, which dates from Our Lord's ascension to the throne of The Father; a reign disputed and resisted in this world by principalities and powers, yet, not the less uninterruptedly and signally carried on by the varied agencies employed in the execution of the Divine judgments, and in the administration of the moral government of the world. Inasmuch, however, as the triumph of this kingdom involves a conquest of those principalities and powers who are warring against it, and to whom the Apostolic writings ascribe an actual and potent influence upon human affairs, that consummation must be attended with important political results. Our Lord, when upon earth, expressly disclaimed, not only for Himself, but also for his followers, the weapons of secular force; the coercive principle of human governments being utterly inapplicable to the

John xix. 36.

promotion of truth, or to the moral subjugation of the world to Christ. Yet, the kingdoms of this world, which *are* political kingdoms, are ultimately to be merged in that dominion which Our Lord has founded; for “He must reign,” till he shall have “put down all rule, and all authority, and power.”

1 Cor. xv. 25.

To this glorious issue of the Providential scheme traced out in the Visions of the Apocalypse, the expectations of the heavenly worshippers are represented as being constantly turned; evidently with a view to lead forward the hopes of the Church in the same direction. Our Lord assured His disciples, that, when the Spirit of Truth was come, He would “shew them things to come;” adding: “He shall glorify ME, for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

John xiv. 14.

In this wonderful Book, we seem to have the specific fulfilment of this promise. It appears to have for its especial design, to exhibit to the Church the power and glory of her ascended Lord. The deity of the Only Begotten of The Father, the Lord of angels and of men, is, in the visions of this Book, displayed in all the effulgence of the Divine attributes. He whom the Beloved Apostle had proclaimed, in his Gospel, to be “The Word who was in the beginning with God, and who was God,” styles Himself, in this Book, “the Omega” as well as “the Alpha,”—“the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” As, “by Him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible,—all things were created by Him and for Him, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist;” so, by Him will the new heavens and the new earth

Col. i. 16, 17.

be called into existence. “He that sate upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” Thus are the Genesis and the Finis of this world’s history connected with Him to whose first advent, as “the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent’s head,” the earliest promise pointed; while the last promise of the sacred volume, issuing from the lips of the glorified Redeemer, assure us of His second advent :—“Surely I come quickly.”

Rev. xxi. 1, 5.

Rev. xxii. 20.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

CHRONOLOGY OF THE GOSPELS.

		B.C.	J.P.
LUKE ii. 1.	Edict of Augustus	5	4709
i. 57.	Birth of John the Baptist	5	
ii. 7.	Birth of Jesus Christ (April)	4	4710
ii. 22.	Presentation in the Temple (May)	4	
MATT. ii. 1.	Arrival of the Magi	4	
ii. 14.	Flight into Egypt (Aug.)	4	
ii. 19.	Death of Herod (March)	3	4711
		A.D.	
LUKE ii. 42.	Jesus accompanies Joseph and Mary to Jerusa- lem	8	4721
iii. 1.	Commencement of John's Ministry	26	4739
MATT. iii. 13.	}	Baptism of Jesus Christ	27 4740
LUKE iii. 21.			
JOHN ii. 13.	First Appearance of Our Lord in the Temple	—	
LUKE iii. 20.	Imprisonment of John (May)	—	
JOHN v. 1.	Our Lord's second visit to Jerusalem	—	
MATT. iv. 12.	}	Commencement of Our Lord's public ministry	— 4741
MARK i. 14.			
JOHN vi. 4.	Second Passover	28	
MATT. xiv. 10.	Death of John the Baptist (Sept.)	28	
JOHN vi. 4.	Third Passover	29	4742
MATT. xvii.	Transfiguration of Christ	—	
JOHN vii. 14.	Feast of Tabernacles	—	
x. 22.	Feast of Dedication	—	
xi.	Raising of Lazarus	30	4743
MATT. xxi. 12.	Second Cleansing of the Temple	—	
JOHN xiii. 1.	Last Supper—Fourth Passover	—	
	The Resurrection	—	
	The Ascension	—	

(B.)

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ACTS AND APOSTOLIC EPISTLES.

PART I.—FROM THE PENTECOST OF A.D. 30 TO THE FIRST PERSECUTION,
A.D. 37.

CHAP.	ACTS I—VIII.	A.D.	A.U.C.	TIBERIUS
II.	Effusion of the Spirit	30	783	17
III.	Cure of the Impotent Man	—		
	Conversion of the five thousand	—		
	First attempt of the Sanhedrim to suppress Christianity	—		
IV. 32.	Community of goods	—		
	Death of Ananias and Sapphira	—		
V. 17.	Second attempt to suppress Christianity	33 ?	786	20
	Advice of Gamaliel	—		
VI.	Appointment of the Seven	35 ?	788	22
	Conversion of many Priests	—		
				CAIUS.
	Disputation with Stephen	37	790	1
VII. 59.	Martyrdom of Stephen	—		
VIII.	Philip preaches in Samaria	—		
	Peter and John visit Samaria	—		
	Baptism of the Ethiopian	—		

PART II.—FROM THE CONVERSION OF SAUL, A.D. 37, TO THE COUNCIL AT
JERUSALEM, A.D. 50.

CHAP.	ACTS IX—XV.	A.D.	A.U.C.	CAIUS.
IX. 3.	Conversion of Saul (Nov.)	37	790	1
	Saul retires into Arabia	38	791	
	Saul returns to Damascus	—		
IX. 26.	Saul visits Jerusalem	40	793	4
IX. 30.	Saul is sent to Tarsus	—		
IX. 31.	Rest of the Churches	39—41		

CHAP.		A.D.	A.U.C.	CLAUD.
x.	Conversion of Cornelius	41	794	1
xI. 26.	Disciples at Antioch first called Christians	42	795	2
xII. 23.	Famine predicted by Agabus	—		
	Gospel of Matthew	42 ?		
xI. 30.	First Mission of Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem	43	796	3
[2 Cor. xii.]	Rapture of St. Paul	—		
xII. 1.	Martyrdom of James the Son of Zebedee	—		
23.	Death of Herod Agrippa	—		
	Epistle of James	44 ?		
xIII.	Paul and Barnabas sent forth	45	798	
	First Epistle of Peter	48 ?		
xIV. 26.	Paul's return to Antioch	48		
[Gal. ii. 11.]	Arrival of Peter at Antioch	—		
xv. 2.	Second Mission of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (with Titus)	50	803	9
[Gal. ii.]	Council of Apostles and Elders	—		

PART III.—FROM THE UNION OF PAUL AND SILAS, A.D. 51, TO THEIR
ARRIVAL AT ROME, A.D. 61.

CHAP.	ACTS XV—XXIV.	A.D.	A.U.C.	CLAUD.
xv. 40.	Paul sets out with Silas on his second circuit	51	804	10
xvi. 8.	Paul arrives at Troas	—		
xvIII. 2.	Edict of Claudius against the Jews	—	804	
	Gospel of Mark	51 ?		
xvII. 15.	Paul at Athens	52	805	11
xvIII.	Paul at Corinth	—		
	Paul brought before Gallio	—		
	First Epistle to the Thessalonians	—		
	Second Epistle to the Thessalonians	53	806	12
	Epistle to the Galatians	—		
xvIII. 18.	Paul leaves Corinth for Syria	—		
xvIII. 22.	Paul visits Jerusalem (4th time after his conversion)	—		
xvIII. 23.	Paul visits Galatia in his route to Ephesus	—		
xIX. 1.	Paul arrives at Ephesus	54	807	{ 13 1 NERO

CHAP.		A.D.	A.U.C.	NERO.
	First Epistle to the Corinthians	56	809	2
[1 Tim. i. 2.]	Paul's visit to Crete	—		
	Epistle to Titus	—		
	First Epistle to Timothy	—		
	Second Epistle to the Corinthians	57	810	3
xx. 3.	Paul's second residence at Corinth	57, 8		
	Epistle to the Romans	58	811	4
xx. 6.	Paul sails from Philippi for Syria	—		
xxi. 17.	Paul reaches Jerusalem	—		
xxiv. 27.	Felix superseded by Festus	59	812	5
xxvii. 1.	Paul sails for Rome	60	813	6
	Gospel of John	60 ?		
xxviii. 14.	Paul arrives at Rome	61	814	7
	Epistle to the Ephesians	—		
	Second Epistle to Timothy	—		
	Epistle to the Colossians	—		
	Epistle to Philemon	—		
	Gospel of Luke	—		
	The Acts	62	815	8
	Epistle to the Philippians	—		
	Epistle to the Hebrews	63 ?		
	Epistle of Jude	64 ?		
	Second Epistle of Peter	65 ?		
	The Apocalypse	96		

(C.)

CHRONOLOGY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

CHAP.		A.D.
v.	First Seal. Era of Roman prosperity . . .	96 Nerva.
	Second Seal. Era of civil discord under the Prætorian sword	180 Commodus.
	Third Seal. Era of fiscal oppression	211 Caracalla.
	Fourth Seal. Era of mortality	248 Philip.
	Fifth Seal. Era of Martyrs	284 Diocletian.
	Sixth Seal. Era of Constantine	324 Constantine.
viii.	Seventh Seal. Interval of Stillness	324— 395
	First Trumpet. Alaric and Rhadagaisus . .	396— 410
	Second Trumpet. Genseric	429— 477
	Third Trumpet. Attila	450— 453
	Fourth Trumpet. Odoacer, &c.	479— 552
ix.	Fifth Trumpet. The Saracens	612— 762
	Sixth Trumpet. The Turks	1057—1453
x.	Descent of the mighty Angel with an open book	1517
xi.	Ministry of the Two Witnesses	529—1789
	Death of the Witnesses	1514
	Resurrection of the Witnesses	1517
	Their Political Ascension	1552
	The Tenth Part of the Great City destroyed by an Earthquake	} England sepa- rated from the Papacy } 1534
	The Seven United Provinces wrested from Spain and Rome	
15.	The Seventh Trumpet.	
xvi.	First Vial. Ulcerous eruption—first out- break of the 'French malignant distem- per'*	1789
	Second Vial. Maritime Wars†	1793—1815

* The expression of Burke. See Elliott, vol. iii. p. 1073.

† In this great naval war of twenty years, there were destroyed, nearly 200 ships of the line, between 300 and 400 frigates, and an almost incalculable number of smaller vessels of war and ships of commerce. Such a period of maritime warfare is unexampled in history. Elliott, vol. iii. p. 1080.

CHAP.		A.D.
	Third Vial. Desolation of the Basins of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Po, and of the Alpine provinces*	1793—1805
	Fourth Vial. Judgment upon the Imperial Power — Extinction of the Germanic Empire†	1806
	Fifth Vial. Judgment upon Rome—Incorporation of the States of the Church with the French Empire‡	1809
	Sixth Vial. Judgment upon the Ottoman or Euphratean Power§	1820
	Seventh Vial. Social Convulsions—Tripartition of the European Commonwealth	****
XVIII.	Overtthrow of the Papal Babylon.	
	* * * * *	

INTERMEDIATE VISIONS.—(See page 565.)

IV, v.	The Heavenly Temple—Chorus of Worshippers.
VII.	The Sealed Number (Era of Augustine)—Chorus of the Faithful.
XI.	The Measuring of the Temple—Chorus of Elders.
XII.	Conflict between the Sun-clothed Woman and the Pagan Dragon.
XIII.	{ Rise from the Sea of the Seven-headed, ten-horned Wild Beast.
	{ Rise from the Land of the Two-horned Beast.

* Elliott, vol. iii. pp. 1083—1087.

† “ In 1806, the year after the battle of Austerlitz, we read of the renunciation by the German Emperor, on Napoleon’s requirement, (just as by Augustulus on Odoacer’s order,) of his title of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and of Germany.” See Elliott, vol. iii. pp. 1091.

‡ Ib. pp. 1104—1109. In 1809, Napoleon issued from Schoenbrunn and Vienna his decrees revoking Charlemagne’s donations to the Holy See, and annexing Rome itself to the French Empire.

§ Ib. pp. 1142—1154. Since 1820, Wallachia and Moldavia, Servia and Greece, have been rescued from the Turkish yoke; Egypt is virtually independent; and Algiers a French colony.

|| Elliott, vol. iii. pp. 1252—1255.

CHAP.

- XIV. Chorus of the Faithful Followers of the Lamb.
Vision of the Three Herald Angels, bearing the Gospel and
announcing the doom of Babylon.
Vision of the Harvest.
Vision of the Vintage.
- XV. Chorus of the Victors over the Beast.
- XVII, XVIII. Vision of the Mystical Babylon.
- XIX. Chorus of Heavenly multitudes.
Triumphal Procession.
- XX. Binding of Satan.
The Judgment.
- XXI, XXII. The New Heaven and New Earth.

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