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THE FINDING OF MOSES



CHRIST THE COMFORTER.





# TAR OF BETHLEHEM

OR THE

## HEAVENLY DAWN

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

AND THE

LIVES OF THE HOLY APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS

BY

REV. JOHN FLEETWOOD, D.D.

TOGETHER WITH THE

LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS AND OF THE MOST EMINENT  
CHRISTIAN MARTYRS, FATHERS AND REFORMERS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

## THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS

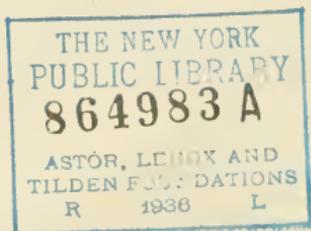
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES.

ALSO A

### CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,

SHOWING THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS OF JEWISH AND CONTEMPORANEOUS  
HISTORY FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

*EMBELLISHED WITH MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED FINE  
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## PREFACE.

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**THIS** peerless volume is the crowning success of all efforts to furnish a Life of Christ that is worthy of its great theme. It is the fruit of vast research, unlimited resources, and brilliant scholarship.

There is a constant demand for a faithful record of the birth, early life, public ministry, beautiful parables and thrilling miracles of Christ. In this superb work the fascinating story is told with such graphic power that young persons are interested, while there is such lofty thought, and glowing description, that the most cultured minds are enlightened and charmed.

The work begins with the birth of Jesus, and those very interesting scenes which surround his advent. The reader hears the angels singing to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and sees the Child Wonderful in the lowly manger, the adoring sages bringing their costly gifts, and the swift flight into Egypt to escape the murderous decree of Herod. The massacre of the infants of Bethlehem; the birth of that mighty prophet, John the Baptist; the death of Herod; the return of Joseph and Mary from Egypt, and the interesting scene when the youthful Nazarene disputes with the learned Doctors in the Temple, are thrilling incidents connected with the early life of Christ, and are fully depicted in "Star of Bethlehem."

The striking events in his public ministry are described with a masterly hand. The reader stands on the banks of the Jordan and witnesses his baptism by John, and the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove; then his terrible

temptation in the wilderness, and victory over the powers of darkness; and afterward the first miracle which showed his divine power, the expulsion of the money-changers from the Temple, the remarkable discourse at Jacob's well to the poor Samaritan woman, and the healing of the sick at Capernaum. The interest grows at every step as the striking scenes are unfolded—such as the delivery of the famous sermon on the mount; the curing of all forms of disease; the rebuke of the winds and waves on the stormy Sea of Galilee; the calling of the rugged fishermen to be Apostles, and those beneficent acts, astonishing miracles, and deeds of mercy which displayed a love and sympathy no less marvelous than the acts of his omnipotence.

Such teachings of Christ as the Golden Rule, the parable of the Good Samaritan, the pathetic story of the Prodigal Son, are both familiar and dear to the heart of the world. The words of the Great Teacher have affected human customs, laws, civilization, and have given character to nations. To unfold the meaning of the marvelous teachings is one of the main objects of this great work, and forms one of its most attractive features. The reader hears the lips that spake as never man spake repeating the words which have enlightened, cheered and blessed the world since the Heavenly Dawn of Christianity. No work ever before published has equalled this in gems of thought; the rich and beautiful meaning delights the reader, and makes the Sublime Gospel story as captivating as if told for the first time.

“Star of Bethlehem” presents a most attractive and thrilling panorama of the closing scenes in the Life of Christ. You behold him in the crowded streets of Jerusalem; at the little village of Bethany; agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane; seized by his enemies and condemned by Pilate; bearing his cross on the way to Golgotha; and wearing the crown of thorns. In startling pen pictures the awful scenes of the crucifixion are depicted, and these are followed by the rending of the tomb and sublime Ascension. It would

not be possible for human pen to portray more vividly those majestic events, at once awful and fascinating, which form the closing part of Christ's life upon earth. There are single chapters in this unrivalled work which contain more to interest and instruct than many whole volumes. It is universally regarded as the most fascinating and valuable work upon this grand subject.

After an eloquent review of the life and doctrines of Christ, this part of the work closes with a brilliant statement of the nature of the Christian religion, the truths and principles it teaches, and its grand effects upon the individual, the home and the nation.

The "Life of Christ," comprehensive as it is, is only one part of this captivating volume. It is followed with the "Lives of the Apostles and Holy Women." These are graphic histories of those great characters of the Bible which surpass the loftiest creations of fiction. The reader is made acquainted with all the apostles, those valiant heroes and martyrs, "of whom the world was not worthy." Peter, James, John, Luke, Mark, Paul, and many others renowned in the glowing annals of the early church, with such devoted women as the Virgin Mother, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the sister of Lazarus, are pictured in a manner worthy of their renown.

The next part of "Star of Bethlehem" contains fascinating descriptions of "Old Testament Characters." From Adam to Daniel, including Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Samson, David, Solomon, and many others, there are new surprises and entrancing discoveries at every step. Pathetic scenes, fierce battles and memorable victories, pass in rapid succession before the eye of the reader. Nothing is omitted that can furnish instruction and delight, and give absorbing interest to the Bible story.

The work would be incomplete did it fail to trace the spread of Christianity from the days of the apostles to the modern era. This is done in a series of Biographies of the

“Early Christian Martyrs, Fathers, and Reformers,” embracing a period from St. John to the Reformation, and showing how the truth was witnessed by these noble men.

No religious work, so full and comprehensive, and ranging over so wide a field, has ever been offered to the American people. Its high character is guaranteed by the fact that apart from the efforts of Fleetwood and the Editor, the book is the sum of the learned labors and researches of the most distinguished Biblical writers of the world, namely, Dr. William Smith, Dean Alford, Dr. Bevan, the Bishop of Ely, Dean Farrar, Dean Milman, Dr. Browne, Mr. Layard, Dr. Milner, Prof. Marks and others, whose names are a sufficient endorsement of the work.

One of the great merits of this work is that it comprises, in one large volume, information which heretofore could only be obtained by perusing a large number of books. It is therefore in itself a complete library of religious literature. Nothing necessary to a full understanding of the truths of revealed religion has been omitted, and care has been taken not to burden the reader with matters merely speculative in their character.

This work will be found especially valuable to parents and others desiring to instruct the young in the truths of religion.

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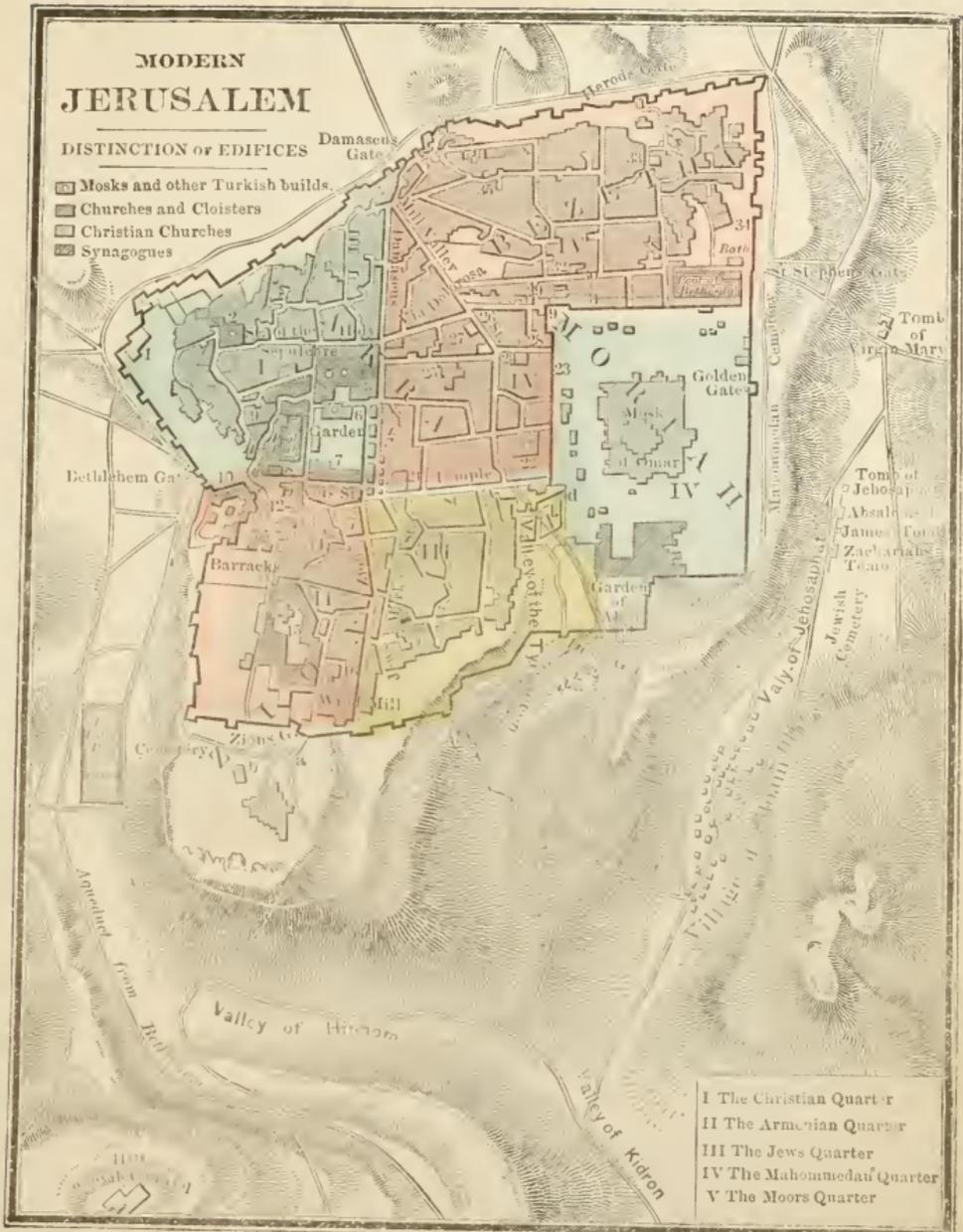


“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD.”

# MODERN JERUSALEM

## DISTINCTION OF EDIFICES

-  Mosks and other Turkish builds
-  Churches and Cloisters
-  Christian Churches
-  Synagogues



- I The Christian Quarter
- II The Armenian Quarter
- III The Jews Quarter
- IV The Mohammedan Quarter
- V The Moors Quarter

L. B. Folger Sc. Chas.

19 Synagogue of the Portuguese Jews.  
20 Mosque.

### IV.—THE MOHAMMEDAN QUARTER.

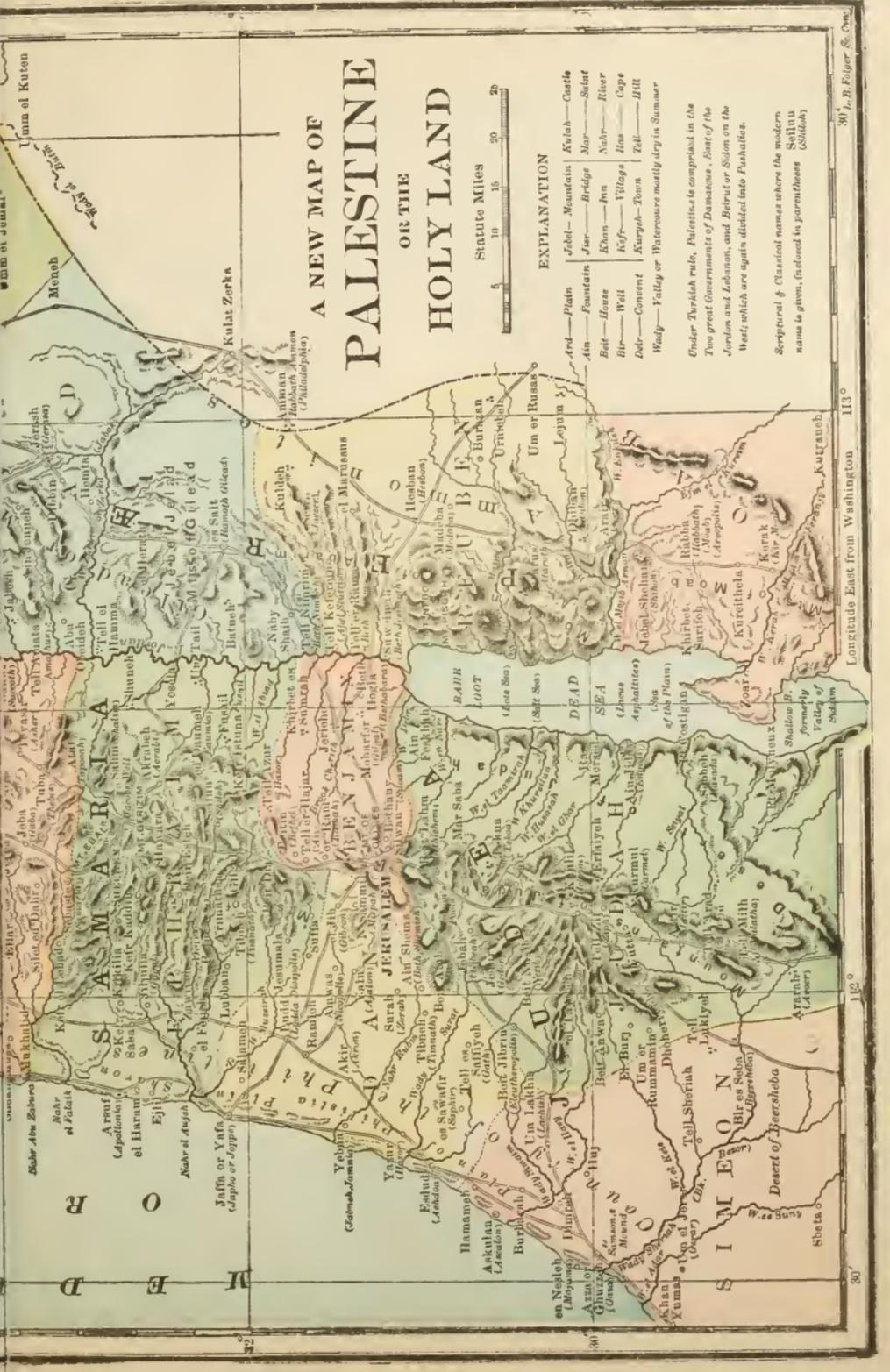
- 21 Khan and Bazaar.
- 22 Mineral Bath.
- 23 Convent and Schools.
- 24 Institute for Blind Dervishes.
- 25 Hospital of St. Helena.
- 26 Reputed site of the House of the Rich Man.
- 27 Reputed site of the House of St. Varonica.
- 28 Residence of the Turkish Pasha.
- 29 Arch of the "Ecce Homo."
- 30 Place of the "Scala Sancta," the Holy Staircase.

- 31 Pilate's House.
- 32 Place of Flagellation.
- 33 Ruins of a Church. House of Simon the Pharisee.
- 34 Church of St. Anna.
- 35 House of Herod. Dervish's Mosque.

### V.—THE MOORS' QUARTER.

- a Armenian Convent. House of Caiaphas.
  - b American Burial Ground.
  - c David's Tomb.
  - d Place of Wailing of the Jews.
- Just within Zion's Gate are wretched abodes of lepers.*





# A NEW MAP OF PALESTINE OR THE HOLY LAND

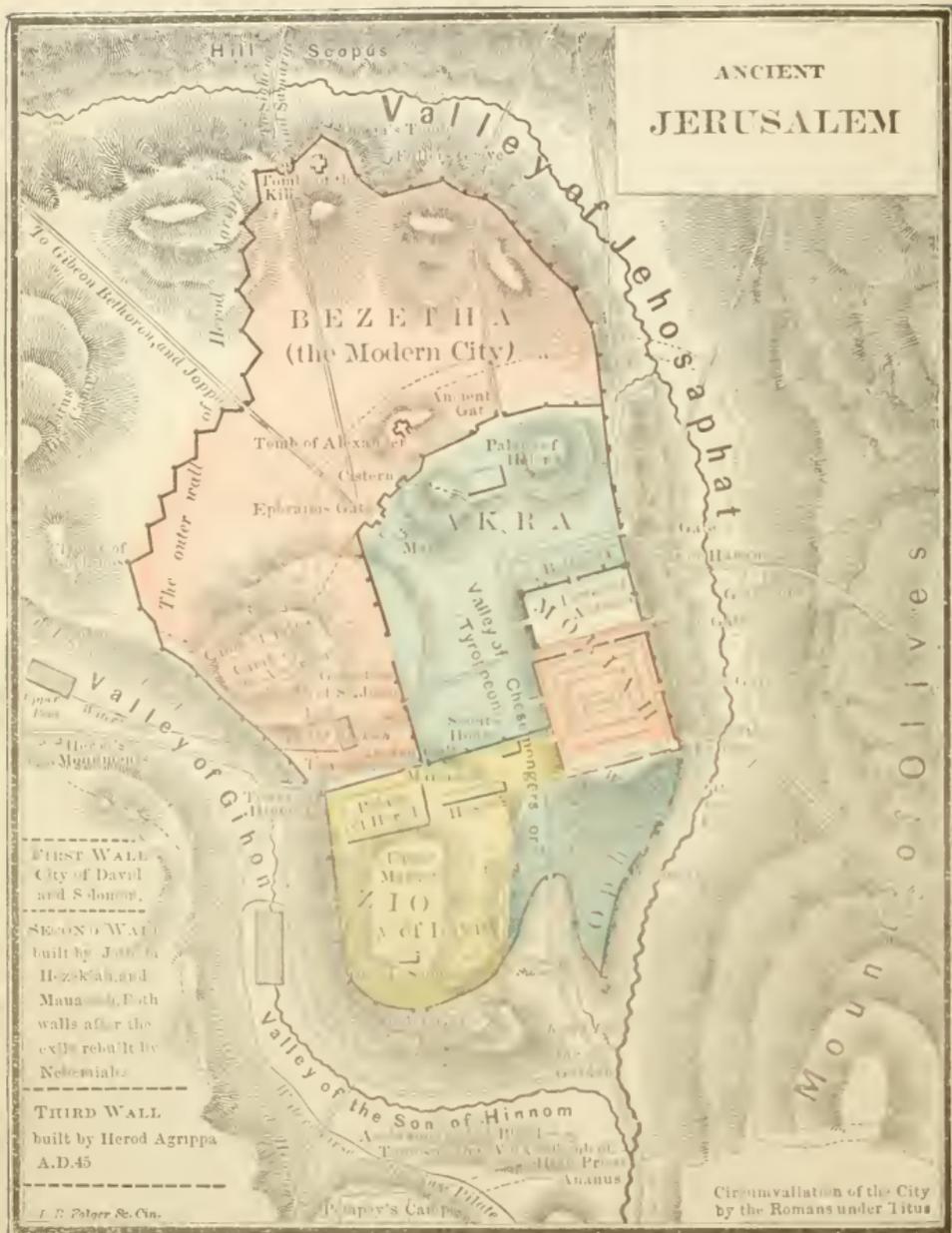


### EXPLANATION

- Arad—Plain
- Ain—Fountain
- Beth—House
- Bir—Well
- Deir—Convent
- Wady—Valley or Watercourse mostly dry in Summer
- Kulab—Castle
- Jur—Bridge
- Khan—Inn
- Kofr—Village
- Karrah—Town
- Tell—Hill
- Mar—Saint
- Nahr—River
- Iss—Cave
- Zell—Hill

Under Turkish rule, Palestine is comprised in the two great Governments of Damascus, East of the Jordan and Lebanon, and Beirut or Sidon on the West; which are again divided into Pashalics.

Scriptural & Classical names where the modern names are given, enclosed in parentheses.



## MODERN JERUSALEM.

### I.—THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER.

- 1 Goliath's Castle.
- 2 Latin Convent.
- 3 Church of Holy Sepulchre.
- 4 Greek Convent.
- 5 Coptic Convent.
- 6 Ruins of St. John's Hospital.
- 7 Greek Church. St. John's.
- 8 Residence of the Christian Bishop.
- 9 Church of the Greek Schismatics.
- 10 Tower of Hippicus. David's Tower.
- 11 Supposed Site of the Tower of Phasaelus.
- 12 The Prussian Consulate.

- 13 Modern Evangelical Church.
- 14 Hospital and Syrian Convent.

### II.—THE ARMENIAN QUARTER.

- 15 Armenian Convent, with the Church of St. James.
- The only building in Jerusalem which presents any appearance of comfort.*
- 16 Nunnery of St. George.
  - 17 Barracks.

### III.—THE JEWS' QUARTER.

- The most wretched in the city.*
- 18 Synagogue of the Shephardim

# STAR OF BETHLEHEM

OR

## THE HEAVENLY DAWN.

---

### CHAPTER I.

PRESAGE OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST—PREDICTION OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—SALUTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN BY THE ANGEL—VISITATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY TO ELIZABETH—BIRTH OF THE BAPTIST.

No event that ever did, or perhaps will happen, can more remarkably display the wisdom and power of the GREAT JEHOVAH, than the glorious manner in which he brought life and immortality to light, by the Gospel of his only Son, manifested in the flesh.

History, as it refers merely to human events, is a pleasing and instructing subject; but that which relates to our immortal interest, certainly claims our most serious regard.

If we survey the works of a stupendous Creator, we shall find that few arrived at perfection at once. This observation is amply confirmed by the various productions in the natural, and changes in the moral world. The Supreme Being, who conducts all his operations according to his infinite wisdom, appears to have retained the same maxim in the regulating of his kindest design to the sons of men. The Divine mind and will were not revealed to mankind, at first, in their clearest evidence and fullest splendor. The dawn, in a spiritual as well as in a natural sense, preceded the meridian glory; the former revelation was but a type or earnest of the latter, and, in comparison with it, intricate and mysterious.

The all-gracious God, as it seemed best to his unerring wisdom, was pleased, by degrees, to open and unfold his glorious councils;

and man gradually attained to the knowledge of the great plan of salvation, and the means used by its great Author to promote and establish it.

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

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

---

\* Dr. Wm. Smith, in his *Dictionary of the Bible*, writes as follows, concerning the Messianic prophecies :

"The earliest gleam of the Gospel is found in the account of the fall (Gen. iii. 15). Many interpreters would understand by the seed of the woman the Messiah only; but it is easier to think with Calvin, that mankind, after they are gathered into one army by Jesus the Christ, the Head of the Church, are to achieve the victory over evil. The blessings in store for the children of Shem are remarkably indicated in the words of Noah, 'Blessed be the God of Shem' (Gen. ix. 26). Next follows the promise to Abraham, wherein the blessings to Shem are turned into the narrower channel of one family. (Gen. xii. 2, 3.) The promise is still indefinite; but it tends to the undoing of the curse of Adam by a blessing to all the earth through the seed of Abraham, as death had come on the whole earth through Adam.

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

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

That this was the great subject of his prayer appears from the declaration of the angel Gabriel: \* The prayer thou hast directed with sincerity to an Almighty ear, concerning the coming of the Messiah, "is heard; and behold thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son," who shall prepare the way for the mighty Redeemer of Israel. The old priest, indeed, was as much astonished at the subject of the

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\* The word Gabriel, which is used as a proper name in Daniel viii. 16-ix. 21, and in Luke i. 19-26, is merely a term descriptive of the angelic office. According to the Jewish and Christian traditions, Gabriel is one of the archangels, "but in Scripture he is set forth only as the representative of the angelic nature in its ministration of comfort and sympathy to man."

mission as he was at the appearance of the messenger ; and esteeming it impossible that his wife, thus advanced in years, should conceive a son, weakly demanded a sign to confirm his belief, in the fulfilment of the promise, though he knew the authority of the angel was derived from the God of Truth. But as it is the lot of humanity to err, Zacharias had, for a moment, forgot, that nothing was impossible to Omnipotence, as well as that it was not the first time an aged woman was caused to conceive, and bear a child—the least reflection would have reminded him that Sarah conceived and bore Isaac when she was far advanced in years, and that Samuel was born of a woman who had been long reputed, and even called barren.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The angel, therefore, perceiving the goodness of her disposition, notwithstanding some little proof of human weakness and shortness of sight, vouchsafed an immediate answer to her inquiry: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall cover thee;" or, in other words, this miraculous event shall be brought about by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and wonderful exertion of the power of the Most High. As thy conception is effected by the immediate interposition of the Holy Ghost, "Therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

To confirm her faith in the glorious message, the heavenly messenger observed to her that her cousin Elizabeth, notwithstanding her advanced years, and reputed barrenness, was above six months pregnant; assigning this incontestable argument for the miraculous incident, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

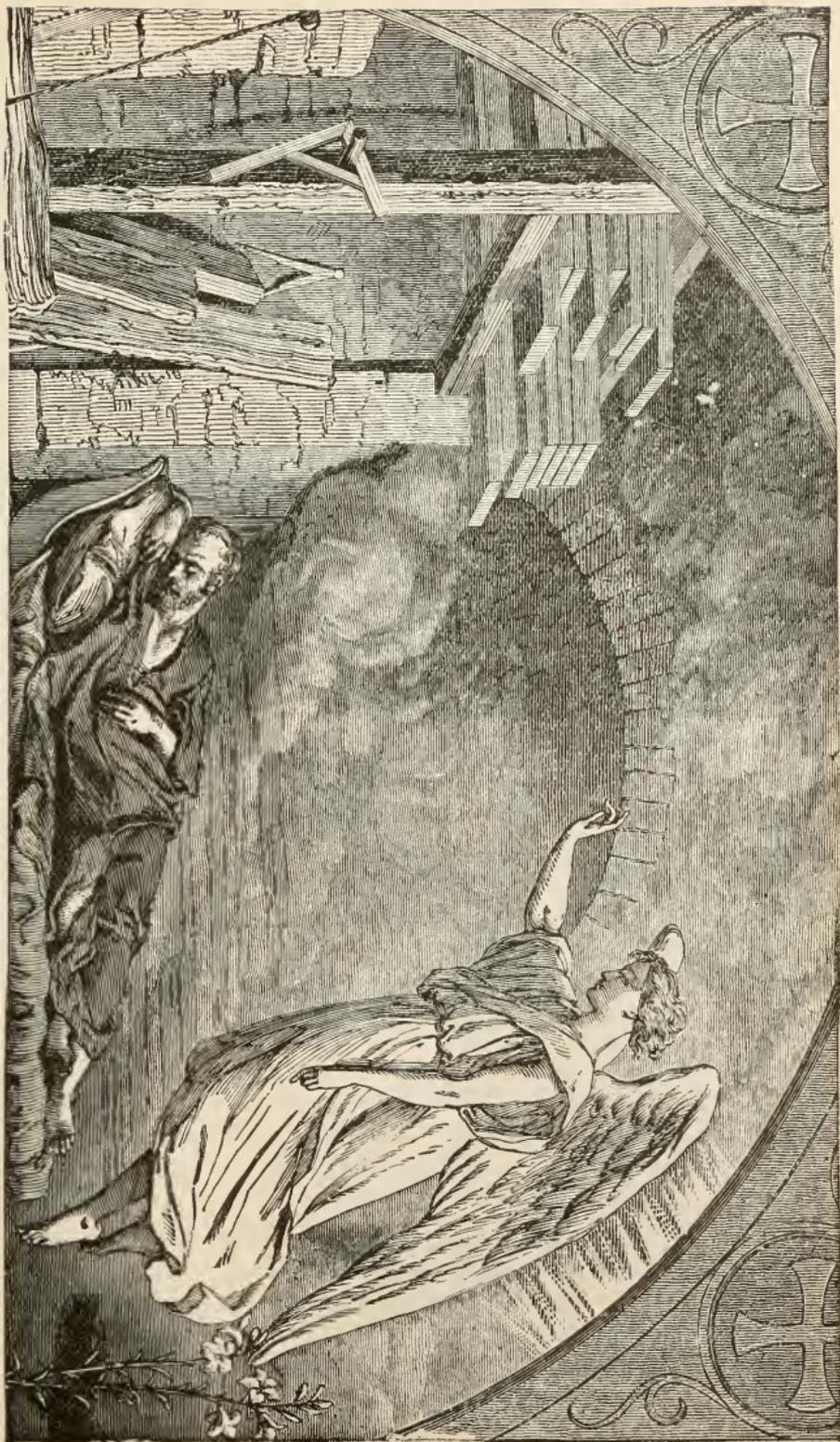
This reply not only removed all her doubts and fears, but filled her with inexpressible joy, so that she even anticipated the promised felicity; for she, with the rest of the daughters of Jacob, had long indulged a hope of being selected by God to be the honored mother of the Saviour of Israel: and therefore,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

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

That evangelist writes, that the salutation of Mary had such an effect upon Elizabeth, that, on her hearing of the miraculous event which had befallen the Virgin, the babe leaped within her, and that she being inspired with a holy delight on the approaching prospect of the nativity of her Saviour, she exclaimed with rapture, "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Luke i. 34. Nor did her ecstasy cease with this token of humility and joy on the important event; in the ardor of which she evinced that prophetic influence, which, while it amazed the blessed Virgin, could not fail of establishing her belief in what the angel had foretold, for she repeated the very words expressed by the angel, in his salutation of the Holy Virgin, "Blessed art thou among women," together with a quotation from the Psalms, and "blessed is the fruit of thy womb!"

For as Mary conceived the seed long promised, and earnestly desired—the seed in whom all the nations of the earth were to be

THE ANGEL APPEARING UNTO JOSEPH.



blessed—he could not but be blessed himself, according to the words of the Psalmist: “His name shall continue as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.” The happy Virgin, catching the holy flame from the aged Elizabeth, broke out into an humble acknowledgment of her unworthiness, and the wonderful grace of the Almighty, in appointing her to the exalted honor of bearing in her womb the Redeemer of Israel, as expressed in those well-known words, “My soul doth magnify the Lord,” etc. Having thus confirmed herself by this visit, in the belief of the prediction of the angel Gabriel, when the period of Elizabeth’s pregnancy approached, she returned to Nazareth, having resided in Judea about three months.

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

This promise being thus fulfilled, the aged priest was restored to his speech, and immediately broke out into praise and rapture at the marvellous works of God, in strains which astonished all around him. This most surprising event greatly alarmed the people of the adjacent country, who were divided in their opinions concerning a child whose birth was attended with so many extraordinary circumstances. Indeed, these incidents were worthy of general admiration: that he who was to be the forerunner of the mighty Saviour of Israel, should not make his entrance on life in an obscure and common manner, but with particular tokens of the favor of heaven, in order to attract the observation of his countrymen, and excite their attention to that ministry which he was called to by God, even the preparation of the people for the reception of the Messiah, who was shortly to appear in the flesh.

It is observable that the Baptist, from his infancy, displayed great qualities, both of mind and body; for such was his strength of constitution, through the blessing of the God of Nature, that he lived till near the thirtieth year of his age, when his public ministry began, in the mountains and desert country of Judea, bereft of almost all the comforts of life. But at length the prophecy of the good old Zacha-

rias, relating to his future elevation, was literally fulfilled: "Thou, O child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation to his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercies of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

As Joseph had abstained from all matrimonial intercourse with his wife, he was not a little alarmed, when, shortly after her return to Nazareth, she discovered evident signs of pregnancy; nay, so far was he wrought on by this circumstance, that he absolutely resolved on a dissolution of the marriage; but previous to such a rigorous procedure, questioning her concerning the same, she, to wipe off so foul an aspersion, minutely related to him the particulars of the vision from the angel, and the extraordinary event that had befallen Zacharias and Elizabeth.

Notwithstanding this ingenuous declaration, Joseph's suspicions continued, and suggested to him, that this might be a device, concerted by the friends of Mary, to exempt her from that disgrace, which must attend a divorce on such a pretence; however, he resolved to execute his purpose as privately as possible, and without assigning the cause of the same, which, under their constitution, would have subjected her to the penalty of death.

But, on cooler reflection, he called to mind the sovereign power of Omnipotence; for which reason, however opposite her case might be to the nature of things in general, her vindication of herself might be well-grounded. He now thought himself bound by every tie of justice and duty, to preserve her character inviolable; though as he was a just man, and a most religious observer of the law, the assertions she made, did not appear to him sufficient to justify him in retaining her in his house. While he was thus ruminating on this interesting event, he was overtaken with a pleasing slumber, and received a communication from above, which fully revealed the cause and manner of Mary's pregnancy, dispelled his doubts, and encouraged him to take home his falsely-suspected spouse; "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost."

The aged Joseph complied with the voice of heaven most cheerfully: for no sooner did the morning dawn appear, than he arose from his couch, and obeyed the commands of the Most High, by relating

to his wife his being assured of her innocence, and immediately restored her to her former favor.

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

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



THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.



BETHLEHEM.

## CHAPTER II.

GENERAL DECREE FOR TAXATION PUBLISHED—BIRTH OF CHRIST—DECLARATION OF THE SAME TO THE SHEPHERDS—CIRCUMCISION AND PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE—THE WISE MEN OF THE EAST WORSHIP THE HOLY CHILD—FLIGHT OF JOSEPH INTO EGYPT—MASSACRE OF THE INFANTS AT BETHLEHEM—DEATH OF HEROD—RETURN OF JOSEPH OUT OF EGYPT.

AUGUSTUS CÆSAR, the Roman Emperor, having at this time issued an edict for a general taxation\* on all nations, cities, and towns subject to the Empire, King Herod, in consequence of that decree, commanded all under his government to muster in the city of his

\* "The pressure of Roman taxation, if not absolutely heavier, was probably more galling, as being more thorough and systematic, more distinctively a mark of bondage. The capture of Jerusalem by Pompey was followed immediately by the imposition of a tribute, and within a short time the sum thus taken from the resources of the country amounted to ten thousand talents. When Judea became formally a Roman province, the whole financial system of the empire came as a natural consequence. The taxes were systematically formed, and the Publicans appeared as a new curse to the country. The portoria were levied at harbors, piers, and the gates of cities. (Matt. xvii. 24. Rom. xiii. 7.) In addition to this, there was the poll tax paid by every Jew, and looked upon, for that reason, as the special badge of servitude. United with this, as a part of the same system, there was also, in all probability, a property tax of some kind. In addition to these general taxes, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were subject to a special house-duty about this time."—*Dr. Smith.*

people, or place of his descent, that an estimate might be taken of their persons and effects. Pursuant to this order, Joseph and Mary, as descendants from the line of David, departed from Nazareth, where they then resided, and came to Bethlehem, a city of Judea, the place of the nativity of David and his ancestors.

So numerous were the people that repaired to this place, on account of the general decree, that every dwelling was occupied; and Joseph and Mary, though they could not depart thence till after the taxation, were forced to take up their residence in an humble stable, the spot in which it pleased the Divine Wisdom should be born the Lord of Life and Glory, who, as a perfect example of humility to all his followers, was to make his entrance into, and his exit out of the lower world, in a very mean and humble manner.

In this lowly tenement, the blessed Virgin brought forth her first-born God-like Son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him (having no better place) in a manger.\*

It pleased the wise disposer of all things, by his holy angel, first to make known to some pious shepherds, who were watching their flocks by night in the neighboring fields, the birth of the long-promised, long-expected Messiah. The radiance which shone around them terrified the astonished peasants; but for the purpose of dissipating their fears, and confirming their joys, the divine messenger interposed, and thus addressed them: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger." Luke ii. 10, etc.

The glorious news was no sooner proclaimed than a number of the celestial choir were heard to resound the praises of the Almighty for this transcendent display of his goodness to sinful men: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." Transported with the happy tidings of the birth of the Redeemer of Israel, the angel no sooner departed

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\* Bethlehem, the birth-place of the Saviour, lies to the east of the main highway from Jerusalem to Hebron, and is six miles from the former place. It was the home of Ruth and the birth-place of David. Its population was small in the days of the Saviour, but at present is about three thousand, nearly all of the inhabitants being Christians. It is said to be one of the cleanest and neatest towns in Palestine. St. Jerome lived here for more than thirty years, and here made his famous translation of the Bible into the Vulgate.

than the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem in quest of the Babe, whom, according to the information of the sacred missionary, they found wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger. This event, so



THE ANGEL APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS.

exactly conformable to the angel's prediction, equally delighted and amazed them; nor could they conceal the purport of his mission, but published abroad all they had seen and heard.

Besides, as all the promises made to Abraham were to be fulfilled in the Messiah, it was necessary he should receive the seal of circumcision, in order to prove his descent from the patriarch, concerning whom it was foretold, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." As a further reason for our Lord's compliance with this Jewish institution, we may urge the propriety of his finishing the former dispensation, by an exact adherence to its rules, as he was about to establish another and better covenant; which could not be effected more fully, than by conforming to that sacrament which was of Divine injunction, and indispensably requisite to admission into the former. As the same institution also required that every first-born son, without any regard to circumstance or family, should be presented to the Lord, in the temple, by delivering him into the hand of the priest, and paying five shekels, together with an offering, which, from the poorer sort, consisted of a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, a ceremony in commemoration of the Divine mercy, in sparing the first-born in Israel, when those of Egypt, both men and beasts, were destroyed; his parents having tarried at Bethlehem till the days of Mary's purification were accomplished, brought the child Jesus to Jerusalem, and there presented him in the temple to the Lord, in the manner just described, with the offering allowed to the poorer sort of people; a repeated instance of the exact obedience of the immaculate Jesus to the ceremonial law, as well as the poverty of his parents, though descended from a royal house.

During the presentation of the Holy Infant, a pious and venerable old man, named Simeon, entered the temple, who, with all the devout, had "waited day and night for the consolation of Israel," and to whom it had been revealed by the Spirit of Truth, that he should not depart this mortal life till he had seen the Lord of life and salvation. Accordingly it was signified to him by the Holy Ghost, at whose instance he came at that precise time into the temple, that the child there presented was the long-expected Messiah, even the Redeemer of Israel. In an ecstasy of joy he embraced the heavenly infant in his arms, and broke out into this rhapsody: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke ii. 29, etc.

A certain aged prophetess, called Anna, who had a long time waited for the redemption of Israel, entering the temple at the instant

in which the pious Simeon exulted in the birth of the heavenly Infant, and finding that he was the promised Messiah, likewise joined with him in praising God, and went forth and declared the glad tidings of salvation to all the faithful in these parts.

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

This step seems to have been pursued in consequence of their opinion that it was necessary, in order to his being acknowledged the Messiah, "sent by God," that he should reside some time in the place of his birth. Whatever might be their motive for removal, it is evident from Scripture, that while they were in Bethlehem with their Son, certain Eastern philosophers, called Magi, or wise men, came, in consequence of the appearance they had seen, to Jerusalem, and inquired for the king of the Jews, declaring they had seen his star in their own quarter, and were come to pay him the adorations due to his dignity.

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

But, notwithstanding these uncertain conjectures, the star answered the end designed, and directed the Magi to the spot where resided the Lord of life and glory. Some men, too wise to admit of the evidences from the Revelation, have sceptically inquired, how these Eastern Magi could arrive at any knowledge that the Jews expected the Messiah, and that, therefore, on the appearance of this new star in the firmament, how they should apprehend it pointed out the birth of the great Redeemer of Israel? The learned assertors of the Christian cause, in answer to these queries, observe, that an opinion of the approach of the Messiah's kingdom had long prevailed all over the East; nay, this is declared in profane history, by Suetonius, Tacitus, and others.

The reason of this prevailing opinion is very obvious. The Jews conceived mighty expectations of the Messiah, from the many prophecies concerning him recorded in their own language; and the

Arabians, from the prophecies to the same import made to Abraham ; it being certain that those people retained traditional knowledge of this promise, from the words of Balaam, who was an Arabian prophet : "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel," etc., which every impartial reader must acknowledge refers to the appearance of the Messiah only, and not to any other incident whatever.

The other Eastern nations derived their expectations of the Messiah from their commercial connections with the Jews and Arabians, but more especially from the Jews, who being scattered over the whole country of the East, spread their religion wherever they went, which occasioned several Roman historians to take notice of the prevalence of that opinion.

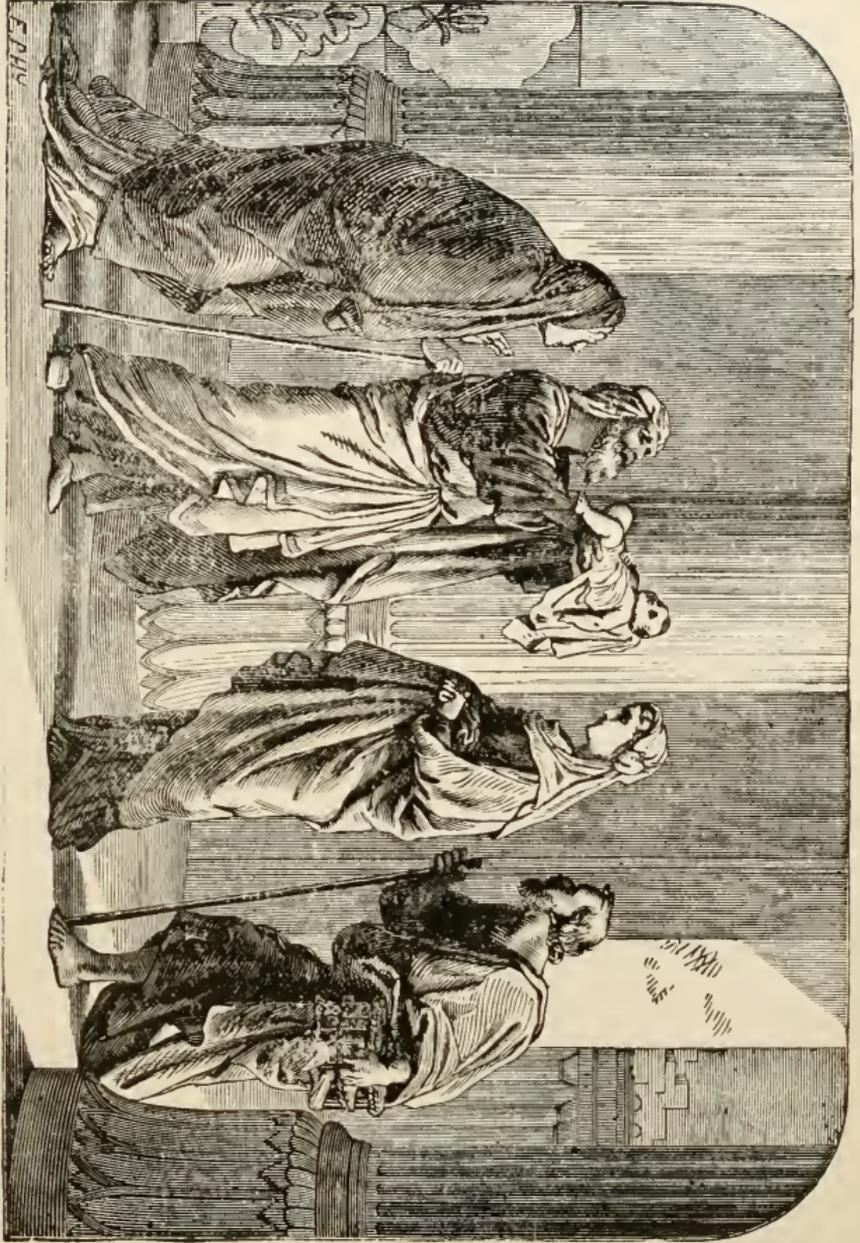
Nay, the expectation of the Messiah being born in Judea, was strongly impressed on the minds of the followers of Zoroaster, who reformed the religion of the Persians, and who, being a servant to the prophet Daniel, was particularly favored with revelations concerning the appearance of the Messiah.

From these considerations, it evidently appears that this opinion prevailed throughout the East ; and that the Magi might, with great reason, on the appearance of the star, repair to Jerusalem in quest of the promised Saviour of Israel.

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

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

SIMEON AND ANNA IN THE TEMPLE.



consequence of the reply from the supreme council of the nation, directed the Magi to Bethlehem, as the place, according to ancient prophecy, designed for the honor of Christ's nativity, earnestly entreating them, at the same time, immediately on their finding out the child, to send him word, that he might repair thither and pay his adoration to him also.

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

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

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

Accordingly, they had no sooner proceeded from Jerusalem, on their way to Bethlehem, than their kind conductor again appeared, went before them to the very city, and fixed on the habitation of the heavenly Infant. Guided by this celestial conductor, they entered the house, and prostrating themselves at the sacred feet of their spiritual King, presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Having thus accomplished the design of their expedition, they returned, according to promise, to Jerusalem.

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

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

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

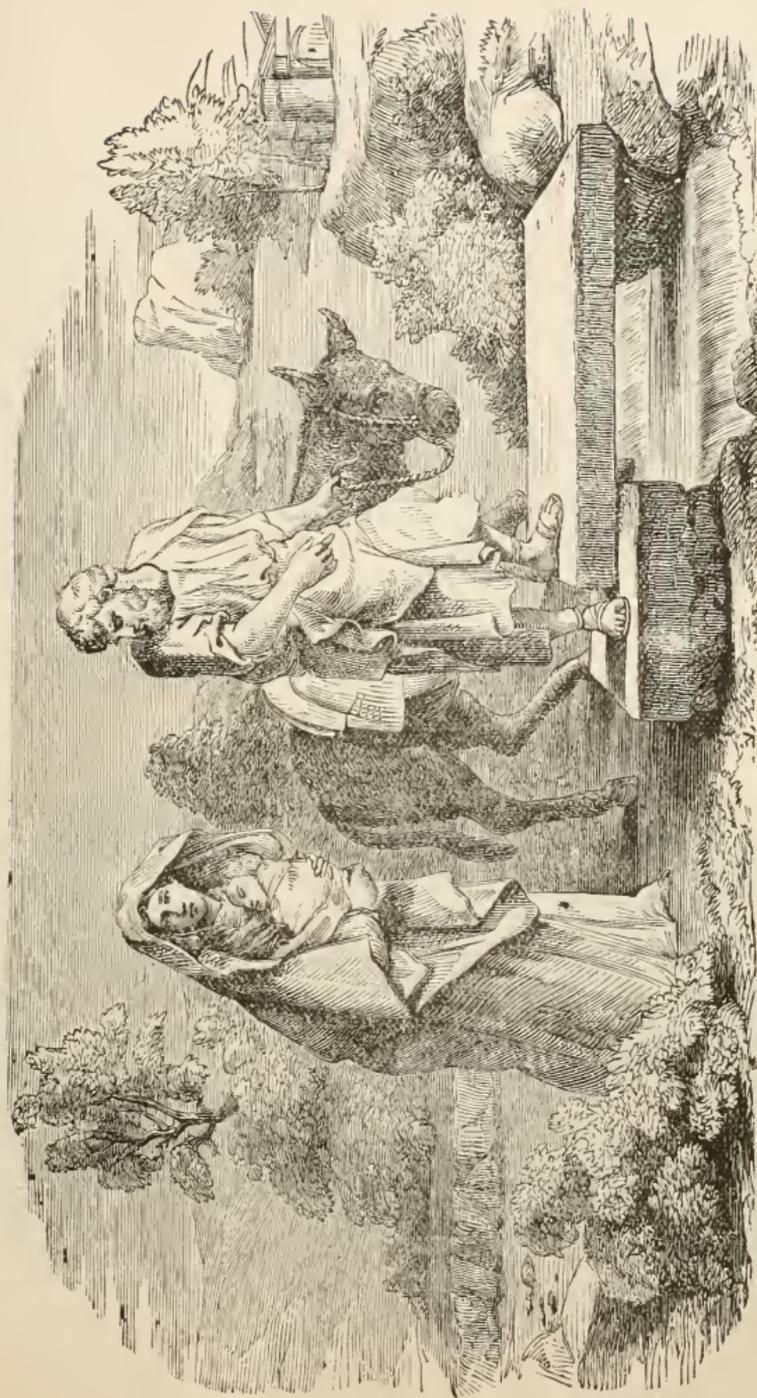
At length, irritated by disappointment, he resolved to accomplish by cruelty that which he could not effect by art, and accordingly issued orders to a large party of soldiers to go throughout Bethlehem, and all the neighboring villages, and massacre all the children they could find therein, from two years old and under; thinking that the infant Jesus, whom, as a prince, he both envied and dreaded, would fall in the general slaughter. But the heavenly missionary was sheltered from above; nor was the relentless king permitted to impede the design of an Almighty Creator. However, the cities, through which the soldiers carried the destructive sword, exhibited such scenes of horror and distress, as could not fail to thrill every soul not entirely lost to humanity: no sound was heard but the piercing cries of parents, the groans of expiring babes, and a general imprecation of vengeance on the merciless tyrant. But he did not long survive his cruel decree, being swept from his throne by a nauseous disease, to answer for his conduct at the bar of a tremendous judge.\*

\* "Herod the Great was the second son of Antipater, who was appointed procurator of Judea, by Julius Cæsar, B. C. 47, and Cyprus, an Arabian of noble

The tyrant Herod being thus cut off from the face of the earth, Joseph was warned by a heavenly messenger to return to the land of Israel. The good old man obeyed the Almighty command; and appears to have had a great desire of residing in Judea, and very probably in Bethlehem; but hearing that Herod was succeeded in his throne by his son Archelaus, and fearing that he might pursue the barbarous design of his father, he directed his course another way; but being warned again by a heavenly mission, he retired into Galilee, then under the government of a mild and benevolent prince, called Antipas, and took up his habitation at Nazareth, where the particular circumstances which attended the birth of the blessed Jesus

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descent. At the time of his father's elevation, though only fifteen years old, he received the government of Galilee, and, shortly after, that of Cœle-Syria. When Antony came to Syria, B. C. 41, he appointed Herod, and his elder brother Phasaël, tetrarchs of Judea. Herod was forced to abandon Judea the next year by an invasion of the Parthians, who supported the claims of Antigonus, the representative of the Asmonæan dynasty, and fled to Rome (B. C. 40). At Rome he was well received by Antony and Octavian, and was appointed by the Senate, king of Judea, to the exclusion of the Asmonæan line. In the course of a few years, by the help of the Romans, he took Jerusalem (B. C. 37.) and completely established his authority throughout his dominions. After the battle of Actium, he visited Octavian, at Rhodes; and his noble bearing won for him the favor of the conqueror, who confirmed him in the possession of his kingdom, B. C. 31, and in the next year increased it by the addition of several important cities, and afterwards gave him the province of Trachonitis, in the district of Panæas. The remainder of the reign of Herod was undisturbed by external troubles; but his domestic life was embittered by an almost uninterrupted series of injuries and cruel acts of vengeance. The terrible acts of bloodshed which Herod perpetrated in his own family were accompanied by others among his subjects, equally terrible from the number who fell victims to them. According to the well-known story, he ordered the nobles, whom he had called to him in his last moments, to be executed immediately after his decease, that so at least his death might be attended by universal mourning. It was at the time of his fatal illness that he must have caused the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 16-18); and from the comparative insignificance of the murder of a few young children in an unimportant village, when contrasted with the deeds which he carried out or designed, it is not surprising that Josephus has passed it over in silence. In dealing with the religious feelings or prejudices of the Jews, Herod showed as great contempt for public opinion as in the execution of his personal vengeance. But while he alienated in this manner the affections of the Jews, by his cruelty and disregard for the Law, he adorned Jerusalem with many splendid monuments of his taste and magnificence. The Temple, which he rebuilt with such scrupulous care, was the greatest of these works. The restoration was begun, B. C. 20, and the Temple itself was completed in a year and a half. But fresh additions were constantly made in succeeding years, so that it was said that the Temple was 'built in forty and six years.' —*Dr. Smith.*



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

were not generally known. The evangelist affirms that Joseph, with the infant and his mother, resided in Nazareth, where the holy Jesus spent his youth: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene."

It is evident that our Lord's residing at Nazareth\* tended in a remarkable manner to the fulfilment of those prophecies, because, in the course of his public ministry, he was frequently reproached with the same, and his countrymen often urged it as a reason for their disregard of his doctrine. But as the stubbornness of unbelief will never admit of conviction, we have therefore added these remarks to confirm the faith of the Christian, rather than convince the obstinate Infidel.

\* Nazareth was an obscure village in the days of our Lord, and but for its connection with his history, would have remained so. It is situated among the hills which constitute the south ridges of Lebanon, just before they descend to the plain of Esdraelon. At present it contains 3000 inhabitants, and is one of the better-class villages of the Holy Land. It was close to the borders of the country of the heathen, with whom it maintained more intimate relations than the rest of Judea. Its people spoke a ruder dialect than their brethren, and were less cultivated. Therefore the Jews looked down upon the place and its people with contempt. It is supposed by some writers that the morals of the people of Nazareth were so loose as to subject them to especial odium.



ANCIENT BANQUET.

## CHAPTER III.

STATE OF OUR LORD'S CHILDHOOD AND PRIVATE LIFE—HIS ARGUMENT WITH THE JEWISH DOCTORS—MISSION, CHARACTER, AND DOCTRINE OF THE BAPTIST—BAPTISM OF CHRIST, AND VISIBLE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT ON THAT SOLEMNITY.

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

As his parents were poor and humble, he had not the advantage of a finished education; and he seems to have received no other instruction than what his parents gave him in conformity to the Jewish law. But supernatural abilities amply compensated for the deficiency of natural acquirements, and he gave instances in his earliest years of amazing penetration and consummate wisdom.

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

These doctors, or expounders of the law, among the Jews, always taught the people publicly on the three great festivals: and it was on

one of these public occasions that the blessed Jesus gave such manifest proofs of his wisdom and penetration as astonished all beholders, many of whom thought he must be something more than human. As, according to his own declaration, he was employed in his heavenly Father's business, it is natural to think, in the course of these disputes, he modestly corrected some of the errors which the Jewish doctors then taught, and which were repugnant to the principles of that religion which he came to promote and establish. The wonder of his parents, at finding him in such sublime employment, was beyond expression; though his pious mother, notwithstanding the pleasure which the discovery afforded her, could not help showing the concern which his absence, without their knowledge, had occasioned both to Joseph and herself, addressed him thus, "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." To this question he replied, That their surprise at his absenting himself without their knowledge was groundless and absurd, as they might have been assured from his extraordinary birth, and the wonderful circumstances attending it, that his Father was no less than the Almighty One of Israel; that he assumed human nature to promote his glorious designs; and, therefore, as his errand was of such moment, they must not imagine he could always reside with them. "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" It would seem from this that his unique life was already beginning to dawn upon him.

This scene in the temple lifts the veil for a moment which hides nearly the whole of the early life of Jesus. Here he appears in the sacred edifice as if he would teach that childhood's proper place is in the sanctuary where instruction is given, where worship is offered, and lessons are taught which benefit all, especially the young. Behold, too, his early zeal, and the first outburst of the flame that afterward shone so brightly. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Though his parents did not clearly discern the full meaning of this excellent remonstrance, his pious mother committed his words to memory, and, together with Joseph her husband, joyfully returned with him to their poor dwelling at Nazareth, where he lived with them in dutiful subjection, thereby affording a noble example for the imitation of all children, who certainly are bound to yield obedience to their parents, since the Son of God himself, when on earth, has set them the pattern, by practising every branch of filial duty to his earthly parents.

Many persons, of more speculation than piety, may be induced to inquire the cause which prevented the evangelists giving us an exact detail of the transactions of our blessed Saviour's life from the twelfth year of his age till the time of his public ministry. To such we reply, that the design of the inspired writers being to instruct rather than amuse, they consulted our interests more than our humor and caprice; and that, therefore, the wisdom of God, by whose inspiration they wrote, demands our admiration, in that they passed over less important parts of our Saviour's life, which would have swelled their Gospels to an enormous bulk, fit only for the perusal of the studious, and those persons who have much vacant time; whereas the four Gospels, as they are written, make only a small volume, which is convenient for carriage, for reading, for the memory to retain, as well as adapted, by the plainness of their style, to the meanest capacities; notwithstanding which they contain all the important transactions of our Saviour's life, such as those which relate to his mediatorial office, the design of his incarnation, which was to teach us those things which belong to our eternal peace and happiness; to instruct us in his heavenly doctrines, as our prophet; to offer himself a sacrifice upon the cross, as our priest; and to burst the chains of death, and triumphantly ascend into heaven, as king or head of his church. The omissions, therefore, can be of no real consequence, since "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name."

During the obscure state of our blessed Redeemer at Nazareth, the Emperor Augustus died in Campania, after a long reign of nearly forty years, to the general regret of the whole Roman empire, and was succeeded by Tiberius, his step-son, a prince of a very different temper of mind from his predecessor. This emperor, in the second year of his reign, recalled Rufus from the government of Judea, and sent Valerius Gracchus to succeed him. After reigning eleven years, Gracchus was recalled, and succeeded by Pontius Pilate, a person resembling in disposition his master Tiberius, who was malicious, cruel, and covetous. Soon after Pontius Pilate was appointed to the government of Judea, John the Baptist began to open his commission for preparing our Saviour's way before him, according as was appointed, by preaching "The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

Sacred history has not informed us of the manner in which the Baptist spent the former part of his life; but according to ancient

tradition, Elizabeth, hearing of Herod's barbarous massacre of the infants of Bethlehem, fled into the wilderness to secure the infant John, then about eighteen months old, from the relentless cruelty of that inhuman monster, and there nurtured him, with all the tenderness of an affectionate mother, within forty days after which, she died.

His aged father, Zacharias, was slain afterwards, when officiating in the temple, by command of the tyrant Herod, for refusing to discover the place of his son's abode. The intended harbinger of the blessed Jesus being thus deprived of his earthly parents, the Father of the fatherless took compassion on him, and sent an angel to defend and support him till he had attained to a sufficient age and strength to provide for himself.

It appears from the accounts of the evangelists, that he dwelt in the desert till the time of his public ministry, resembling the ancient prophet Elijah, in the meanness of his clothing, and plainness of his diet. His dress was composed of camel's hair, his food the spontaneous productions of the wilderness, such as locusts and wild honey, and his drink the pure water of some crystal spring. His course of life was, indeed, admirably adapted to the doctrine of repentance, which he preached, as well as to engage the attention of his hearers; so that it appears highly reasonable that those persons who waited the coming of the Messiah with earnest expectation, should flock to him, anxious to hear what he had to deliver concerning him. He proved very successful in his ministry, as he enforced the doctrine of repentance, because the kingdom of heaven was at hand: persons of all degrees and professions flocked to him, confessed their sins, were baptized in Jordan, and submitted to whatever the prophet prescribed as necessary to inherit that kingdom, the approach of which he came to declare. Amongst his converts were many of the Pharisæical tribe, some of whom confessed their sins, and were baptized in Jordan.

The conversion of the Pharisees surprised the Baptist, knowing that they maintained a high opinion of their own sanctity, for which reason it was very astonishing that they should express any desire of obtaining a remission of their sins. In short, he was much surprised to find the whole nation so affected by his threatenings, especially as he knew that they expected salvation on account of their being of the seed of Abraham, a conceit which they greatly cherished, and which they seemed to have derived from a misrepresentation of the following passage: "Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun

for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night; who divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, if the heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

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

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

During the time of the Baptist's continuance at Bethabara, the blessed Jesus left his retirement at Nazareth; and previous to his public ministry repaired to the banks of the river Jordan,\* where

\* The river Jordan forms the eastern boundary of the Holy Land. It rises in Anti-Libanus, by two sources, and flows south, through several lakes, into the Dead Sea. Its course in an air line measures about sixty miles, but the windings of the stream make its total length one hundred and twenty miles. Its

John was executing his commission from above, in order to be there baptized by him. We cannot impute this conduct of our Lord to any necessity there was for his conforming to the institution of baptism; for purity needs no cleansing. It is therefore evident, that his motive was to add a sanction to that ordinance, for ever after appointed to be the initiating rite of Christianity: "Go, baptize all nations," etc. It appears that John immediately, as it were by a prophetic revelation, knew the Saviour of the world; for we find from the evangelist that he acknowledged his superiority, and declined the office. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Our Lord's answer, though short, is very full and

expressive: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." As if he had said, Regard not the precedence at this time, but perform thy office; for it is necessary that we should, in the minutest point, conform to the Divine will, by which this institution is enjoined. This remonstrance removed the objections of John, and he baptized the immaculate Jesus in the river Jordan, in the presence of numerous spectators.



DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST  
UPON CHRIST.

When the ceremony was performed, as he needed not the instructions usually given on the occasion, he went up straightway

out of the water, and kneeling on the bank of the river, fervently addressed his Almighty Father for an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit, as he was now entering on his public ministry, the prelude of his important mission, the end of which was the salvation of mankind.

breadth and depth vary greatly; in spring, when highest, it has been found to be one hundred and forty feet wide in some places, and entirely unfordable, with a very swift current, and many cataracts. The valley through which it flows, is about five miles in width, and is hemmed in by bold cliffs; the soil is sandy and barren, but the banks of the river are covered with a thick undergrowth. Several small streams flow into the river. The waters of the Jordan are clear and sweet.

His prayer was heard, his request was granted ; and an immediate attestation of the Divine pleasure given, by a visible ray of glory around him, and an audible voice proceeding from the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, and pronouncing these words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" Distinguishing his peculiar approbation of the blessed Jesus, by the epithet "beloved," as well as his standing in that relation to him, in a manner nearer than any of the human race, who are called, in common, the sons of men. This voice resembled not any human sound, but was loud and awful, like the thunders of heaven, in order to strike with reverence the surrounding multitude, and publicly declare the holy mission of the promised Messiah.

The blessed Jesus was called, in the Old Testament, the Son of God, but was, on this occasion, declared by the Almighty himself to be the long-expected deliverer of Israel. Thus all who were present at this marvellous descent of the Holy Spirit, were amply convinced of the Divine mission of our blessed Lord, by an infallible testimony from above, this being the *Star* that was to come out of Jacob, and the *Sceptre* that was to rise out of Israel ; the *Shiloh* foretold by the patriarch Jacob ; the *Great Prophet*, by Moses ; the *Holy One*, by David ; the *Prince of Peace*, by Isaiah, and the *Son of Man*. But this remarkable event tended much more to the glory of the Messiah than all those prophecies, as it was, in some measure, a real display of what they could only picture in the dark.



AN EASTERN DIVAN.

## CHAPTER IV.

COMMENCEMENT OF OUR SAVIOUR'S MINISTRY—HIS TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS—DEPUTATION OF THE SANÆDRIM TO JOHN THE BAPTIST—FIRST MIRACLE WROUGHT BY THE BLESSED JESUS.

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

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

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

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

In this wild and dreary situation the great Redeemer, as Moses and Elijah had done before him, fasted forty days and forty nights, maintained an incessant communion with his heavenly Father, digested the doctrine he was about to deliver, and the obedience he came to perform, and, by a total abstinence from food for forty days and forty nights, evinced the Divinity of his mission, or, in other words, proved that he was a "teacher come from God." But the melancholy solitude of a desert, and the extremes of hunger and thirst, were but a small part of our Saviour's sufferings in the

wilderness: Satan, that implacable foe to mankind, was permitted to buffet him with the most insinuating wiles, and assail him with the most alluring temptations, in order to attempt the defeat of Heaven's most gracious designs, and keep mankind under the dreadful dominion of sin and death.

The enemies of Revelation have not failed to represent this event in the most ludicrous manner. If any, therefore, should demand why God permitted his only Son, the Saviour of the world, to be tempted by the devil, whose power was deemed to be restrained, we reply as follows:—One cause of the Redeemer's being suffered to be tempted, was, that he, being personally acquainted with the wiles of Satan, might become a faithful and compassionate high-priest, know how to succor his people in time of adversity, and pity them when they fell into temptations. That in order to be a shining pattern of every virtue, also a wise and valiant general, the blessed Redeemer underwent all the difficulties and trials attending his service; that we, being animated by his glorious example, might not sink under the pressure and troubles which God, for our good, should be pleased to lay upon us.

The Saviour of the world hath not only been exposed to poverty and ridicule, but also to the most trying temptations of Satan; that as the Captain of our Salvation has undergone the same, we ought not to faint when we are tempted, but like him be able to withstand the fiery darts of the devil. It doubtless appears highly proper, in order that our blessed Lord and Master might both enter upon and prosecute his ministry with more glory to himself and advantage to mankind, that he should previously overcome the most subtle arts of that deceiver who, under the mask of a serpent, seduced our first parents, and involved them and their posterity in one common ruin. But, at the expiration of the forty days, when the blessed Jesus had endured the keenest hunger, the tempter, to make proof of the divinity of his mission, insolently demanded why he bore the sensation of hunger, since, if he was the Son of God, he must have power to change the stones of that dreary wilderness into bread; and, by so marvellous a transmutation, he might have the satisfaction of knowing the truth of what was said concerning him at his baptism.

But our blessed Saviour repelled this device by citing the words of Moses, which implied that God, whenever it seemed good in his sight, could, by extraordinary means, provide for the support of the

human race. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Luke iv. 4.

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

But observe his accursed pride and arrogance in promising that which is the gift of God alone—universal empire over the earth; and requiring what was due to none but the Supreme—religious homage. This blasphemy, as well as insolence, incited the blessed Jesus to exert his divine authority and command him, in a peremptory manner, to desist; citing this special injunction from sacred writ, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Though thus repelled, he repeated the attempt, and, having taken our Lord to Jerusalem, placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, and, by a taunt of insolence, urged him to prove the truth of his mission by casting himself down from thence; citing, as an encouragement for him to comply with his desire, the words of the inspired Psalmist: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Matt. iv. 6. But our Saviour soon baffled this attempt by another apt quotation from Scripture: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Matt. iv. 7. Thou shalt not provoke the Lord, either by disobeying his command or by an impertinent curiosity to know more concerning his mind and will than he is pleased to reveal.

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

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

During the time of our Saviour's retirement in the wilderness,

his faithful harbinger, the Baptist, being assured, from the miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit and other concurring testimonies, that Jesus was the promised and long-expected Messiah, continued publishing his mission to the multitude; so that the rulers in Jerusalem received information of the surprising events that had happened in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, before they saw the blessed Jesus, in confirmation of whose mission and doctrine they were affected. Prompted by curiosity, they despatched a deputation of priests and Levites to the Baptist, to demand of him whether he was the Messiah or Elias, or that prophet who was to rise from the dead and precede the Messiah, the powerful Prince so earnestly expected by the whole nation of Israel.

The Baptist frankly replied that he was not the Messiah whom they expected, nor Elias, who, as they vainly thought, would personally appear among them, nor any other prophet risen from the dead; but at the same time, hinted to them that, though he was not Elias himself, yet he was that person spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, and him of whom he thus prophesied: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isa. xl. 3.

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

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

The Baptist, as his grand business was to direct all persons to the Messiah for life and salvation in and through him, embraced this reasonable opportunity of pointing him out to the multitude: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!" Lest

the attending crowd should surmise that it had been previously concerted between Jesus and John, that the former should assume, and the latter give him, the appellation of Messiah, he publicly and solemnly declared that he was, equally with them, ignorant of the pretensions of Jesus to that high character until he saw the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost, and heard him pronounced, in the most awful manner, the Son of God. "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." John i. 32, etc.

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

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

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

Some time after, Jesus met with Philip, an inhabitant of the town

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

Philip, meeting with Nathanael, an inhabitant of Cana, a town of Galilee, informed him of the actual coming of the long-expected Messiah, that great Deliverer of Israel spoken of by Moses and the ancient prophets, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael was assured, from the predictions concerning the Messiah, that he was to be descended from the line of David and born in the city of Bethlehem, and therefore discovered an amazement at his being called Jesus of Nazareth: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Can that most contemptible of places, Nazareth, be supposed to have given birth to the mighty Saviour, the Prince of Peace, especially as it was expressly foretold by the prophet that he was to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David?

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

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

Our Saviour then told him he should hereafter have much stronger testimonials of the divinity of his mission, when he should be eye-witness to what the old patriarch Jacob had before seen in a vision—the angels of heaven descending and ascending, to attend the person

and execute the commands of the Son of Man: an appellation our blessed Lord assumed, not only as considering his humanity, but in order to fulfil most peremptorily that remarkable prediction of the prophet Daniel concerning him: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 13, 14.

These glowing prophecies of the Messiah beam like morning stars through the shadows of the old dispensation, and tell of the rising dawn. There was an expectation, a waiting, a longing, the weary world sighing for a new life. Strange that predictions should be so signally fulfilled, and men should not know it.

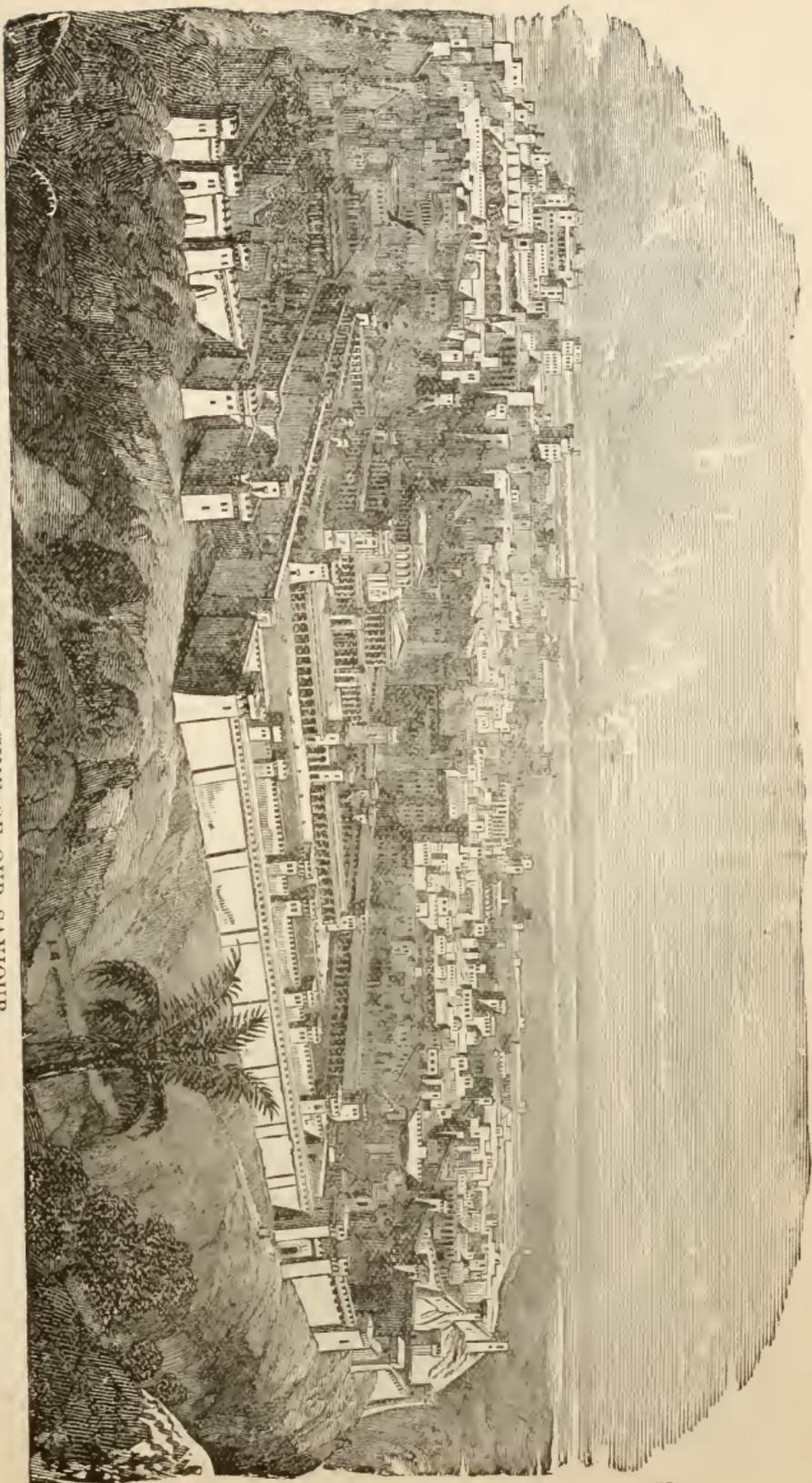
The great Redeemer, having attested the divinity of his mission by many incontestable evidences, and made five disciples, departed for Galilee, where, soon after his arrival, he was invited, with his mother and disciples, to a marriage-feast at Cana, a place near Nazareth. At these nuptials there happened to be a scarcity of wine, and his mother, who interested herself in the conduct of the feast, and was therefore desirous that every thing should be done with decorum, applied to her Son, hoping he would be able to remedy the defect. She had doubtless conceived he had the power of working miracles, and was therefore desirous that he would give proof of his ability in the presence of her friends, who were assembled at the marriage.

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

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

Our blessed Lord, being assured that working a miracle would greatly tend to confirm the faith of his young disciples, exerted his

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF OUR SAVIOUR.



divine power, by ordering the servants to fill six water-pots, containing each about twenty gallons, with water; which was no sooner done than the whole was converted into excellent wine.

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

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

The blessed Jesus having thus, by divers means, confirmed the faith of his disciples, and attested the truth and the divinity of his mission amongst those with whom he had been brought up, departed from Cana, and proceeded towards Jerusalem, in order to keep the approaching Passover.



JESUS DRIVES OUT THE MONEY-CHANGERS.

## CHAPTER V.

EXPULSION OF THE PROFANERS OF THE TEMPLE—JESUS VISITS AND DISPUTEE WITH NICODEMUS—BAPTIZES IN JUDEA—INSTRUCTS A POOR SAMARITAN—HEALS A SICK PERSON AT CAPERNAUM—RETIRES AGAIN TO NAZARETH, AND IS EXPELLED THENCE BY HIS IMPIOUS COUNTRYMEN.

OUR blessed Lord, immediately on his arrival at Jerusalem, repaired to the temple; where he was shocked at beholding a place dedicated to the solemn service of Almighty God prostituted to purposes of fraud and avarice, and become the resort of traders of every kind. Such abuse could not long escape his notice and correction; having an absolute right to chastise so flagrant a perversion of a place that, strictly speaking, was his own. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts." Accordingly, the blessed Jesus, whose pious soul was vexed at their profanation of the sacred place, drove out the traders, and upset the tables of the money-changers; saying unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

These mercenary wretches appeared to have been struck at once with a consciousness of their guilt, and the severity of our Lord's reproof, as they immediately departed without making the least resistance.

But our Lord's conduct in this affair carrying with it every token of zeal, for which the ancient prophets were so remarkable, the council assembled, and determined to inquire by what authority he attempted such a reformation, requiring at the same time a demonstrative proof of the divinity of his commission. To gratify their curiosity, our blessed Lord referred them only to the miracle of his own resurrection: "Destroy," says he, laying his hand on his breast, "this temple, and I will raise it up in three days." The rulers mistaking his meaning, imagined that he referred to the superb and lofty temple finished by Herod; and therefore told him such a relation was highly improbable, nor had they the least reason to think he could possibly rebuild in three days that magnificent structure, which had been

finished at immense expense, and was the labor of forty and six years.

Though the blessed Jesus declined compliance with the request of the mighty and noble amongst the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he wrought several miracles in the presence of the common people, in order to confirm the doctrines he delivered, and prove the divinity of his mission. As there had not been any miracles wrought amongst them for a considerable time, though many were recorded in their sacred books, they beheld our blessed Lord with amazement and veneration; and numbers were satisfied that he was the long-promised Messiah, the desired of all nations, so often foretold by the ancient prophets. For wise reasons, however, he did not publicly discover that he was the Great Prophet, as he knew that the faith of numbers was yet but weak, and that consequently many would desert his cause when they found he was opposed by the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and did not set up a worldly kingdom, as they thought the expected Messiah was to do. But the miracles wrought by the holy Jesus did not excite the wonder and astonishment of the common and illiterate class of the people alone.

Nicodemus, a principal person among them, on impartial reflection upon his wondrous works, so astonishing in their nature, so demonstrative in their proof, so salutary in their effect, so happily adapted to the confirmation of his doctrines, and so perfectly agreeable to the attributes of Deity, as well as the predictions of the ancient prophets concerning the Messiah, the Sun of Righteousness, who was to rise with healing in his wings, was perfectly assured that nothing less than Omnipotence itself could produce such wonders; and thence, like many others of his countrymen, concluded that Jesus was of a truth the *Son*, and *sent of God*, which last term is the meaning of the word Messiah. But scruples still arose in his mind, when, on the other hand he considered the obscurity of his birth, and the meanness of his appearance; so different from the exalted notions the people of the Jews always entertained concerning this powerful Prince, who was to erect his throne in the mighty city of Jerusalem, and subject to his dominion all the states and kingdoms of the earth. To remove, therefore, these scruples, and solve these perplexing doubts, Nicodemus resolved on an interview with the blessed Jesus; but desiring to conceal his visit from the other members of the Sanhedrim, who were greatly averse to his person and doctrine, he chose the night as most convenient for that purpose.

His salutation of the mighty Redeemer of Israel was this: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." John iii. 2. Rabbi, I am sufficiently convinced that thou art immediately sent as a teacher from on high; for nothing less than power Divine could enable thee to perform the miracles which thou hast wrought in the presence of multitudes. But this salutation by no means implies that Nicodemus thought Jesus the great promised Messiah, even the Redeemer of Israel: nor could he obtain that knowledge till it was revealed to him by the blessed Spirit of God.

We may observe, that our Saviour, waiving all formality and circumlocution, which tend to no real profit, immediately preaches to this noted rabbi the first great doctrine of Christianity—Regeneration: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, I declare unto thee, as a truth of the last importance; verily, verily, unless a man be regenerated in the spirit of his mind, have his will and affections transferred from earthly to spiritual objects, he cannot see the kingdom of God, which is holy and spiritual in its nature and enjoyments. This was a mysterious system to the rabbi, whose religious views extended no further than rites and ceremonies, and were bounded by time and space; besides he thought the very position of our Lord an absurdity in terms. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Our Lord replies to this question, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The regeneration which I preach unto you is not of a natural, but of a spiritual nature: unless a man embraces the Christian religion and doctrines, whose initiating ordinance is baptism, and becomes the subject of Divine grace, he cannot be an heir of Divine glory: which consists not in earthly splendor, and the gratifications of the meaner passions, but in an exemption from whatever is earthly, sensual, and sinful; and the prosecution of whatever is heavenly, holy, and spiritual. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." It is a truth that you are all concerned in, therefore, wonder not at my doctrine of regeneration, which is designed to inform you, that you derive no excellence from your boasted descent from Abraham; as such you are merely earthly. subject to sins and infirmities of every kind; as well as to show that

you must undergo a spiritual and mental regeneration, a renovation of the heart, which changes the whole man, and fits you for the participation of heavenly blessedness. This important work is likewise spiritual in its operation, unseen by mortal eyes, being wrought on the mind or heart of man by the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, which change his nature; and with respect to eternal things, make him another, a new creature. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Notwithstanding this explanation of the blessed Jesus, Nicodemus was so prepossessed with partiality towards the Jews, who, on account of their alliance to Abraham, thought they were the people of God, entitled to heaven, and consequently in no need of this new operation of the mind, called regeneration, that he again demanded, "How can these things be?" The Divine Instructor then reproves his dulness and misapprehension of what he had so clearly explained and propounded to him, especially as he was himself a teacher of the people, and one of the great council of the nation. "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" The doctrines I deliver are not fiction and mere surmise, but founded on eternal truth, immediately revealed from God, and consistent with the will of heaven. I am witness to the same, and therefore affirm that such testimony is sufficient to render them valid. But your prejudices still prevail, nor can your unbelief be conquered by all the arguments I can advance. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." If ye thus reject the first principles of the Christian religion, such as the necessity of regeneration, or the influence of the Spirit of God upon the heart of man, how will ye believe the sublimer truths I shall hereafter deliver concerning the kingdom of God, or state of the saints in glory? If I inform you of spiritual transactions in this lower world, and ye believe not, how can ye believe if I tell you of those things which relate solely to another and a heavenly state? But to confirm your belief in what I have delivered, know that my assured knowledge of these things is derived from the Father of Light, the God of Truth, by whom I am vested with gifts superior to any of the ancient prophets.

No man hath ascended the regions of immortality, and descended from thence, but "the Son of Man," consequently no man but the Son

of Man can, with truth and certainty, reveal the immediate will of the Father, who is in heaven. Your great lawgiver, Moses, ascended not there—Mount Sinai was the summit of his elevation; whereas the Son of Man, who was in heaven, and came down from thence, with a Divine commission to sinful mortals, had the most clear and convincing proofs of the will of his Almighty Father, penetrated into the designs of infinite wisdom and grace, and consequently must be higher than any other prophet, being, in a peculiar sense, the prophet of the Most High God, or angel of his presence.

The Divine Preacher, who spake as no man ever spake, likewise labors to eradicate the favorite principles of the Jews, I mean that of confining all blessings, temporal and eternal, to their own nation and people, as well as to show the vanity of expecting the appearance of the Messiah in pomp and magnificence.

To effect this glorious design, he lays open to the rabbi, that it was agreeable both to the doctrines of Moses, as well as the will of God, that the Redeemer, in this state of mortality, should be exposed to poverty and distress of every kind; that his conquests were not to be of a temporal nature, over the hearts and will of men; that his throne was not to be established in the earthly, but the heavenly Jerusalem; previous to which he was to shed his blood, as, by virtue of the same, all, of every nation and kingdom throughout the earth, might pass into the heavenly world, and there, for ever, provided they relied on his merits, and conformed their lives to the doctrines he preached, enjoy that perfection of bliss, which through his sufferings was provided for them by God himself, to all eternity.

This is the sum and substance of Christianity; this is the sum and substance of what our blessed Lord preached to Nicodemus, that great ruler and teacher of the Jews; a sermon comprehending the whole of what is necessary to be taught, notwithstanding religion is at this day rent to pieces by sectaries, each of whom invents some new-fangled doctrine, suggested by ignorance or presumption, or both united.

That God Almighty, the Father, out of his unsupplicated, unmerited grace and mercy to the sinful race of men, sent his only-begotten Son, to purchase eternal life through the effusion of his own blood, for all of every nation and kingdom throughout the earth, who should believe in the divinity of his mission, and the efficacy of his atonement, and, in consequence of that faith, conform, as far as the infirmities of sinful nature will permit, to the rules of his gospel

“Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.” Condemnation, justly passed on all transgressors of the law of God, (which are all mankind,) can alone be averted according to the Divine institution, the propriety of which is the height of impiety and presumption to call in question, by faith in the blessed Jesus, such a faith as we have just explained. “He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.”

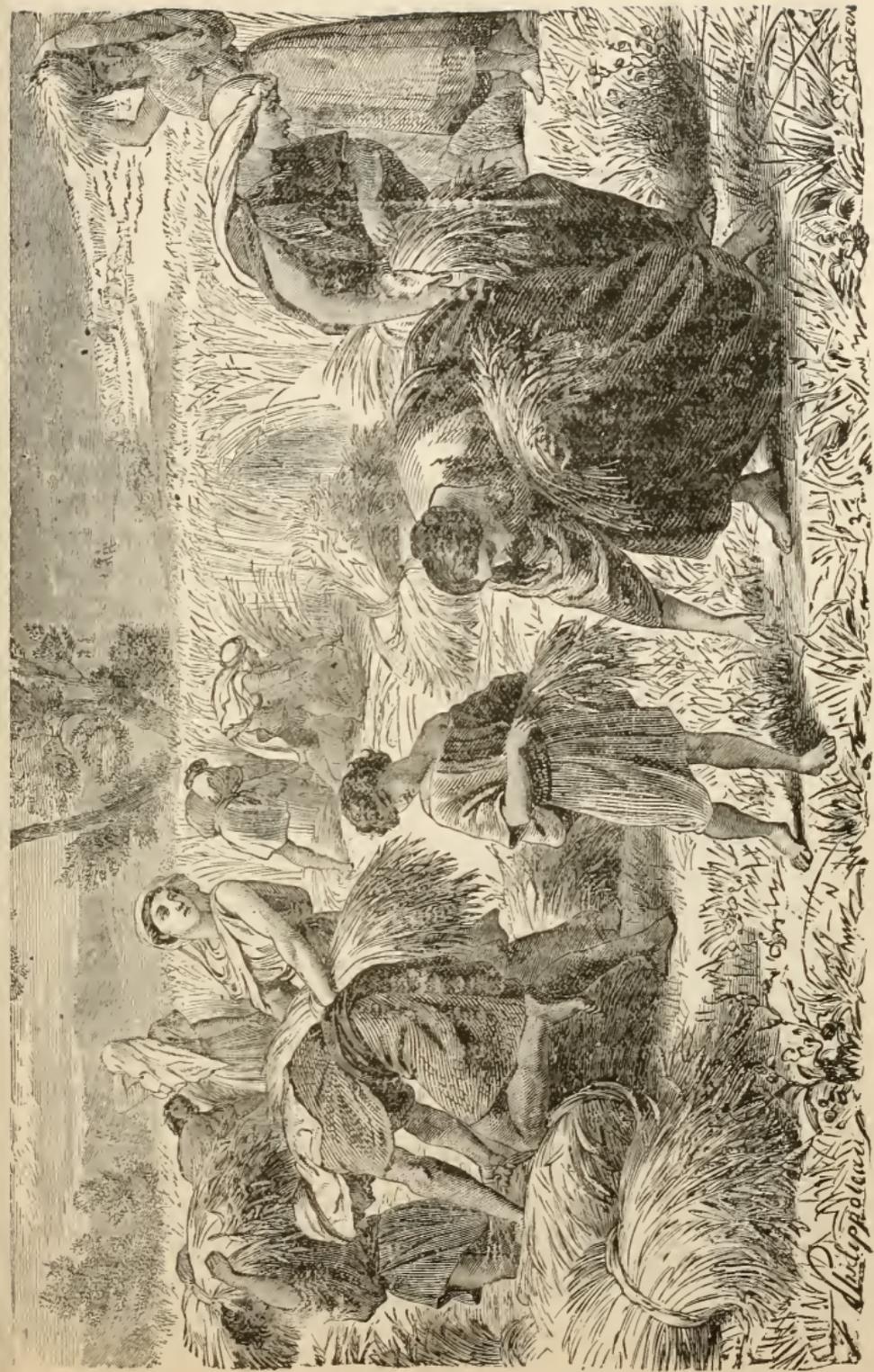
It appears from the future conduct of Nicodemus, that, instead of supposing that Jesus was merely a teacher come from God, he was fully convinced that he was the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel; for he afterwards constantly espoused his cause in the great council of the nation; and when his countrymen put him to an ignominious death, he, together with Joseph of Arimathea, conveyed him to burial, when all others had forsaken him.

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

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

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

The Baptist, after having publicly preached the great doctrine of salvation through faith in Jesus, departed from the wilderness of Judea, where he had continued a considerable time, and went into Galilee, often repairing to the court of Herod, who esteemed, or affected to esteem, both his preaching and person. But John, being



HARVEST SCENE IN ANCIENT PALESTINE.

faithful in his ministry, could not fail to remonstrate on the impiety and injustice of a known practice of Herod,\* his cohabiting with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; and thereby incurring the displeasure of that ambitious woman, he was, at her instance, cast into prison, there to be reserved for future destruction.

Whilst these things happened in Galilee, our blessed Lord continued preaching in the wilderness, whither great numbers resorted, attracted by curiosity, to see the great miracles which fame reported he daily wrought. The success of his ministry exciting the envy of the hypocritical tribe of Pharisees, our blessed Lord thought proper to retire into Galilee, in order to promote the design of his mission in those parts. In the course of his journey, being weary with travelling in so warm a country, and very thirsty, he sat down in Samaria, by a celebrated well, given by the old patriarch Jacob to his son Joseph, while his disciples were gone to the city to procure provisions.

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

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\* "Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great by Malthace, a Samaritan. His father had originally destined him as his successor in the kingdom, but by the last change of his will, appointed him 'tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa.' He first married a daughter of Aretas, 'king of Arabia Petraea,' but after some time he made overtures of marriage to Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Herod Philip, which she received favorably. Aretas, indignant at the insult offered to his daughter, found a pretext for invading the territory of Herod, and defeated him with great loss. This defeat, according to the famous passage in Josephus, was attributed by many to the murder of John the Baptist, which had been committed by Herod a short time before, under the influence of Herodias. At a later time, the ambition of Herodias proved the cause of her husband's ruin. She urged him to go to Rome to obtain the title of king, but he was opposed at the court of Caligula by the emissaries of Agrippa, and condemned to perpetual banishment at Lugdunum, A. D. 39. Herodias voluntarily shared his punishment, and died in exile. Pilate took occasion, from our Lord's residence in Galilee, to send Him for examination to Herod Antipas, who came up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. The city of Tiberius, which Antipas founded, and named in honor of the Emperor, was the most conspicuous monument of his long reign."—*Dr. Wm. Smith.*

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

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

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

Though this great preacher of Israel, by a simple and natural allegory, displayed the power of Divine grace, the woman, ignorant of the illusion and meaning of the Saviour, desired of him that water, that she might not thirst in future, nor have occasion to come to Jacob's well daily for water. To show her the malignity of her presumption, in turning into contempt the discourse of him who had the words of eternal life, the blessed Jesus, by some pertinent questions and replies, evinced his knowledge of her infamous course of life, and by that means convinced her that he acted under an influence more than human. To evade, however, the present subject of discourse, which filled her with a degree of awe and fear, she proposed to his discussion a case long warmly contested between the Jews and Samaritans, whether Mount Gerizim, or the city of Jerusalem, was destined by God, as the place peculiarly set apart for religious worship? Our blessed Lord replied to this evasive, as well as insignificant question, that it was not the place, but the manner in

which adoration was offered to the Father of Spirits, that rendered such worship acceptable; observing, that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John iv. 24.

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

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

While Jesus continued talking with the woman, his disciples returned, and approached him at the very time when he told the woman that he was the Messiah. Though they were astonished at his condescension in conversing with an inhabitant of Samaria,\* and

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\* The term Samaria, as used in the New Testament, does not apply only to the city of that name, but to the remnant of the once extensive territory of the Ten Tribes, over whom Jeroboam made himself king (1 Kings xiii. 32). The city of Samaria stood on the summit of a steep hill, with a long, flat top, which rises in the centre of a wide, basin-shaped valley, which lies six miles to the north-west of Schechem and almost on the edge of the great plain which borders the Mediterranean. Omri chose this hill for the site of the capitol of Israel, after the separation from Judah (1 Kings xvi. 23, 24).

After the separation a feeling of dislike, which gradually deepened into hatred, sprang up between the Jews, or people of the kingdom of Judah, and the Ten Tribes, or Samaritans. The latter kingdom suffered many evils from which Judah was exempt. In 721 B. C., Thalmaneser, king of Assyria, took the city of Samaria, after a siege of three years, and put an end to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. The Samaritans now began that promiscuous intermingling with the Gentiles, partly forced upon them, and partly their own choice, which put an end to their race as of the pure stock of Israel. They passed through many vicissitudes, and eventually became more Assyrian than Israelitish. At the rebuilding of the temple, upon the return of Judah from captivity, the Samaritans desired to be allowed to assist in this work, but were refused, and endeavored to impede it by all the means in their power. The feud thus begun, was never healed. About 409 B. C., one Manasseh, a Jew of priestly lineage, who had been expelled from Jerusalem by Nehemiah for an unlawful marriage, came to Samaria, where he was well received. He sought and obtained permission from the Persian king, who was master of the whole land, to build a Temple for the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim. This Temple the Samaritans regarded as superior to that of Jerusalem. They conducted their worship according to the Mosaic law, and sacrificed the Passover on this mountain. They received the five books of Moses as authority, but rejected all the other books in the Jewish Canon. The Jews, or their part, denounced the Samaritans as outcasts and apostates, and



AN EASTERN WELL.

even of instructing her in the doctrines of religion, none presumed to ask him why he conversed with one who was an enemy to the Jews, and the worship in the temple at Jerusalem? But the woman hearing Jesus call himself the Messiah, left her pitcher, and ran into the city, to publish the glad tidings, that the great Deliverer of mankind was then sitting by the well of Jacob, and had told her all the secret transactions of her life.

This report astonished the Samaritans, and, at the same time, roused their curiosity to see a person foretold by Moses and the prophets, and of whose appearance there was then so universal an expectation. The disciples, on their return, set before their Master the provision they had purchased; but he, wholly absorbed in meditation, refused the refreshment so highly requisite, telling them he had "meat to eat that they knew nothing of."

This unexpected answer surprised his disciples; who, understanding his words in their natural sense, asked one another, whether any

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regarded them with the utmost contempt. In 130 B. C., the Samaritan temple was destroyed, but the people of that race continued to maintain their national existence down to the time of our Lord, although it had been more than seven hundred years since they had been planted in Samaria by the Assyrian king. They lay just in the midst of the Jews, but did not coalesce with them, and though their temple had been destroyed, still worshipped towards the mount on which it had stood. The Saviour seems to have manifested a special tenderness upon all occasions towards these lost sheep of the House of Israel.

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

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

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

Having accomplished his gracious design in Samaria, Jesus continued his journey to Galilee, to exercise his ministry, and preach there the kingdom of God, telling his disciples, that the time was now accomplished which had been predetermined by Omnipotence for erecting the happy kingdom of the Prince of Peace, the Mosaic ceremonies being no longer obligatory.

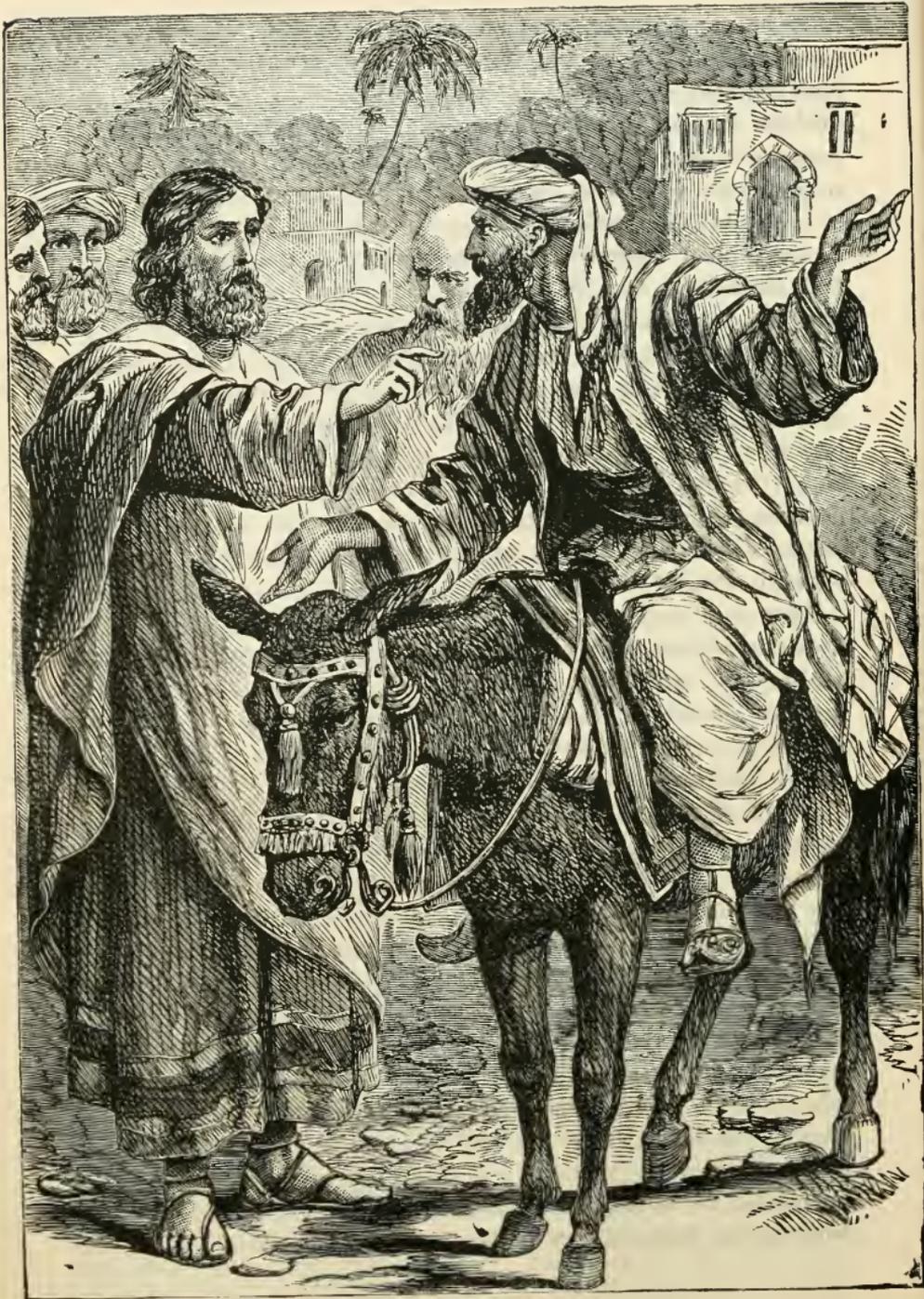
Our Lord had performed several miracles at Jerusalem during the passover, at which the inhabitants of Galilee were present. His preaching was, therefore, at first, attended with great success, for they listened attentively to his doctrine, and received it with great kindness and courtesy, especially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

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

After some stay in the city and neighborhood of Cana, Jesus went to Nazareth where he had spent the greatest part of his youth, and, as his constant custom was, went to the synagogue on the Sabbath-

\* Galilee, in which about one half of our Lord's ministry was performed, embraced all that country lying between Syro Phœnicia on the north, Samaria on the south, the Jordan river on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west. It was one of the most beautiful and fertile portions of Palestine, and contained the towns of Nazareth, in which the early years of the Saviour were spent, Cana, in which His first miracle was performed, and Capernaum, a delightfully situated town at the head of the Sea of Galilee in which our Lord spent the greater part of His private life, and performed many miracles. It was divided into Upper and Lower Galilee, and during our Lord's ministry was under the rule of Herod Antipas. The Apostles were all either Galileans by birth or residence.

Capernaum was the chosen residence of the Lord, and was peculiarly His "own city." It was a place of considerable importance, and was one of the most delightful cities of the Holy Land. The doom which Christ pronounced against it, has been strikingly fulfilled, and to-day it is impossible to locate even its site with any degree of certainty.



CHRIST HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

and read that celebrated prediction of the Messiah by the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bound, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke iv. 18, 19.

It should be remembered that our blessed Saviour read this passage in the original Hebrew, which was then a dead language; and as he had never been taught by letters, could do it only by inspiration from above. But he did more; he explained the passage with such strength of reason and beauty of expression, that the inhabitants of Nazareth, who well knew he had never been initiated into the rudiments of learning, heard him with astonishment. But as he had performed no miracle in their city, they were offended at him. Perhaps they thought the place of his residence should have been his peculiar care; and as he could with a single word heal the sick at a distance, not a single person in Nazareth should have been afflicted with any kind of disease.

That they really entertained sentiments of this kind, seems plain from our Saviour's own words: "Ye will surely say to me, Physician, heal thyself: whatever ye have done in Capernaum, do also here in thy own country;" evidently alluding to the great and benevolent miracle he had wrought on the nobleman's son.

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

## CHAPTER VI.

OUR LORD PROCEEDS TO CAPERNAUM—ADDS TO THE NUMBER OF HIS FOLLOWERS—PROCLAIMS THE GOSPEL IN GALILEE—PREACHES TO A NUMEROUS AUDIENCE HIS WELL-KNOWN AND EXCELLENT DISCOURSE UPON THE MOUNT.

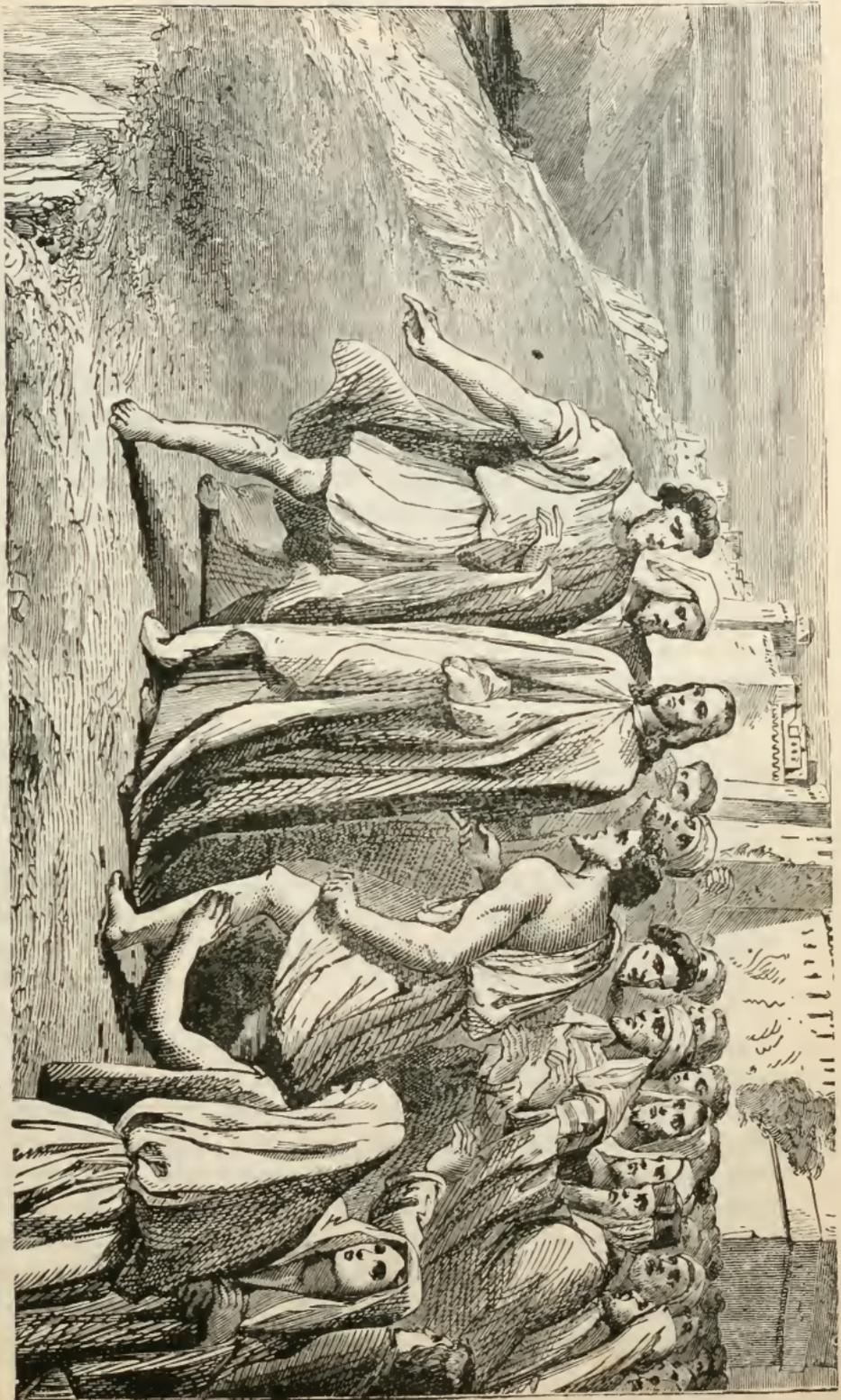
THE Holy Jesus, aggrieved by the cruel Nazarenes, departed from them, and visited in Capernaum, the capital of Galilee, which, from being built on the borders of the lake of Genesareth, was a place highly convenient for his designs; for besides the numerous inhabitants of that city, the trading towns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

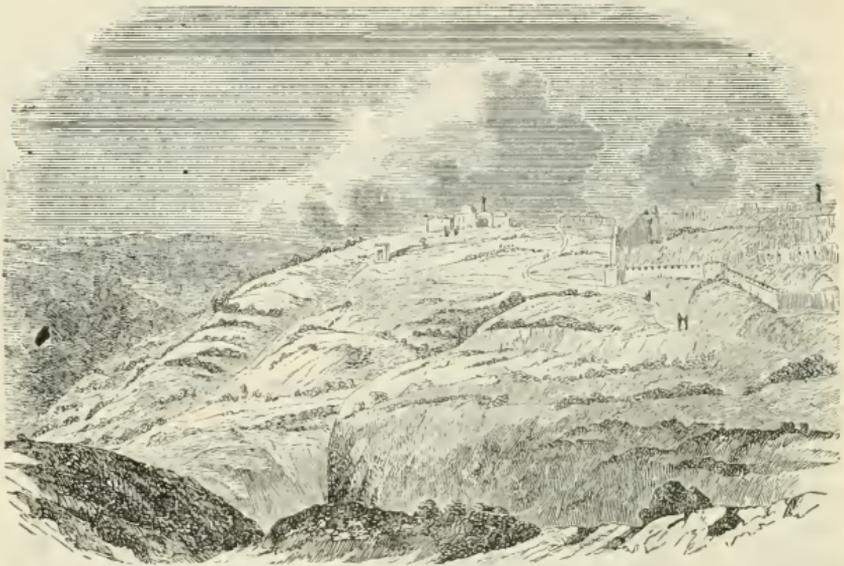
While Jesus tarried at Capernaum, he usually taught in the synagogues on the Sabbath-day, preaching with such energy of power as greatly astonished the whole congregation.

He did not, however, constantly confine himself to that city, the adjacent country was often blessed with his presence, and cheered with the heavenly words of his mouth.

In one of the neighboring villages he called Simon and Andrew, who were following their occupation of fishing on the lake, to accompany him. These disciples, who had before been acquainted with him, readily obeyed the heavenly mandate, and followed the Saviour of the world. Soon after, he saw James and John, who were also fishing on the lake, and called them also. Nor did they hesitate to follow the great Redeemer of mankind; and from their ready compliance there is reason to believe that they, as well as Simon and Andrew, were acquainted with Jesus at Jordan; unless we suppose, which is far from being improbable, that their readiness, proceeded from the secret energy of his power upon their minds. But however this may be, the four disciples accompanied our blessed Saviour at Capernaum, and soon after to different parts of Galilee. How long our Lord was on this journey cannot be determined. All the evangelists have mentioned is, that he wrought a great number of miracles on deceased persons; and that the fame of these wonderful

ATTEMPTING TO CAST JESUS DOWN FROM THE BROW OF THE HILL.





MOUNT ZION ; WITH THE MOSQUE OF DAVID, AND PART OF THE SOUTH WALL OF JERUSALEM.

works drew people from Galilee, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond Jordan. Nor was the knowledge of these miracles concealed from the heathen, particularly the inhabitants of Syria; for they also brought their sick to Galilee to be healed by him. Consequently the time our blessed Saviour spent in these tours must have been considerable, though the evangelists have said very little concerning it.

But whatever time was spent in these benevolent actions, the vast multitudes which flocked to him from every quarter, moved his compassion towards those who were bewildered in the darkness of ignorance, and determined him to preach to them "the words of eternal life."

For this blessed purpose he ascended a mountain in the neighborhood, and placing himself on an eminence, from whence he could be heard by the throngs of people attending him, he inculcated in an amazingly pathetic manner, the most important points of religion. But, alas! they were coldly received, because many of them were directly opposite to the standing precepts delivered by the Scribes and Pharisees. Surely these people, who had seen the blessed Jesus perform so many benevolent actions to the poor, the diseased, and the maimed, might have entertained a more favorable opinion of his doctrine, and known that so compassionate and powerful a person must have been actuated by the Spirit of God; and, consequently, that the doctrine he taught was

really divine. He opened his excellent sermon with the doctrine of happiness: a subject which the teachers of wisdom have always considered as the principal object in morals, and employed their utmost abilities to convey a clear idea of it to their disciples, but differed very remarkably with regard to the particulars in which it consisted. The Jews were, in general, persuaded that the enjoyments of sense were the sovereign good. Riches, conquest, liberty, mirth, fame, revenge, and other things of the same kind, afforded them such pleasures, that they wished for no better in the Messiah's kingdom, which they all considered as a secular one; and that a golden, instead of a sceptre of righteousness, would have been the sceptre of his kingdom. Nay, some of the disciples themselves retained, for a time, this notion, till they were convinced of their mistake, by the spirit, word, and conduct of their Divine Saviour.

Our Lord and Master, therefore, to show his hearers in general, and his disciples in particular, the grossness of their error, declared that the highest happiness of men consisted in the favor and image of God; these will make man unspeakably happy, even in tribulation. Possessing these, the soul has peace and joy, and a lively hope of eternal rest; without these, no situation, however pleasant, no wealth, however abundant, no station, however exalted, can afford solid or permanent satisfaction of mind.

You congratulate the rich and the great, said the Redeemer, but "Blessed are the poor in spirit," those humble souls, that, deeply conscious of their ignorance and guilt, can quietly yield to Divine teachings, and Divine disposals; for however they may be despised, "theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." You admire the gay and jovial part of mankind, and please yourselves with the hopes of joy and festivity; but I say unto you, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The truth of this heavenly aphorism is very evident; for what has so great a power to turn the feet of the sons of men into the path of virtue as affliction? Has it not a natural tendency to give mankind a distaste to the pleasures of the world, and convince them they are nothing more than vanity and vexation of spirit; and consequently to demonstrate that they must seek for happiness in things more solid and permanent than any in this vale of tears? The Holy Spirit then awakens the most serious thoughts in the mind; composes it into a grave and settled frame, very different from the levity inspired by prosperity; gives it a fellow-feeling for the scrows of others; and

makes it thoroughly sensible of the danger of departing from God, the source and centre of all its joys.

Nor are the passionate happy; but, on the contrary, the meek:—those who have subdued their tempers can patiently bear provocation, and are strangers to that destructive passion, envy. The meek shall inherit the choicest blessings of the present life; for, indeed, they principally flow from that benevolent and heavenly temper of mind. Meekness consists in the moderation of our passions, which renders a person lovely and venerable in the eyes of his fellow-mortals; and thence he possesses their sincere esteem, while the passionate and envious man is considered as despicable, though adorned with the robe of honor, and dignified with the most ample possessions. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Men, through vanity and blindness, consider as happy those who enjoy the pleasures of this life, by rioting in luxury and excess. But this is far from being the case; on the contrary, those are the truly happy who have the most vehement desire of treading the paths of virtue and religion, for they, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, shall obtain every thing they desire; and shall be happy here in the practice of righteousness; and after this transitory life is ended, be received into the blissful mansions of the heavenly Canaan. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

Forgiveness, not resentment, for injuries done, is a real spring of happiness; and those being of a humane and beneficent disposition, rejoice when they can perform a benevolent action, especially to their fellow-mortals in distress. The merciful shall see themselves recompensed even in this life; for they shall find, after many days, the bread they have cast upon the waters of affliction, return tenfold into their bosom. And surely nothing can surpass the pleasure felt by a generous mind, at having relieved a brother, when pressed beneath a load of misfortunes; the pleasure is Godlike, it is divine! “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

With what delight do we behold the glories of the sun, and contemplate the beautiful scenes of nature that surround us! But what proportion has this to the delight that must fill the minds of those who behold the great Creator himself, who called the whole universe from nothing, and still supports it with the word of his power? But the ineffable pleasures of a pure mind cannot be enjoyed by those who seek it in the goods of this world: it is the lot of those only

who have mortified their carnal appetites, to enjoy an inward purity of mind. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The tyrants and conquerors of the earth, who disturb the peace of mankind, are far from happy. It falls to the share of those who love their fellow-creatures, and do all in their power to promote peace and harmony among the children of men: for they imitate the perfections of their Maker, and therefore will be acknowledged by him for his children, and participate of his happiness. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Nor does happiness consist in liberty and ease, if those privileges are purchased at the expense of truth and righteousness; for those who have suffered the severest trial that human nature is capable of sustaining, from purity of heart and conscience's sake, shall be honored with the highest reward in the blissful mansions of eternity. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Contentment is not to be expected from the applause of the world, but will be the portion of those who are falsely reviled for righteousness' sake, and share in the affronts offered to God himself; for by these persecutions the prophets of all ages have been distinguished. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matt. v. 11, 12.

These are the declarations, with regard to happiness, made by the Son of God; and surely we may believe the words of him who came down from heaven; who, in compassion to our infirmities, took upon himself our nature; and to redeem us from the power of sin and death, offered himself a sacrifice upon the cross, and thereby opened to us the gates of eternal life.

Having shown in what true happiness consisted, our Saviour addressed himself to his disciples, and explained their duty as the teachers appointed to guide others in the paths that lead to eternal felicity; exciting them to diligence in dispensing the salutary influences of their doctrine and example, that their hearers might honor and praise the great Creator of heaven and earth, who had been so kind to the children of men.

As his definition of happiness was very different from what the Jews were accustomed to hear from the Scribes and Pharisees, he

thought proper to declare, that he was not come to destroy the moral precepts contained in the law or the prophets, but to fulfil or confirm them.

Nothing is so steadfast as the eternal truths of morality; the heavens may pass away, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, but the rule of righteousness shall remain immutable and immortal. And therefore he ordered his disciples, on the severest penalties, to enforce, both by preaching and example, the strict observation of all the moral precepts contained in the sacred writings; and that in a much greater latitude than they were taken by the teachers of Israel. And, in consideration of the frailties of human nature, taught them that excellent form of prayer, which has been used by Christians of all denominations to this very day.

*Our Father, etc.*

If earthly parents are called fathers, the Almighty has the best title from every creature, and particularly from men, being the Father of their spirits, the maker of their bodies, and the continual preserver of both. Nor is this all:—he is our Father in a still higher sense, as he regenerates us, and stamps his image upon our minds; so that, partaking of his nature, we become his children, and can, therefore, with holy boldness, call him by the title of that relation. In the former sense, God is the father of all his creatures, whether good or bad; but in the latter he is the father only of the righteous. Father is the most magnificent title invented by philosophers or poets, in honor of their God; it conveys the most lovely idea possible to be conceived by the human breast. As it is used by mankind in general, it marks the essential character of the true God, namely, that he is the first cause of all things, or the author of their being: and, at the same time, conveys a stronger idea of the tender love he bears to his creatures, whom he nourishes with a watchfulness infinitely superior to that of an earthly parent. The name of Father also teaches us, that we owe our being to God, points out his goodness and mercy in upholding us, and expresses his power in giving us the things we ask.

We are likewise taught to give our Maker the title of Father, that our sense of the tender relation in which he stands to us may be confirmed, our faith in his power and goodness strengthened, our hopes of obtaining what we ask in prayer cherished, and our desire of obeying and imitating him quickened; for reason, aided by grace, teaches that it is disgraceful in children to degenerate from their parents, and

that they cannot commit a greater crime than to disobey the commands of an indulgent father.

Lastly, We are commanded to call him Father in the plural number, and that even in our secret addresses to the throne of grace, to put us in mind that we are all brethren, the children of one common parent; and that we ought to love one another with sincerity, as we pray not for ourselves only, but for all the human race.

*Which art in Heaven.* These words do not suppose the presence of God confined; he is present everywhere; is about our paths, and about our bed, and narrowly inspecteth every action of the sons of men; but they express his majesty and power, and distinguish him from those we call fathers upon earth, and from false gods, which are not in heaven, and happy mansions of bliss and felicity, where the Almighty, who is essentially present in every part of the universe, gives more especial manifestation of his presence to such of his creatures as he hath exalted to share with him in the eternal felicities of the heavenly Jerusalem.

*Hallowed be thy name.* By the name of God, the Hebrews understood God himself, his attributes, and his works; and, therefore, the meaning of the petition is, May thy existence be universally believed, thy presence loved and imitated, thy works admired, thy supremacy over all things acknowledged, thy providence revered and confided in! May all the sons of men think so highly of his Divine Majesty, of the attributes, of his works! and may we so express our veneration of God, that his glory may be manifested in every corner of the world!

*Thy kingdom come.* Let the kingdom of the Messiah be extended to the utmost parts of the earth, that all the children of men "may know his salvation, and become one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ the righteous."

*Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* May thy will, O thou great Father of the universe, be done upon us, that by the light of thy glorious gospel we may be enabled to imitate the angels of light, by giving as sincere, universal, and constant obedience to thy Divine commands, as blessed beings do in glory.

*Give us this day our daily bread.* Give us from time to time wholesome and proper food, that we may be enabled to worship thee with cheerfulness and vigor.

*And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.* The great God, as supreme governor of the universe, has a right to support his gov-

ernment, by punishing those who transgress his laws. The suffering of punishment, therefore, is a debt which sinners owe to the Divine justice: so that when we ask God in prayer to forgive our debts, we beg that he would be mercifully pleased to remit the punishment of all our sins, particularly the pains of hell; and that, laying aside his displeasure, he would graciously receive us into favor, and bless us with life eternal.

In this petition, therefore, we confess our sins, and express the sense we have of their guilt; namely, that they deserve death; and surely nothing can be more proper than such a confession in our addresses to God; because humility and a sense of our own unworthiness, when we ask favors of the Almighty, whether spiritual or temporal, have a tendency to give us a proper sense of the goodness of God in bestowing them upon us.

The terms of this petition are worthy our notice: *Forgive us only as we forgive.* We must forgive others, if we hope ourselves to be forgiven; and are permitted to crave from God such forgiveness only as we grant to others: so that if we do not forgive our enemies, we seriously and solemnly implore the Almighty to condemn us to the punishment of eternal death! How exceedingly careful, therefore, should men be to purge their hearts from all rancor and malice before they venture into the temple of the Almighty, to offer up their prayers to the throne of grace!

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* O thou that helpst our infirmities, suffer us not to enter into temptation, to be overcome, or suffer loss thereby, but make a way for us to escape, and deliver us by some means from the evil; either by removing the temptation, or increasing our power to resist it. This petition teaches us to preserve a sense of our own inability to repel and overcome the solicitations of the world, and of the necessity there is of our receiving assistance from above, both to regulate our passions, and enable us to prosecute a religious life.

*For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.* Because the government of the universe is thine for ever, and thou alone possessest the power of creating and upholding all things; and because the glory of thine infinite perfections remains eternally with thee, therefore all men ought to hallow thy name, submit themselves to thy government, and perform thy will. And in an humble sense of their dependence, seek from thee the supply of their wants, the pardon of their sins, and the kind protection of thy providence.

This is emphatically called the Lord's Prayer, because delivered by the Son of God himself; and therefore we should do well to understand it thoroughly, that when we enter the temple of the Lord, and address him in solemn prayer, we may have hopes that he will grant our petitions.

The Divine Preacher proceeded to consider the great duty of fasting, in which he directed them not to follow the hypocrites in disfiguring their faces, and in clothing themselves in the melancholy weeds of sorrow, but to be chiefly solicitous to appear before God as one that truly fasteth. Then will the Almighty, who constantly surrounds us, and is acquainted even with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, openly bestow upon us the blessing he hath promised a true penitent, whose mortification, contrition, and humility he can discern without the external appearances of sorrow and repentance. It must, however, be remembered, that our blessed Saviour is here speaking of private fasting, and to this alone his directions are to be applied; for when we are called upon to mourn over public sins and calamities, it ought to be performed in the most public manner.

Heavenly-mindedness was the next inculcated by the blessed Jesus; and this he recommended with a peculiar earnestness, because the Jewish doctors were in general strangers to this virtue, in which he was desirous his followers should be clothed, as being the most excellent ornament for a teacher of righteousness. This is strenuously recommended by our blessed Saviour, by showing the deformity of its opposite—covetousness, which has only perishable things for its object:—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt. vi. 19, 20, 21.

More solid happiness will accrue from depositing your treasures in heaven, than in laying them up in earth, where they are subject to a thousand disasters, and even at best, can remain only for a short series of years: whereas those that are laid up in the heavenly Jerusalem are permanent, subject to no accident, and will lead to "a crown of glory that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens." Nor let any man be so foolish as to think he can place his heart on the happiness of a future life, when his treasures are deposited in this vale of misery; for wherever are laid up the goods which his soul desireth, there

his heart and affections will also remain. If, therefore, you are desirous of sharing in the joys of eternity, you must lay up your treasures in the "mansions of my Father's kingdom."

Lest they should imagine it was possible to be both heavenly-minded and covetous at the same time, he assured them that this was full as absurd as to imagine a person could, at the same time, serve two masters of opposite characters. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Matt. vi. 24.

To strengthen this doctrine he added a few plain and evident instances of the power, perfection and extent of God's providence, in which his tender care for the least and weakest of his creatures shines with remarkable lustre, demonstrating the wise and paternal attention of the Deity to all the works of his hand. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?" Matt. vi. 25.

He desired them to observe the birds of the air, the lilies, and even the grass of the field; leading his most illiterate hearers to form a more elevated and extensive idea of the divine government than the philosophers had attained, who, though they allowed, in general, that the world was governed by God, had very confused notions of his providence with regard to every individual creature and action. He taught them that the Almighty Father of the whole is the guardian and protector of every being in the universe; that every action is subject to his will, and nothing left to the blind determination of chance. And if our lives be according to the Divine will, we have surely no reason to be anxious about the necessaries of life. "Behold (says the blessed Jesus) the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Matt. vi. 26. Are not the fowls of the air, who have no concern for future wants, fed and nourished by the beneficent hand of your heavenly Father? and can ye doubt that man, whom he hath made the lord of the earth, shall be destitute of his tender care? "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." Matt. vi. 28, 29.

Our Lord then prohibited all rash and uncharitable censure, either

with regard to the characters of others in general, or their actions in particular; lest, in so doing, both God and man resent the injury. If you judge charitably, says the benevolent Redeemer of the human race, making allowances for the frailties of human nature, and are ready to pity and pardon their faults, both your heavenly Father and man will deal with you after the same manner. But if you always put the harshest construction upon every action, and are not touched with a feeling of your brother's infirmities, nor show any mercy in the opinions you form of his character and actions, no mercy will be shown you either from Omnipotence or the sons of men. God will inflict on you the punishments you deserve, and the world will be sure to retaliate the injury. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matt. vii. 1, 2.

The blessed Jesus, in this pious discourse, charged them to cultivate an entire reformation in themselves; a particular absolutely necessary in those whose office it is to reprove and reform their brethren. And surely nothing can be more preposterous than to condemn in others what we practice ourselves; or to set up for reformers of the world, when we ourselves are contaminated with the most enormous vices. With what countenance can we undertake to rebuke others, when we ourselves are plunged in the most detestable pollutions? Well might the Redeemer of the world say, "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Matt. vii. 5.

Lest the disciples should think that these precepts were not to be attained by human nature, he directed them to apply to God for the assistance of his Spirit, together with all the other blessings necessary to their salvation; assuring them, that if they asked with earnestness and perseverance, the Father of mercies would not fail to answer their requests. Adding the noblest precepts of morality ever delivered by any teacher: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. vii. 12. How clear a rule of duty is this! how easy and applicable to practice!

Having enforced these heavenly precepts, he exhorted them to place an humble dependence on the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to strive to practice the precepts of religion, however difficult the task may appear. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate,

and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 13, 14. Strait indeed is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to life! In the way nothing is to be found that suits the flesh, but many things that have a tendency to mortify it; poverty, fasting, watching, injuries, chastity, sobriety. It receives none that are puffed up with the glory of this life; none that are elated and blown up with pride; none that are indulging in luxury. It does not admit those that love riches, or are encumbered with the goods of this world. None can pass through it but those who renounce all worldly lusts, and are resolved to forsake all sin. There is, however, no reason for us to despair of entering through this heavenly portal; if we sincerely endeavor, the assistance of the Holy Spirit will be freely given us; and we shall pass through the strait gate, and pursue our journey along the narrow path, till we arrive at the blissful mansions of the heavenly Canaan. But, lest evil-minded men, under the mask of piety and religion, should endeavor to draw them from the paths of righteousness, our blessed Saviour cautioned his disciples to beware of such persons, and carefully make the strictest scrutiny into their lives and doctrines.

Our Lord closed his sermon with the parable of the house built on different foundations; intimating that the bare knowledge, or the simple hearing of the divinest lessons of the truth ever delivered, nay, even the belief of these instructions, without the practice of them, is of no manner of importance. The way of life which our blessed Redeemer has marked out for us, in such precepts as the above, may indeed, to corrupt nature, appear rugged and narrow, and the gate strait, through which we are to pass; but let us encourage ourselves against all the difficulties, by considering that immortal life and glory to which they infallibly lead. Then shall we, doubtless, prefer the most painful way of piety and virtue, though with yet fewer companions, than we might reasonably expect, to all those flowery and frequented paths of vice, which lead to the chambers of death.

## CHAPTER VII.

OUR BLESSED LORD CURES THE LEPROSY AND PALSY—CASTS OUT A DEVIL—SUCCORS THE MOTHER-IN-LAW OF PETER; AND AFTERWARDS PURSUES HIS JOURNEY THROUGH THE COUNTRY OF GALILEE.

THE great preacher of Israel having finished his excellent discourse, came down from the mountain, surrounded by a multitude of people, who had listened with astonishment to the doctrines he delivered, which were soon confirmed by divers miracles. A leper met him in his way to Capernaum, and being doubtless acquainted with the wondrous works he had already performed, threw himself with great humility before the Son of God, using this remarkable expression, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The species of leprosy, common among the Jews and other eastern nations, was equally nauseous and infectious; but this was so far from preventing the blessed Jesus from approaching so loathsome an object, that it increased his pity: he even touched him; but instead of being polluted himself, the leper was instantly cleansed, and he departed, glorifying God.

The evangelist adds, that Jesus forbade him to tell any person what had been done, but repair immediately to the priest, and offer the gift commanded by Moses.

Having performed the cure on the leper, our blessed Jesus proceeded to Capernaum; but as he entered the city, he was met by a Roman centurion, who represented to him, in the most pathetic manner, the deplorable condition of his servant, who was grievously afflicted with a palsy. The compassionate Redeemer of the world listened attentively to his complaint, and immediately told him he would come and heal him. The centurion thought this too great a condescension to one who was not of the seed of Jacob, and therefore told him that he did not mean that he should give himself the trouble of going to his house, which was an honor he had not the least reason to expect, being confident that his word alone would be sufficient; disease and devils being as much subject to his commands as his soldiers were to him.

Our Lord was not ignorant of the centurion's faith, or the basis on

which it was built; he well knew the thoughts of his heart long before he uttered his request; and to make this faith the more conspicuous, he gave it the praise it so justly deserved: "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matt. viii. 10. This centurion doubtless relied upon the miracle Jesus had before wrought upon the nobleman's son; but the excellency and peculiarity of it consisted in applying the most grand ideas of the Divine power to Jesus, who, according to outward appearance, was only one of the sons of men. This exalted faith induced the blessed Jesus to declare the gracious intentions of his Almighty Father, with regard to the Gentiles, namely, that he would as readily accept their faith as that of the Jews, and place them with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; while those who boasted of being the offspring of these great patriarchs, but fell far short of the heathen in faith, should be excluded from the blissful seats of paradise. "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. viii. 11, 12.

Having thus addressed the multitude, the blessed Jesus turned himself to the centurion, and said, "Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." And the evangelist adds, "his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." Matt. vii. 13.

On the succeeding Sabbath our Saviour went into the Jewish synagogue at Capernaum, and taught the people, delivering his instructions in so graceful and elegant a manner that they were all astonished; and, to increase their admiration, one of the congregation, possessed with an unclean spirit, cried out in a terrible manner, "Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Mark i. 24.

But the blessed Jesus, who wanted the testimony of no such confessors, commanded him to keep silence, and immediately to come out of the man; which command the evil spirit instantly obeyed, to the great surprise and astonishment of the spectators.

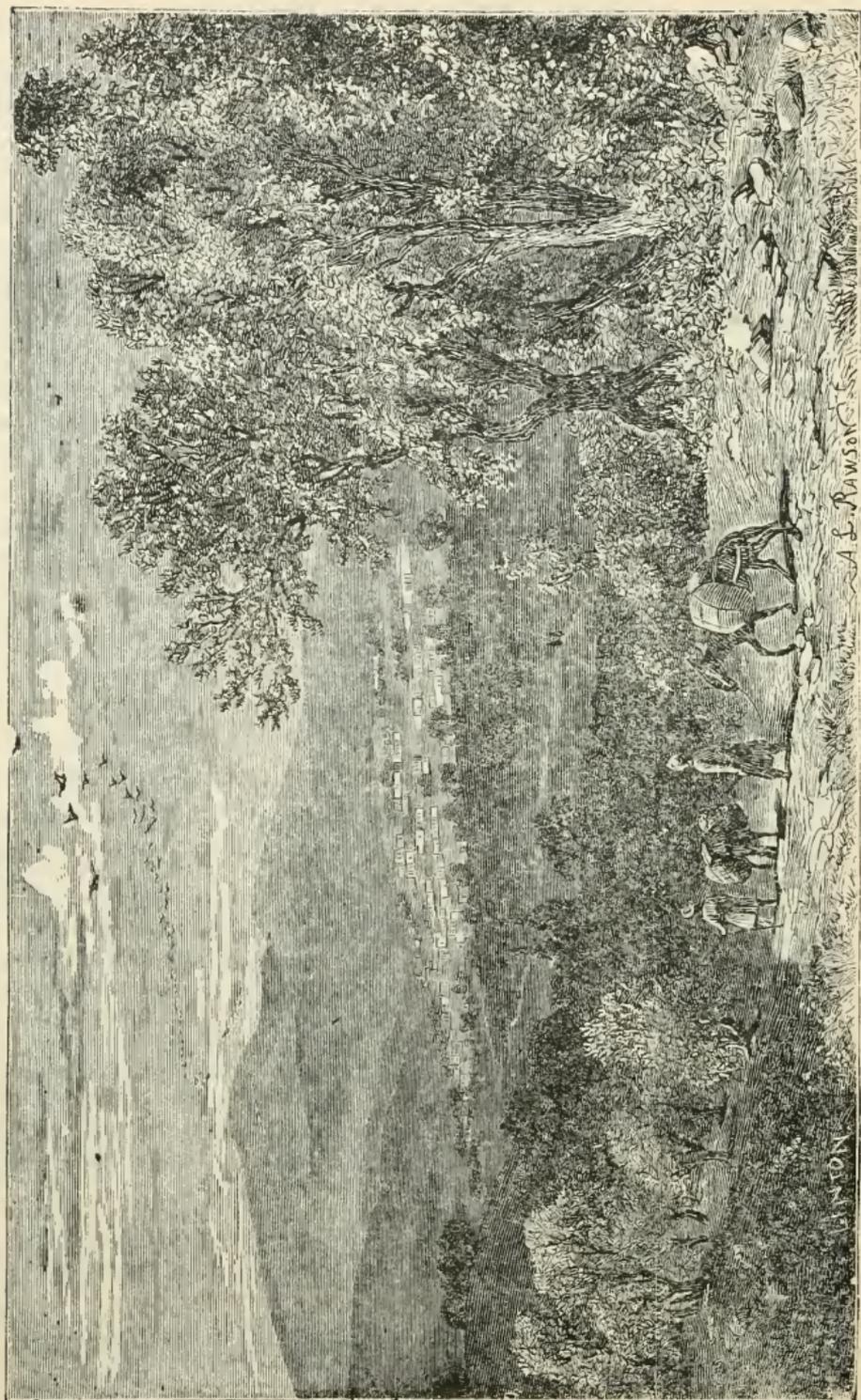
The enemies of the gospel have always endeavored to depreciate our Saviour's miracles, pretending that no more is meant by a person possessed of the devil than that he was afflicted with some loathsome disease; and that because sepulchres were considered as polluted

places, therefore, whenever any melancholy person frequented them, they were said to be possessed of unclean spirits. They add, that it will be difficult to assign a reason why demons were, at this time, more numerous in Judea than in any other country.

To the first of these objections, namely, that these demoniacs were in reality nothing more than persons afflicted with some loathsome disease, we reply, it is evidently false; the evangelists having taken care to be very particular on this head. "They brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them." Matt. iv. 24 "He gave to the Apostles power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases." Matt. x. 1. "He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils." Mark i. 34. It is therefore evident that those said to be possessed with unclean spirits were different from those that had diseases. Let us therefore pass to the second objection, and see whether we cannot give a satisfactory reason why demons were, at this time, more numerous in Judea than in any other country.

That there were evil spirits of this kind is abundantly evident from the Holy Scriptures, the sacred penmen having taken care to acquaint us with their origin and fall, their names and numbers, their government and orders, their malicious designs and employments, with several other particulars. So that no one can doubt of the existence of demons, who believes these holy oracles to be the word of God. And it is equally evident, both from sacred and profane history, that before our Saviour's advent great numbers of men were possessed of those evil spirits. The truth is, these angels of darkness had, at this time, taken possession of a large share of the world; and, therefore, one end of the incarnation of the Son of God was, that he might "destroy the works of the devil." And hence we may easily see the reason why Omnipotence suffered these apostate spirits to appear so frequently in Judea at the time of our Saviour's ministry, namely, that the Son of God might, in a more signal manner, triumph over all the powers of darkness, and convince mankind that he was truly the Saviour of the world.

He had before healed the sick, and done many other wonderful things: but to command with authority the unclean spirits to quit their residence, and to see these enemies to mankind readily obey his voice, filled them with astonishment.



CANA OF GALILEE...

It has been asked, why the devil, who, it is plain from the text, knew our Saviour to be the Son of God, should put it into the heart of Judas to betray him, since this was the proper method of accomplishing the redemption of mankind? But the answer to this is obvious and easy. The devil, doubtless, knew Jesus to be the Messiah; but he was ignorant of the mystery of man's redemption, and, therefore, though he was not ignorant of his divinity, yet he might be so far infatuated, as to think, that by destroying his humanity, he should defeat the great design of Omnipotence. For however extensive we may suppose his intellectual faculties to be, yet the wonderful work of man's redemption, by the death of Christ, was a mystery that no finite understanding could comprehend, till God himself was pleased to reveal it.

Having performed this astonishing miracle in the synagogue, our Lord retired to Peter's house, where he found his wife's mother sick of a fever; but on his taking her by the hand, she was immediately restored to health, and arose from the bed, and "ministered unto him."

The evangelist St. Luke, in his account of this miraculous cure, tells us, that "he rebuked the fever," Luke iv. 39, to intimate his authority over all diseases, being analogous to the figurative expres-

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personal power of evil, he uses an argument, as to the division of Satan against himself, which, if possession be unreal, becomes inconclusive and almost insincere. Lastly, the single fact recorded of the entrance of the demons at Gadara (Mark v. 10-14) into the herd of swine, and the effect which that entrance caused, is sufficient to overthrow the notion that our Lord and the evangelists do not assert or imply any objective reality of possession. In the face of this mass of evidence it seems difficult to conceive how the theory can be reconciled with anything like truth of Scripture. III We are led, therefore, to the ordinary and literal interpretation of these passages, that there are evil spirits, subjects of the Evil One, who in the days of the Lord himself and his Apostles especially, were permitted by God to exercise a direct influence over the souls and bodies of certain men. This influence is clearly distinguished from the ordinary power of corruption and temptation wielded by Satan through the permission of God. The distinguishing feature of possession is the complete or incomplete loss of the sufferer's reason or power of will; his actions, his words, and almost his thoughts, are mastered by the evil spirit (Mark i. 24, v. 7; Acts xix. 15), till his personality seems to be destroyed, or, if not destroyed, so overborne as to produce the consciousness of a twofold will within him, like that sometimes felt in a dream. In the ordinary temptations and assaults of Satan, the will itself yields consciously, and by yielding gradually assumes, without losing its apparent freedom of action, the characteristics of the Satanic nature. It is solicited, urged, and persuaded against the strivings of grace, but not overborne."--*Dr. William Smith.*

ions in Scripture, which not only represent all inanimate creatures as servants to the Almighty, but diseases, famine, pestilence, and the like, as executioners, waiting on him to inflict punishment on rebellious sinners. "Before him went the pestilence, and burning diseases went forth at his feet." Heb. iii. 5.

The fame of these miracles was soon spread through the city; and as soon as the Sabbath was over, which ended at the setting of the sun, the whole city was gathered together about Peter's house, and with them great numbers of sick persons, and those possessed with devils. The sight of so many human objects in distress excited the pity of this heavenly physician, so that he immediately healed them all. And thus was the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

But the vast concourse of people that now gathered round him in Capernaum began to be troublesome, and he retired into a desert, whither the multitude soon followed him, and intreated him never to depart from them. But as this request was inconsistent with the design of his mission, he for the first time refused their request, "and preached in the synagogues of Galilee." Luke iv. 44.



SENDING FORTH THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

## CHAPTER VIII.

JESUS CONFIRMS HIS MISSION BY PRODUCING A MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES—CURING THE LEPROSY A SECOND TIME—APPEASING THE BOISTEROUS WAVES—CASTING DEVILS OUT OF DIVERS PERSONS GRIEVOUSLY POSSESSED.

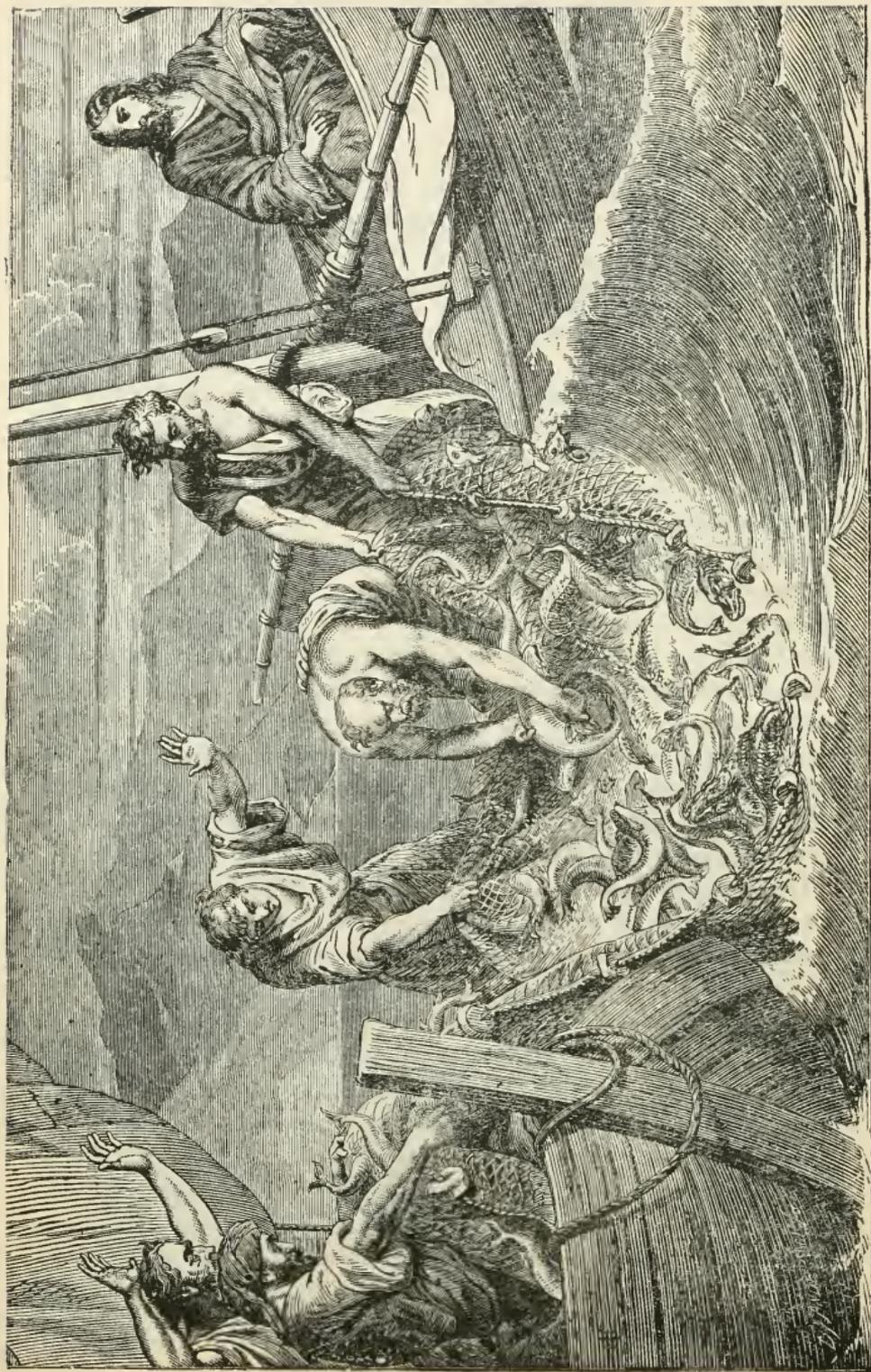
OUR blessed Lord having spread his glorious doctrine throughout Galilee, returned to Capernaum, followed by such numbers of people, that he found it necessary to step into Peter's ship; from whence he taught the multitude, who stood on the shore listening with great attention to his doctrine.

Having concluded his discourse, he turned himself to Simon Peter, desiring him to launch out further from the shore,\* and let down his net. On which the disciple told him of the unsuccessful pains they had taken during the whole night; but added, that he would, in obedience to his command, make one trial more. Nor had he any cause to repent; for the net was no sooner in the lake than they found it so full of fishes, that it was in danger of breaking; the draught being so large, they were compelled to call "unto their partners in another ship that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both ships."

This success, after such ill fortune, astonished Peter, who, falling down at the feet of Jesus, cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He was conscious of the many sins he had

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\* The Sea of Galilee, or of Gennesaret, is called the Sea of Chinnereth, or Cinneroth, in the Old Testament. It is a beautiful lake, oval in shape, about thirteen or fourteen geographical miles long, and six wide. It is sometimes spoken of as the Sea of Tiberius, in the New Testament, that celebrated city having stood on its banks. It was situated in the most densely populated part of Palestine, having no less than nine cities on its shores. The River Jordan flows through it, entering it at its northern end, and flowing out at the south. It is seven hundred feet below the level of the ocean, and is surrounded by a rugged and unattractive country. "The great depression makes the shores almost tropical. This is very sensibly felt by the traveller in going down from the plains of Galilee. In summer the heat is intense, and even in early spring the air has something of an Egyptian balminess." The beach is covered with bright, sparkling pebbles, and adds much to the appearance of the lake. The water is clear, cool, and sweet, and abounds in fish.



THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

been guilty of; and therefore afraid of being in the company of so divine a person, lest some offence might have exposed him to more than ordinary chastisement.

But the benevolent Redeemer of mankind allayed his fears, by telling him, that from henceforth the employment of him and his companions should be far more noble; they should "catch men;" that is, they should turn them from the crooked paths of iniquity, to the strait road leading to the heavenly mansions.

This miracle was considered by the disciples as a plainer manifestation of his being the Son of God, than those they had seen him perform on the sick in the city and neighborhood of Capernaum. It was a received opinion among the Jews, that all good men, by prayers and laying their hand on the sick, were able to cure certain diseases, and even to cast out devils, but that the creatures inhabiting the element of air or water, were subject only to the commands of Omnipotence himself; consequently, the power shown by our blessed Saviour on this occasion undeniably proved him to be divine. And accordingly this demonstration of his power rendered these disciples, for the future, absolutely devoted to his will; and in the greatness of their admiration they abandoned everything, and followed the Saviour of the world.

The disciples being thus attached to their Divine Master, followed him through the cities of Galilee, where, according to his usual custom, he preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, and confirmed the doctrine he delivered with astonishing miracles.

In one of the cities through which he passed, he found "a man full of leprosy, who, seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Luke v. 12.

It was the custom in Judea, for the priests to banish from society those persons who were afflicted with contagious leprosy. The disease of this person, therefore, was of a less pestilential kind, as he was suffered to enjoy the conversation of men. His case, however, excited the pity of the compassionate Jesus, who immediately cleansed him, and ordered him to repair to Jerusalem; and, after showing himself to the priest, offer the gifts commanded by Moses; giving him the same admonition he had done to others, namely, not to tell any man what had been done for him. But the blessing he had received was so great and unexpected, that instead of concealing, he published everywhere the great things Jesus had done for him; which brought such crowds to the Son of God, that he was obliged to retire from

Capernaum into the wilderness, to refresh his body with rest, and his spirit with prayer and meditation.

The generality of commentators suppose that this leper, and the other mentioned in the foregoing chapter, are one and the same person ; but this is a mistake. The former was cured in the fields, the latter in the city. After cleansing the first, Jesus went to Capernaum, and healed the centurion's servant : but after curing the latter, he retired into the wilderness, to shun the prodigious crowds which soon gathered round him from the leper's publishing everywhere the miracle Jesus had wrought for him.

If the curious should inquire why our blessed Saviour so often commanded the people to conceal his miracles? we answer them: His modesty and humility would not suffer that his works should have the least appearance of ostentation ; nor the Jews to have the least pretence for accusing him of "seeking his own glory." Nor was it proper at this time to irritate too greatly the Scribes and Pharisees. He well knew, that in a certain determinate space of time, they would bring about what had been determined by Providence concerning him. In the meantime, "he was to work the works of him that sent him while it was day," John ix. 4, and to propagate his gospel with the greater facility both among the Jews and Gentiles ; which could not have been so conveniently performed, if the greatness of his miracles had once provoked the malice and envy of his enemies to exert their utmost power against him. He likewise knew the mad, capricious humor of the multitude, and had reason to apprehend "that they might come and take him away by force, and make him king," John vi. 15, if all his miracles had been blazed abroad before he had sufficiently instructed them in the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and that his throne was not to be established in the earthly, but in the heavenly Jerusalem.

From these instances we see that the blessed Jesus did not, without sufficient reason, desire his miracles to be concealed. The fame of this single miracle, being spread through the neighboring countries, brought such multitudes of people to Capernaum, that, as we have already observed, he was obliged to retire into a solitary part of the neighboring wilderness. Nor could he long enjoy the repose and tranquillity he sought, even in this thirsty waste ; the people soon discovered the place of his retreat, and flocked to him from every quarter.

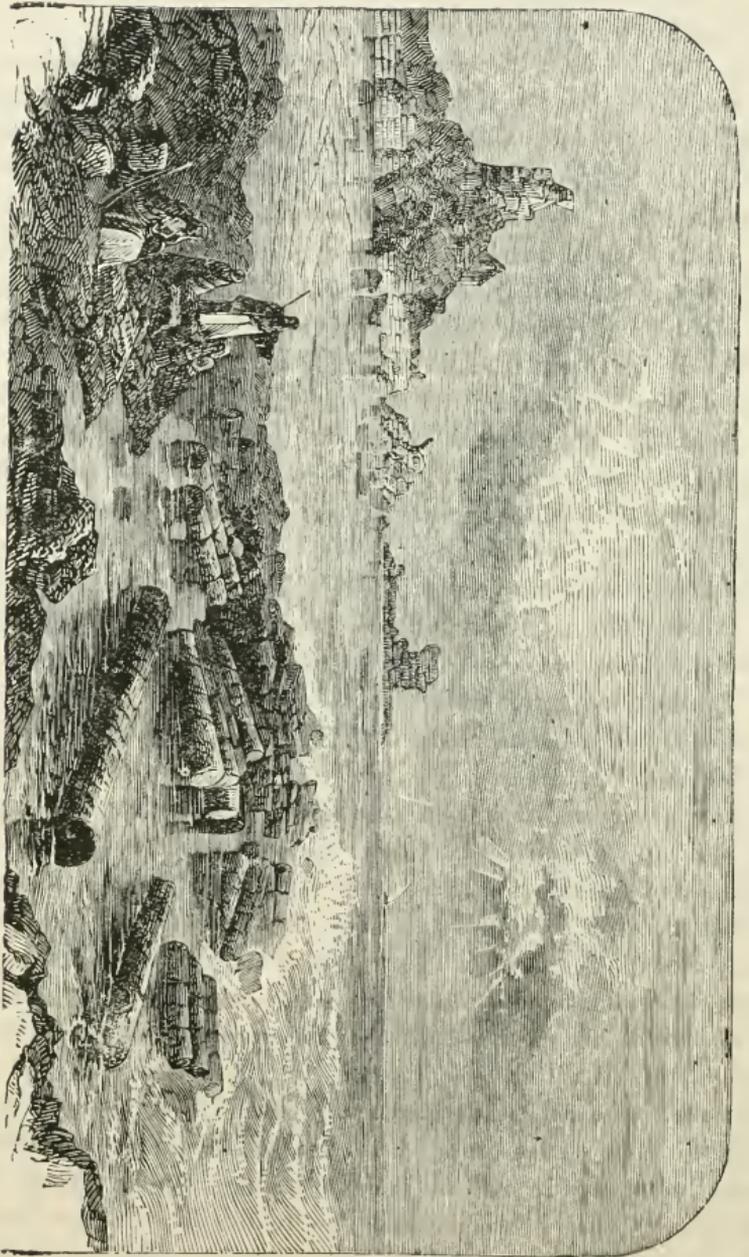
Our blessed Lord, finding all his endeavors to conceal himself in the desert would be in vain, ordered his disciples to accompany him

to the other side of the lake; upon which a certain Scribe, who happened to be present, declared he would follow him: but Jesus, who well knew that his desire was only to gain the profits and advantages of an earthly kingdom, which he supposed the Messiah would establish, told him, that if he intended nothing more by following him, than to improve his worldly wealth, he would find himself wretchedly mistaken. "The foxes have holes," said the blessed Jesus to this teacher of Israel, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Matt. viii. 20.

The title, Son of man, is a name by which the Messiah is called in the prophecy concerning him recorded by the prophet Daniel, (vii. 13,) where his universal dominion is described; and, therefore, when applied to our great Redeemer, denotes his human nature, and, at the same time, conveys an idea of that glorious kingdom, over which he was in his human nature to preside; but as it was also the name by which the old prophets were called, from the contempt in which they were held by their countrymen, it is used on several occasions to express the deep humiliation of the Son of God.

The disciples having prepared the ship, took on board their Master, and departed for the other side of the lake, attended by many boats full of people, who were desirous of hearing his heavenly discourses, and of being spectators of his astonishing works. But Jesus being fatigued with the labors of the day, sat himself down at the stern of the ship, and fell asleep.

The weather, which had till now been calm and serene, suddenly changed. A terrible storm came on, and the rising waves dashed impetuously against the ship, threatening every moment to bury them all in the bowels of the deep. The darkness of the night increased the horrors of the tempest. Now they were carried on the top of the mountainous waves, and seemed to touch the skies: then plunged to the bottom of the deep, while the foaming billows roared horribly above them. In vain the disciples exerted their utmost strength; the storm continued to increase, and baffled all the efforts of human strength. The waves broke over the ship, the waters rushed in, and she began to sink. All hopes of escaping were vanished; despair seized every individual, and they were on the brink of perishing, when they ran to Jesus, crying out, "Master, Master, we perish!" Their vehement cries roused him from his sleep. He raised his hand, so often employed in acts of mercy and benevolence; and, with a stern and awful voice, rebuked the boisterous element. The raging



ANCIENT HARBOR OF CAESAREA.

sea instantly obeyed his command. The aerial torrent stopped short in its impetuous course, and became silent as the grave, while the mountainous waves sunk at once into their beds, and the surface of the deep became as smooth as polished marble.

The disciples had before seen their great Master perform many miracles; and therefore had abundant reason to rely wholly on his power and goodness. They should have considered that he who could by his word restore the sick, and bring the inhabitants of the sea to their nets, could with the same ease have supported them on the surface of the deep, had the ship sunk beneath them, and carried them safe to the place whither they were going. But they seemed to have forgotten the power of their Master; and, when human assistance failed, to have abandoned all hopes of life. The blessed Jesus, therefore, very justly rebuked them, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Why should ye doubt of my power to protect you? The voyage was undertaken at my command: and therefore you should have been confident that I would not suffer you to perish in it.

It is indeed strange that the disciples should have been so remarkably terrified during the storm, and after it to make this reflection, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Matt. viii. 27.

But it should be remembered that the terror of the storm had deprived them of all presence of mind, so that they did not recollect the divine power of their Master during the fury of the tempest: and the transition from a terrible storm to the most perfect calm was so quick and astonishing, that they probably uttered this reflection before the confusion in their minds was over.

Soon after the storm was allayed, they arrived in the country of Gadara; and on their landing, two men possessed with devils came from the tombs to meet Jesus. One of them, who was more furious than the other, had been often bound with chains and fetters, but to no purpose, being always broken with great fury; so that no man attempted further to restrain him. Being therefore at liberty, he shunned the society of men, wandered day and night in desert places, among the sepulchres or caverns where the dead were deposited, crying and making the most dismal complaints, and cutting himself with stones.

The disciples were terrified at the approach of these furious mortals; but Jesus soon dissipated their fears, commanding, while the

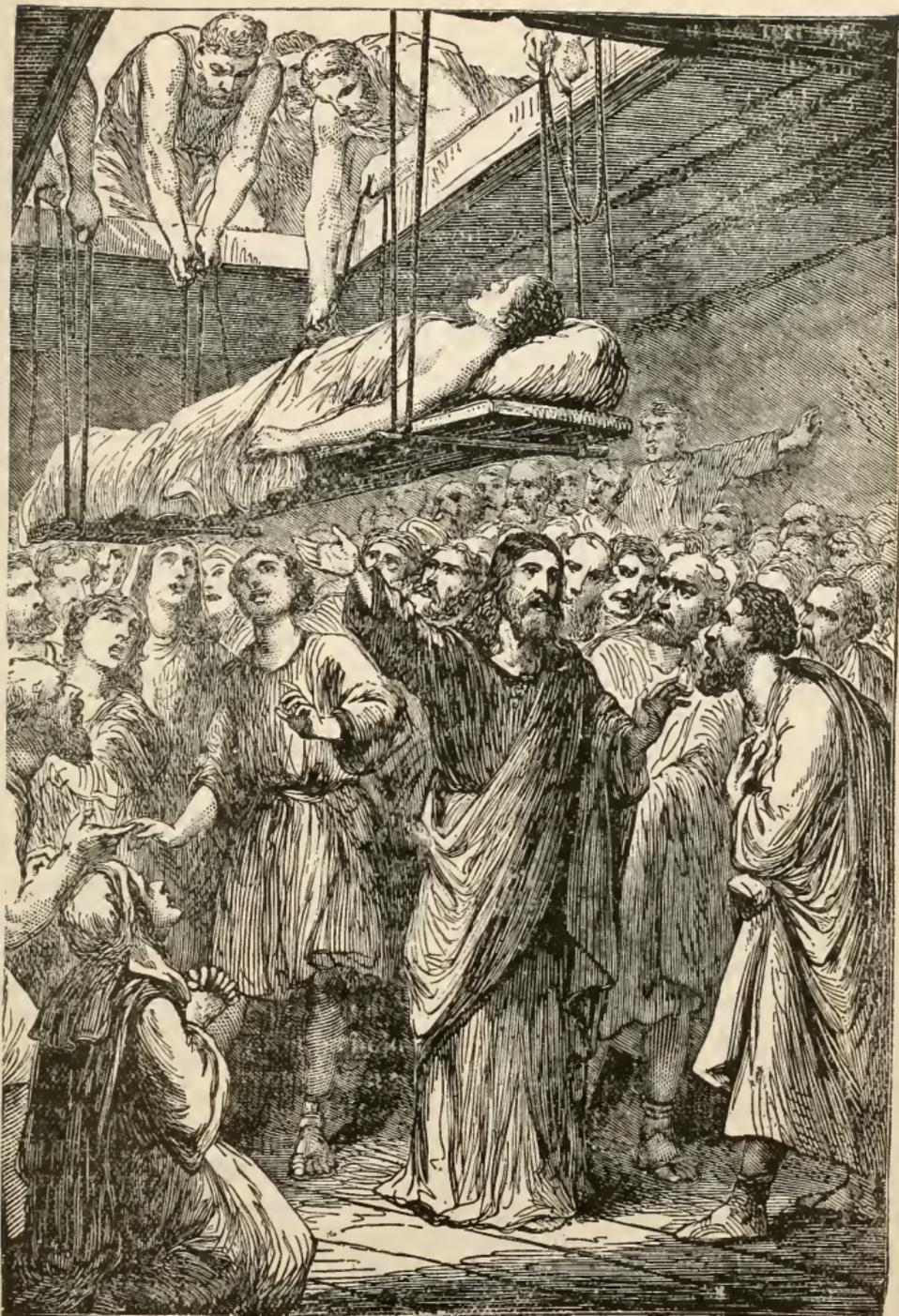
men were at a distance, the devils to come out of them. The heavenly mandate was no sooner given than they fell on their faces, crying out, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God?" Mark v. 7. "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matt. viii. 29. "I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not." Mark v. 7. The apostate spirits well knew the power of the Son of God, and trembled lest he should immediately cast them into the torments prepared for them, and not suffer them to continue moving through the earth till the day of judgment, when they should be condemned to eternal punishment in the sight of the whole creation.

Jesus being willing that the torment suffered by these miserable men should be known before he healed them, asked one of the devils his name, who answered, "Legion, for we are many," Mark v. 9; begging, at the same time, that he would not command them to repair into the deep, or bottomless pit, but suffer them to enter a herd of swine, feeding at a distance.

How subtle are the wiles of the devil! The power of the Son of God, he knew, was not to be resisted; but he could not help envying the benevolent miracles he had wrought for the sons of men: and was therefore willing to prevent as much as possible their good effects on the miserable people of this country. This was the true reason why he begged leave to enter the herd of swine: he knew if he could obtain that permission, he could destroy them; and this he hoped would render our blessed Saviour odious to the wicked inhabitants of Gadara.

Though Jesus well knew his crafty design, yet he permitted the devils to enter the swine, that his disciples and others who were with him might be fully convinced that these unhappy persons were really possessed by apostate spirits; and at the same time give them a terrible instance of their power, when free from all restraint.

The divine permission was no sooner granted than the spectators beheld at a distance the torments these poor creatures suffered, with what amazing rapidity they ran to the confines of the lake, leaped from the precipices into the sea, "and perished in the waters;" while the persons who, a moment before, were raving and cutting themselves in the most shocking manner, became at once meek and composed, having recovered entirely the exercise of their reason. The keepers of the herd, terrified at this astonishing miracle, ran into the



HEALING THE PALSIED.

city, publishing in every part the cure of the men possessed with the devils, and the destruction of the swine.

This surprising report threw the inhabitants into the greatest consternation: they left the city to be spectators of so wonderful an event, but when they saw the men who had been possessed sitting at the feet of Jesus, decently clothed, and in their right minds, their fear was increased. For, knowing they had trespassed in keeping the swine, which was contrary to the law of Moses, they dreaded a more severe punishment; and being ignorant of the goodness of Jesus, though he had given them so remarkable a proof of it in the cure of these wretched mortals, they besought him that he would leave their country.

There prevailed a custom among the heathen, when any illustrious hero had delivered his country from its enemies, or from any other great evil, to erect lofty columns to his memory; his statue was seen in every place; altars blazed to his glory; they honored him with the high appellation of Saviour; and thought nothing, not even divine honors, too great to confer upon him. But when Christ had removed a monster from the Gadarenes, more formidable and fearful than any in heathen history, even a "legion of devils," and rendered the way, by which no man could pass before, secure from danger, instead of being received by them as a Saviour and as a God, with the acclamations and hosannahs of the people, he was besought to depart out of their coasts. Stupid people! They had indeed lost their herd of swine; but surely the valuable gift they had received in two of their countrymen and fellow-creatures being delivered from the tyranny of Satan, was better than the cattle on a thousand hills, and merited at least their thanks and acknowledgments!

The stupid request of the Gadarenes was, however, complied with by the blessed Jesus, who entering the ship, returned to the country from whence he came, leaving them a valuable pledge of his love, and us a noble pattern of perseverance in well-doing, even when our kindnesses are condemned, or requited with injuries. He would not suffer the persons dispossessed to accompany him, though they earnestly requested it; but ordered them to stay in their own country, as a standing monument both of his power and goodness. "Go home to thy friends," said the compassionate Jesus to one of them, "and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Mark v. 19.

## CHAPTER IX.

OUR LORD PROCEEDS IN ACTS OF MERCY AND BENEVOLENCE—ADDS MATTHEW TO THE NUMBER OF HIS DISCIPLES—CASTS OUT AN EVIL SPIRIT—PASSES AGAIN THROUGH GALILEE—SELECTS TWELVE FROM AMONG HIS DISCIPLES, AS HIS CONSTANT FOLLOWERS AND COMPANIONS, AND HARANGUES THE MULTITUDE IN AN EXCELLENT DISCOURSE.

THE arrival of our Saviour and his disciples at Capernaum, a city of Galilee, was no sooner published, than such throngs of people were gathered together, that the house could not contain them, nor even the court before it. He, however, preached the words of eternal life to the listening audience, among whom were many Pharisees and doctors of the law, who, from the fame of his miracles, were come from all quarters to hear him.

He not only addressed them in the most nervous and pathetic manner, in order to inculcate the doctrines he delivered; but also performed such astonishing miracles as ought to have removed all their scruples with regard to the truth of his mission.

Among other instances he gave of his Divine power, was that of restoring a man to perfect health, who had long been afflicted with the palsy, and was reduced by that terrible disease to the most melancholy condition, being unable to move any member of his body, but seemed rather an ematiated carcass than a man. This miserable object was supported in his bed by four persons, who being unable to enter by the door, on account of the multitude, carried him to the top of the house, which, like the other roofs in that country, was flat, and had a battlement round, according to the direction given by Moses. Deut. xvii. 8.

On these roofs there was a kind of trap-door, by which they came out of the houses upon the roofs, where they spent a considerable part of the day. It was also common to have a flight of stairs from the garden to the roof; and by these the persons seem to have carried the sick of the palsy; but finding the door fastened, forced it open, or uncovered the roof, and through the opening let down by ropes the sick of the palsy, lying on his bed, into the midst of the company, before Jesus, who seeing the faith of the friends of this afflicted person,

he had compassion on him, and spake aloud, "Son, be of good cheer! thy sins are forgiven thee."

The pride of the Scribes taking offence at this saying, cried out, This man speaketh blasphemy; for he appropriates that to himself, which is solely the province of Omnipotence. "Who can forgive sins, but God only?" They were ignorant that the person who uttered such gracious words was the Son of God; and consequently, had the power of forgiving the sins of the human race.

But our Lord who had recourse to the most secret recesses of the heart, and was willing to show them that he was really endued with the Spirit of God, said to them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk?" These were questions beyond the abilities of the haughty Scribes to answer, and they held their peace. The blessed Jesus then added, that the miracle he was going to perform would sufficiently demonstrate that he had not usurped what did not in the strictest manner belong to him. And turning himself from these bigoted teachers of Israel, towards the sick of the palsy, he said unto him, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine own house." Matt. ix. 6.

Nor was this divine mandate any sooner given, than the man was restored to his former health and strength, and to the astonishment of all present, rose, took up his bed, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw this great work, expressed the highest degree of surprise, mixed with admiration, for the great honor the Almighty had conferred on human nature. "They glorified God, who had given such power unto men."

But with regard to the Scribes and Pharisees, though they must have been confounded at this miracle, yet they still continued in their unbelief; an instance, which should awaken in us the most serious thoughts, as it abundantly demonstrates, that the palsy of the soul is a much more deplorable disease than the palsy of the body.

The blessed Jesus having wrought this miracle, repaired to the sea-side, and taught a multitude of people. What the subject of his sermon was, the evangelists have not told us; but it was, doubtless, like the rest, calculated to promote the eternal welfare of mankind.

His discourse being ended, he returned to the city; and in his way saw Matthew, or Levi, the son of Alpheus, a rich publican, sitting in his office, where the customs were levied, at the port of Capernaum, whom he ordered to follow him. Matthew immediately obeyed the

summons, and followed the Saviour of the world, to pursue a far more honorable and important employment, being afterwards both an apostle and evangelist.

A few days after his calling, he made a splendid entertainment for his Master, inviting all the publicans he knew; hoping that by hearing the heavenly conversation of Christ, they might also repent, and embrace the doctrines of the gospel.

The self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, who considered all men as sinners, except themselves, especially the publicans, were highly offended that one who called himself a prophet, should so far demean himself as to be seen in the company of such men; and asked his disciples with an air of insolence, in the hearing of all the guests, how their Master could sit down at the same table with publicans and sinners?

Our Lord replied to this artful question, that the sick only had need of a physician, and desired them to reflect seriously on the prophet Hosea's declaration: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." The turning sinners into the paths of righteousness, which is the highest act of benevolence, is far more acceptable to the Almighty, than all the ceremonies of the law of Moses, so highly magnified by your fraternity; who, on many occasions, observe them at the expense of charity; adding, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The repentance of the righteous, is not so much the object of my attention as the conversion of sinners.

This answer, however satisfactory to an unprejudiced person, was far from being so to the Scribes and Pharisees, who, joining with some of John's disciples, then present, returned to Matthew's house, and demanded of Jesus why his disciples wholly neglected to fast, a duty often performed by the rulers of Israel, and the disciples of John? To this the blessed Jesus replied, it is not a proper season for the friends of the bridegroom to fast and afflict themselves, while they enjoy his company: "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast." The various calamities and afflictions that shall attend them after the departure of their Master, shall cause them to fast, which they shall repeat as often as the circumstances of distress and danger, with which they are surrounded, shall require. And added, that to have obliged his disciples to observe the precepts of frequent abstinence at a time when he was employing them to preach the gospel, by which all the legal ceremonies of the law were to be abolished, would have

been as absurd, as to sew a piece of new cloth upon a rotten garment, which would only make the rent the worse; or to put new wine into old leathern bottles, which, on the first fermentation of the liquor, would burst. Indicating, that the old corrupt nature of man would not admit of a thorough reformation being made at once: that infant virtue must not immediately be put to the greatest trials, lest it be destroyed by the severity of the exercise.

During this controversy between our Lord and the haughty Scribes and Pharisees, in Matthew's house, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came running to him in all the agonies of grief, and in the presence of the whole company, fell on the ground before him, beseeching that he would come and heal his daughter, who lay at the point of death.

When did the beneficent Jesus deny his gracious assistance to those who implored it of him? He immediately arose, and followed the ruler towards his house, surrounded by a great multitude of people, who were desirous of seeing so great a miracle.

But as he passed through the streets, a woman, who had for twelve years been afflicted with an issue, or flux of blood, and had spent her whole substance on physicians, to no purpose, "came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch his clothes I shall be well." Nor was she deceived; for no sooner had she touched the border of the garment of the Son of God, than "her issue of blood dried up:" and she felt, by the return of her health and strength, and other agreeable sensations that accompany such sudden changes, from painful diseases to perfect health, that the cure was absolutely complete.

But this transaction could not be concealed: the blessed Jesus knew the whole, and her secret thoughts, before she put them in practice; and, pleased with the opinion this woman had entertained both of his power and goodness, would not, by any means, suffer it to pass unapplauded. Accordingly, he turned himself about, and asked, "Who touched me?" He well knew the person: but asked this question for the fuller manifestation of the woman's faith, and that he might have an opportunity of instructing and comforting her.

His disciples being ignorant of what had passed, were surprised at the question: "Thou seest," said they to their Master, "the multitude thronging and pressing thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" They did not distinguish between the spiritual and corporeal touch, nor knew that such efficacious virtue had gone out of their

**Master.** Jesus, however, persisted in knowing who it was that had done the thing: and the woman, finding it vain to conceal her action any longer, came to him, trembling, and told him all. Perhaps the uncleanness of her distemper was the reason of her fear, thinking he would be offended, even at her touching the hem of his garment. But the divine physician, far from being angry, spake to her in the kindest manner, and commended her faith, on which account he had consented to heal her plague: "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole." Matt. ix. 22.

Such a miraculous incident must, doubtless, have greatly strengthened the ruler's faith; for, behold, a virtue, little inferior to that of raising the dead, issues from the border of Christ's garment, and heals a disease, which, for the space of twelve years, had baffled all the precepts of the healing art, and defied the power of medicine. Indeed, the faith of this ruler had great need of the strongest confirmations; for news was brought him, that his daughter was even now dead; and therefore it was needless for him to give any further trouble to Jesus, not in the least suspecting that he had power to recall the fleeting spirit, and to reanimate a breathless carcass.

This message was a terrible blow to the affectionate parent. His only daughter, who, a few days before, was in the bloom of youth, was now a pale and lifeless corpse; and with her all his joys and comforts were fled. But Jesus, commiserating his grief, desired him to be comforted, promising that his daughter should be made whole.

On his coming to the ruler's house, he found it full of mourners, who made terrible lamentations; a sufficient demonstration that the damsel was really dead. And, accordingly, when our blessed Saviour desired the mourners to cease their funeral ceremonies, as "the maid was not dead, but sleeping," they "laughed him to scorn."

It is necessary to remark, in this place, that the Jews, when they spoke of a person's death, styled it "sleep," to intimate their belief that his spirit existed in the happy scenes of paradise, and their hopes of a future resurrection to life eternal. But the blessed Jesus used the word with remarkable propriety, to signify, that though she was now locked in the cold embraces of death, yet he was going to release her from the power of the king of terrors, with the same ease as a person is awaked from sleep. Thus our blessed Saviour, in the very manner of performing a miracle, modestly declined the honor that would undoubtedly result from a work so greatly superior to all the powers of the sons of men.



CHRIST RAISING JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.

Having thus briefly addressed the mourners, he entered the chamber where the damsel was lying, but suffered none to follow him, except Peter, James and John; together with the father and mother of the damsel. Probably his reason for suffering these only to be spectators of so stupendous a work, was, that they might have an opportunity of examining the whole transaction in the most careful manner, and be thence enabled, afterwards, to report it upon the fullest conviction, and with every circumstance of credibility.

The blessed Jesus now approached the body, took her by the hand, and, with a gentle voice, said, "Maid, arise!" The heavenly command was instantly obeyed: the damsel arose, as from a sleep, and with all the appearance of health and vigor; for Jesus commanded to give her something to eat: a plain proof that she did not appear in the weak and languishing condition of a person worn out with disease, or even like one who had fainted away; a circumstance that abundantly proves the greatness and perfection of the miracle. It is, therefore, no wonder that her parents should be astonished at so stupendous a work, the fame of which was soon spread through all the neighboring country; though Jesus, who was in every sense above praise, and therefore never courted it, had strictly charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

These instances of power did the blessed Jesus display, to convince the world, that those who die in him are not dead; and that he hath the keys of life and death. Those also of the present age, who believe that the soul sleeps with the body till the resurrection, would do well to consider the expression of the evangelist, "Her spirit came again," Luke viii. 55; which sufficiently shows that the soul exists separately, when the body is laid in the chambers of the grave.

Having performed this benevolent miracle, our blessed Saviour left the ruler's house, and was followed through the streets by two blind men, imploring assistance; nor did they implore in vain. The Redeemer of mankind was, and still is, always ready to grant the petitions of those who apply to him for relief. Accordingly, he was no sooner entered into the house, to avoid the thronging of the multitude, than he touched their eyes, and said, "According to your faith, be it unto you," Matt. ix. 29; and immediately the valuable gift of sight was bestowed upon them.

The blind men were so overjoyed at beholding the light, that though our Saviour charged them to keep the miracle a secret, they published his fame in every part of the country, being unwilling to

conceal what, in gratitude for so great a mercy, they thought themselves obliged to divulge.

The men who had thus miraculously received their sight, being departed, the multitude brought to him a "dumb man possessed with a devil." So moving a sight could not fail of attracting a compassionate regard from the Saviour of the world, who, being never weary of well-doing, immediately cast out the apostate spirit; on which the dumb man recovered the use of his speech, and spoke in a very rational manner to the multitude, who, with one voice, declared, that such wondrous works were never wrought by any of the old prophets. "It was never so seen in Israel." Matt. ix. 33.

These works did not remove the prejudices of the Pharisees, who, being unable to deny the miracle, insinuated that he did it by a power received from Beelzebub, "the prince of the devils." A poor pretence, indeed, which did not escape the animadversion it deserved from the Saviour of the world, as we shall see in a succeeding chapter. Well might the prophet Isaiah cry out, in a prophetic ecstasy, "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

But all their calumnies could not provoke the meek and merciful Jesus to cease from performing these compassionate offices for the children of men. On the contrary, he exerted himself still more and more, to promote the prosperity and salvation of the whole human race. Accordingly, he left Capernaum, and travelled through the country, in search of miserable objects, on whom he might confer happiness and peace: visiting "all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people." Matt. ix. 35.

In his return from this tour to Capernaum, he was attended by a great number of people, who expressed a more than common desire to hear the doctrine of the gospel. An incident abundantly sufficient to engage the attention of this divine teacher, who was always careful to cultivate the latent seeds of virtue, and cherish the least appearance of piety and religion.

It was not this desire of the people alone that excited his compassion towards them: he well knew they were wholly destitute of spiritual teachers; for the Scribes and Pharisees, who ought to have instructed them, were blind, perverse, and lazy guides, who, instead of seeking the glory of the Almighty, made it their whole business to

support and augment their own. They magnified the ritual ceremonies and traditions, but took no care to inspire the people with a love for virtue. "To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God," were no parts of their doctrine. The small appearance of religion they entertained was wholly hypocritical; and the disputes carried on with so much bitterness, between the factions of the Pharisees and Sadducees, distracted the minds of the people.

The inhabitants of Judea were truly in a deplorable situation, which called loudly for the compassion of the Son of God, who always regarded the descendants of Jacob with the most tender affection. He saw the sheep of Israel scattered on the barren wastes of error and superstition; without a shepherd to lead them to the heavenly pastures of the law and the prophets. He saw; he commiserated their distress; and resolved to provide some remedy for it. Accordingly, he directed his apostles to intercede with the Almighty, who, by his servants, the prophets, had sown the seeds of piety and virtue in the minds of the Jews, that he would not suffer the rich harvest to be lost, for want of laborers. "The harvest," said the blessed Jesus to his disciples, "truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Matt. ix. 37, 38.

To these gracious acts he added the most powerful of all intercessions to the throne of grace, his own prevailing prayer. And, accordingly, ascended to the top of the mountain, and there spent the night in making the most powerful petitions, in behalf of "the lost sheep of Israel," to his heavenly Father.

Having spent the night in this pious exercise, he lost no time in putting his beneficent intentions in execution: for no sooner had darkness withdrawn her sable veil, and the blushing rays of the morning adorned the chambers of the east, than this benevolent Redeemer of mankind called his disciples to him, and chose twelve, "whom he named apostles, to be with him: and that he might send them forth to preach." He ordered them to be with him, that they might learn from his own mouth the doctrines they were to preach to the whole world; that they might "see his glory," the transcendent glory of the virtues which adorned his human life; and that they might be witnesses of all the wondrous works he should perform during his residence in the vale of misery, and by which his mission from the courts of heaven was to be fully demonstrated.

These twelve persons, thus qualified, were to supply the people

with that spiritual food they so greatly wanted, both while their Master continued here below, and after his ascension to the right hand of Power.

Having ordained them to their respective offices, he sent them out by two and two, into the most distant parts of Judea, to preach there the glad tidings of the gospel, and prepare the way for their Master, the great Shepherd of Israel.

And that nothing might be wanting to render their preaching acceptable to the people, and confirm the important doctrines they delivered, he invested them with full power to cure all diseases, cast out devils, and even to raise the dead.

Perhaps the number of the twelve apostles was fixed upon rather than any other, to show that God intended, by their ministry, to gather together the scattered remnant of the twelve tribes of Israel. But be that as it may, these twelve apostles constantly continued with him from the time of their election, till he offered himself a sacrifice on the cross, for the sins of mankind, never departing from him, unless by his own appointment.

All these persons being illiterate Galileans, and at first destitute of the qualifications necessary in the discharge of their duty, integrity alone excepted, were the most unlikely persons in the world to confound the wisdom of the wise, baffle the power of the mighty, overturn the many false religions which then flourished everywhere, under the protection of the civil government; and, in short, to reform the manners of mankind, then universally corrupted.

Had the choice of instruments for so grand an undertaking been committed to human prudence, such, doubtless, would have been chosen, as were remarkable for learning, strong reasoning, and prevailing eloquence. But behold the wisdom of God, infinitely superior to that of man, acted very differently; for the treasure of the gospel was committed to earthen vessels, that the excellency of its power might in all countries appear to be of God.

Accordingly, the religion which these illiterate Galileans taught through the world, exhibited a far juster notion of things than the Grecian and Roman philosophers were able to attain, though their lives were spent in study and contemplation. Hence, by its own intrinsic splendor, as well as by the external glory of the miracles that accompanied it, this religion sufficiently appeared to be wholly original and divine.

Besides, its truth and dignity were sufficiently attested by the

remarkable success that attended it. It was received everywhere by the bulk of mankind with the highest applause, as something they had hitherto been seeking in vain; while the maxims and precepts of the philosophers seldom spread farther than their respective schools.

It was, therefore, with the highest wisdom that the foundations of the church were laid in the labors of a few illiterate fishermen, for it demonstrated, with irresistible evidence, that the immense fabric was at first raised, and is still sustained, not by the arm of flesh, but purely by the hand of the Almighty.

After appointing the twelve apostles, he came down from the mountain, and was joyfully received by the multitudes of people who were waiting for him in the plain, and pressed to touch him; well-knowing that if they could only touch the border of his garment, they should be healed of whatever distemper they were afflicted with. A sufficient reason why they were continually waiting for him, and were willing to accompany him, even into the remotest corners of the wilderness.

The preaching and miracles of our Lord were not attended to by the low and vulgar only; persons of the first rank and character came from distant parts of the country, to converse with him, hear his doctrine, and be spectators of his wonderful works. It therefore evidently appears, that persons of all ranks were desirous of following him; and their desire could be founded on nothing but the truth of his miracles.

After healing all the sick among the multitude, he turned towards his disciples, and delivered a divine discourse, something like that he had before preached to them on the mountain; but in the former, he only pronounced blessings, whereas, in the latter, he added curses also; and in this principally it differs from that recorded by St. Matthew: I shall therefore only select a few passages from the sermon now delivered, as I have given a larger paraphrase on the former.

“Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.” Luke vi. 24. Riches, considered in themselves, have no tendency to render us the objects of the Almighty’s hatred, unless accompanied with those vices which too often flow from an opulent fortune; as luxury, covetousness, and the like. The wo, therefore, is here denounced against such only as are contaminated with these vices: for those who make a proper use of their wealth, and possess

the virtues which should accompany affluence, have no share in the malediction.

“Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger.” The pain ye shall suffer in a future life shall be sharp and excruciating. The opportunities you neglected of doing good to your afflicted brethren in this life, shall then be remembered with the most poignant grief, and bewailed with the most bitter lamentations. “Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep.” This malediction of our blessed Saviour is not inconsistent with the apostle’s precept, which commands Christians always to rejoice. Neither is the mirth, against which the wo is here denounced, to be understood of that constant cheerfulness of temper which arises in the breast of true Christians, from the comfortable and cheerful doctrine with which they are enlightened by the gospel, the assurance they have of reconciliation with God, the hope they have of everlasting life, and the pleasure they enjoy in the practice of virtue and the other duties of religion; but it relates to that turbulent, carnal mirth, that excessive levity and vanity of spirit, which arises not from any solid foundation, but from immoderate sensual pleasures, or those vain amusements of life in which the giddy and the gay contrive to spend their time; that sort of mirth which dissipates thought, leaves no time for consideration, and gives them an utter aversion to all serious reflection. Persons who constantly indulge themselves in this kind of mirth, shall weep and mourn eternally, when they are excluded from the joys of heaven and banished for ever from the presence of God, by the light of whose countenance all the righteous are enlivened, and made transcendently happy.

“Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Wo unto you, if by propagating such doctrines as encourage men in sin, you shall gain to yourselves the applause and flattery of the generality of men; for thus in old times did the false prophets and deceivers, who, accommodating their doctrines to the lusts and passions of men, gained the applause of men, but incurred the *wrath* and displeasure of a just and all-seeing God.

## CHAPTER X.

CONTINUATION OF OUR LORD'S GLORIOUS DOCTRINES—BENEFICENT ACTS, AND ASTONISHING MIRACLES WROUGHT IN CONFIRMATION OF THE DIVINITY OF HIS MISSION, AND THE EXTENDING OF HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM.

THE divine preacher having closed this excellent sermon, repaired to Capernaum, and was met by certain messengers from a centurion, desiring him to come and heal a servant, who was dear to him and ready to die.

This centurion, from the account given of him by the evangelists, seems to have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, as he was a lover of the sons of Jacob, and had erected for them a place of worship; and accordingly the inhabitants of Capernaum strongly espoused his cause on this occasion; saying, "that he was worthy for whom he should do this: for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." Luke vii. 4, 5.

There was not the least danger that this petition would be rejected by the blessed Jesus, who sought all occasions of doing good to the children of men. Accordingly, he very readily accompanied the messengers; but before he came to the house, he was met by some of the centurion's friends, who expressed the high idea that officer entertained of his power, and desired that he would not take the trouble of coming to his house, as his word was abundantly sufficient to perform the cure. At this message Jesus turned himself about, and said to the multitude, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Luke vii. 9.

The persons having delivered their message, returned to the house, and found the servant who had been sick perfectly recovered.

Having thus miraculously healed the centurion's servant, he repaired to Peter's house to eat bread; but the multitude came again together, and surrounded the house in a very tumultuous manner, demanding, in all probability, that he should heal their sick; and it was not without difficulty they were dispersed by his friends.

The multitude being dispersed, Jesus called unto him the twelve apostles he had before chosen, and conferred on them the power of working miracles, in confirmation of the doctrines they were ap-



PLAIN OF JERICHO.

pointed to preach, and delivered them such instructions as he thought necessary to enable them to discharge the duties of this important commission.

“Go,” said their heavenly Master, “and preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Publish in every corner of Judea, the glad tidings of the gospel, and the near approach of the great Messiah’s kingdom; not a temporal, but a spiritual empire, consisting of righteousness and peace.

To inure them to those hardships and dangers which were to attend them in their preaching after the death of their Master, our Lord forbade them to provide anything for their journey; teaching them to rely wholly on the providence of God for support in every distress, and to have recourse to his protection in every danger.

Our Lord’s disciples had, perhaps, flattered themselves with the pleasing expectation, that the glad tidings they were going to publish, and the miraculous cures they were enabled to perform, would procure them an honorable reception wherever they came. Their Master, however, told them the event would not in any manner answer their expectations; but that they were everywhere to be despised, persecuted, delivered into the hands of the rulers, and punished as wicked men; but at the same time he promised them the aid of the Almighty, and gave them instructions for their behavior in every particular. He added, that those who rejected their message should be treated with severity by the great Judge of all the earth;



THE WIDOW'S SON RESTORED TO LIFE.

but those who received them kindly, and gave even a cup of cold water to the least of his disciples, for their Master's sake, should not fail of receiving a large reward.

Having received this commission, the apostles visited all the parts of Palestine where the Jews inhabited, preaching the doctrine of repentance, working miracles for its confirmation, and particularly healing the sick, while our blessed Saviour continued the course of his ministry in Galilee.

The apostles being returned from their tour, Jesus went to Nain, a town situated near Endor, about two miles south of Mount Tabor, attended by many of his disciples, and a great multitude of people.

On their coming to the entrance of the city, a melancholy scene presented itself to the eyes of Jesus and his followers: "Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Luke vii. 12.

"When the Lord saw her he had compassion on her:" he both sought the patient, and offered the cure unexpectedly. "Weep not," said the blessed Jesus to this afflicted woman. Alas! it had been wholly in vain to bid her refrain from tears who had lost her only child, the sole comfort of her age, without administering the balm of consolation, to heal her broken spirit. This our compassionate Redeemer well knew; and, therefore, immediately advancing towards the corpse, "he touched the bier:" the pomp of the funeral was instantly stopped, silence closed every mouth, and expectation filled the breast of every spectator. But this deep suspense did not long continue; that glorious voice which shall one day call our dead bodies from the grave, filled their ears with these remarkable words: "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." Nor was this powerful command uttered without its sure effect: "He spake, and it was done:" he called with authority, and, immediately, "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he restored him to his mother." He did not show him around to the multitude; but, by a singular act of modesty and humanity, delivered him to his late afflicted, now astonished and rejoicing mother, to intimate, that in compassion to her great distress, he had wrought this stupendous miracle.

A holy and an awful fear fell on all who heard and saw this astonishing event; "and they glorified God, saying, a great prophet is risen up among us; and God hath visited his people."

## CHAPTER XI.

THE CHARACTER OF JOHN THE BAPTIST CLEARED AND JUSTIFIED BY THE BLESSED JESUS—DISPLAY OF OUR LORD'S HUMILITY AND CONDESCENSION.

WE have taken notice in a foregoing chapter, that Herod, incensed at the honest freedom of the Baptist's reproving his adulterous commerce with Herodius, his brother Philip's wife, had cast him into prison, and in this state he still continued, though his disciples were suffered to visit and converse with him. In one of these visits they had given him an account of our Saviour's having elected twelve apostles to preach the gospel, and of his miracles, particularly of his raising to life the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain.

On hearing these wonderful relations the Baptist immediately dispatched two of his disciples to Jesus, to ask him this important question: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?"

Accordingly, the disciples of John came to Jesus, and proposed the question of their master at the very time when he "cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and to many that were blind he gave sight." Matt. xi. 4, 5. Jesus, therefore, instead of directly answering their question, bid them return, and inform their master what they had seen: "Go, and shew John again those things which ye hear and see; how the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Matt. xi. 4, 5. Go tell your Master, that the very miracles the prophet Isaiah so long since foretold should be wrought by the Messiah, ye yourselves have seen performed.

It appears from Scripture, that the Baptist, through the whole course of his ministry, had borne constant and ample testimony to our Saviour's divine mission; that he exhorted those who came to him, to rest their faith not on himself, but on "him that should come after him;" and that as soon as he was acquainted who Jesus was, by a visible descent of the Holy Ghost, and a voice from heaven, he made it his business to dispose the Jews in general, and his own disciples in particular, to receive and reverence him, by testifying

everywhere that he was the "Son of God, the Lamb of God who came down from heaven and spake the words of God, and to whom God had given the Spirit not by measure."

A remarkable figure, this John the Baptist! Four hundred years before his appearance the prophet Malachi had announced that the Messiah would have a forerunner, one who would prepare the way for his great advent; one who would smoothe the path for such footsteps as never consecrated the world before. John's advent was in keeping with that of his more illustrious Master. He, too, might have been born in a manger, and nursed among the cattle of the stalls. His manner of life was very simple; his food was locusts and wild honey; like princely Elijah, he wore a shaggy mantle. No need of purple nor a crown! His mission was to testify of the Christ, and point to him as the Lamb of God.

The Baptist therefore well knew who Jesus was, and consequently he did not send his disciples to ask this question to solve any doubt in his mind concerning the Saviour of the world.

But it may be asked what else could induce the Baptist to put such a question? To this some answer, that he had no other intention than to satisfy his disciples that Jesus was the Messiah so long expected among the Jews, and to engage them to follow a more perfect Master, especially as he himself was now on the point of leaving the world.

This solution is doubtless partly right, but to some it does not remove the whole difficulty, as they think it is plain, from the very account recorded by the evangelist, that the question had actually some relation to himself; and therefore we must remove the difficulty by another method. In order to which, they say, it must be remembered, that John had been long confined in prison; and being persuaded that it was necessary for him to preach the gospel, and prepare men to receive the kingdom of the Messiah, and for that reason, from the very time of his imprisonment, earnestly expected that the Messiah would exert his power to procure his release. But on hearing that Jesus had chosen twelve illiterate fishermen to preach the gospel, and furnished them with miraculous powers, in order to enable them to perform so great a work; and that two persons of no consequence were raised from the dead, while he was suffered to remain in prison, he began to think himself neglected, and his services disregarded. He therefore sent two of his disciples to ask him this question, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" Not that he entertained any doubt of his being the true Messiah, intending

nothing more by making the demand, but to complain that Jesus had not acted the part which he thought the Messiah should have acted; and that this was really the case seems sufficiently plain from the caution added by our blessed Saviour himself: "And blessed is he whomsoever shall not be offended in me:" as if he had said, when you have informed your master of what you have seen and heard, tell him that he would do well not to be offended either at the choice of the Apostles, or that no miracle has been wrought for his release.

From this circumstance it is evident that impatience, on account of his long confinement, was the true reason for the Baptist's sending his disciples with this question to Jesus, and that the purport of the answer was to teach him submission in a case that was plainly above the reach of his judgment.

Lest the people from this conversation should imbibe any notion prejudicial to the character of the Baptist, our blessed Saviour thought fit to place it in a proper point of light. He praised his invincible courage and constancy, which was not to be overcome, or "like a reed to be shaken with the wind:" his austere and mortified life; for he was not "clothed in soft raiment," like those who wait in the palaces of kings; adding, that he was "a prophet, nay, more than a prophet: for this is he of whom it was written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." But subjoined, "notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The propriety of this remark will appear when it is considered, that though the Baptist excelled all the prophets that were before him, yet the least inspired person in the kingdom of heaven, the least apostle or preacher of the gospel, was greater than he, because by constantly attending on Jesus, they were much better acquainted with his character, disposition, and doctrine than the Baptist, who had only seen him transiently; wherefore, in respect of their personal knowledge of the Messiah, the apostles greatly excelled the Baptist.

Having thus shown the greatness of the Baptist's character, and wherein he was surpassed by the disciples, our blessed Saviour took occasion from thence to blame the perverseness of the age in rejecting both his own and the Baptist's testimony.

It seems that the Scribes and Pharisees, seeing their pretended mortifications eclipsed by the real austerity of the Baptist, impudently affirmed that his living in the desert, his shunning the company of men, the coarseness of his clothing, the abstemiousness of his diet,

and the other severities he practised, were the effects of his being possessed by an apostate spirit, or of a religious melancholy. "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil." Matt. xi. 18.

On the other hand, they would not listen to the heavenly doctrines preached by Christ, because he did not separate himself from society: attributing his free manner of living to a certain looseness of disposition, though they well knew that he observed the strictest temperance himself, and never encouraged the vices of others, either by dissimulation or example. "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children." Matt. xi. 19.

He next proceeded to upbraid the several cities where his most wonderful works had been performed. For though they had heard him preach many awakening sermons, and seen him perform many astonishing miracles, such as would have converted Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, cities infamous for their impiety, contempt of religion, pride, luxury, and debauchery; yet so great was their obstinacy, that they persisted in their wickedness, notwithstanding all he had done to convert them from the evil of their ways. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works that have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." Matt. xi. 21, etc.

Having denounced these judgments on the cities which had neglected to profit by his mighty works, he concluded his discourse with these heavenly words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matt. xi. 28, etc.

Having concluded this public address, one of the Pharisees, named Simon, desired he would "eat with him;" the blessed Jesus accepted

the invitation, accompanied him to his house, and sat down to meat. He had not continued long at the table, before a woman who had lately left the paths of vice for those of virtue, placed herself behind him, and from a deep conviction of her former crimes, and the obligations she owed the Saviour of mankind for bringing her to a sense of them, shed such quantities of tears that they trickled down on his feet, which, according to the custom of the country, were then bare. But observing that her tears had wet the feet of her beloved instructor, she immediately wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed them with the most ardent affection, and anointed them with a precious ointment she had brought with her for that purpose.

It was a custom among the inhabitants of the East, to pour fragrant oils on the heads of such guests as they intended particularly to honor while they sat at meat; and probably the woman's original intention was to anoint Jesus in the usual manner. But being exceedingly humbled on account of her former crimes, she could not presume to take such a freedom with him, and therefore poured it on his feet, to express at once the greatness of her love and the profoundness of her humility.

The Pharisee, who had attentively observed the woman, concluded from thence that our Saviour could not be a prophet. "This man," said the Pharisee to himself, "if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman that is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." Luke vii. 38.

But though Simon spoke this only in his heart, his thoughts were not concealed from the great Redeemer of mankind, who, to convince him that he was a prophet, and that he knew not only the characters of men, but even the secret thoughts of their hearts, immediately conversed with him on the very subject he had been revolving in his mind. He did not indeed expose him before the company, by relating what he had said in secret, but with remarkable delicacy pointed out to Simon alone the unreasonableness of his thoughts. "Simon," said the blessed Jesus, "I have something to say to thee: There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most." And he said unto him, "thou hast rightly judged." And then immediately applied this short parable to the subject of the woman, on which the Pharisee had so unjustly reasoned

with himself. "Simon," continued our Saviour, "seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." Luke vii. 40.

This woman's kind services were in no danger of losing their reward from the blessed Jesus, who possessed the softer and finer feelings of human nature in their utmost perfection. Accordingly, he added, in pursuance of the kind invitation he had before made to weary and heavy-laden sinners, "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little." Luke vii. 47.

The blessed Jesus having thus commended the conduct of the woman to the company, and rebuked, with great delicacy, the unjust suspicions of Simon, turned himself to the woman, and in the kindest manner assured her, that "her sins were forgiven." But the power he assumed in forgiving sins greatly offended the Jews, who, not being acquainted with his Divinity, considered his speech as derogatory to the honor of the Almighty. Jesus, however, contemned their malicious murmurs, and repeated his assurances, telling the woman that her faith had saved her, and bade her depart in peace.

The next day Jesus travelled from Capernaum to different parts of Galilee, going "through every village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." Luke viii. 1. That is, he declared to the people the welcome tidings of the Almighty's being willing to be reconciled to the children of men, on condition of their repentance, and embracing the gospel of the grace of God.

Leaving Galilee, he repaired to Jerusalem, to keep the passover, being the second feast of that kind since his public ministry. In this journey he was accompanied by certain pious women, "who ministered to him of their substance."

## CHAPTER XII.

MIRACULOUS CURE EFFECTED AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA—REPROOF OF THE SUPERSTITION OF THE JEWS, IN CONDEMNING THE PERFORMANCE OF NECESSARY WORKS ON THE SABBATH DAY—AFTER DOING MANY ACTS OF MERCY AND WONDER, OUR BLESSED LORD IS VISITED BY HIS MOTHER AND HIS BRETHREN, AND MAKES A SPIRITUAL REFLECTION ON THAT INCIDENT.

OUR Lord had no sooner entered the ancient city of Jerusalem, so long famous for being the dwelling-place of the Most High, than he repaired to the public bath or pool, called in the Hebrew tongue “Bethesda,” that is, “the house of mercy,” on account of the miracles wrought there by the salutary effects of the water at certain seasons. This bath was surrounded by five porches or cloisters, in which those who frequented the place were sheltered both from the heat and cold; and were particularly serviceable to the diseased and infirm, who crowded thither to find relief in their afflictions. These porches were now filled with a “great multitude of impotent folk—of blind, halt, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water. Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” John v. 3, 4.

Such is the account of this miraculous pool given us by St. John, the evangelist. Many controversies have arisen concerning the place, the time, and the nature of the pool; questions which will perhaps never be answered, because the pool of Bethesda is not mentioned by any Jewish historians.

The time when this miraculous effect took place is not precisely determined; but it is almost universally agreed, that it could not be long before the coming of our Saviour; and that the miracle was intended to lead us to the Son of God. For the gift of prophecy and of miracle had ceased among the Jews for above four hundred years; and therefore to raise in them a more ardent desire for the coming of the Messiah, and to induce them to be more circumspect in observing the signs of his coming, God was pleased to favor them with this remarkable sign at Bethesda. And as the descendants of Jacob, in the last times, were very obnoxious not only to the irruptions and

tyranny of the Gentiles, but had wholly lost their liberty, so God favored them with this eminent token of his favor, this wonderful pool, that they might not despair of the promises made to their forefathers being fulfilled.

The pool was situated near the gate of victims, which were figures of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that they might be convinced God had yet a regard to the posterity of Abraham, and the worship which he himself had established; and might thus support themselves with the pleasing hope of the coming of the Messiah, the great Angel of the Covenant, to his temple. And as this miracle of the angel descending from heaven began when the coming of the Messiah was at hand, to advise them of the speedy and near approach of that promised salvation, so Christ entered these porches, which were situated without the temple, and performed the miracle I shall presently relate, to indicate what was the true intent of this gift of healing, namely, to lead men to himself, "the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness:" and the waters were troubled only at this certain season of the passover, or at other stated periods, and one only healed each time the angel descended, to show them at once the weakness of the law, and the great difference between that and the gospel dispensation; and to teach them not to rest satisfied with the corporeal benefit only, as in the ministration of an angel; but to reflect attentively on the promises of the Messiah's approaching advent.

These remarks I conceived might be necessary to the reader, relating to the celebrated pool, and shall now return to the blessed Jesus, who thought proper to visit the porches of Bethesda, now crowded with persons laboring under various diseases.

Among these objects of pity was one who had labored under his infirmity no less than thirty and eight years. The length and greatness of this man's afflictions, which were well known to the Son of God, were sufficient to excite his tender compassion, and make him the happy object to demonstrate that his power of healing was infinitely superior to the sanative virtue of the waters of Bethesda, while the rest were suffered to remain in their affliction.

Our compassionate Lord now approached the man whom he had singled out as the person on whom to manifest his power: he asked him whether he was desirous of being made whole. A question which must induce the man to declare publicly his melancholy case, in the hearing of the multitude, and consequently render the miracle more conspicuous. And as this was done on the Sabbath day, our

blessed Saviour seems to have wrought it to rouse the sons of Jacob from their lethargy, and convince the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the long-expected Messiah was now come, and that "God had actually visited his people."

This distressed mortal beholding Jesus with a sorrowful countenance, and understanding that he meant his being healed by the sanative virtue of the waters, answered, in a plaintive accent, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming another steppeth in before me." John v. 7. But the compassionate Redeemer of mankind soon convinced him that he was not to owe his cure to the salutary nature of the waters but the unbounded power of the Son of God, and accordingly said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." Nor was the heavenly mandate any sooner uttered, than the impotent man, to the astonishment of the multitude, "was made whole: and took up his bed, and walked." John v. 9.

This great and miraculous cure could not fail of having a proper effect on the spectators; and his carrying his bed on the Sabbath day, which the Jews considered as a profanation of that day of rest, tended greatly to spread the fame of the miracle over the whole city. Nor did the man scruple to obey the commands of his kind physician: he well knew that the person who had the power of working such miracles must be a great prophet; and consequently that his injunction could not be sinful. He therefore thought that he gave a sufficient answer to those Jews who told him it was not lawful to carry his bed on the Sabbath day, to say, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." John v. 11. He that restored my strength in an instant, and removed, with a single word, a disease that had many years afflicted me, commanded me, at the same time, to take up my bed and walk; and surely a person endued with such power from on high, could not have ordered me to do anything but what is truly right.

The votaries of infidelity should remember that this signal miracle was performed in an instant, and even when the patient did not expect any such favor, nor even knew the person to whom he owed it. None, therefore, can pretend that imagination had any share in performing it. In short, the narrative of this miracle of mercy sufficiently proves, that the person who performed it was really divine.

The Jews had long expected the Messiah: but they had expected him to appear as a temporal prince, who would not only restore the

former lustre of the throne of David, but infinitely augment it, and even place it over all the kingdoms of the earth. And, hence, they were unwilling to acknowledge Jesus for their Messiah, notwithstanding the proofs of his mission were so undeniable, because they must in so doing have abandoned all their grand idea of a temporal kingdom. Our blessed Saviour, therefore, desired them to consult their own scriptures, particularly the writings of the prophets, where they would find the characters of the Messiah displayed, and be fully convinced they were all fulfilled in his person.

He also gave them to understand, that the proofs of his mission were as full and clear as possible, being supported by the actions of his life, which in all things agreed with his doctrine; for he never sought the applause of men, or assumed secular power, but was always innocent and humble, though he well knew that these virtues made him appear little in the eyes of those who had no idea of a spiritual kingdom, but expected the Messiah would appear in all the pomp of secular authority.

In short, the fatal infidelity of the Jews was principally owing to their pride. They had long filled the minds of the people with grand ideas of the glory and power of the Messiah's kingdom; they had represented him as a potent prince, who was to appear at once adorned with all the ensigns of power; and therefore to have ascribed that august character to a mere teacher of righteousness, destitute even of the ordinary advantages of birth, fortune, and erudition, would have been so plain a confession of their ignorance of the scriptures, as must have exposed them to the ridicule and contempt of the whole people.

Our blessed Saviour added, that he himself should not be their own accuser to the God of Jacob for their infidelity; but Moses, their great legislator, in whom they trusted, would join in that unwelcome office; for by denying him to be the Messiah they denied the writings of that prophet. "For, had ye," added he, "believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me: but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John v. 46, 47.

Thus did the blessed Jesus assert himself to be the Son of God, the great Judge of the whole earth, and the Messiah promised by the prophets; and at the same time gave them such convincing proofs of his being sent from God, that nothing could be said against them.

Convincing as these proofs were, they yet did not in the least abate the malice of the Scribes and Pharisees; for the very next Sabbath,

upon his disciples plucking a few ears of corn as they passed through the fields, and eating the grain after rubbing it out in their hands, they again exclaimed against this violation of the Sabbath. But our blessed Saviour soon convinced them of their error, by showing, both from the example of David and the constant practice of their own priests, who never omitted the necessary works of the temple on the Sabbath day, that works of necessity were often permitted, even though they broke a ritual command; that acts of mercy were the most acceptable services to God on any day whatever: that it was inverting the order of things to suppose that "man was made for the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath for the benefit of man." Adding, that if the service of the temple should be said to claim a particular dispensation from the law of the Sabbath, he and his disciples, whose business of promoting the salvation of mankind was of equal importance, might justly claim the same exemption, as they were carrying on a much nobler work than the priest who attended on the service of the temple. Thus did our blessed Saviour prove, that works of mercy should not be left undone, though attended with the violation of some of the most sacred institutions of the ceremonial law.

Soon after this dispute with the Scribes and Pharisees, our blessed Saviour entered one of the synagogues of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, and found there a man whose right hand was withered.

The Pharisees, who observed the compassionate Jesus advance towards the man, did not doubt but he would attempt to heal him; and therefore watched him attentively, that they might have something to accuse him of to the people.

Their hypocrisy was arrived at that enormous pitch, that they determined to injure his reputation, by representing him as a Sabbath-breaker, if he dared to heal the man, while they themselves were profaning it by an action which would have polluted any day, namely, that of seeking an opportunity of destroying a person who had never injured them, but who had done many good actions for the sons of Jacob, and was continually laboring for their eternal welfare.

The Saviour of the world was not unapprized of these malicious intentions. He knew their designs and defied their impotent power, by informing them of the benevolent action he designed, though he well knew they would exert every art they were masters of, in order to pu' him to death.

Therefore when our Saviour ordered the man to show himself to the whole congregation, in order to excite their pity, these hypocritical

teachers declared, in the strongest terms, the unlawfulness of his performing even such beneficent actions on the Sabbath: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" They did not, however, ask this question with an intention to hinder him from performing the miracle. No, they had a very different intention to that of accusing him; for they hoped he would have declared openly that such actions were lawful; or at least make no reply to their demand, which they would have construed into an acknowledgment of what they asserted.

Nor did our Lord fail to expose their malice and superstition, and accordingly asked them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?" Luke vi. 9 Is it not more lawful for me, on the Sabbath day, to save men's lives, than for you to seek my death without the least provocation? This was a severe rebuke, and would admit of no answer; they therefore "held their peace," pretending not to understand his meaning. He therefore made use of an argument, which stupidity itself could not fail of understanding, and which all the art of these hypocritical sophists was unable to answer. "What man," said the blessed Jesus, "shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day will he not lay hold on it and lift it out: how much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day." Matt. xii. 11, 12.

The former question they pretended not to understand, and therefore held their peace; but this argument effectually silenced them, though they were determined not to be convinced. This unconquerable obstinacy grieved the spirit of the meek, the benevolent Jesus, who beheld them "with anger;" that, if possible, an impression might be made either on them or the spectators. But at the same time that he testified his displeasure towards the Pharisees, he uttered words of comfort to the lame man, bidding him stretch forth his hand; and he no sooner obeyed the divine command than "his hand was restored whole, as the other."

This astonishing work performed in the midst of a congregation, many of whom doubtless knew the man while he labored under this infirmity, and in the presence of his most inveterate enemies, must certainly have had a great effect on the minds of the people, especially as they saw that it had effectually silenced the Pharisees, who had nothing to offer, either against the miracle itself or the reasoning and power of him who had performed it.

But though these whited sepulchres, as our blessed Saviour justly

termed them, were silenced by his arguments and astonished at his miracles, yet they were so far from abandoning their malicious intentions that they joined their inveterate enemies, the Herodians, or Sadducees, in order to consult how they might destroy him; well knowing that if he continued his preaching and working miracles, the people would wholly follow him, and their own power soon become contemptible. Jesus, however, thought proper to prevent their malicious designs, by retiring into Galilee, and there pursue his benevolent intentions.

This retreat could not, however, conceal him from the multitude, who flocked to him from all quarters, bringing with them sick and maimed, who were all healed and sent away in peace.

During this dispute with the Pharisees, Jesus was informed that his mother and brethren, or kinsmen, were without, desiring to speak to him: upon which the blessed Jesus stretched out his hands towards his disciples, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Matt. xii. 49, 50. This glorious truth should be stamped on the minds of all believers, as it shows that every one, of what nation or kindred soever, who is brought into subjection to the will of God, is allied to the blessed Jesus and entitled to the salvation of God.



AN EASTERN FUNERAL.

## CHAPTER XIII.

OUR LORD DELIVERS MANY REMARKABLE PARABLES, AND EXPLAINS SEVERAL OF THEM—RETURNS TO NAZARETH AND COMMISSIONS THE TWELVE APOSTLES, WHOM HE HAD BEFORE SELECTED AS HIS CONSTANT ATTENDANTS AND FOLLOWERS, TO DISPERSE AND PREACH THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN DIVERS PLACES—AFTER THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, THE APOSTLES RETURN TO NAZARETH.

THE miraculous power of our blessed Lord, both in performing the most astonishing acts and confuting the most learned of the Pharisaical tribe, who endeavored to oppose his mission and doctrine, brought together so great a multitude, that he repaired to the sea-side; and for the better instructing the people, he entered into a ship, and the whole multitude stood on the shore. Being thus conveniently seated, he delivered many precepts of the utmost importance, beginning with the parable of the sower, who cast his seed on different kinds of soil, the products of which were answerable to the nature of the ground, some yielding a large increase, others nothing at all. By this striking similitude the blessed Jesus represented the different kinds of hearers, and the different manner in which they are affected by the truths of religion. Some wholly suppress the doctrines delivered; in others they produce the fruits of righteousness, in proportion to the goodness of their hearts. And surely a more proper parable could not have been delivered, when such multitudes came to hear his discourses, and so few practiced the precepts or profited by the heavenly doctrines they contained.

The parable being finished, his disciples asked, why he taught the people in parables; to which he answered, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have in more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I unto them in parables: because in seeing they see not; and in hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." Matt. xiii. 11, etc. As if he had said, You, my beloved disciples, who are of an humble, docile temper, and are willing to use means, and resort to me for instruction and the

explanation of the truths I deliver ; to you it shall be no disadvantage that they are delivered in parables. Besides, my discourses are plain and intelligible to all unprejudiced minds; truth will shine through the veil in which it is arrayed, and the shadow will guide you to the substance. But these proud, these self-conceited Pharisees, who are so blinded by their own prejudices that they will neither hear nor understand a thing plainly delivered, to them I preach in parables, and hide the great truths of the gospel under such metaphorical robes as will forever conceal them from persons of their temper. They have therefore brought upon themselves this blindness, that in seeing they see not, and this wilful deafness, that in hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

The blessed Jesus added, that there was no reason for their being surprised at what he had told them, as it had long before been predicted by the prophet Isaiah: "By hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Matt. xiii. 14, 15. There is some variation in the words, as quoted by the evangelist and those found in Isaiah; but the import of both is the same, and may be paraphrased in the following manner: "The sons of Jacob shall indeed hear the doctrines of the gospel, but not understand them; and see the miracles by which these doctrines are confirmed, without perceiving them to be wrought by the finger of God: not because the evidences produced by the Messiah are insufficient, but because the corruption of their hearts will not suffer them to examine and weigh these evidences; for the sins of this people have hardened their hearts: their pride and vanity have shut their ears, and their hypocrisy and bigoted adherence to traditions and forced interpretations of the law and the prophets have closed their eyes, lest the brilliant rays of truth should strike their sight with irresistible force, and the powerful voice of divine wisdom force their attention, and command their assent, being unwilling to be directed to the paths of righteousness which lead to the heavenly Canaan."

Such are the reasons given by our blessed Saviour, for his teaching the people by parables. He then proceeded to explain the parable of the sower, opened its secret, wonderful meaning in his simple way, and deeply impressed the meaning he wished to teach. "The sower,"



SOWING THE GOOD SEED.

said he, "soweth the word." The seed therefore implies the doctrines of true religion, and the various kinds of soil the various kinds of hearers. The ground by the highway-side, which is apt to be beaten by men treading upon it, is an image of those who have their hearts so hardened with impiety, that though they hear the gospel preached it makes no impression on their callous hearts, because they either hear it inattentively or quickly forget the words of the preacher. And surely no similitude could more strongly represent this insensibility and inattention, than the beaten ground, bordering on the highway, into which the seed never entering, it is picked up by the fowls of the air, or trodden and broken by the feet of the passengers. "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which is sown in his heart: this is he which received the seed by the way-side." Matt. xiii. 19. We must not suppose that the devil has the power of robbing hearers of their knowledge by any immediate act of his own, because he is said to catch away the word sown in their hearts, but by the opportunities they give the deceiver of mankind for exerting his strong temptations, and particularly those which have a relation to commerce with men; a circumstance that could not escape the observation of St. Luke, who tells us that the seed was trodden down, or destroyed, from their own headstrong lusts, which, like so many birds pinched with hunger, devour the seed implanted in their minds. The rocky ground represents those hearers who so far receive the word into their hearts that it discovers itself by good resolutions, formed on slight conviction, which are, perhaps, accompanied with a partial reformation of some sins, and the temporary practice of some virtues. But the word has not sunk deep enough in their minds to remain constantly there: its abode with them is only for a season; and, therefore, when persecution ariseth for the sake of the gospel, and such hearers are exposed to tribulations of any kind, the blade which sprung up, quickly withers for want of being watered with the streams of piety and virtue; like the vegetable productions of the earth when deprived of the enlivening rains and dews of heaven and a want of earth to contain this balmy fluid, when the rays of the sun dart in full vigor upon them; "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

The ground encumbered with thorns, which sprung up with the seed and choked it, represents all those who receive the word into hearts already filled with the cares of this world, which will, sooner or later destroy whatever good resolutions are raised by the word. The cares of the world are compared to thorns, not only because of their pernicious tendency to choke the word, but because they cannot be eradicated without great pain and difficulty. In this parable, the hearers of this denomination are distinguished from those who receive the seed on stony ground, not so much by the effect of the word upon their minds as by the different causes of unfruitfulness in each; for in both the seed sprang up, but brought forth no fruit.

Those represented by the stony ground have no depth of soil; those by the thorny ground, are choked by the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the love of pleasures, which, sooner or later, stifle the impressions of the word; by which means they at last become as unfruitful as the former. But both are distinguished from those hearers represented by the seed sown by the highway-side, that they receive the word, and, in some measure, obey its precepts; whereas the first never retained the word at all, hearing without attention; or, if they do attend, forget it immediately. "He also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Matt. xiii. 22.

In opposition to these unprofitable hearers of the word, others are represented as hearing the word attentively, understanding it clearly, and treasuring it up with great care. These are convinced of the truths delivered, and practice them, though contrary to their prejudices and opposite to their inclinations. All those bring forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, and some thirty, in proportion to the different degrees of strength in which they possess the graces necessary to the profitable hearing the word of righteousness.

Having ended this interpretation of the parable of the sower, he continued his discourse to his disciples, explaining to them, by the similitude of a lighted lamp, the use they were expected to make of all the excellent instructions they had and should receive from him. Their understanding, he told them, was to illuminate the world, as a brilliant lamp placed in the centre of an apartment enlightens the whole. He added, that though some of the doctrines of the gospel were then concealed from the people, because of their prejudices, yet the time would come when these doctrines should be preached openly

and plainly through the world; and therefore it was their duty to whom God had given both an opportunity of hearing and a capacity of understanding these doctrines, to listen with the utmost attention. "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." Matt. iv. 21, 22, 23.

But as it was a matter of great importance that the disciples, who were to publish the gospel throughout the whole world, should listen with the closest attention to his sermons, he repeated his admonitions, adding, that their present privileges and future rewards should be both proportioned to the fidelity and care with which they discharged the important trust committed to them. "Take heed what ye hear: with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given." Mark iv. 24.

Having explained these parables to his disciples, he turned himself to the multitude on the shore, and, in his usual endearing accent, delivered the parable of the enemy's sowing tares among the wheat, and on their first appearance, astonishing the husbandman's servants, who knew the field had been sowed with good seed; and, in order to free the wheat from such injurious plants, proposed to root them up. But this the husbandman absolutely refused, lest by extirpating the one they injured the other; adding, that he would take care, at the time of harvest, to give orders to his reapers, that they should first gather the tares into bundles, and burn them, and afterwards carry the wheat to the granaries. "The kingdom of heaven," said the blessed Jesus, "is likened to a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers, Gather ye the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." Matt. xiii. 24, etc. This parable of the tares being ended, he spake

another concerning the seed which sprang up secretly, representing the gradual progress of the gospel among the sons of men.

The next parable he spake to the multitude was that of the mustard-seed, which though very small when sown, becomes, in Palestine and other parts of the East, a large, spreading tree. Intimating to his audience, under this similitude, that notwithstanding the gospel would at first appear contemptible from the ignominy flowing from the crucifixion of its author, the strictness of its precepts, the weakness of the persons by whom it was preached, and the small number and mean condition of those who received it; yet, being founded on truth itself, it would increase to an astonishing magnitude, filling the whole earth and affording spiritual nourishment to persons of all nations, who should enjoy all the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom equally with the Jews. And surely a more proper parable could not have been uttered to encourage his disciples to persevere in the work of the ministry, notwithstanding it would in the beginning be opposed by the learned, the rich, and the powerful. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

Our blessed Saviour concluded his discourse to the multitude with the parable of the leaven, to intimate the influence of the doctrine of the gospel on the minds of particular persons: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matt. xiii. 33.

While Jesus was thus employed in his heavenly Father's business, his mother and brethren came a second time, desiring to see him. In all probability they feared that the continued fatigue of preaching would injure his health; and were therefore desirous of taking him with them, that he might refresh himself. But the blessed Jesus, who was never weary of doing good, answered his indulging parent as before: "My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God and do it." Luke viii. 19.

Night approaching, Jesus dismissed the multitude, and returned to the house in Capernaum, where he abode, and there explained to his disciples the parable of the tares in the field. The husbandman, said our blessed Saviour, is the Son of man. The field, the Christian church, planted in different parts of the world. The wheat are those

Christians that believe in Christ, who obey the precepts of the gospel, and are supported by the influences of the Holy Spirit; and the tares, the bad professors, seduced into the paths of vice by the temptations of the devil. Our blessed Lord, therefore, by this parable, represented the mixed nature of the church on earth, the dismal end of the hypocrites, and those who forget God; for these may deceive for a time, by assuming the robes of virtue and religion; yet they will not fail, sooner or later, to betray themselves, and show that they are only wolves in sheep's clothing. At the same time, however sincerely we may wish to see the church freed from her corrupted members, we must not extirpate them by force, lest, being deceived by outward appearances, we also destroy the wheat, or sound members. We must leave this distinction to the awful day, when the great Messiah will descend to judgment; for then a final separation will be made, the wicked cast into torments that will never have an end, but the righteous received into life eternal, where they shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. xiii. 43.

Our Lord on this occasion delivered the parables of the treasure hid in the field, and of the pearl of great price, both designed for the same purpose, to promote the diligence, zeal, and resolution of his disciples, in searching into and teaching these great and important truths, in which the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, were so much concerned.

And surely the similitudes, both of the treasure and pearl, are very naturally used to signify the gospel; the former as it enriches all who possess it; and the latter, because it is more precious than rubies.

But that the disciples must expect that the Christian church would consist of a mixed multitude of people, the good blended with the bad in such a manner that it would be difficult to separate them, he compared it to a net cast into the sea, which gathered fish of every kind, good and bad, which were separated when the net was drawn to land; that is, at the last great day of accounts, when the righteous will be conveyed to life eternal, and the wicked cast into everlasting misery.

Our blessed Saviour having finished these parables, asked his disciples if they understood them; and upon their answering in the affirmative, he added, that every teacher of the gospel ought to resemble a person whose house was completely furnished, and brought "forth out of his treasure things new and old." Matt. xiii. 52.

Soon after Jesus left Capernaum, and repaired to Nazareth, where

he had been brought up, and preached in the synagogue the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; but his townsmen, though astonished at his doctrine, could not overcome the prejudices they had conceived against him, on account of the meanness of his family, and thence refused to own him for the Messiah. Our Saviour finding them the same incorrigible persons as when he visited them before, departed from them, and taught in the neighboring villages. They, in common with all the Jews, were strangers to the true character of the Messiah, whom they considered as a temporal prince; and therefore could not bear that a person so mean as Jesus appeared to be, should perform works peculiar to that idol of their vanity, a glorious, triumphant, secular Messiah.

While our Lord resided in the neighborhood of Nazareth, he sent out his disciples to preach in different parts of Galilee, and to proclaim the glad tidings, that God was then going to establish the kingdom of the Messiah, wherein he would be worshipped in spirit and in truth. And in order that they might confirm the doctrines they delivered, and prove that they had received their commission from the Son of God, they were endowed with the power of working miracles. How long they continued their preaching cannot be known, but it is reasonable to think they spent a considerable time in it, preaching in several parts of Judea.

The miracles which the apostles wrought raised the expectations of men higher than ever: the people were astonished to see the disciples of Jesus perform so many miracles; and thence concluded that our Saviour must be greater than any of the old prophets, who could not transmit the power they enjoyed to any other. This extraordinary circumstance could not fail of spreading his fame through the whole country; it even reached the ears of Herod the Tetrach, who, fearing a person of such extraordinary abilities, was very uneasy; which some of his courtiers observing, endeavored to remove, telling him, that one of the old prophets was risen from the dead; but this did not satisfy him, and he declared that he believed it was John the Baptist risen from the dead. "And he said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him." *Matt. xiv. 2.*

The evangelists having on this account mentioned John the Baptist, inform us that Herod had put him to death; but when this happened is uncertain.

It has already been observed, that Herod had cast John into prison

for his boldness, in reproving him for the adulterous commerce in which he lived with his brother's wife. The sacred writers have not told us how long he continued in prison ; but it is plain from his two disciples, who came from him to our Saviour, that his followers did not forsake him in his melancholy condition. Nay, Herod himself both respected and feared him, knowing that he was highly and deservedly beloved by the people : he consulted him often, and in many things followed his advice. But Herodias, his brother's wife, with whom he lived in so shameful a manner, being continually uneasy lest Herod should be prevailed upon to set him at liberty, sought all opportunities to destroy him ; and at last an incident happened which enabled her to accomplish her intentions.

The king having, on his birth-day, made a great feast for his friends, she sent her daughter Salome, whom she had by Philip, her lawful husband, into the saloon, to dance before the king and his guests. Her performance was remarkably elegant, and so charmed Herod, that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.

Having obtained so remarkable a promise, she ran to her mother, desiring to know what she should ask ; and was instructed by that wicked woman to require the head of John the Baptist. Her mother's desire doubtless surprised Salome, as she could not possibly see the use of asking what could be of no use to her. But Herodias would take no denial, peremptorily insisting on her demanding the head of the Baptist. Accordingly she returned to Herod, saying, "I will that thou give me, by and by, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist."

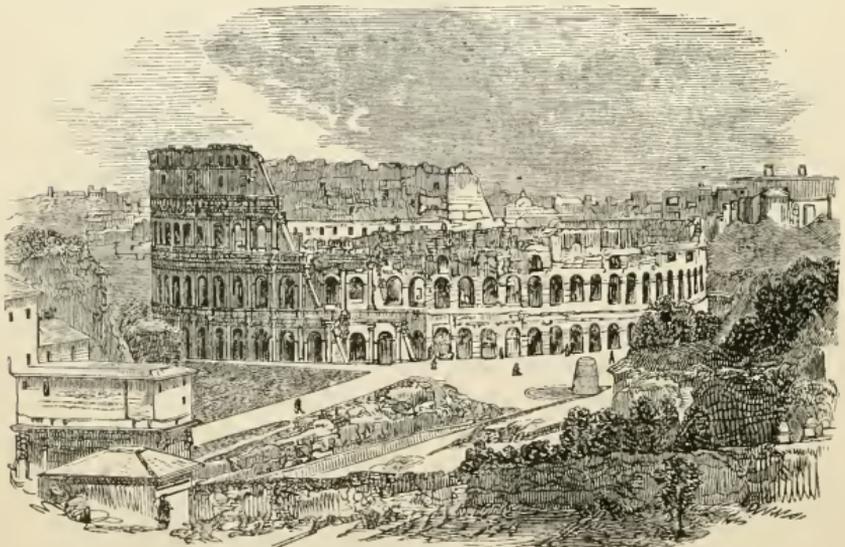
So cruel a request thrilled every breast ; the gayety of the king was vanished : he was vexed and confounded : but being unwilling to appear either rash, fickle, or false, before a company of the first persons of his kingdom for rank and character, he commanded the head to be given her ; not one of the guests having the courage to speak a single word in behalf of an innocent man, or attempt to divert Herod from his mad purpose, though he gave them an opportunity of doing it, by signifying to them that he performed his oath merely out of regard to the company. Thus Herod, through a misplaced regard to his oath and his guests, committed a most unjust and cruel action ; an action that will forever brand his memory with dishonor, and render his very name detestable to the latest posterity.

Soon after the command was given, the head of that venerable

prophet, whose rebukes had struck Herod with awe in his loosest moments, and whose exhortations had often alarmed his guilty conscience, was brought pale and bloody, in a charger, and given to the daughter of Herodias, in the presence of all the guests.

The young lady eagerly received the bloody present, and carried it to her mother, who enjoyed the whole pleasure of revenge, and feasted her eyes with the sight of her enemy's head, now silent and harmless. But she could not silence the sounding of the name of the Baptist; it became louder and louder, filling the earth and heavens, and publishing to every people and nation this woman's baseness and adultery.

Thus fell that great and good man, John the Baptist, who was proclaimed by our blessed Saviour himself to be "more than a prophet." Josephus tells us, that his whole crime consisted in exhorting the Jews to the love and practice of virtue: and in the first place, to piety, justice, and regeneration, or newness of life; and not by the abstinence from this or that particular sin, but by an habitual purity of mind and body.



RUINS OF THE COLISEUM AT ROME.

## CHAPTER XIV.

OUR LORD ADDS TO THE CONFIRMATION OF HIS MISSION AND DOCTRINE BY WORKING A MIRACLE IN THE WILDERNESS OF BETHSAIDA—THE PEOPLE, STRUCK WITH THE POWER AND GRACE OF THE BLESSED JESUS, PROPOSE TO RAISE HIM TO THE EARTHLY DIGNITY OF KING—PETER, BY MEANS OF HIS BLESSED MASTER, PERFORMS A MIRACLE IN WALKING UPON THE SEA—OUR LORD'S IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIRACLES WROUGHT IN THE WILDERNESS, INTRODUCED IN A DISCOURSE DELIVERED IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF CAPERNAUM.

THE disciples were so alarmed at the cruel fate of the Baptist, whose memory they highly revered, that they returned from their mission, and assisted in performing the last offices to the body of their old Master, many of the apostles having been originally disciples of John. As soon as these pious rites were over, they repaired to Jesus and told him all that had happened.

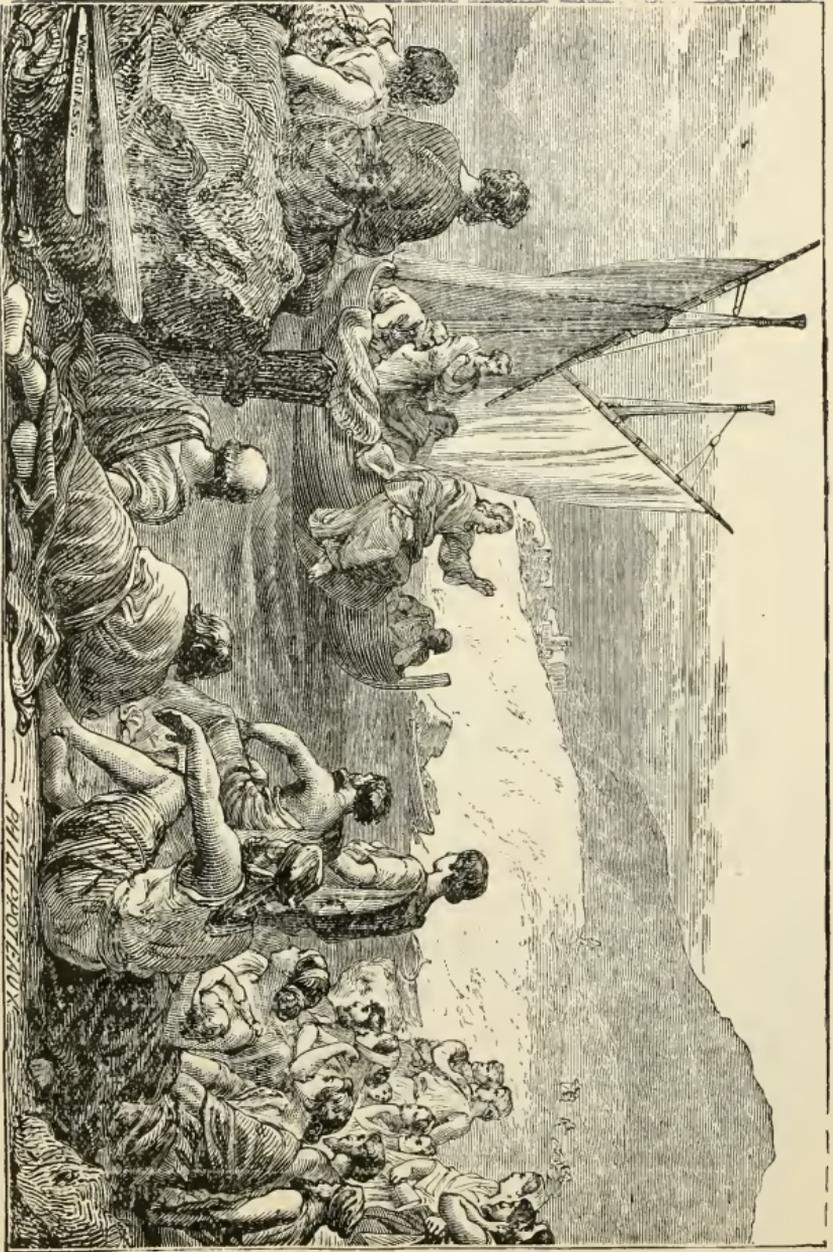
Their compassionate Master, on hearing this melancholy news, retired with them, by sea, into a desert place, belonging to Bethsaida, that by retirement, meditation, and prayer, they might be refreshed and recruited for their spiritual labors; and at the same time leave an example to us that we should often retire from the noise and hurry of the world, and offer up the most fervent prayers to our heavenly Father.

But the multitude attended so closely, that their departure was not long concealed; and great numbers of people repaired to the place where they supposed Jesus and his disciples had secluded themselves. Struck with the greatness of his miracles on those that were sick, and anxious to hear more instructions from the mouth of so divine a teacher, no difficulties were too great for them to surmount, nor any place too retired for them to penetrate, in search of their admired preacher.

Nor was the beneficent Saviour of the world regardless of their pious esteem. He saw them, he was "moved with compassion" towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, multitudes of people without a pastor, a large harvest without laborers; motives abundantly sufficient to excite compassion in the Son of God.

The situation of those numerous throngs of people scattered abroad,

JESUS TEACHING BY THE SEA-SIDE.



without a guide, without a guardian; a large flock of defenceless sheep, without a single shepherd to defend them from the jaws of the infernal wolf, was truly deplorable; the blessed Jesus, therefore, that "good shepherd who came to lay down his life for the sheep," was moved with pity towards them: the same pity which brought him from the courts of heaven for the sake of his lost and wandering sheep in the desert, now brought him to this multitude of people, whom he instructed in the doctrines of eternal life; and with his usual goodness, healed all the sick among them.

Intently devoted to teaching and healing the people, our blessed Saviour did not seem to notice the day to wear away, and that the greatest part of it was already spent: but his disciples, too anxious about the things of this world, thought proper to advise him of it; as if the Son of God wanted any directions from man. The day, said his disciples, is now far advanced, and the place a solitary desert, where neither food nor lodging can be procured: it would, therefore, be convenient to dismiss the people, that they may repair to the towns or villages on the borders of the wilderness, and provide themselves with food and lodging, for they have nothing to eat.

But our Lord prevented that trouble, by telling them there was no necessity for sending the people away to procure victuals for themselves, as they might satisfy the hunger of the multitude, by giving them to eat. And at the same time to prove what opinion his disciples entertained of his power, addressed himself to Philip, who was well acquainted with the country, and said, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

Philip, astonished at the seeming impossibility of procuring a supply for so great a multitude, with the small sum of money which he knew was their all, and forgetting the extent of his Master's power, answered, "Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." John vi. 6.

Our blessed Saviour might now have put the same question to Philip that he did on another occasion: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" John xiv. 9. Hast thou beheld so many miracles, and art still ignorant that I can supply food not only for this people, but for all the sons of men, and for "the cattle upon a thousand hills?"

But he contented himself with answering, "Give ye them to eat." The twelve, not yet comprehending the design of their Master, repeated the objection of Philip, but added that they were willing to

expend their whole stock in order to procure as large a supply as possible. "Shall we go," said they, "and buy two hundred penny-worth of bread, that they may eat?"

But this was by no means the design of their great Master, who, instead of making a direct answer to their question, asked them, "How many loaves have ye?" How much provision can be found among this multitude? go and see.

The disciples obeyed the command of their Master, and Andrew soon returned to inform him, that the whole stock amounted to no more than five barley loaves and two small fishes; a quantity so inconsiderable that they scarcely deserved notice. "What are they," said his disciples, "among so many?" What, indeed, would they have been among such a multitude of people, if they had not been distributed by the creating hand of the Son of God?

Jesus, notwithstanding the smallness of the number, ordered them to be brought to him, and immediately commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, with which the place abounded, directing his disciples at the same time to range them in a regular order, by hundreds and fifties in a company, each company forming a long square, containing a hundred in rank, and fifty in file, that the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people more regularly served.

The multitude being seated, Jesus took the loaves and fishes into his hands, in the sight of all the people, that they might be convinced of the small quantity of provisions that were then before them, and that they could only expect to be fed by his supernatural power. But that hand which had constantly sustained nature could now easily multiply these five loaves and two fishes; for, as the Psalmist elegantly observes, "He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness." Accordingly he looked up to heaven, returned thanks to God, the liberal giver of all good things, for his infinite beneficence in furnishing food for all flesh, and for the power he had conferred on him, of relieving mankind by his miracles, particularly for that he was about to work. This done, he blessed them; and so peculiarly efficacious was his blessing, that these five barley loaves and two fishes were multiplied into a quantity sufficient to supply the wants of five thousand men, besides women and children, who, on the most favorable supposition, must amount to an equal number. "And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were sat down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would." John vi. 11.



JESUS FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

Thus did the compassionate and powerful Redeemer feed at least ten thousand people with five barley loaves and two small fishes, giving a magnificent proof both of his power and goodness. For after all had eaten to satiety, they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces; a much larger quantity than was at first set before our Lord to divide.

The people, when they had seen the Saviour of the world perform so stupendous a miracle, were astonished above measure; and, in the height of their transport, proposed to take Jesus by force, and make him a king, concluding that he must then assume the title of the Messiah, whose coming they had so long earnestly expected, and under whose reign they looked to enjoy all kinds of temporal felicities.

But, our Lord, well knowing the intentions of the multitude, and the inclinations of his disciples to second them, ordered the latter to repair immediately to their boat, and sail for Bethsaida, while he sent away the multitude. They would, it seems, gladly have detained the people, with whom they fully agreed in sentiments; and even lingered till he constrained them to get into the boat; so fully were they still possessed that their Master was to take the reins of government, and become a powerful prince over the house of Jacob.

The people suffered the disciples to depart, without the least remorse, as they saw that Jesus did not go with them.

Perhaps they imagined he was sending them away to provide such things as they had need of. Nor did they refuse to disperse when he commanded them, purposing to return in the morning, as we find they actually did.

Having thus sent the disciples and the multitude away, Jesus repaired himself to the summit of a mountain, spending the evening in heavenly contemplations and ardent prayers to his Almighty Father.

But the disciples, meeting with a contrary wind, could not continue their course to Bethsaida, which lay about two leagues to the northward of the desert mountain, where the multitude were miraculously fed. They, however, did all in their power to land as near that city as possible, but were tossed up and down all night by the tempest, so that in the fourth watch, or between three and six o'clock in the morning, they were not above a league from the shore.

Their divine Master beheld from the mountain the distressed situation in which they were; but they were ignorant of his presence, though he was now coming to their relief.

Such was the state of the disciples: they were tossed by boisterous waves, and opposed in their course by the rapid current of the wind; so that all hopes of reaching the place intended were vanished; when, behold, their heavenly Master, to assist them in this distressful situation, comes to them, walking on the foaming surface of the sea.

Their Lord's approach filled them with astonishment: they took him for an apparition, and shrieked for fear. Their terrors were, however, soon removed; their great and affectionate Master talked to them, with the sound of whose voice they were perfectly acquainted. "Be of good cheer," said the blessed Jesus: "It is I, be not afraid."

Peter, a man of a warm and forward temper, beholding Jesus walking on the sea, was exceedingly amazed, and conceived the strongest desire of being enabled to perform so wonderful an action. Accordingly, without the least reflection, he immediately begged that his Master would bid him come to him on the water. He did not doubt but that Jesus would gratify his request, as it sufficiently intimated that he would readily undertake anything, however difficult, at the command of his Saviour. But it appeared that his faith was too weak to support him to that height of obedience to which he would have willingly soared. To convince this forward disciple of the weakness of his faith, and render him more diffident of his own strength, our blessed Saviour granted Peter his request. He ordered him to come to him on the water.

Peter joyfully obeyed his divine Master; he left the boat, and walked on the surface of the sea. But the wind increasing, made a dreadful noise, and the boisterous waves, at the same time, threatened every moment to overwhelm him. His faith now staggered, his presence of mind forsook him, he forgot that his Saviour was at his hand; and, in proportion as his faith decreased, the waters yielded, and he sunk. In this extremity he looked around for his Master; and, on the very brink of being swallowed up, cried, "Lord, save me!" His cry was not disregarded by his compassionate Saviour: "He stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. xiv. 31.

Peter was convinced, before he left the ship, that it was Jesus who was coming to them on the water: nor did he even doubt it when he was sinking, because he then implored his assistance. But when he found the storm increase, and the billows rage more horribly than before, his fears suggested that either his Master would

be unable or unwilling to support him amidst the frightful blasts of the tempest.

This miracle alarmed the disciples; for, though they had so very lately seen the miracle of the five loaves, they did not seem to have before formed a proper idea of his power; but being now persuaded that he could be no other than the expected Messiah, they "came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth, thou art the Son of God." Matt. xiv. 33.

Our Saviour seems to have confirmed this miracle by working another; for the evangelists tell us, that he had no sooner entered the ship, and hushed the horrors of the storm, than they arrived at the place whither they were going. "Then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." John vi. 21.

When our Lord disembarked, the inhabitants of the neighboring country ran to him, bringing with them all those that were sick; and they were all healed. It must be remembered, that though Jesus ordinarily resided in the neighborhood of Capernaum, yet he had been absent ever since his visiting Nazareth; and therefore it is natural to



PETER SAVED BY JESUS.

think, that the inhabitants, on his return, would not omit the opportunity of bringing their sick in such prodigious crowds, that it seems our blessed Saviour did not bestow particular attention on each of them; and this was the reason for their beseeching him, "that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole." Matt. xiv. 36.

The virtue of that power, by which he wrought these things, lay not in his garments: for then the soldiers, who seized them at his crucifixion, might have wrought the same miracles; but it was because Jesus willed it to be so. It was now the acceptable time,



THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

the day of salvation, foretold by Isaiah, and Christ's power was sufficient to remove any distemper whatsoever.

But no sooner did the cheering rays of light appear, than the multitude left their retreat, and searched for Jesus in every part of the mountain, to the summit of which they had seen him retire. Finding their search in vain, they concluded that he must have departed for the other side, in some boat belonging to Tiberius, which had been forced by the storm to take shelter in a creek at the foot of the mountain. Accordingly, they repaired to Capernaum, where they found him in the synagogue teaching the people; and could not help asking him, with some surprise, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" John vi. 25.

To this question our Lord replied, that they did not seek him because they were convinced, by his miracles, of the truth of his mission, but because they hoped to be continually fed in the same miraculous manner as before. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled," These are the views which induce you to follow me; but ye are entirely mistaken; for happiness does not consist in the meat that perisheth, nor is it that sort of meat ye must expect to receive from the Messiah. Mere animal foods, which please and delight the body only, are not the gifts he came down from heaven to bestow; it is the meat that endureth to everlasting life, divine knowledge and grace, which, by renewing all the faculties of the soul, make it capable of enjoying eternal felicity: neither ought ye to follow the Son of man with any intention to obtain the meat that perisheth; but in the obtaining of the meat that endureth to everlasting life: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." John vi. 27.

But by the miracle of the loaves, my heavenly Father hath typified the true, the spiritual, the heavenly bread, which he himself giveth to the sons of men, and of which the manna was only a symbolical representation: the food that sustained the Israelites in the wilderness was sufficient only for a single nation, but this for all the children of men.

Many of the Jews, who listened with pleasure to his doctrine, and having heard him describe the properties of the celestial bread, they were animated with an earnest desire of being always fed with it:

“Lord,” said they, “evermore give us this bread; to which the blessed Jesus answered, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” John vi. 34.

Having made this answer to those who listened attentively to his doctrine, he turned himself to such as had heard him with prejudice, and took every advantage of wresting his words. You ask me, says he, to show you a sign, that ye may see and believe me to be the true Messiah. Surely you have seen it: you have seen my character and mission in the many miracles I have performed: miracles abundantly sufficient to convince you that I am really the Messiah so often promised by the ancient prophets, so long expected by the whole Jewish nation. But notwithstanding all these proofs, your hearts are still hardened; you expect a temporal prince, who shall raise the Jewish kingdom above all the empires of the earth; and because I do not affect the authority and pomp of an earthly monarch, you reject me as an impostor. Your infidelity, therefore, does not proceed from want of evidence, as you vainly pretend, but from the perverseness of your own dispositions, which may perhaps in time be overcome; for all those that the Father giveth me, however obstinate they may be for a season, will at last believe on the Son of God. Nor will I ever reject any that come to me, however low their circumstances may be, however vile they may appear in their own eyes, or however greatly their violence against my doctrines may have been exerted. I came down from heaven not to act according to the common method of human passions, which excite men to return “evil for evil,” but to bear with them; to try all possible means to bring them to repentance; and to lead them in the strait paths of righteousness, which terminate at the mansions of the heavenly Canaan.

It is the fixed will of my Father, to bestow eternal life on all who truly believe in me; and therefore I will raise them up at the last day.

As the prospect of the greatest part of the Jews extended no farther than temporal privileges and advantages, it is no wonder that they were offended at this doctrine; especially at his affirming, that he was the bread of life, and that he came down from heaven. Was not this man, said they, born into the world like other mortals? And are we not acquainted with his parents? How then can he pretend to come down from heaven?

But these degrading thoughts could not escape the censure of him

to whom nothing is a secret: you need not, said the blessed Jesus, object to my Birth, and the meanness of my relations, nor consider them as inconsistent with my heavenly extraction; for while you believe your teachers, who have so shamefully corrupted the oracles of Omnipotence, and filled your minds with the vain expectation of a temporal kingdom, you cannot believe on me. No man can believe on the Son of God, unless he be taught and assisted by the Father. You need not be surprised at this: for however ye may imagine that all men, at the appearance of the Messiah, will flock to him with great cheerfulness, and become the willing subjects of his kingdom, without any aid from the Holy Spirit, the prophets plainly foretold the contrary; for they promise that men shall enjoy the teaching of the Father in a far more eminent manner during the Messiah's kingdom, than under any preceding dispensation; consequently persuasion, and the most earnest persuasion too, is necessary. You are not to understand that by being taught of God you are to see with your bodily eyes the invisible Jehovah, because that privilege is confined to the Son alone; but that you are to be taught by the Spirit of God whatever is requisite to your eternal interest in and by me, who am the way, the truth, and the life.

This is the bread which came down from heaven; a kind of bread infinitely superior to that of manna, both in its nature and efficacy. It is different in its nature from manna, because it is not to be eaten as your fathers did that food in the wilderness; they "ate manna and are dead." It is different in its effect, because he that "eateth of this bread shall live forever."

These particulars Jesus spake in the hearing of all the people who attended the public worship in the synagogue of Capernaum, and though most of the metaphors were very easy to be understood, yet they did not comprehend what he meant by "eating his flesh and drinking his blood;" a thing not only prohibited by the law of Moses, but also repugnant to the customs of all civilized nations.

Many, therefore, who had followed him, considered it as inconsistent and absolutely absurd. But Jesus answered, Are you offended, because I told you my flesh is bread; that it came down from heaven, and that you must, in order to have eternal life, eat my flesh and drink my blood? But what if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up bodily into heaven, from whence he was sent by his heavenly Father? You will then surely be persuaded that I really came from heaven; and, at the same time, be convinced that you cannot eat my flesh in a

corporeal manner. I never meant that you should understand the expression literally: my flesh in that case would be of no advantage to the children of men. The metaphor was only used to indicate, that you must believe in the doctrines which I preach; for to reveal these I took upon me the veil of flesh, and assumed the nature of man. It is, therefore, more properly my spirit that confers this life on the human race, and renders them meet for immortal glory. My doctrine may perhaps be ineffectual to some of you, because ye are desirous of perverting it, and from thence to form a pretence for forsaking me. I well know the secret recesses of every heart; and therefore told you, that no man can believe on me, except it be given him of my Father.

The self-sufficient, self-righteous Jews were so offended at this discourse, that many of them, who had hitherto been our Saviour's disciples, went out of the synagogue, and never came more to hear him. They found that all their pleasing views of worldly grandeur and an extensive kingdom could have nothing more than an ideal foundation, if they acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah. But as they were unwilling to abandon all their favorite hopes of power, they refused to own him for the great Redeemer of Israel they had so long expected.

When the Jews were departed, Jesus turned himself to his disciples, and with a look of ineffable sweetness said to them, "Will ye also go away?" To this Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." John vi. 68, 69.

Peter in this reply alluded to our Lord's declaration of himself, in which he says that he was the bread of life, founding his faith in him as the Messiah. But Jesus, to convince them that he was not ignorant of the most secret thoughts of the heart, nor afraid that his enemies should be spectators of his most retired actions, told him that one of the twelve was a wicked man, and would be guilty of the vilest action. The prediction of Jesus was punctually verified when Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve chosen disciples, basely betrayed his great Lord and Master.

## CHAPTER XV.

PHARISAICAL SUPERSTITION SEVERELY REPRIMANDED—THE GREAT REDEEMER CONTINUES TO DISPLAY HIS POWER AND BENEVOLENCE, IN THE RELIEF OF SEVERAL OBJECTS OF AFFLICTION—GUARDS HIS DISCIPLES AGAINST THE PREVAILING ERRORS AND FALLACIES OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES—PROCEEDS ON THE WORKS OF HIS HEAVENLY FATHER.

THE season of the grand passover approaching, Jesus went up to Jerusalem, to attend that solemnity. But the Jews, being offended at his discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, made an attempt upon his life. Our Lord, therefore, finding it impossible to remain at Jerusalem in safety, departed from that city, and retired into Galilee.

The Pharisees were sensible they could not perpetrate their malicious designs upon him on that occasion; yet they followed him, hoping to find something by which they might accuse him, and at length ventured to attack him for permitting his disciples to eat with unwashed hands, because in so doing they transgressed the tradition of the elders.

Moses had, indeed, required external cleanness as a part of their religion; but it was only to signify how careful the servants of the Almighty should be to purify themselves from all uncleanness, both of flesh and spirit. These ceremonial institutions were, in process of time, prodigiously multiplied; and the Pharisees, who pretended to observe every tittle of the law, considered it as a notorious offence to eat bread with unwashed hands; though, at the same time, they suffered the more weighty precepts of the law to be neglected and forgotten.

To expose the absurdity of such superstitious customs, our Saviour applied to them the words of the prophet Isaiah: "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Adding, that all their worship was vain and displeasing to the Almighty, while they practised themselves and imposed upon others the frivolous precepts of man's invention, and, at the same time, neglected the eternal rules of righteousness; and to remove all objections that might be

brought against this imputation of gross profaneness in the Pharisees, he supported it by a very remarkable instance.

God, said the Saviour of the world, hath commanded children to honor their parents, and to maintain them, when reduced to poverty by sickness, age, or misfortunes; promising life to such as observe this precept, and threatening death to those who disregard it. But notwithstanding the peremptory commandment of Omnipotence, you teach that it is a more sacred duty to enrich the temple, than to nourish their parents, reduced to the utmost necessity; pretending that what is offered to the great Parent of the universe is much better bestowed than what is given to the support of our earthly parents; making the honor of God absolutely different from that of his creatures. Nay, ye teach that it is no breach of the commandment, for a man to suffer his parents to perish, provided he has given what ought to nourish them to the temple at Jerusalem. Thus have you concealed under the cloak of piety the most irreligious and horrid, the most unnatural crime any person can commit.

Having thus reprovèd the Pharisees, he called the multitude to him; and desired them to reflect on the absurdity of the precepts inculcated by the Scribes. These hypocrites, said he, solicitous about trifles, neglect the great duties of morality, which are of eternal obligation. They shudder with horror at unwashed hands, but are perfectly easy, under the guilt of a polluted conscience; though they must be sensible that "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth the man." Matt. xv. 11.

The haughty Pharisees were highly offended at his speaking in a degrading manner of their traditions. And the apostles, who would gladly have reconciled their Master and the Pharisees, insinuated to Jesus, that he ought to have acted in another manner. To which our Saviour answered, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matt. xv. 13. As if he had said, you have no cause to fear their anger, as both they and their doctrine shall perish together, for neither of them came from God. Adding, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matt. xv. 14.

His disciples, not fully comprehending this doctrine, desired their Master to explain it. This our Saviour complied with, and showed them, that meats being of a corporeal nature, could not defile the

mind of man, or render him polluted in the sight of the Almighty, unless they were used to excess, or in opposition to the commandment of God: and even then the pollution arose from the man, and not from the meat. But, on the contrary, that which proceedeth out of the mouth of a man comes from his heart, and really polluteth his mind.

These doctrines of the truth could not fail of irritating the Pharisees, as they tended to strip them of the mask with which they concealed their deformity, and rendered themselves so venerable in the eyes of the vulgar; and therefore their plots were levelled against his reputation and life.

Jesus, to avoid their malice, retired to the very borders of Palestine, to the coasts of those two celebrated Gentile cities, Tyre and Sidon,\* purposing there to conceal himself for a time: but he could not be hid. It was as impossible for the "Son of righteousness" to be concealed wherever he came, with his healing wings and message of peace, as it is for the sun in the firmament, when he riseth in all his glory, "as a bridegroom cometh out of his chamber, and as a giant rejoicing to run his course." For a certain woman of Canaan, having heard of him, determined to implore his assistance. She was, indeed, one of the most abject sort of Gentiles, a Canaanite, one of that detested race with which the Jews would have no dealing, nor even conversation; but notwithstanding all these discouraging cir-

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\* Tyre and Sidon were the chief cities of Phœnicia, and were extensively engaged in commerce. They were amongst the most magnificent cities of the East, but were steeped in idolatry and sensuality. The country to which they belonged was very powerful, and the cities were all bound by a confederation. Sidon is said to have been founded by Zidon, the first-born son of Canaan. Tyre is of more modern origin, but is mentioned in the book of Joshua. Hiram, King of Tyre, made a number of magnificent presents to Solomon at the building of the temple, and a friendship thus sprung up between the Jews and the Tyrians, which lasted long after the revolt of the ten tribes. Tyre and Sidon were both captured by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the former after a siege of thirteen years' duration. The "strong city" was utterly demolished; but it afterwards rose from its ruins, and became a great city. Alexander the Great took it after a siege of seven months, and burned it; but it again sprung up, and under the Greeks and Romans became a great city. Both cities were in the height of their glory in the days of our Lord. Both were taken by the Christians in the Crusades, having passed into the hands of the Turks, in 1633—'38, when the Caliph Omar conquered Palestine. After the taking of Acre, in 1291, by the Sultan of Egypt, the Christian inhabitants of Tyre abandoned the city, and fled in their ships. Tyre was occupied by the conquerors, and since then has declined. During the present century, however, it has shown some signs of reviving. Sidon still retains a little of its ancient commerce; but has declined almost in proportion with the growth of Beyroot.



THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

cumstances, she threw herself, as an humble petitioner, on the never-failing mercies of the Son of God. Strong necessity urged her on; and insuperable distress caused her to be importunate. Alas! unhappy parent! her only daughter, her beloved child, had an unclean spirit—"was grievously vexed with a devil."

When her case was so urgent, and her woes so poignant, who can wonder that she was so importunate, and would take no refusal from this divine person, whom she knew was able to deliver her! Accordingly, she came, she fell at his feet, she besought him, she cried, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David," have mercy! I plead no merits; as a worthless, suffering wretch, I entreat only the bowels of thy mercy; I entreat it, for I believe thee to be the Son of David, the promised Messiah, the much-desired Saviour of the world; have mercy on me, for the case of my child and her distresses are my own; "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Matt. xv. 22.

Is it not, at the first view, astonishing that such a petitioner should be apparently rejected; and that by a bountiful and merciful Redeemer, who kindly invited all that were heavy laden to come to him; who promised never to cast out any that would come, and whose business it was "to go about doing good?"

We, however, find he answered this woman not a word: he did not, in appearance, take the least notice either of her or her distress! But this silence did not intimidate her: she still cried, she still besought, she still importunately pressed her petition; so that the very disciples were moved with her cries, and became her advocates. They, themselves, though Jews, besought their Master to dismiss this petitioner—to grant her request, and to send her away.

But Jesus soon silenced them, by an answer agreeable to their own prejudices: "I am not sent," said he, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To this the disciples readily assented; and, as they had an high opinion of the Jews' prerogative, were so well satisfied with the answer, that we hear them pleading no more for this lost, this miserable Gentile.

But this soothed not her griefs; it was her own cause, and what is immediately our own concern, animates us to the most zealous application. Somewhat encouraged that she was the subject of discourse between our Lord and his disciples, she ventured to approach the Saviour of the world, though she well knew that the custom actually forbade such an intercourse; yet she came, she worshipped this "Son

of David," she confessed again his divinity, and prayed, saying, "Lord, help me."

The compassionate Saviour now condescended to speak to her, but with words seemingly sufficient to have discouraged every farther attempt; nay, to have filled her with bitter dislike to his person, though she had conceived such high and noble notions of his mercy and favor: "It is not meet," said he, "to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Matt. xv. 26. It is not justice to deprive the Jews, who are the children of the covenant, the descendants of Abraham, of any part of those blessings which I came into the world to bestow, especially to you, who are aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel.

This answer, however severe, could not shake her humility, nor overcome her patience; she meekly answered, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table." Matt. xv. 27. Let me enjoy that kindness, which the dogs of any family are not denied; from the plenty of miraculous cures which thou bestowest on the Jews, drop this one to me, who am a poor, distressed heathen; for they will suffer no greater loss by it than the children of a family do by the crumbs which are cast to the dogs.

Our Lord having put the woman's faith to a very severe trial, and well knowing that she possessed a just notion of his power and goodness, as well as of her own unworthiness, wrought with pleasure the cure she solicited in behalf of her daughter; and, at the same time, gave her faith the praise it so justly deserved. "O, woman! great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt: and her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matt. xv. 28.

After performing this miracle, Jesus returned to the sea of Galilee, through the region of Decapolis.\* In this country, a man was brought to him who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Objects in distress were always treated with benevolence by the holy Jesus; but as the people now thronged about him, in expectation that he would soon establish his kingdom, he thought proper to take the

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\* Decapolis is the name applied to a large district, extending on both sides of the Jordan. It contained ten noted cities, which are enumerated as follows, by Pliny: Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Gerasa, Dion, Canatha, Damascus, and Raphana. Josephus, however, does not include Damascus in the ten; for he speaks of Scythopolis as the largest city of Decapolis. All these cities, with the exception of the one last named, lay east of the Jordan. This region was densely populated during the time of our Saviour, and multitudes flocked here to listen to and see him. Now, it has scarcely an inhabitant.

man, with his relations, aside from the multitude; after which he put his fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue, that the deaf man, who could not be instructed by language, might know from whence all his benefits flowed. He then "looked up to heaven, and sighed, and said unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man." Mark vii. 34-36.

We cannot fail to be impressed with the fact that the spirit of Christ was that of humility, and his manner was far removed from that parade and ostentation which mark the world's ambitious heroes. If ordinary men perform a great feat, if some renowned achievement is born of their genius or valor, they are willing the trumpet should be blown, and their praises sounded. They are not apt to dash aside the wreath held out to deck their brows, and refuse the honors which applauding multitudes are eager to confer.

But notwithstanding they were enjoined to secrecy, the man, or his relations, published it in every part of the country, doubtless thinking they could not be too lavish in the praises of so great a benefactor especially as the modesty with which he had performed the cure abundantly demonstrated that his sole view was the benefit of the human race.

This rumor gathered the multitude round him in Decapolis; for the fame of his miracles was extended to every corner of the country; he, therefore, to avoid these prodigious crowds of people, retired to a desert mountain, near the sea of Galilee. But the solitary retreats of the wilderness were unable to conceal this beneficent Saviour of the human race. They soon discovered his retreat, and brought him from all quarters the sick, the lame, the dumb, the blind, and the maimed. The sight of so many objects in distress so excited the compassion of the Son of God, that he graciously released them from all their complaints. Miracles like these could not fail of astonishing the spectators, especially those performed upon the dumb; for it must be remembered, that he not only conferred on these the faculty of hearing and pronouncing articulate sounds, but conveyed at once into their minds the whole language of their country; they were instantly acquainted with all the words it contained, their significations, their forms, their powers, and their uses; at the same time they enjoyed the habit of speaking it both fluently and copiously. This was surely enough to demonstrate to the most stupid that such works could have been effected by nothing less than infinite power. "The multitude wondered

when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel." Matt. xv. 31.

The various works performed by the blessed Redeemer detained the multitude in the desert with him three days, during which time they consumed all the provisions they had brought into this solitary place. But Jesus would not send them away fasting, lest any who had followed him so far from their habitations, should faint in their return. Accordingly, he again exerted his Almighty power to feed the multitude a second time in the wilderness.

After feeding the multitude miraculously, Jesus retired into a district called Dalmanutha, a part of the territory of Magdala.\* Here he was visited by the Pharisees, who, having heard that he had a second time fed the multitude miraculously, were fearful that the common people would acknowledge him for the Messiah; and, therefore, determined openly and publicly to confute his pretensions to that character.

In order to do this, they boldly demanded of him a sign from heaven; for it must be remembered that the Jews expected the Messiah would make his first public appearance in the clouds of heaven, and in a glorious manner establish a temporal kingdom. This opinion was founded on the following prophecy of Daniel, which they understood literally: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 13, 14.

It is, therefore, evident that the Pharisees, by desiring him to show them a sign from heaven, meant that he should demonstrate himself to be the Messiah, by coming in a visible and miraculous manner from heaven, and wresting, with great pomp, the sceptre of David from the hands of the Romans.

If the minds of the Pharisees had been open to conviction, the proofs which Jesus was daily giving them would have been more than sufficient to establish the truth of his mission, and demonstrate that he was the long-expected Messiah. But they were not desirous of being con-

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\* Magdala was a city of some importance on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, about equi-distant from Tiberias and Capernaum. It was the home of Mary Magdalene.

vinced; and to that alone, and not to want of evidence, or capacity in themselves, it was owing, that they refused to acknowledge our Saviour to be the person foretold by the prophets. Their disposition was absolutely incorrigible; so that Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit, and declared that the sign they sought should never be given them; and that the only sign they were to expect was that of the prophet Jonas, or the miracle of his own resurrection: a sign, indeed, much greater than any shown by the ancient prophets; and consequently a sign which demonstrated that Jesus was far superior to them all. "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas." Matt. xvi. 4.

Having thus reproved the impertinent curiosity of the Pharisees, he departed with his disciples, and entered into a ship: and as they sailed, he cautioned them to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which he termed leaven, from its pernicious influence in filling the minds of men with pride, and other irregular passions, these hypocrites chiefly insisting on the observation of frivolous traditions, but neglecting the true principles of piety, and hence filling the minds of their disciples with an high opinion of their own sanctity. But the disciples, having forgotten to take bread with them, understood that he intended to caution them against procuring it from the Heathen, or Samaritans. They were so weak as not to think that their Master, who had fed some thousands of people with five loaves, was also capable of providing for them in their necessities.

On his landing at Bethsaida, they brought unto him a blind man, desiring that he would heal him: Jesus accordingly took the man by the hand, and led him out of the city, and having spat upon his eyes, and put his hands upon him, asked him if he saw aught. To which the man answered, "I see men as trees walking;" a very proper expression to convey an idea of the indistinctness of his vision. Jesus then put his hands again upon him, and he was restored to sight, "and saw every man clearly." It should be remembered, that the people of Bethsaida had, by their ingratitude, impenitence, and infidelity, greatly displeased the Saviour of the world: and this, perhaps, was the reason why Jesus would not perform the cure in the city, but led the man out into the adjacent plain. The people had also, for a long time, been solicitous, that he would take upon himself the character of a temporal Messiah, and therefore he chose to perform this miracle without the city; to prevent their farther importunity, so incompatible with the modesty and lowliness of our dear Lord and Master.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE BLESSED JESUS DELEGATES A SPECIAL POWER TO PETER, ONE OF THE DISCIPLES—PRONOUNCES THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD, AND IS AFTERWARDS TRANSFIGURED UPON THE MOUNT.

JESUS having displayed his power and goodness in restoring the blind man to his sight, the blessed Lord departed from Bethsaida, and retired into the territory of Cæsarea Philippi; where, being desirous of proving, in some measure, the faith of the apostles, he asked them, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" In answer to this question, the disciples replied, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Matt. xvi. 14. The people, in general, mistook the character of our Saviour because he did not assume that outward pomp and grandeur with which they supposed the Messiah would be adorned. Jesus was, therefore, desirous of hearing what idea his disciples formed of his character, as they had long enjoyed the benefit of his doctrine and miracles, and accordingly asked them what they themselves understood him to be. To this question Simon Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Our Saviour acknowledged the title, telling Peter that God alone had revealed the secret to him. And in allusion to his surname, "Peter," which signifies a "Rock," our Saviour promised that he should have a principal hand in establishing his kingdom, and that the Christian church should be erected on his labors, as on a solid foundation, never to be destroyed, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

Having delegated this power to Peter, our Saviour strictly forbade his disciples to tell any man that he was the Messiah; because it had been foretold by the prophets that he should be rejected by the rulers of Israel as a false Christ, and suffer the pains of death. "Then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was

Jesus the Christ." Matt. xvi. 20. Circumstances which could not fail of giving his followers great offence, as they did not yet understand the true nature of his kingdom; and therefore he thought proper to let every man form a judgment of his mission from his doctrine and miracles.

The foregoing discourses had, doubtless, filled the apostles' minds with lofty imaginations, and therefore our Saviour thought proper to acquaint them with his sufferings, in order to check any fond expectations of temporal power. Peter, however, was greatly displeased to hear his Master talk of dying at Jerusalem, when he had just before accepted of the title of Messiah. Accordingly, he rebuked him for the expression, which he was so bold as to think unguarded. But Jesus, turning himself about, said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matt. xvi. 23.

Peter's conduct in this respect arose from an immoderate attachment to sensual objects. Our Saviour thought proper to declare publicly, that all who intended to share with him in the glory of the heavenly Canaan, must deny themselves: that is, they must be always ready to renounce every worldly pleasure, and even life itself, when the cause of religion required it: he also told them, that in this life they must expect to meet with troubles and disappointments; and that whoever intended to be his disciple, "must take up his cross daily, and follow him."

Thus did the blessed Jesus fully explain to his disciples the true nature of the kingdom; and, at the same time, intimated, that though they had already undergone many afflictions, yet they must expect still more and greater, which they must sustain with equal fortitude, following their Master in the footsteps of his afflictions. This duty, however hard, was absolutely necessary, because by losing their temporal life, they would gain that which was eternal; "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Luke ix. 24. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. xvi. 26.

To add to the weight of this argument, and to enforce the necessity of self-denial, our Saviour particularly declared, that a day was fixed for distributing rewards and punishments to all the human race; and that he himself was appointed, by the Father, as universal judge; **so**

that his enemies could not flatter themselves with the hope of escaping the punishments they deserved, nor his friends be afraid of losing their eternal reward. "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Mark viii. 38.

As this doctrine, of Christ being appointed the universal judge, might appear incredible at that time, on account of his humiliation, he told them, that some who heard him speak should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom. "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Matt. xvi. 28. There are some here present that shall not die till they see a faint representation of the glory in which I shall come at the last day, and an eminent example of my power inflicted on the men of this sinful generation.

To verify which prediction the disciples lived to see their Master coming in his kingdom, when they were witnesses of his transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension, and had the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit conferred upon them—lived to see Jerusalem with the Jewish state destroyed, and the gospel propagated through the greatest part of the then known world. About eight days after this discourse, our blessed Saviour being with the multitude in the country of Cæsarea Philippi, he left them in the plain, and, accompanied by Peter, James, and John, ascended an exceedingly high mountain.\* In this solitude, while Jesus was praying with these three disciples, he was transfigured; his face became radiant and dazzling, for it shone like the sun in his meridian clearness. At the same time his garment acquired a snowy whiteness, far beyond anything human art could produce—a whiteness bright as the light, and sweetly refulgent,

\* It was formerly believed that Mount Tabor was the scene of the Transfiguration; but as that mountain must have been too thickly inhabited to admit of the privacy of this great event, it is the general opinion of the most reliable writers, that it was Mount Hermon, the grandest of all the hills of the Holy Land, that witnessed the glorious Light. It is said to be 10,000 feet high, and is a prominent land-mark in Palestine. In the summer, when the plains below are parched with the heat, the crest of Hermon is capped with glittering snow. The mountain has three summits, "situated like the angles of a triangle, a quarter of a mile from each other." It stands at the southern end, and is the highest point of the Anti-Libanus range. At its feet are the fountains of the Jordan, and the ancient border city of Dan. The view from it is magnificent, and includes a large part of the Holy Land.



THE FINAL CALL OF PETER.

but in a degree inferior to the radiance of his countenance. Thus, as it were, for an instant, the Son of God, during his state of humiliation, suffered the glory of his divinity to shine through the veil of human nature, with which it was covered; and to heighten the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, and Elijah, a zealous defender of the laws, appeared in the beauties of immortality, the robes in which the inhabitants of the heavenly Canaan are adorned. The disciples, it seems, did not see the beginning of this transfiguration; happening to fall asleep at the time of prayer, they lost that pleasure, together with a great part of the conversation which these two prophets held with the only begotten Son of God. They, however, understood that the subject was his meritorious sufferings and death, by which he was to redeem the world; a subject that had, a few days before, given great offence to his disciples, particularly to Peter. At beholding this illustrious sight, the disciples were greatly amazed; but the forwardness of Peter's disposition prompting him to say something, he uttered he knew not what: "Master," said he, "it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

This disciple imagined that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity; that Elias was come according to Malachi's prediction, and the Messiah's kingdom was at length begun.

Accordingly, he thought it was necessary to provide some accommodation for his Master and his august assistants, intending, perhaps, to bring the rest of the disciples, with the multitude, from the plain below, to behold his matchless glory.

This, he thought, was much better for his Master than to be put to death at Jerusalem, concerning which Jesus had been talking with the messengers from heaven, and the design of which Peter could not comprehend. But, "while he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." When the three disciples heard the voice, which, like the roaring thunder, burst from the cloud, and was such as mortals were unaccustomed to hear, they fell on their faces, and continued in that posture till Jesus approached, who raised them up, and dispelled their fears, saying unto them, "Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."

## CHAPTER XVII.

OUR SAVIOUR RELIEVES A YOUTH TORTURED WITH A DUMB SPIRIT—CONFORMS CHEERFULLY TO THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY BY PAYING THE TRIBUTE—REPROVES THE PRIDE OF HIS DISCIPLES, AND DELIVERS SOME EXCELLENT MORAL PRECEPTS.

WHEN our Lord approached the descent of the mountain, accompanied by his three disciples, he saw a great multitude surrounding the nine who continued in the plain, and the Scribes disputing with them.

The people, seeing Jesus coming down from the mountain, ran to him, and saluted him with particular reverence. After which Jesus asked the Scribes what was the subject of their debate with his disciples. To which one of the multitude answered, "Master, I have brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit: and wheresoever he taketh him he teareth him; and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not." Mark ix. 17, 18.

This answer being made by one of the multitude, and not by the Scribes, to whom the question was directed, indicates that they had been disputing with the disciples on their not being able to cure this afflicted youth. Perhaps their making this unsuccessful attempt had given the Scribes occasion to boast, that a devil was at length found, which neither they nor their Master were able to conquer. This seems to be indicated by the manner in which our Saviour addressed himself to these arrogant rulers. "Oh, faithless generation," says he, "how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" Will no miracles ever be able to convince you? Must I always bear with your infidelity? You have surely seen sufficient demonstrations of my power, notwithstanding ye still discover the most criminal infidelity. After speaking in this manner to the Scribes, he turned himself to the father of the young man, and said, "Bring thy son hither." But no sooner was he brought in sight of his deliverer, than the evil spirit attacked him, as it were, with double fury: "the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming." Mark ix. 20.

Jesus could easily have prevented this attack ; but he permitted it, that the minds of the spectators might be impressed with a more lively idea of this youth's distress. And for the same reason, probably, it was that he asked the father how long he had been in this deplorable condition: to which the afflicted parent answered, "Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Mark ix. 21, 22.

The inability of our Lord's disciples to cast out this spirit, had greatly discouraged the afflicted father; and the exquisite torture of his son, and the remembrance of its long continuance, so dispirited him, that he began to fear this possession was even too great for the power of Jesus himself, as the Scribes had, probably, before affirmed, and therefore could not help expressing his doubts and fears. But Jesus, to make him sensible of his mistake, said to him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." On which the father cried out, with tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." The vehement manner in which he spake causing the crowd to gather from every quarter, Jesus "rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him." Mark ix. 25.

No sooner was the powerful order pronounced, than the spirit, with a hideous howling, and convulsing the suffering patient in the most deplorable manner, came out, leaving the youth senseless and without motion; till Jesus, taking him by the hand, restored him to life, and delivered him, perfectly recovered, to his father.

The nine disciples, during the whole transaction, remained silent. They were, doubtless, mortified to think that they had lost, by some fault of their own, the power of working miracles, lately conferred upon them by their Master, and for this reason were afraid to speak to him in the presence of the multitude. But, when they came into the house, they desired Jesus to inform them why they failed in their attempt to heal that remarkable youth. To which Jesus answered, "Because of your unbelief." But, to encourage them, he described the efficacy of the faith of miracles. "If ye have faith, as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matt. xvii. 20. Nothing shall be too great for you to accomplish, when the glory of God and the good of the church are concerned, provided you have a proper degree of faith; even yonder

mountain, which bids defiance to the storm, and smiles at the attacks of its mingled horrors, shall, at your command, leave its firm basis, and remove to another place.

The expulsion of the dumb spirit seems to have astonished the disciples more than any other miracle they had seen their Master perform; so that our Saviour found it necessary to moderate their high admiration of his works, by again predicting his own death, and retiring for a time into the unfrequented parts of Galilee.

After a short tour, through the desert part of Galilee, Jesus returned into Capernaum, the place of his general residence. Soon after his arrival, the tax-gatherers came to Peter, and asked him whether his Master would pay the tribute. That disciple, it seems, had promised that Jesus would satisfy their demand; but, on a more mature consideration, feared to ask him concerning his paying taxes on any pretence whatever. Jesus was, however, no stranger to what had happened, and the fear of Peter to ask him; and therefore turned his discourse to this subject, by saying unto him, "What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free;" insinuating, that as he was himself the Son of the great King, to whom heaven, earth, and the sea belong, he had no right to pay tribute to any monarch whatever, because he held nothing by a derived right. Or, if we suppose this contribution was made for the service and reparation of the temple, he meant, that as he was himself the Son of that Omnipotent being, to whom the tribute was paid, he could justly have excused himself. But the blessed Jesus was always careful not to give offence, and therefore sent Peter to the lake, with a line and a hook, telling him, that in the mouth of the first fish that came up he should find a piece of money equal to the sum demanded of them both. "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them, for me and thee." Matt. xvii. 27.

Our Lord took this extraordinary method of paying the tribute money in this manner, because the miracle was of such a kind as could not fail to demonstrate that he was the Son of the great Monarch worshipped in the temple, and who rules the universe. In the very manner, therefore, of paying this tribute, he showed Peter that he was free from all taxes, and, at the same time, gave this useful lesson to his

followers, that when their property is affected only in a small degree, it is better to recede a little from their just right than to offend their brethren, or disturb the state, by obstinately insisting on it.

Notwithstanding our blessed Saviour had lately foretold his own sufferings and death, and though these melancholy accounts had greatly afflicted the minds of his disciples, yet their grief was of no long continuance, for, within a few days, they forgot the predictions of their Master, and disputed with each other about the chief posts of honor and profit in the Messiah's kingdom. This debate was overheard by the blessed Jesus, though he did not mention it till after the tax-gatherers had retired, when he asked them what they were disputing about on the way. This question rendered them all silent. They were fearful of discovering the cause that had given rise to the debate, as they knew it would draw on them a reprimand from their Master.

Jesus, perceiving that they still continued silent, sat down, and ordered them all to stand round him, and attend to what he was going to deliver. If any man, said the Saviour of the world, is ambitious of being the greatest person in my kingdom, let him endeavor to obtain that dignity by preferring others in honor, and doing to them all the good offices in his power. "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." Mark ix. 35.

The disciples were now convinced that it was in vain to conceal the subject of the debate that had happened on the way; and accordingly they drew near to their Master, desiring him to decide a point which had often given occasion to dispute. "Who," said they, "is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Matt. xviii. 1. Jesus, to check these foolish emulations in his disciples, called a little child unto him, and placed him in the midst, that they might consider him attentively; and said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xvii. 3. Unless ye be regenerated by the power of divine grace, and brought to a due sense of the vanity of all earthly preferments, riches, and honors, and become meek and humbled in spirit, ye shall be so far from becoming the greatest in my kingdom, that ye shall never enter into it. But whosoever shall accept of the remedy provided, and receive with meekness all the divine instructions, however contrary to his own inclinations, and prefer others to himself, that man is really the greatest in my kingdom. "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself, as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 4.

Our Saviour, to demonstrate how truly acceptable the grace of humility is to the Almighty, took the child in his arms, declaring that whoever humbled themselves like a little child, and showed kindness to their fellow-creatures for his sake, should have the same kindness showed them in the great day of account, especially if they performed these worthy actions in obedience to his commands.

It seems, from circumstances, that James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were principally concerned in this debate, for we find that John endeavored to divert it, by telling his Master they had seen one casting out devils in his name, and had forbidden him, because he did not join himself to their company. To which Jesus replied, that they should not have forbidden him, since he must have entertained very high notions of their Master's power, and at seeing the devils leave the bodies of men on mentioning the name of Jesus. "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me." Mark ix. 39.

You should, added the blessed Jesus, consider that every one that does not persecute us is a friend; and that the ejection of devils in my name will advance my reputation and promote my interest, even though the exorcist and the devils themselves should design the contrary. He also told his disciples, that the least degree of respect showed him by any one, even though it should be no more than the giving a cup of cold water to his thirsty disciples, was acceptable to him, and should not fail of meeting an adequate reward. "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." Mark ix. 41.

But, on the other hand, the least discouragement given to his disciples in the propagation of the gospel, come from what quarter it will, shall be punished with the greatest severity. "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." Mark ix. 42.

From this saying Jesus inferred, that it was more advantageous to deny ourselves the highest enjoyments of this world, and to part with everything, however precious, represented by a hand, a foot, or an eye, than by these to cause the weakest of his friends to stumble. And as the disciples were appointed to sow the seeds of truth and religion in the world, or according to the metaphor, to salt the people for an offering to heaven, in allusion to sacrifice being salted at the temple;

Jesus exhorted them to mortify themselves, that they might appear worthy of so high an office as that of salting mankind for the altar of heaven; for as they were to be the salt of the earth, it was requisite that they should themselves be filled with the spiritual salt of all the graces, and particularly the holy salt of love and peace, that they might, as far as possible, be free from the rottenness of ambition, pride, contention, and every evil work.

Pride is the source of numberless sins, and, therefore, the blessed Jesus cautioned his disciples, in the most solemn manner, to beware of that vice; assuring them that the meanest child is an object of the care of Providence; and "that their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven." Our blessed Saviour did not mean by this expression, that every man who practices the duties of religion has a particular guardian angel assigned him: but as all angels are sent as ministering spirits, they may truly be called his angels.

To show the concern of his Almighty Father for the least of his reasonable creatures, and the great value he sets upon the souls of the human race, our Saviour told them, that he not only gave his highest angels charge concerning them, but had also sent his only-begotten Son to seek and to save that which was lost; and would share in the joy which the heavenly beings are filled with on their recovery. "How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? and if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Matt. xviii. 12-14.

Having thus addressed the offending party, he turned himself towards his disciples, and gave them instructions with regard to the offended. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouths of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Matt. xviii. 15-17. Try every measure to reclaim thy brother, and in order to this, represent his fault to him privately. If this rebuke has the desired effect,

thou hast brought him back to the paths which lead to happiness: but, if this gentle method fail, two or more grave persons should join in the rebuke, that he may be convinced of the injury he has done thee. If he still remains obstinate, tell his offence to the church, whose sentence will sufficiently show that thou hast done thy duty, and that he alone is to blame. But if he be so hardened as not to be affected by the censure of the church, he is from thenceforth to be treated as the Pharisees treat the heathen and publicans; namely, as an incorrigible sinner, whose company and conversation being contagious, ought to be shunned by all who have any love for religion.

Our Saviour now conferred on all his disciples the special power which some think he had before confined to Peter. "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xviii. 18. That is, ye have free power to excommunicate such offenders as will not be reclaimed by proper means, or to free from church censure those who were truly penitent; and such decree will remain valid in the court of heaven, though passed here below.

But, on the other hand, if the offending brother continues impenitent, after all the method above described are tried, his guilt is bound the faster upon him; because, by the precepts of the gospel, none but penitents can obtain pardon.

Our blessed Saviour also added, as an encouragement to good men, that if they continued earnest in their endeavors to bring sinners to repentance, and offered up their prayers to the Almighty for assistance, he would always grant their petitions, provided they were agreeable to the wise ends of his providence. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

Peter had before heard his Master speak of the doctrine of frequent forgiveness, and imagined that what he had now so strongly inculcated might prove dangerous to society; and therefore thought it his duty to offer his objections. "Lord," said he, "how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven times?" Matt. xviii. 21. He thought it a strange doctrine which obliged him to forgive offences seven times repeated; but our blessed Saviour told him he was very greatly mistaken; that he never intended to limit

forgiveness to seven times, but that it ought to be extended even to seventy times seven.

This excellent moral precept he enforced by the parable of the two servants, debtors to one lord; in order to show the necessity of forgiving the greatest injuries, in every case where the offending party is sensible of his fault, and promises amendment; because on this condition alone our heavenly Father will forgive our offences. "Therefore," said the blessed Jesus, "is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants." God is the great King and Sovereign of all creatures, and all are accountable to him as servants to a master. He will reckon with all, and happy are they who live sensible of this important truth.

When he had began to reckon, one servant was brought unto him who owed him an immense debt, "ten thousand talents," a debt much greater than he was able to pay. His lord, therefore, commanded him, agreeably to the custom of those times, to be sold for a slave, and his "wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made."

The servant, convinced of the justice of the sentence, and knowing he had nothing to hope for, but from the mercy and clemency of his lord, fell down in the most humble manner, and importunately besought him, saying, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." The master, moved with compassion towards him, accepted of his humiliation; and to make his happiness complete, loosed him from the sentence inflicted, and freely forgave him the enormous debt; an obligation, one would have supposed, sufficient to have melted the hardest heart into gratitude towards his lord, and the tenderest sympathy towards any of his brethren in distress. But, alas! who is acquainted with the human heart? This very servant went out from the presence of his compassionate lord, and found one of his fellow-servants who owed him an "hundred pence:" a poor, inconsiderable debt in comparison of what he himself owed his lord.

But behold the inhumanity of this servant: he laid hands on the poor debtor, seizing him violently by the throat, and saying, "Pay me that thou owest." His fellow-servant fell down at his feet, even as he had just before done at the feet of his lord and besought him in the very same words he himself had so lately used, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." Such a similarity of circumstances one would surely have thought must have affected his stony heart, brought to remembrance his own late distress, and melted his soul

into the like generous compassion which had flowed so sweetly from his lord to him. But his conduct was the very reverse; he would have no patience; he would show no pity: he went and cast the unhappy debtor into prison, till he should pay the debt. His fellow-servants, when they saw what was done, were exceedingly afflicted, and came and told their lord the whole transaction. Upon which he summoned the unmerciful servant to appear before him, and filled with indignation and abhorrence, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, how perverse is thy behaviour, how ungrateful and base thy proceeding; "I forgave thee all that debt," that enormous debt thou owedst me, "because thou desiredst me:" I was moved to clemency and compassion by thy entreaties and distress, and "shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant even as I had pity on thee?" Shouldst not thou much rather have forgiven him, who was thy fellow-servant, and owed thee so small a sum, when I, thy king and lord, had forgiven thee so immense a debt?

Having thus expostulated with him, his wrath was kindled, and he "delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise," added the Son of God, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye, from your hearts, forgive not one another your trespasses." Matt. xviii. 34, 35. And surely this awful threatening ought to strike the minds of fierce and implacable men with terror. For whatever they may think, it will certainly, in its full extent, be inflicted upon all who refuse to obey the dictates of divine mercy, and forgive not only their fellow-servants, but every brother in Christ, who through weakness or inadvertence may have done them an injury, either in person or property.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

OUR BLESSED LORD ATTENDS FOR THE FOURTH TIME THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER AT JERUSALEM—ADDRESSES THE MULTITUDE AT THE SOLEMN FEAST OF TABERNACLES—EXEMPTS THE WOMAN DETECTED IN ADULTERY FROM THE PUNISHMENT ANNEXED BY THE JEWS TO THAT CRIME—ESCAPES FROM THE ENARES LAID FOR HIM BY THE INVETERATE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

THE great Redeemer, having promoted his Father's work in Galilee, departed into Judea, passing through the country beyond Jordan, that the Jews who inhabited those distant parts might enjoy the unspeakable benefits of his discourses and miracles. And after sowing the seeds of eternal life, and publishing the glad tidings of salvation in those remote countries, repaired to Jerusalem to celebrate the fourth passover; but the malignity of the Scribes and Pharisees was so great that he staid but a short time in the capital, and then returned into Galilee, while the multitude again resorted to him, and he again instructed them in the paths that lead to everlasting life.

The feast of tabernacles now drew on, at which all the males of the Jewish nation, capable of travelling, repaired to Jerusalem, and dwelt in the tabernacles, or booths, made of the boughs of trees, in commemoration of their fathers having had no other habitation, during their forty year sojourning in the wilderness.

To this feast some of the kinsmen of the blessed Jesus desired he would accompany them, and there show himself openly to the whole nation of the Jews. They did not themselves believe that he was the great Prophet so long expected, and therefore condemned the method he pursued in his public ministry as altogether absurd.

“My time,” said the blessed Jesus to these unbelieving relations, “is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you: but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.” John vii. 6–8. As if he had said, it is not proper for me to go before the feast begins; but you may repair to the capital whenever you please: the Jews are your friends, you have done nothing to displease them; but the purity of

the doctrines I have preached to them, and the freedom with which I have reprov'd their hypocrisy, and other enormous crimes, have provok'd their malice to the utmost height; and, therefore, as the time of my sufferings is not yet come, it is not prudent for me to go so soon to Jerusalem.

Times and seasons are always observed in the providence of God. The blossoms of June do not breathe fragrance on the air of December; "leaves have their time to fall, and flowers to wither at the north wind's breath." This waiting for the clock to strike and the time to come, is seen through all the Biblical history. For ages the world look'd for the promised Messiah. There is no haste in the movements of God; there is a divine "going" that is always calm. In "the fulness of time," when there was readiness and ripeness, he was sent forth who was to be born of a woman.

There was also another reason why our blessed Saviour refused to accompany these relatives to the feast of tabernacles; the roads were crowded with people, and these, gathering round him, and accompanying him to Jerusalem, would doubtless have given fresh offence to his enemies, and have, in a great measure, prevented his miracles and doctrines from having the desired effect. He, therefore, chose to continue in Galilee till the crowd were all gone up to Jerusalem, when he followed, as it were in secret, neither preaching nor working miracles by the way, so that no crowd attended him to the feast.

As Jesus did not go up openly to Jerusalem, so neither did he, on his arrival, repair to the temple, and there preach openly to the people. This gave occasion to several disputes among the Jews with regard to his character. Some affirmed that he was a true prophet, and that his absenting himself from the feast could be owing only to accident; while others as confidently asserted that he only deceived the people, and paid no regard to the institutions they had received from heaven.

But about the middle of the feast Jesus appeared openly in the temple, and taught the people, delivering his doctrines with such strength of reason and elegance of expression, that his very enemies were astonished, knowing that he had never enjoyed the advantage of a learned education. "Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught, and the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John vii. 14, 15. To which the great Redeemer of mankind replied, My doctrine was not produced by human wisdom: the sages of the world

were not my instructors: I received it from heaven, it is the doctrine of the Almighty, whose messenger I am. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." John vii. 16. Nor can he who is desirous of practising the doctrines I deliver, if he will lay aside his prejudices, and sincerely desire to be taught of God, be at a loss to know from whom my doctrines are derived; because he will easily discern whether they are conformable to the will of man or of God. It is no difficulty to discover an impostor, because all his precepts will tend to advance his own interest and gratify his pride. Whereas all the doctrines delivered by a true prophet have no other end than the glory of God, however contrary they may prove to himself. "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." John vii. 18. Our Lord was upbraided with impiety by some of the Jews, because he had healed on the Sabbath the impotent man, in one of the porches of Bethesda, which, they pretended, was a violation of the law of Moses, and consequently what no prophet would be guilty of. In answer to which our blessed Saviour told them, that however they might pretend to reverence the authority of Moses and his law, they made no scruple of violating the most sacred of his precepts: they had resolved to put him to death, directly contrary to every law of God and man; and, in order to execute their detestable scheme, were laying plots against his life.

The people replied, "Thou hast a devil, who goeth about to kill thee." To which Jesus answered, I have done a miracle of an extraordinary kind on the Sabbath day, which you think inconsistent with the character of a pious man, and therefore wonder how I could perform it. But surely Moses gave you the law of circumcision, and you make no scruple of performing the ceremony on the Sabbath day, because it is a precept both of Moses and the fathers. Since, therefore, ye think yourselves bound to dispense with the strict observance of the Sabbath, in order to obey a ceremonial precept, can you be angry with me, because, in order to fulfil the great end of all the divine law, I have cured a man who was infirm in all his members, and even with far less bodily labor than you perform the ceremony of circumcision? Consider, therefore, the nature of the thing; divest yourselves of your prejudices, and the superstitious opinions taught by your elders, and judge impartially. "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye, on the Sabbath day, circumsise a man. If a man, on the

Sabbath day, receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." John vii. 23, 24.

Notwithstanding the strength of this argument, several of our blessed Saviour's inveterate enemies asked, with sarcastical surprise, if the boldness of Jesus and the silence of the rulers proceeded from their being convinced that he was the Messiah! and, at the same time, to deride his pretensions to that high character, said, that they were acquainted both with his parents and relations; but that no man, when Christ appeared, would be able to tell from whence he came, founding their opinion on these words of the prophet Isaiah, "Who shall declare his generation?" Isaiah liii. 8. To which the blessed Jesus answered, that their knowing his parents and relations was no reason against his having the prophetic character of the Messiah. Adding, I am not come of myself, but sent from heaven by God, who has uttered nothing by his servants, the prophets, concerning the Messiah but what is true, and will all be fulfilled in me: but ye are totally ignorant of his gracious perfections and gracious counsels, and have no inclination to obey his just commands. You are really ignorant of what the prophets have delivered concerning the Messiah; for, had you understood their predictions, you would have known that one of his principal characters is to understand the perfections and will of God more fully, and explain them to the sons of men more clearly, than any other messenger ever before sent from the Most High. And would you attentively consider the doctrines I deliver, you would soon perceive this character remarkably fulfilled in me, and be convinced that I came from the Almighty God of Jacob.

This observation, however powerful, and his reasons, however solid, were far from disarming his enemies of their malice, for some of them were desirous of apprehending him; but Providence would not suffer any to lay hands on him, because the time of his sufferings was not yet come. Many of the people, however, convinced by the powerful miracle he had lately wrought, and the unanswerable reasons he had advanced in support of his character, believed on him, and affirmed publicly, in the temple, that he was the Messiah. "And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" John vii. 31.

The Scribes and Pharisees were highly provoked at this attach-

ment of the common people to Jesus; and accordingly, on the last and great day of the feast, they met in council, and sent several officers to apprehend him, and bring him before them. Jesus, during these transactions in the council, continued in the temple, teaching the people. My ministry, said he to the multitude, is drawing near to its period, and therefore you should, during the short time it has to last, be very careful to improve every opportunity of hearing the word: you should listen, with the greatest attention, to every discourse, that your minds may be stored with the truths of the Almighty, before I return to my Father; for, after my departure, you shall earnestly wish for the same opportunities of seeing me, and hearing my instructions, but shall never obtain them. "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come." John vii. 33, 34.

The Jews, who did not understand that our blessed Saviour alluded to his own death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high, whither their sins would not permit them to follow him, wondered at this doctrine, and imagined that he intended to leave Judea, and preach to their brethren dispersed among the Gentiles. But this supposition was not sufficient; because, if he did go and preach among the Gentiles, they thought it was not impossible for them to follow him thither. "Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?" John vii. 35, 36.

While the divine teacher was thus instructing the people in the temple, the water from Siloam was brought in, according to the appointment of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, part of which they drank, with loud acclamations, in commemoration of the mercy showed to their fathers, who were relieved by a stream which miraculously flowed from a rock, and refreshed a whole nation, then ready to perish with thirst in a dreary and sandy waste; and the other part they poured out as a drink-offering to the Almighty, accompanying it with their prayers, for the former or latter rain to fall in its season; the whole congregation singing the following passage: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isa. xii. 3.

It was the custom of the blessed Jesus to deliver moral instruc-

tions, in allusion to many occurrences that happened ; and accordingly he took this opportunity of inviting, in the most affectionate manner, all who were desirous of knowledge or happiness, to come to him and drink, alluding to the ceremony they were then performing. And, to encourage all such as were desirous of believing in him, he promised them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he represented under the similitude of a river flowing out of their belly. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John vii. 37, 38.

During this discourse to the people, the officers from the council came to apprehend him ; but hearing that the topic he was discussing was a very singular one, and he seemed to deliver his discourse with remarkable fervor, their curiosity induced them to listen some time to his discourses before they laid hands on him. But the eloquent manner in which he delivered his subject appeased their rage ; the sweetness of his pronunciation, and the plainness and perspicuity of his discourse, elucidated the beauties of truth, and caused them to shine, before the understanding, with their native lustre. Accordingly, his very enemies, who were come from the council on purpose to apprehend him, were astonished ; the greatness of the subject, made, as it were, visible by the divine speaker, filled their understandings ; the warmth and tenderness with which he delivered himself penetrated their hearts ; they felt new and uncommon emotions, and being overwhelmed with the greatness of their admiration, were fixed in silence and astonishment ; they condemned themselves for having undertaken the office, and soon returned to the rulers of Israel without performing it.

If our Lord had pleaded for his life, before the officers of the council who were sent to apprehend him, the success of his eloquence, even in that case, had been truly wonderful ; but, in the case before us, it surely was superior to all praise ; for, in a discourse addressed to others, and even on a spiritual subject, it disarmed a band of inveterate enemies, and made them his friends.

Nor were the officers the only persons affected by this discourse, for many of them declared that he must be one of the old prophets ; and others, that he was no other than the Messiah himself. Some, however, led away with the common mistake, that he was born at Nazareth, asked, with disdain, if the Messiah was to come out of

Galilee; and whether they would acknowledge a Galilean for the Messiah, when the scripture had absolutely declared that he was to be born in Bethlehem, the native town of his father David. "Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth, this is the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" John vii. 40-42.

Such were the dissensions on this subject, that some of his enemies, knowing that the officers were sent to apprehend him, threatened to lay hands on him; but the Almighty would not suffer them to execute their wicked design. "And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him." John vii. 44.

The officers now returned to the council, and were asked, why they had not brought Jesus of Nazareth; to whom the officers answered, "Never man spake like this man."

This reply enraged the council, who reviled them for presuming to entertain a favorable opinion of one whom they had pronounced an impostor.

It is strange, said they, that you, who are not ignorant of our sentiments concerning this person, should entertain a favorable idea of him. Have any persons of rank, or celebrated for their knowledge of the laws, believed on him? Are not his followers the lower order of the people, who are totally ignorant of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah?

The officers made no answer to these railing accusations of their masters; but Nicodemus, a member of the council, arraigned their conduct in a very poignant manner. "Does our law," says he, "condemn any man before he has been heard?" They had before condemned their officers for being ignorant of the law, when it appeared they were themselves far more ignorant in pretending to condemn a person before they had proved him guilty. They were acting directly contrary to the fundamental principles of the law of equity, at the time they boasted of their profound knowledge of its precepts.

Incensed at this reprimand of Nicodemus, they asked him, with an air of disdain and surprise, if he was also one of those mean persons who had joined together to support the pretences of a Galilean; though the scripture had plainly said that Bethlehem was the place of the Messiah's nativity; adding, that if he refused to listen

to them, he should soon be convinced that the great prophet mentioned by Moses was not to be born in Galilee. "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." John vii. 52.

Having made this reply to Nicodemus, the council broke up, and Jesus, who well knew their malicious intentions, retired to the Mount of Olives, where he spent the night with his disciples.

Our blessed Lord, early the following morning, returned to the temple, and again taught the people. The Scribes and Pharisees now determined to render him odious to the multitude, or obnoxious to the Roman governor, and therefore placed before him a woman that had been taken in the act of adultery, desiring his opinion what punishment she ought to suffer. "This woman," said they to Jesus, "was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us, that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou?" John viii. 4, 5. Had our Lord disapproved the sentence of the law, they would doubtless have represented him to the multitude as a person who contradicted Moses, and favored adultery, which could not have failed of rendering him odious to the people. On the other hand, had he ordered her to be stoned, it would have afforded a plausible pretence for accusing him to the Roman governor, as a person who stirred up the people to rebellion, the Romans having now taken the power of life and death into their own hands.

But Jesus, who well knew their malicious intentions, made them no answer, but "stooped down, and, with his finger, wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." John viii. 6.

They, however, still continued pressing him to give an answer; and at last Jesus, in allusion to the law, which ordered that the hands of the witnesses, by whose testimony an adulterer was convicted, should be first upon him, said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Let those who are remarkably zealous for having justice executed upon others, at least take care to purify themselves from all heinous crimes.

This reply had its desired effect. The hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees were convicted of sin by their own consciences, so that they immediately retired, fearing Jesus would have made their particular sins public. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." John viii. 9.

The woman's accusers being all retired, Jesus told her, that

as no man had pronounced sentence of death upon her, neither would he pronounce it; but advised her to be very careful for the future, to avoid the temptations which had induced her to commit so black a crime.

The wisdom, knowledge, and power of our blessed Saviour were eminently displayed on this occasion: his wisdom in defending himself against the malicious attempts of his enemies; his knowledge in discovering the secrets of their hearts, and his power in making use of their own consciences to render their artful intentions abortive.

It was, therefore, with remarkable propriety, that the great Redeemer of mankind now called himself the "light of the world:" as if he had said, I am the spiritual sun that dispels the darkness of ignorance and superstition, in which the minds of men are immersed, and discovers the path that leads to eternal life: nor shall any who follow me ever be involved in darkness. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii. 12.

This assertion of our Lord highly provoked the Pharisees, who told him he must be a deceiver, because he boasted of himself. To which the great Redeemer of mankind replied: You are not to imagine that I called myself the light of the world from a principle of pride and falsehood; that title justly belongs to me: nor would you yourselves refuse to acknowledge it, did you know from what authority I received my commission, and to whom, when I have executed it, I must return. But these things ye are totally ignorant of, and therefore judge according to outward appearances, and condemn me because I do not destroy those who oppose, as you vainly think the Messiah will do those who shall refuse to submit to his authority. But the design of the Messiah's coming is very different from your mistaken notions; he is not come to destroy, but to save the children of men. "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I am, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man." John viii. 14, 15. He added, that if he should condemn any person for unbelief, the condemnation would be just, because his mission was true, being confirmed by his own testimony and that of his Almighty Father, the God of Jacob, by whose authority, and agreeable to whose will, all his sentences would be passed. "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." John viii. 16.

Having thus asserted the divinity of his mission, and shown that his judgment was just, he proceeded to inform them that the Father himself bore witness to the truth of his mission. You cannot, said he, justly complain, even if I should punish you for your unbelief, because you are, by your own laws, commanded to believe the testimony of two witnesses, that my mission evidently is true. For the actions of my life, which are perfectly agreeable to the character of a messenger from heaven, bear sufficient witness of me; and the Father, by the miracles he has enabled me to perform, beareth witness of me; ye are, therefore, altogether culpable in objecting to my mission. "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." John 17, 18.

The Jews then asked him, Where is thy Father, the other witness to whom thou appealest? Jesus replied, Your conduct sufficiently demonstrates that ye are strangers both to me and my Father; for had ye known who I am, ye must have also known who it is I call my Father: had ye been convinced that I am the Messiah, you must also have been convinced that the Father is no other than that Omnipotent Being, who created and upholds all things by the word of his power. "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." John viii. 19.

This discourse, the evangelist tells us, was held in the treasury, or court of the temple, where the chests were placed for receiving the offerings of all who came up to worship in the temple; and, therefore, must have been a place of great resort, being frequented by all, even the priests and rulers. But, notwithstanding the public manner in which our blessed Saviour now asserted his claim to the character of the Messiah, no man attempted to seize him; Providence not suffering them to put their malicious designs in execution, because his "hour," or the time of his sufferings, "was not yet come."

The debate being ended, Jesus again repeated what he had before told them; namely, that he should shortly depart from them; and that they should then seek him, but not be able to find him. "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." John viii. 21. As if he had said, after my ascension into heaven, when the Roman armies shall spread horror and desolation in every corner of the land, ye shall then earnestly wish for the coming of the Messiah, in expectation of being delivered by his

powerful arm from your cruel enemy; but ye shall then find your mistake; you shall die in your sins, and be forever excluded from the mansions of happiness.

The Jews by no means comprehended this departure of which our Lord told them. They even fancied he would destroy himself, because they thought the only retreat where they could not find him was the gloomy habitation of the grave. To which the blessed Jesus replied, Your vile insinuation discovers at once the wickedness of your own hearts, and the baseness of your original. Ye are from the earth, and therefore subject to all the evil passions that infest human nature; and from the dictates of your own hearts, you fancy that I can be capable of committing the horrid crime of self-murder. But my extraction is very different: it is from heaven, and consequently my mind is not tainted with the corruption of human nature, the source of temptation to every sin. You, therefore, must believe that I am the "bread of life," the heavenly manna, the light of the world, the true Messiah, if you are desirous of being cleansed from these pollutions which flow from your earthly origin; but if you still continue in your unbelief "you shall die in your sins."

The Jews now, in order to vindicate themselves, demanded what sort of person he pretended to be. To which Jesus answered, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning," that is, at the beginning of his discourse, "the light of the world." Adding, "I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him." John viii. 26.

This discourse, however plain it may appear, was not understood by the perverse Jews; they did not perceive "that he spoke to them of the Father." But Jesus told them, that when they had crucified him, they would be convinced, by the miracles accompanying that awful hour, the resurrection from the dead, the effusion of the Holy Spirit on his disciples, and the destruction of the Jewish nation, who he was, and the Father that sent him. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." John viii. 28.

He added, that though he should be crucified as a malefactor, that punishment would not be inflicted on him as a consequence of his being deserted by his Father: because he would never leave him in any

period of his sufferings, or even at the hour of his death, as he had always acted agreeably to his will.

These words induced many of the people to believe him to be the Messiah. Perhaps by "lifting him up" they did not understand his crucifixion, but his ascension to the throne of David; and hence supposed that he now entertained sentiments worthy of the Messiah, and were, therefore, very ready to acknowledge him as such; and believe the doctrine he had delivered, concerning his mission. But Jesus told them, that if they persevered in the belief and practice of his word, they should in reality become his disciples, have a title to that honorable appellation, be fully instructed in every doctrine of the gospel, and not only freed from the slavery of sin and its consequences, but also from the ceremonial laws delivered by Moses. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John viii. 31, 32.

The Jews, on hearing him mention that they should be made free, answered, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man." This assertion, if taken literally, was absolutely false; the whole nation at that very time being in bondage to the Romans: nor were their ancestors any strangers to slavery, having severely felt the hand of tyranny, both in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. The expression, therefore, according to some writers, must be taken in a metaphorical sense, to signify spiritual bondage; it was a freedom by truth, a freedom in respect of religion which they now asserted.

They meant that they were the descendants of illustrious ancestors; and during the worst of times, had preserved sentiments in religion and government worthy the posterity of Abraham; nor had the hottest persecution of the Assyrian kings been able to compel them to embrace the religion of the heathen. In respect of truth, "we were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

In answer to this question, Jesus told them that those who gave themselves up to the practice of sin and the gratification of their sinful appetites, were absolutely slaves, and how far they might deserve that appellation, it was incumbent on them to consider. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." And as a slave cannot be assured of the continuance of his master's favor, or certain of abiding continually in the family; so my Father can, when he pleases, discard such habitual sinners, deprive you of the external economy of religion, in which you so highly boast.

SHEPHERD'S FIELD AT BETHLEHEM.



But Jesus told them that an outward profession of the true religion was of no consequence. They must "love it in deed and in truth," if they hoped to be in reality the children of God; and if they truly loved religion, they must love him who came down from heaven on purpose to reveal it to the sons of men. Adding, that he did not come of himself, but was sent by the great Creator of the universe. "If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God: neither came I of myself, but he sent me." John viii. 42.

But ye, continued the blessed Jesus, inherit the nature of your father, the devil, and therefore will continue to gratify the lusts ye have derived from him. He was an enemy to, and a murderer of, mankind from the beginning, and has ever since exerted his whole power to work their destruction; sometimes by seducing them into sin by his falsities, and sometimes by instigating them to kill those whom God thought proper to send to reclaim them. And having early departed from holiness and truth, a custom of lying is become habitual to him. Being, therefore, a liar and the father of lying, when he speaketh a falsity he speaketh what is properly his own. But I tell you the truth: and, therefore, it is natural to think that ye will disbelieve me. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." John viii. 44, 45.

Though ye dare even to reject my doctrine, are any of you able to show that I have not received my commission from heaven, or that I have done anything that has a tendency to render me unworthy of belief? Can you show that I have taught false doctrines, reprov'd you unjustly for your actions, or been guilty myself of sin? If you are unable to do this, but, on the contrary, must acknowledge that my doctrine and life are such as become a messenger of God, what reason can ye pretend for not believing me? "And if," in affirming that I am perfectly free from sin, "I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" Whosoever is of God, receives, with the greatest humility, whatever revelation God is pleased to make of himself by his messengers, and makes it his study and delight to obey all his commandments. But ye reject the revelations and precepts of the Almighty, delivered by me, who came down from heaven, for no other reason

than because ye are not the children of God. "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God." John viii. 47.

The Jews, still attached to their lineal descent, replied, that his calling the descendants of Abraham the children of the devil, was a sufficient proof that he was either a very profligate wretch himself, or instigated by some evil spirit. But Jesus told them that he was neither mad, nor actuated by an evil spirit. On the contrary, he honored his Father by speaking the words of truth, which he had sent him to deliver, and therefore they dishonored him in calling him by so opprobrious a title. Adding, that he sought not their applause, but referred their conduct to an omniscient and impartial judge. "And I seek not my own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth." John viii. 50.

Our Lord having declared his mighty and divine power, asserts the happy effects of faith and obedience to the gospel. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." John viii. 51. On this declaration, the Jews, who were total strangers to our Lord's spiritual meaning of death, cried out, Now we sufficiently know that thou art possessed with a devil; for the most righteous persons that ever flourished among the sons of men are dead; Abraham, and the prophets, and other holy men, are all laid in the chambers of the dust, and thou hast the impudence and folly to affirm, that whosoever keeps thy precepts shall never die. Thou surely canst not think nor pretend to be more in favor of the Almighty than Abraham and the prophets were, who, though the strictest observers of the divine precepts, could not obtain the privilege of being themselves exempt from the stroke of death, much less for their followers. "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" John viii. 52, 53.

In reply to this impertinent query, the Messiah returned, If I should attempt to speak in praise of myself, you would call it vain and foolish, and, like the Pharisees, tell me, "Thou bearest record of thyself: thy record is not true." Instead, therefore, of giving you a full description of my dignity, I shall only inform you, that it is my Father who speaketh honorably of me, by the many miracles he enables me to perform. And surely this may be sufficient to convince you

of what I have promised for my disciples; especially when I tell you that my Father is no other than the Almighty God of Jacob, whom all the descendants of Abraham pretend to worship. But though you vainly boast of worshipping my Father as your God, you are ignorant of him: you neither form just conceptions of him, nor worship him in the manner you ought. Your knowledge and actions, therefore, disagree with your profession; but, on the contrary, I entertain proper ideas of him, and obey his precepts. You may, perhaps, construe this declaration as proceeding from vanity: but if I should say I do not form adequate conceptions of him, or acknowledge him as he deserves, I should be a liar like unto you. Even your father Abraham, of whom you so highly boast, earnestly desired to behold the time when I, the promised seed, should put on the veil of human nature, and convert all the nations of the world from their ignorance and idolatry to the knowledge and worship of the true God. He earnestly desired to see the great transactions of my life, by which this invaluable blessing was to be procured for all the sons of men, and view the happy state of all nations, when this blessing was bestowed upon them. This was granted him; he "saw it and was glad." He was favored with the ravishing prospect of these happy times, then concealed in the womb of futurity, and was exceedingly transported with the scene. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." John viii. 56.

The Jews, still blind to the spiritual meaning of our Lord's words, concluded he had affirmed that he was before Abraham; and knowing he was not yet fifty years old, considered it as absolutely ridiculous. They had no conception of his divine nature, though he had so often told them he was the Son of God, and consequently existed with the Father, before this world was called from its primitive chaos. This gross stupidity and perverseness induced the Saviour of the world to assert his dignity in still plainer terms: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." John viii. 58.

The Jews, incensed at our Lord's prior claim to Abraham in point of existence, rushed on him, and attempted to stone him, but Jesus, by miraculously concealing himself, passed unhurt through the crowd, and retired out of the temple.

## CHAPTER XIX.

OUR LORD CONTINUES TO WORK MIRACLES IN CONFIRMATION OF HIS MISSION AND DOCTRINE—CALLS FORTH AND SENDS OUT SEVENTY DISCIPLES—PREACHES TO THE PEOPLE OF JUDEA, BY WAY OF PARABLE.

THE great preacher of Israel, having defeated the cruel designs of the obstinate Jews, in passing on his way, saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The sight of so affecting an object could not fail to excite the compassion of the benevolent Saviour of mankind. Nor could the affronts and indignities he had just received from the Jews hinder him from “working the works of him that sent him,” and dispensing blessings on that rebellious and ungrateful nation. Accordingly, he beheld this poor blind man, not with a transient view, but fixed on him the eyes of pity, and presented him with the riches of his adorable love.

The disciples, observing the affectionate regard of their Master to this object of compassion, and probably imagining that he was going to extend his usual mercy to this unfortunate object, asked their Master, whether his blindness was occasioned by his own sin or the sin of his parents. They had often heard their Master say that afflictions were commonly the punishment of particular sins; and had learned from the law of Moses, that sin was the fruitful source of evil; and that the Lord punished the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. Their Master kindly answered, that neither his own nor the sins of his parents were the immediate cause of this peculiar punishment; but that he was born blind, “that the works of God should be made manifest in him:” particularly his sovereignty in bringing him blind into the world, his power in conferring the faculty of sight upon him, and his goodness in bearing witness to the doctrine by which men are to be saved.

We may learn by this pertinent reply of the Saviour of the world, that a curious inquiry into the afflictions of other men may be safely avoided; and that we ought to suppose every calamity subservient to the glory of Omnipotence, never imputing to their personal sins whatever miseries we behold in others, lest, like the disciples in the present

case, we assign that to sin, which owes its origin to the glory of our Maker.

Having assigned the cause of this person's blindness, namely, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him," Jesus added, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Intimating to his disciples and all the sons of men, his unwearied labor in the work of his Almighty Father. In this he was occupied day and night, during the time of his sojourning in the flesh. To this alone he directed all his thoughts and all his intentions. This he esteemed even as his meat and drink; and for this he suffered the neglect of his ordinary food, that he might finish the blessed, the beneficent work of human salvation. A work, to accomplish which he left the courts of heaven; and, during the execution of it, went about doing good.

It was now the Sabbath day, and the blessed Jesus was going to perform a miracle, in which there was to be a small degree of servile work; and therefore he told his disciples, that they need not be surprised to see him work miracles of that kind on the Sabbath day. For, though they should imagine that he might defer them till the day of rest was over, his time on earth was so short, that it was necessary for him to embrace every opportunity that offered of working miracles. Perhaps he chose to perform this work on the Sabbath, because he knew the Pharisees would, for that reason, inquire into it with the utmost attention, and consequently render it more generally known. But, however this be, our blessed Saviour, who was now going to confer sight on one that was born blind, took occasion from thence to speak of himself as one appointed to give light also to the minds of men involved in darkness. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Having declared the salutary design of his coming into the world, "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is, by interpretation, Sent). He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came, seeing." John ix. 6, 7.

This miraculous operation could not fail of producing a general curiosity and surprise, and induced those who had seen this blind man in his dark and deplorable condition, to be very particular in their inquiries into the means of so singular a miracle. It was doubtless the subject of general conversation; and, it is natural to think,

should also have proved the means of a general conversion: but, as too frequently happens, a perverse curiosity prevented its salutary effects upon their souls. Unbelief and hardness of heart led some of them even to doubt of the plainest fact; a fact the most evident and indisputable, and plainly the work of the divinity, and others to persecute at once both the object and the author of it! "The neighbors, therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he." John ix. 8, 9.

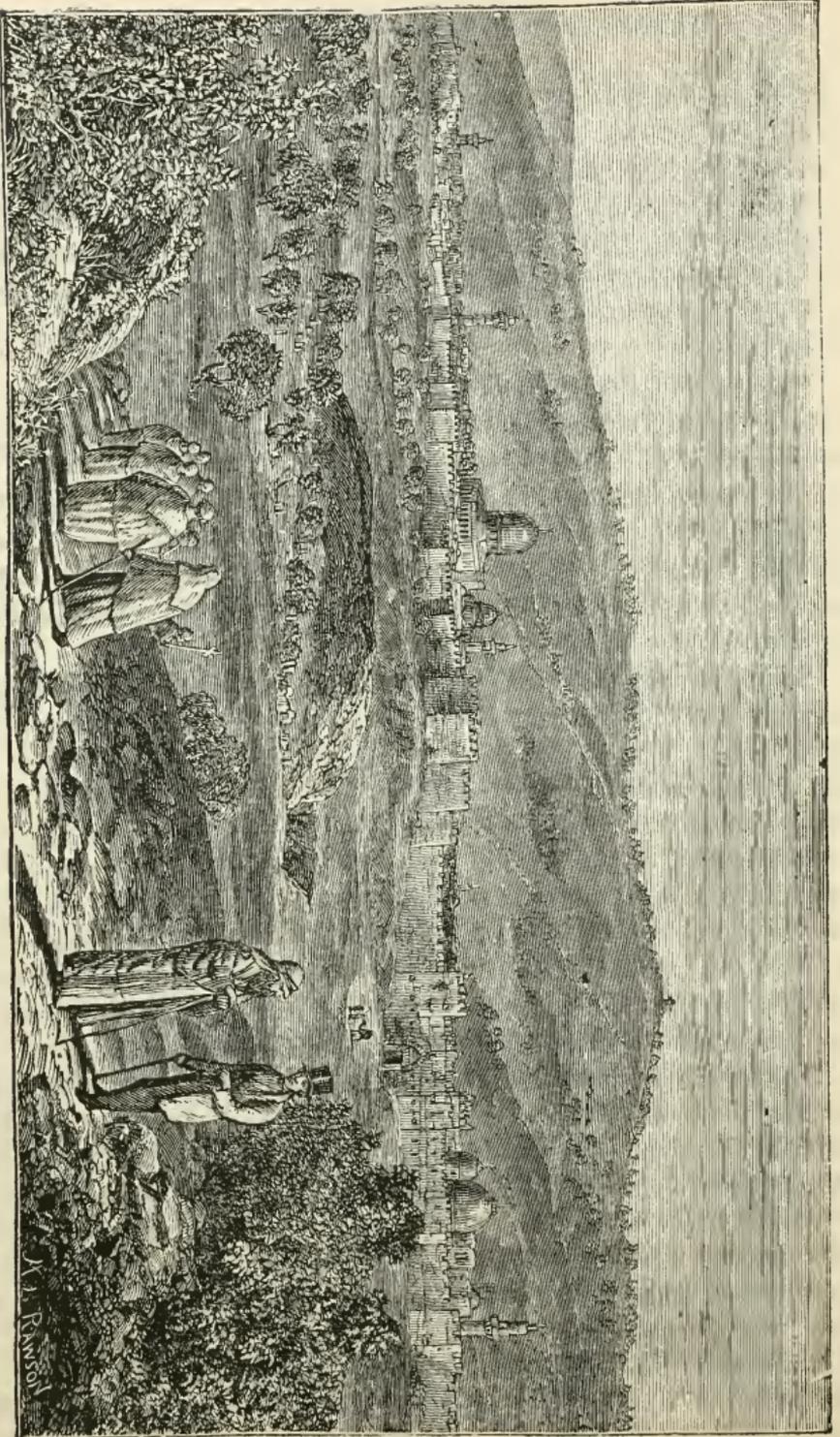
The man, transported with gratitude and joy, perceiving his neighbors doubted of the identity of his person, proclaimed himself to be the very same, whom they lately saw begging in total darkness. I am he, thus wonderfully blest with sight by the peculiar mercy of the Almighty! I am he who was blind from my birth, whom ye have all seen, and many relieved in my miserable distress! I am he who was, even from my mother's womb, involved in pitchy darkness, but now enjoy the enlivening light of day!

So genuine an acknowledgment of the fact excited in them curiosity to know how this admirable effect was produced. "How were thine eyes opened?" to this question he readily replied, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight." John ix. 11. They then asked him where the person was, who had performed so stupendous a work? to which the man answered, "I know not:" for Jesus had retired while the man went to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam, probably to avoid the applauses which would naturally have been given him, and which we see, through the whole Gospel, he generally studied to avoid.

The neighbors, either stimulated by envy, or excited by a desire of having the truth of this extraordinary event searched to the bottom, brought the man before the council as the proper judges of this affair. Accordingly, he was no sooner placed before the assembly, than the Pharisees began to inquire of him, "how he had recovered his sight?" Not daunted by this awful assembly, though terrible to a man of his mean circumstances, he boldly answered, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see." John ix. 15.

On hearing this account of the miracle, the Pharisees declared that the author of it must be an impostor, because he had, by performing it, violated the Sabbath day. But others, more candid in their way

GOLGOTHA—JERUSALEM IN THE DISTANCE.



A. Rawson

of thinking, gave it as their opinion, that no deceiver could possibly work a miracle of that kind, because it was too great and beneficial for any evil being to have either the inclination or power to perform.

The court being thus divided in their opinion with regard to the character of Jesus, they asked the man himself what he thought of the person who had conferred on him the blessing of sight; to which he boldly and plainly answered, "He is a prophet." But the Jews, hoping to prove the whole a cheat, started another objection, namely, that this person was not born blind, though all his neighbors had already testified the truth of it.

Accordingly, they called his parents, and asked them whether he was their son; if he had been born blind; and by what means he had obtained his sight. To which they answered, that he was truly their son, and had been born blind; but with regard to the manner in which he received his sight, and the person who had conferred it on him, they could give no information: their son was of age, and he should answer for himself. "These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." John ix. 22.

The Pharisees, finding all attempts, either to discredit or disprove the fact, useless, had recourse to their usual method of calumniating the author of it. They called again "the man that was born blind, and said unto him, give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." John ix. 24. To which the man boldly answered these rulers of Israel, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." John ix. 25.

This reply prevailed not with the obstinate Jews: they were desirous of confounding him with repeated questions and the art of sophistry, and accordingly asked him, "What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?" They had before asked these questions, but now proposed them a second time, in order that the man, by repeating his account of the servile work performed at the cure, might become sensible that Jesus had thereby violated the Sabbath, and consequently must be an impostor. Thus the enemies of our dear Redeemer would gladly have prevailed on the person who had received the invaluable gift of sight, to join with them in the judgment they passed on the great person who had wrought so stupendous a miracle. But their obstinacy in denying the truth appeared so criminal to him,



MARY ANOINTS THE HEAD OF CHRIST IN PREPARATION  
FOR HIS BURIAL.

that he boldly answered, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would you hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?" John ix. 27.

The council were highly exasperated at this retort. "They reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple? but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." John ix. 28, 29.

The poor man, incensed at their unbelief and hardness of heart, replied, It is very strange that you should not acknowledge the divine mission of a teacher who performs such astonishing miracles; for common sense sufficiently declares that God never assists impostors in working miracles; and, accordingly, there cannot be found a single example since the creation of the world, of any such person opening the eyes of one born blind. My opinion therefore is, that if this man had not been sent by God, he could not work any miracle at all. "The man answered, and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he hear-

eth. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." John ix. 30-33.

The honest man's arguments, though plain, were powerful, and founded upon truths they could not deny. They all owned that God heareth not sinners: they all knew that God had heard Jesus, by the miracle he had wrought, which was a fact proved beyond any possibility of doubt, and was such as never any man performed: it therefore undeniably followed, that Jesus was not a sinner, but sent from God, since otherwise he could do nothing. The Pharisees were not ignorant that this argument was conclusive; they felt its whole force, and well knew that it could not be resisted.

Accordingly, they did not attempt to answer it, but had recourse to punishment and abusive language. Thou wicked, illiterate, impudent mortal, said they, whose understanding is still as blind as thy body lately was, and who wert born under the heaviest punishment of sin, dost thou pretend to instruct in a matter of this kind the guides of the people, and those who have rendered themselves eminent for their knowledge of the law? "Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?"

After their presumptuous taunts, the evangelist adds, that they cast him out." That is, they passed on him the sentence of excommunication, which was the highest punishment they had power to inflict. But though he was cut off from the Jewish society, the Almighty thought proper to unite him to one, where no unjust sentences can ever be past, nor any member be ever separated during a joyful eternity.

The feast of dedication now drew near. This solemnity was not appointed by Moses, but by that heroic reformer, Judas Maccabeus, in commemoration of his having cleansed the temple, and restored its worship, after both had been polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes. Although this feast was merely of human institution, Jesus determined to be present at it, even though he knew that farther attempts would be made against his life.

His public ministry was, indeed, now drawing near its period; and therefore the blessed Jesus would not omit any opportunity of preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and of doing good to the children of men.

Nor did he now, as he had formerly done, travel privately to the

capital, but openly declared his intention of going to Jerusalem, and set forward on his journey with great courage and resolution.

The road from Galilee to Jerusalem lay through Samaria, the inhabitants of which entertained the most inveterate hatred against all who worshipped in Jerusalem. Jesus being no stranger to this disposition of the Samaritans, thought proper to send messengers before him, that they might, against his arrival, find reception for him in one of the villages. The prejudiced Samaritans, finding that the intention of his journey was to worship in the temple at Jerusalem, refused to receive either him or his disciples into their houses.

The messengers, being thus disappointed, returned to Jesus, and gave him an account of all that had passed, at which James and John were so exceedingly incensed, that they proposed to their Master to call for fire from heaven, in order to destroy such inhospitable wretches; alleging, in excuse for such violent proceedings, the example of the prophet Elijah: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" Luke ix. 54.

Our Lord, desirous of displaying an example of humility on every occasion, sharply rebuked them for entertaining so unbecoming a resentment for this offence. "Ye know not," said he, "what manner of spirit ye are of." Ye are ignorant of the sinfulness of the disposition ye have now expressed; nor do ye consider the difference of times, persons, and dispensations. The severity exercised by Elijah, on the men who came from Ahab to apprehend him, was a just reproof to an idolatrous king and people; very proper for the times, and very agreeable to the characters, both of the prophet who gave it, and of the offenders to whom it was given, and, at the same time, not unsuitable to the Mosaic dispensations. But the gospel breathed a very different spirit; and the intention of the Messiah's coming into the world was not to destroy, but to save the lives of the children of men.

Ye wise of this world, who reject saving knowledge, behold here an instance of patience under a real and unprovoked injury, which you cannot parallel among all your boasted heroes of antiquity! An instance of patience which expressed infinite sweetness of disposition, and should be imitated by all the human race, especially by those who call themselves the disciples of Christ.

Being denied the reception by the inhospitable inhabitants of this Samaritan village, Jesus, attended by his disciples, directed his way towards another, and as they travelled, a certain man said to him-

“Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” But Jesus, to whom the secret purposes of all hearts were open, knowing he only desired the riches and honors of the Messiah’s kingdom, thought proper to make him sensible of his mistake, and accordingly said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” Luke ix. 58. I am so far from boasting of a temporal kingdom, and the power and pomp attending it, that I have not even the accommodation provided by nature for the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. They have safe and secure retreats; but the Son of man is destitute of an habitation.

Jesus, in the course of his wandering, met with one who had formerly been his disciple, and ordered him to disengage himself from all worldly employments, and to follow him; but he was desirous of excusing himself for the present, under the pretence that he was bound by the ties of gratitude to continue with his aged father till death, and he had laid his remains in the sepulchre of his ancestors. “Lord,” said he, “suffer me first to go and bury my father.” To which Jesus answered, “Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.” Luke ix. 59, 60. Let those that are immersed in worldly affairs, follow the affairs of the world; but those who have embraced the doctrines of the gospel, do everything in their power to spread the glad tidings of salvation in every part of the earth.

A third person offered to follow him, provided he would give him the liberty to return to his house, and take leave of his family: but Jesus told him, that he should not suffer any domestic affairs to interfere with the care of his salvation; that the calls of religion were too pressing to admit of the least delay or excuse whatever; and that all who set themselves to seek the welfare of their souls, should pursue the work assiduously, without looking carelessly around them, as if they were regardless of the work they had undertaken to perform. “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Luke ix. 62. As our blessed Saviour’s ministry was from this time till its final period to be confined to Judea, and the countries beyond Jordan, it was necessary that some harbingers should be sent into every town and village he was to visit, to prepare his way. Accordingly, he called his seventy disciples unto him, and after instructing them in the duties of their mission, and the particulars they were to observe in their journey, he sent them into different parts of the country, to those particular places

whither he himself intended to follow them, and preach the doctrine of the gospel to the inhabitants.

Our Lord, according to his own declaration, dispatched these disciples on the same important message as he had done the twelve before. The harvest was plenteous in Judea and Perea, as well as in Galilee, and the laborers also few; and being never more to preach in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, the cities wherein he had usually resided, he reflected on the reception he himself had met with from the inhabitants of those cities. He foresaw the terrible consequences that would flow from their rejecting his doctrine, and the many kind offers he had made them.

He was grieved for their obstinacy; and, in the overflowing tenderness of his soul, he lamented the hardness of their hearts. "Woe," said he, "unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell." Luke x. 13-15. To which our Saviour added, as some consolation to his disciples: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Luke x. 16.

Such a token of heavenly regard could not fail of comforting the seventy, and alleviating their minds, when thinking of the ill usage they expected to meet with, during the course of their mission. They well knew that the preaching of Christ himself had been often despised, and often unsuccessful, with respect to many of his hearers; and therefore they had no very great reason to expect that they should find a more welcome reception than their Master.

The seventy disciples having received their instructions and the power of working miracles from the Messiah, departed to execute their important commission in the cities and villages of Judea and Perea. And, after visiting the several places, publishing the glad tidings of salvation, and working many miracles in confirmation of their mission, they returned to their Master with great joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us, through thy name!"

From this appeal, it seems that they knew not the extent of their delegated power: and were pleasingly surprised to find the apostate spirits tremble at their command. To which their great Master re-

plied, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." You will be no longer astonished that the devils are subject to the power I have given you, when I tell you that their prince is not able to stand before me; and accordingly, when I first put on the veil of human nature, to destroy him and his works, I saw him, with the swiftness of the lightning's flash, fall from heaven. Adding, in order to increase their joy, and prove that he had really cast Satan down from the seats of heaven, that he would enlarge their power. "Behold," says he, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions; and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Luke x. 19.

Lest they should exult beyond measure in the honor thus conferred on them, which was merely temporary, our Lord adds: "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke x. 20.

Nor could the blessed Jesus reflect on the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of the divine dispensations to mankind, without feeling extraordinary joy; so that his beneficent heart overflowed with strains of gratitude. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Luke x. 21.

When the disciples had executed their commission, Jesus left Samaria, and retired into Judea, and in the way was met by a certain lawyer, or scribe, who, being desirous of knowing whether the doctrines preached by Jesus were the same with those before delivered by Moses, asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life.

It is really amazing that any mortal should ask a question like this, with a view to tempt, not to be instructed! This was, however, the case; but the blessed Jesus, though no stranger to the most secret thoughts of the heart, did not reply, as he had before done to the Pharisees, "Why tempest thou me, thou hypocrite?" he turned the scribe's weapons against himself; What, said he, is written in the law, of which thou professest thyself a teacher? how readest thou? That law will teach thee what thou must do to be saved; and happy will it be for thee if thou compliest with its precepts. The scribe answered, It is there written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Luke x. 27.

Our Lord then shows the strength and spirituality of the law. "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Perform these commands, and thou hast fulfilled the duties of an Israelite; for on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Where is the man that can fulfil the law? The lawyer, who, in all probability, expected no such answer, being conscious of his defects, and consequently of the impossibility of obtaining eternal life on these conditions, was willing, as the sacred historian informs us, to justify himself; was willing to stifle the rising suggestions of his own conscience, and at the same time to make a show of his own devotion; and, in order to this, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" A question very natural to be asked by a bigoted Jew, whose narrow notions led him to despise all who were not of his own fold; all who were not the natural descendants of his father Abraham.

To remove their obstinate attachment to their own principles, open their hearts to a more generous and noble way of thinking, and show them the only foundation of true love, and the extensive relation they and all mankind stand in to each other, our Saviour delivered the following most beautiful and instructive parable:

A certain person, in his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, had the misfortune to fall into the hands of robbers; who, not content with taking his money, stript him of his raiment, beat him in a deplorable manner, and left him for dead. While he continued in this miserable condition, utterly incapable of assisting himself, a certain priest happened to travel the same road; "and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side." So little compassion had these ministers of religion for a brother in the most deplorable circumstances of distress, that they continued their journey, without offering to assist so miserable an object, notwithstanding their sacred characters obliged them to perform, on every occasion, the tender offices of charity and compassion. It was a brother, a descendant of Abraham, in distress; and therefore those hypocrites could offer no reasons to palliate their inhumanity. Their stony hearts could behold the affecting object of an unforunate Israelite, lying in the road, naked and cruelly wounded, without being the least affected with his distress.

FINDING THE LOST SHEEP



Though these teachers of religion were hypocrites, and wholly destitute of grace and charity, compassion glowed in the heart of a Samaritan, who, coming to the spot where this helpless object lay, ran to him; and though he found him to be a person of a different nation, and one who professed a religion opposite to his own, yet the hatred which had been instilled into his mind from his earliest years, and every objection arising from the animosity subsisting between the Jews and Samaritans, were immediately silenced by the tender sensations of pity awakened by the sight of such complicated distress; his bowels yearned towards the miserable object; though a Jew, he flew to him, and assisted him in the most tender manner.

It was the custom in these eastern countries for travellers to carry their provisions with them; so that this compassionate Samaritan was enabled, though in the desert, to give the wounded man a little wine to recruit his spirits. He also bound up his wounds, pouring into them wine and oil, placed him on his own beast, and walked himself on foot to support him. In this manner he conducted him to an inn, took care of him during the night; and, in the morning, when business called him to pursue his journey, recommended him to the care of the host, left what money he could spare, and desired that nothing might be denied him; for whatever was expended he would repay at his return.

Having finished the parable, Jesus turned himself to the lawyer, and asked him, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?" The lawyer, struck with the truth and evidence of the case, replied, without the least hesitation, "He that showed mercy on him." Upon which Jesus replied, "Go, and do thou likewise." Perform all the good offices in thy power, extend thy kindness to every one who stands in need of thy assistance, whether he be an Israelite, a heathen, or a Samaritan. Consider every man as thy neighbor, in respect to works of charity, and make no inquiry with regard to his country or religion, but only with regard to his circumstances.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE HUMBLE JESUS RESIDES WITH MARTHA AND MARY, TWO OBSCURE WOMEN OF BETHANY—IMPROVES A CIRCUMSTANCE WHICH OCCURRED AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION—PRESCRIBES A MODE OF PRAYER TO HIS DISCIPLES AND FUTURE FOLLOWERS—REVISITS SOME OF THE PHARISAICAL TRIBE.

THE feast of the dedication approaching, Jesus turned his course towards Jerusalem, and in the evening came to the house of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, at Bethany. Martha was desirous of expressing her regard for the divine guest, by providing for him and his disciples the best entertainment in her power. But her sister, who was of a more contemplative disposition, sat quietly at the feet of Jesus, listening with the utmost attention to his doctrine; for the great Redeemer of mankind never omitted any opportunity of declaring the gracious offers of the Almighty, and his unspeakable love for the children of men. Martha being greatly fatigued with the burden of the service, complained to Jesus of the little care Mary took to assist her. "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me." Luke x. 40.

But Martha's officiousness incurred our Lord's reproof, who commended Mary for her attentive application to his doctrine. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke x. 41, 42.

When Jesus repaired to Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of dedication, he was informed that the beggar he had restored to sight at the feast of tabernacles, was, by the council, cast out of the synagogue. This information excited the pity of the Son of God, and he resolved to make him full amends for the injury he had suffered. It was not long before he met the suffering person, and said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." John ix. 35-38.

We have hinted, that the beggar was thoroughly convinced that

the person who opened his eyes was a messenger from heaven ; it is, therefore, no wonder that, as soon as he knew Jesus was the person who had performed so great a work, he readily believed him to be the Son of God.

Our Saviour having thus given the poor man ample proof of his Messiahship, directed his discourse to the people, and said unto them : " For judgment I am come into this world ; that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." John ix. 39. The meaning of our Saviour, though he alluded to the blind man, was spiritual. He did not intend to represent the design of his coming, but the effect it would have on the minds of men ; as it would demonstrate what character and disposition every person possessed.

The humble, the docile, and the honest, though they were immersed in the night of darkness, with regard to religion and the knowledge of the scriptures, should be enlightened by his coming, as the blind man had enjoyed the invaluable gift of sight from his hands ; but those who were wise, learned, and enlightened in their own opinion, should appear in their true character, absolutely ignorant, foolish, and blind.

The Pharisees, who happened to be present when he spake these words to the people, imagined that he intended to throw a reflection on their sect, which the common people, from their skill in the law, held in great veneration. Accordingly, they asked him, with disdain, " Are we blind also ?" Dost thou place us, who are teachers, and have taken such pains to acquire the knowledge of the Scriptures, on a level with the vulgar ? To which Jesus answered, " If ye were blind, ye should have no sin ; but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." If ye had not enjoyed the faculties and opportunities of discerning the proofs of my mission, ye might have been considered as blind. But as ye are superior to the vulgar, in point of learning, and at the same time your hearts averse from acknowledging the truth, your enlightened understanding will only aggravate your guilt.

Having condemned the obstinacy and prejudice of the sect, in rejecting the most evident tokens of the divinity of his mission, he continued the reproof, by describing the characters of a true and a false teacher. It was our Lord's custom always to allude to objects before him ; and, being now in the outer-court of the temple, near the sheep, which were there exposed to sale for sacrifice, he compared the

teachers among the Jews to shepherds, and the people to sheep: a metaphor often used by the old prophets. He considered two kinds of bad shepherds or teachers; the one who, instead of entering in by the door, to lead the flocks to the richest pastures, entered some other way, with an intention only to kill, to steal, and to destroy; the other, who, though they entered by the door to feed their flocks, with the dispositions of hirelings, yet when the wolf appeared they deserted the sheep, having no love for any but themselves. By the former, he plainly alluded to the Pharisees, who had cast the man born blind out of the synagogue, for no other reason than because he would not act contrary to the dictates of his conscience, and agree with them in declaring Jesus to be an impostor. But, though they had cast him out of their church, Christ received him into his, which is the true church, the spiritual inclosure, where the sheep go in and out, and find pasture.

To illustrate the allusion, it should be observed, that the sheep which were brought to be folded were inclosed in little folds, within the outer court of the temple, so that the shepherd himself could not enter till the porter had opened the door. And from this circumstance the following parabolical discourse may be easily understood: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." John x. 1. Believe me, that whosoever, in any age of the church, assumed the office of a teacher, without a commission from me, was a thief and a robber: and, in the present age, he is no better who assumes that office without my commission, and particularly without believing on me. "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." John x. 2-4

The doctrine here inculcated is, that good men are obedient to the instructions of true and faithful teachers; and that the latter, in every case, show them their duty with the greatest plainness, not concealing it, because it may be disagreeable to their inclinations. On the contrary, "a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." John x. 5. The people of God will not hearken to impostors and false teachers, who neither preach nor love the truth, but flee from them, like

sheep from the voice of a stranger; for they can easily distinguish them from the messengers of God, by their fruits, their doctrines, and their lives.

Thus did the great Redeemer of mankind, by this instructive parabolical discourse, explain to the Pharisees the difference between true and false teachers; but they being ignorant of his meaning, he added, by way of explication: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." I am not only the door, by which the shepherd must enter, but I am also the door of the sheep: it is by me that men enter into the spiritual inclosure of the true church. "All that ever came before me:" all those who have presumed to assume the character of teachers of religion, without commission from me, "are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them." John x. 8.

I am the door, through which alone any one can come acceptably unto God: "By me, if any man enter, he shall be saved; and shall go in and out, and find pasture." If any man believeth on me, he shall become a true member of the church of God upon earth; and shall, from time to time, receive such instruction as shall nourish his soul unto eternal life. Our blessed Saviour seems to change the image in the last particular, and instead of the outer court of the temple, where the sheep were kept, represented an inclosure where cattle were fed. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John x. 10. You may easily know that I am neither a thief nor a robber, by considering that the intention of such is only to steal, to kill, and to destroy the flock. They assume the characters of teachers, who have received their commissions from heaven, for no other reason than to promote their own interest at the expense of the souls of men: but I am come merely to give you life, and even much more abundantly than it was given under the dispensation of the law.

Nor am I an hireling shepherd, appointed by the Owner to take care of the flock: I am the good Shepherd promised by the prophets; the true proprietor of the sheep. This is sufficiently evident from my laying down my life for the safety of the flock. Whereas an hireling, who proposes nothing but his own advantage, when he sees the wolf approaching, deserts the sheep: his whole care is for his own safety, and therefore he will not expose himself to any danger on their account; so that the wolf, without resistance,

teare some to pieces, and disperses the rest. "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." John x. 11-13.

And as I am the good Shepherd, and so earnest in tending them, so I know every particular sheep, am able to claim it, in whose possession soever it be, and know every thing relating to the sheep. I know the circumstances wherein they are placed, am well acquainted with their wants, and can judge what assistance they need. Besides, I love them all with the greatest sincerity, and approve of their obedience to me, because it is sincere, and springs from a right principle. For they have just notions of my dignity and character; they know that I am their Shepherd and Saviour sent from God; and that I am able to feed them with knowledge, deliver them from sin, and the punishment of it, and bestow on them eternal life, and procure them a place in the blissful mansions of my Father's house. "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." John x. 14.

And this mutual knowledge and love of each other is like that subsisting between me and my Father. "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." John x. 15.

I will give a convincing proof of the love I bear the sheep: I will lay down my life for them: an instance of regard that will never be given by an hireling.

But I have other sheep besides those of the seed of Abraham; numbers of my flock are among the Gentiles. These also I must bring into my church, and they will cheerfully submit to my laws. There shall then be but one fold, and they shall know me, shall distinguish my voice from that of a stranger, and though consisting of Jews and Gentiles, yet they shall have but one shepherd, to feed and govern them: for the middle wall of partition shall be broken down. 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.'" John x. 16. And because I lay down my life to save the world, therefore my heavenly Father loveth me. But though I lay down my life, I will take it again; for I will, in

due time, rise from the dead. I do not, however, either lay down my life or rise from the dead without the appointment of the Almighty. I act in both according to the divine wisdom, and agreeably to the will of my heavenly Father. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John x. 17, 18.

Various were the effects produced by this discourse upon the minds of the Jews. Some of them cried out, that he was mad, and possessed with a devil, and that it was the highest folly to hear him; while others, who judged more impartially of him and his doctrine, declared that his discourses were not those of a lunatic, nor his miracles the works of a devil; asking those who were enemies to Jesus, if they imagined any devil was able to confer the faculty of sight on one that was born blind. "There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad: why hear ye him? others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" John x. 19-21.

Soon after, as Jesus was standing in Solomon's porch, the Jews came to him, desiring that he would tell them plainly whether he was the expected Messiah or not. But Jesus, knowing that they did not ask this question for information, but to gain an opportunity of accusing him to the Romans, as a seditious person, who endeavored to deceive the people, by pretending to be the great Son of David promised by the prophets, in order to usurp the kingdom, told them, that they must form a judgment of him from his actions. "I told you, and ye believed not; the works I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." John x. 25, 26. Your unbelief is the effect of your attachment to this world, being unwilling to receive the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven; because you must then renounce all your fond hopes of temporal power and advantage. But, on the contrary, those who are of a meek and humble disposition, and their minds free from worldly passions, easily perceive the truth of my doctrine and miracles, and consequently are readily disposed to become my disciples. Nor shall such persons lose their reward; for I will willingly receive them, and make them partakers of eternal life in my Father's kingdom. And however assiduous malicious men

may be in endeavoring to hinder men from believing on me, they shall never be able to effect their purpose, though assisted by all the powers of darkness. For my heavenly Father, who hath given them to me, is far greater than them all; nor is any able to contend with him: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." John x. 27, etc.

The Jews were so incensed at this declaration, which they considered as blasphemous, that they took up stones to cast at him, in conformity to the law, which commands all blasphemers to be stoned. But Jesus asked them, which of the beneficent miracles he had wrought, in confirmation of his mission, deserved such treatment. "Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me!" As if he had said, I have fed the hungry in the desert, I have healed the lame, I have cleansed the lepers, I have cured the sick, I have given sight to the blind, I have cast out devils, and I have raised the dead: for which of these works are ye going to stone me? Do these miracles indicate that the author of them is an impostor? Or, can you be so stupid as to think that the Almighty would suffer any person to perform such works with no other intention than to deceive the human race? The Jews answered: We are far from thinking that thou deservest punishment for any good work thou hast done in favor of the afflicted and distressed: the punishment is intended to chastise thee for thy blasphemous speeches; for thou, though a weak mortal, a being of a day, like ourselves, arrogantly assumest the power and majesty of the Most High, and, by claiming the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, makest thyself God. "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." John x. 33.

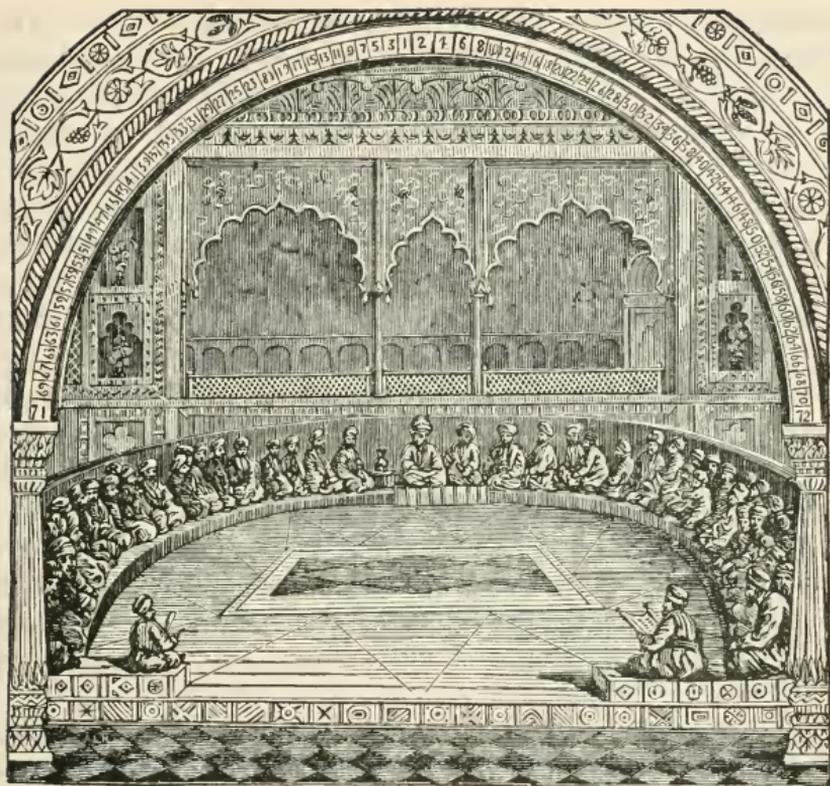
Jesus replied, Have not the Scriptures expressly called those gods and the sons of God, who were commissioned to govern God's people, on account of their high office, and the inspiration of the Spirit, which was, though sparingly, bestowed upon them; can you, therefore, impute to that person whom the Almighty hath sanctified and sent into the world to save lost mankind, and pay the price of redemption for all the sons of men; can you, I say, impute blasphemy

unto him, for taking on himself the title of the Son of God? If my own assertion be not sufficient to convince you of my personal dignity, you must surely think that the many miracles I have wrought abundantly prove that they are the works of the Most High, as Omnipotence alone could perform them; and therefore, that the Father and I are so united, that whatever I say, or do, is approved of by the Almighty. "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." John x. 34, etc. But this reply, instead of satisfying the Jews, rather tended to enrage them the more: and Jesus seeing it was of no consequence to reason with so headstrong a people, withdrew himself in an extraordinary manner, escaped from them. "Therefore they sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hands." John x. 39.

The feast of the Dedication being now over, Jesus departed from Jerusalem, and retired into the parts of Perea beyond Jordan. Here his ministry was attended with great success; for the inhabitants of the country, remembering what had been told them by John the Baptist concerning Jesus, and being sensible that the doctrine and miracles of our blessed Saviour were fully equal to what the Baptist had foretold, firmly believed him to be the Messiah.

Accordingly, to this supposition, which seems the most agreeable to reason, the inhabitants of these countries enjoyed the doctrines and miracles of the Son of God for a very considerable time. But, however this be, the evangelist tells us, that while he was executing his ministry beyond Jordan, he happened to pray publicly with such fervency, that one of his disciples, who was exceedingly affected both with the matter and manner of his address, begged he would teach them to pray. "And it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Luke xi. 1.

Soon after, our blessed Saviour happened to cast out a devil, when some who were present ascribed the miracle to Beelzebub: "And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass,



THE SANHEDRIM IN SESSION.

when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." Luke xi. 14, 15. However strange this argument may seem, and however weak and absurd it must appear to impartial judges, yet it had a considerable effect on illiterate persons, especially on those whose prejudices and interests it favored. The Pharisees pretended, that as Jesus had all along been at great pains to oppose the traditions which most of the teachers of that age considered as the essentials of religion, and the principal branches of piety, they concluded that he must be a very wicked person. They also supposed that a false prophet had the power of working signs and wonders; and thence concluded that our Saviour performed all his miracles by the assistance of evil spirits, with an intention to turn the people from the worship of the true God.

Another pretended reason for ascribing his miracles to evil spirits was, that the demons themselves, when they departed out of the per

sons possessed, honored him with the title of Messiah. Their arguments, though so evidently founded on falsehood, contributed largely to the infidelity of the Jews, and however we may be surprised that such weak reasons should have any effect, considering what multitudes were witnesses of the many miracles the blessed Jesus performed on the sick of all sorts, on the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the maimed, the lame, on paralytics, lunatics, demoniacs, and other miserable objects; nay, on the dead, whom he raised again to life; on the winds and the seas: in a word, on every part of nature; fixed that headstrong people in their infidelity.

Though part of the multitude were content with ascribing this miracle to the power of evil spirits, others went still farther, desiring him to prove himself the Messiah, by giving them a sign from heaven. But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, refused to grant them this request, telling them that they were a wicked race of mortals, and discovered a very perverse disposition, by seeking, after so many miracles had been performed, a sign from heaven; and therefore that no greater sign should be given them than the sign of the prophet Jonas. "This is an evil generation; they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet." Luke xi. 29.

"No man," added the Saviour of the world, "when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it into a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light."

No man endued with the Spirit of God concealeth the blessed gift; but holdeth forth the glorious doctrines of salvation, as it were, like a candle, that the light of the same may shine upon the souls of men, who hear them. "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body is also full of darkness. Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness." Luke xi. 34, etc.

Take care, therefore, that thy soul be so completely enlightened by the Spirit, that the emanations of its light be not in the least interrupted by any evil passion or affection; that all the faculties of the soul may be as much enlightened and assisted, as the members of the body are by the bright shining of a candle. "If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." Luke xi. 36.

Thus did our blessed Saviour prove the truth of his mission, against the cavils and sophistical reasonings of his malicious enemies. And when he had done speaking, one of the Pharisees present desired he would dine with him. The Redeemer of mankind accepted the invitation, though probably given, as some think, with an insidious design, accompanied the Pharisee to his house, and sat down to meat, but without performing the ceremony of washing, observed by all the other guests.

An omission of this kind could not fail of surprising the Pharisee, as he had thereby shown an open contempt of their traditions. Jesus, who well knew the thoughts of this bigoted Pharisee, said to him, Your sect are remarkably careful to keep everything clean that touches your food, lest by eating it your body should be polluted; but you take no pains to cleanse your minds from the pollutions of rapine, covetousness and wickedness. You must surely be convinced, that he who created the body formed also the soul; and can you imagine that the Almighty, who requires purity of body, because it is the work of his hands, will not also insist upon a greater purity of soul, which is undoubtedly the far nobler part of human nature? Instead, therefore, of that scrupulous solicitude of washing your hands, when ye sit down to meat, ye should be careful to apply yourselves to the great duty of charity: a duty that will render it impossible for any external things to defile you, but will be at all times acceptable to your Maker. "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold all things are clean unto you." Luke xi. 39, etc. But the Pharisees, obstinate and perverse, withstood every means made use of by the benign Redeemer of mankind to conquer their prejudices, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth, and therefore our blessed Saviour treated them, on this occasion, with a kind and wholesome severity, denouncing against them the most dreadful woes, for regarding so zealously the ceremonial parts of religion, and at the same time utterly neglecting the very precepts of their own religion. "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you,

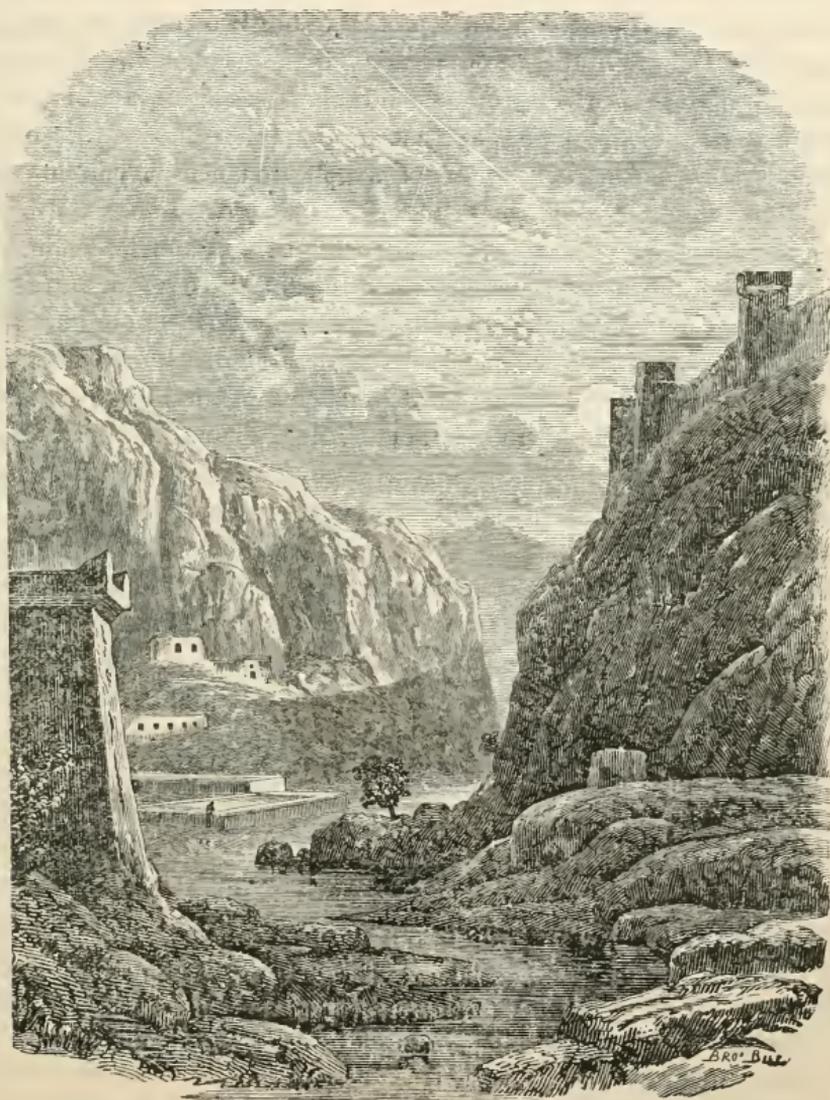
Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." Luke xi. 42, etc.

A certain lawyer, who sat at the table, thinking that his rebuke, though levelled principally against the Scribes and Pharisees, affected his order also, was greatly displeased. But our blessed Saviour, who had never any regard to the persons of men, despised his resentment, and told him freely what he thought of their character. "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." Luke xi. 46. You pervert, in a very erroneous manner, the interpretation of scripture, for no other reason than to favor the tradition of the elders, and by that means lay so heavy a burden on the shoulders of the descendants of Jacob, that neither you nor they will touch with one of their fingers. The blessed Jesus also condemned them for building the sepulchres of the prophets, whom their fathers had murdered; because they did not do it from the respect which they had for the memory of these holy men, but from a secret approbation of their fathers' actions; as too evidently appeared from their whole conduct. "Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute; that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, might be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation." Luke xi. 47, etc.

Our Lord also reprov'd the lawyers for filling the minds of the people with notions founded on the wrong interpretation of scripture, whereby they were prejudiced against the gospel; not being contented with rejecting it themselves, they took care to hinder others from receiving it. "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Luke xi. 52.

Such honest reprimands highly provoked the Pharisee and his guests. They were conscious of being guilty of the crimes laid to their charge, but unwilling that the people should think them

guilty; and therefore, out of revenge, urged him to speak on a variety of topics, hoping they should be able by these means to find occasion of rendering him obnoxious either to the government or the multitude. "And as he said these things unto them, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him." Luke xi. 53, 54.



THE VALLEY OF TOPHET.

## CHAPTER XXI.

EXPLANATION OF THE ORIGIN AND OPINIONS OF THE DIFFERENT SECTS AMONGST THE JEWS—OUR LORD TEACHES THE MULTITUDE BY PLAIN DISCOURSE, AND ALSO BY PARABLES.

HAVING undertaken to write the history of the life of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we cannot omit a distinct account of the different sects of the Jews, a people with whom he was most intimately concerned, both as an elucidation of many circumstances, as well as a verification of many things foretold concerning the Messiah.

Josephus reckons four principal sects among the Jews; the Pharisees, the Sadducees, (called also Herodians,) the Essenes, and the Galileans. The evangelists mention only two, the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The rise of the Pharisees is unknown. They claim, indeed, the celebrated Hillel for their founder, as he is by some supposed to have lived during the pontificate of Jonathan, about a hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ: but others, with more reason, suppose that he was contemporary with the famous Someas, who lived about the time of Herod, long before whom the sect of the Pharisees was in high repute. It is, therefore, probable that they claim Hillel rather as an ornament, than as the author of the sect.

One of the most famous tenets of the Pharisees was that of an oral tradition handed down from Moses, and to which they attributed the same divine authority as to the sacred books. This being strenuously opposed by the Sadducees and Samaritans, rendered these equally detested by them. But none more incurred their hatred than the blessed Jesus, who embraced every occasion of reproving them, for the unjustifiable preference they gave this pretended tradition to the written word of God, and for condemning those as apostates, worthy of death, who did not pay the same, or even a greater, regard to the former than to the latter.

Another tenet they embraced in opposition to the Sadducees, was that of the existence of angels, the immortality of the soul, the resur-

rection of the dead, and future rewards. But, with regard to the last, they excluded all who were notoriously wicked from having any share in the happiness of eternity; supposing, that as soon as death had put a period to their lives, their souls were conveyed into everlasting punishment.

A third tenet was, that all things were subject to fate; or, as some expressed it, to the heavens. It is not easy to conceive what they meant by this: Josephus, indeed, will have it, that they designed to reconcile the fatality or predestination of the Essenes, with the free will of the Sadducees.

If so, this is not the only absurdity, or even contradiction, which they held; but a certain learned prelate seems to have proved that they attributed all to fate, or to that chain of causes to which the Creator had subjected all things from the beginning; among which the influence of the heavenly bodies was considered as the principal. This seems to be hinted at by St. James, in the beginning of his epistle to the new converts, where he explodes that pharisaical leaven by the most beautiful opposition of the immutability of God, the giver of all good, to the mutability of the planets, which, according to that notion, must necessarily vary their aspects from a malign to a benevolent one, and the contrary, even by their natural motion and change of position.

This tenet of the Pharisees was, therefore, a source of dislike to the doctrines delivered by the blessed Jesus, as these affirm that men are the authors of their own unbelief, disobedience, and obstinacy; and consequently answerable for that, and all the train of evils these vices draw after them.

But the most distinguished character of the Pharisees, and that which rendered them more obnoxious to the just censures of our blessed Saviour, was their supererogatory attachment to the ceremonial law; their frequent washings, fastings, and prayings; their giving alms publicly, seeking for proselytes, scrupulous tithings, affected gravity of dress, gesture, and mortified looks, their building the tombs of the prophets, to tell the world that they were more righteous than their ancestors, who murdered them, though they were themselves plotting the death of one greater than all the prophets; their over-scrupulous observance of the Sabbath, to the exclusion of the works of the greatest charity, and many others of the like nature; while they were wholly negligent of the moral and eternal law of mercy and justice; of charity and humility, and the like indispensable

virtues. The very best of them contented themselves with abstaining from the actual committing any enormous act, while they indulged themselves in the most wicked thoughts and desires. Nay, some, more hardened in their vices, made no scruple not only of coveting, but destroying poor widows' houses; of committing the vilest oppressions, injustice, and cruelties, and of encouraging these enormities in their followers, under the specious cloak of religion and sanctity. Well, therefore, might the great Redeemer of mankind compare them to whited sepulchres, beautiful indeed without, but within full of rottenness and corruption.

The last erroneous opinion we shall mention of the Pharisees, common indeed to all the other sects, but more exactly conformable to their haughty, rapacious, and cruel temper, was their expectation of a powerful, a conquering Messiah, who was to bring the whole world under the Jewish yoke; so that there was scarce an inhabitant of Jerusalem, however mean, that did not expect to be made a governor of some opulent province, under that wonderful Prince. How unlikely was it, then, that the preaching of the meek, the humble Jesus, whose doctrine breathed nothing but humility, peace, sincerity, contempt of the world, and universal love and beneficence, should ever be relished by that proud, that covetous, that hypocritical sect, or even by the rest of the people, while these, their teachers, so strenuously opposed it!

The sect of the Sadducees is said to have been founded by one, Saddoc, a disciple of Antigonus of Socho. Their chief tenet was, that our serving God ought to be free either from slavish fear of punishment, or from selfish hope of reward; that it should be disinterested, and flow only from the pure love and fear of the Supreme Being. They added, that God was the only immaterial being; in consequence of which they denied the existence of angels, or any spiritual substances, except the Almighty himself. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Sadducees should take every opportunity of opposing and ridiculing the doctrine of the resurrection.

Another of their tenets, equally opposite to the Pharisees and to the doctrine of Christ, was, that a man was constituted absolute master of all his actions, and stood in no need of any assistance to choose or act: for this reason they were always very severe in their sentences, when they sat as judges. They rejected all the pretended oral traditions of the Pharisees, admitting only the texts of the sacred books, and preferred those of Moses to all the rest of the inspired writings.

They are charged with some other erroneous tenets by Josephus and the Talmudists; but those already mentioned are abundantly sufficient for the purpose. The notion of a future life, universal judgments, eternal rewards and punishments to men whom a contrary doctrine had long soothed into luxury, and an overgrown fondness for temporal happiness, which they considered as the only reward for their obedience, must of necessity appear strange and frightful; and as such could not fail of meeting with the strongest opposition from them; especially if we add what Josephus observes, that they were in general men of the greatest quality and opulence, and consequently too apt to prefer the pleasures and grandeur of this life to those of another.

The sect of the Galileans, or Gaulonites, so called from Judas, the Galilean, or Gaulonite, appeared soon after the banishment of Archelaus, when his territories were made a Roman province, and the government given to Coponius. For the Jews, considering this as an open attempt to reduce them to slavery, Judas took advantage of their discontent; and, to ripen them for an insurrection, Augustus furnished them with a plausible pretence, by issuing about this time an edict for surveying the whole province of Syria, and laying on it a proportional tax. Judas, therefore, who was a man of uncommon ambition, took occasion from this incident to display all his eloquence, in order to convince the Jews that such a submission was nothing less than base idolatry, and placing men on a level with the God of Jacob, who was the only Lord and Sovereign that could challenge their obedience and subjection. The party which he drew after him became in a short time so considerable, that they threw everything into confusion, laid the foundation for those frightful consequences that ensued, and which ended only with the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Essenes, though not mentioned by the evangelists, made a very considerable sect among the Jews, and are highly celebrated by Josephus, Philo, Pliny, and several Christian writers, both ancient and modern. It is impossible to trace their origin, or even the etymology of their name. This, however, is certain, that they were settled in Judea in the time of Jonathan, the brother and successor of Judas Maccabeus, about one hundred and fifty years before Christ.

The Essenes distinguished themselves by their rules and manner of life into laborious and contemplative. The former divided their time

between prayer and labor; such as the exercise of some handicraft, or the cultivation of some particular spot of ground, where they planted and sowed such roots, corn, etc., as served for their food; and the latter, between prayer, contemplation, and study. In this last they confined themselves to the sacred books and morality, without troubling themselves with any branch of philosophy. Both the contemplative and laborious had their synagogues, their stated hours for prayer, for reading and expounding the sacred books. The latter was always performed by the elders, who were seated at the upper end of the synagogue, according to their seniority; while the younger, who were permitted to read the lessons, were placed at the lower. Their expositions were generally of the allegorical kind, in which they seem to have excelled all their Jewish brethren. But they paid the greatest regard to the five books of Moses, and considered that lawgiver as the head of all the inspired penmen: they even condemned to immediate death whoever spoke disrespectfully either of him or his writings. Upon this account they studied, read, and expounded them more than all the rest, and seemed to have drawn all their religion chiefly from the Pentateuch. The doctrines and expositions of the elders were received with implicit faith, and in their practice they conformed with an entire submission to all their sect.

With respect to their faith, they believed the existence of angels, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, like the Pharisees; but seem to have had no notion of the resurrection. They considered the souls of men as composed of a most subtle æther, which immediately after their separation from the body, or from the cage or prison, as they called it, were adjudged to a place of endless happiness or misery, that the good took their flight over the ocean, into some warm or delightful regions prepared for them, while the wicked were conveyed to some cold and intemperate climate, where they were left to groan under an inexpressible weight of misery. They were likewise entirely averse to the Sadducean doctrine of free-will, attributing all to an eternal fatality, or chain of causes. They were averse to all kinds of oaths, affirming that a man's life ought to be such that he may be credited without them. The contemplative sort placed the excellency of their meditative life in raising their minds so far above the earth, and placing their thoughts on heaven: when they had attained this degree of excellency they acquired the character of prophets.

In their practice they excelled all the other sects in austerity. If

we may credit Philo, it was a fundamental maxim with them, upon their entrance into the contemplative life, to renounce the world, and to divide among their friends and relations their properties and estates. They never eat till after sunset, and the best of their food was coarse bread, a little salt, and a few stomaehic herbs. Their clothing was made of coarse wool, plain, but white. They condemned all sorts of unctions and perfumes as luxurious and effeminate. Their beds were hard, and their sleep short. Their heads, or superiors, were generally chosen according to seniority, unless there started up among the brotherhood some more conspicuous for their learning, piety, or prophetic spirit. Some of them, indeed, were so contemplative, that they never stirred out of their cells, or even looked out of their windows during the whole week, spending their time in reading sacred books, and writing comments upon them. On the Sabbath day they repaired to their synagogues early in the morning, and continued there the whole day in prayers, singing of psalms, or expounding the sacred books.

Having endeavored to explain the origin and tenets of several sects among the Jews, we now return to the history of our blessed Saviour, whom we left preaching in the country beyond Jordan, where he was surrounded by an innumerable multitude of people.

In the audience of this vast assembly, he gave his disciples in general a charge to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, namely, hypocrisy; because all their actions would be brought to light, either in this world or in that which is to come; and therefore exhorted them to be very careful never to do anything which could not bear the light, but to let the whole of their behavior be honest, just, and good.

“Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear, in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.” Luke xii. 1-3.

This argument against hypocrisy he improved as a reason for their acquiring another quality, which would much better serve all the ends they could propose; namely, an undaunted resolution in the performance of their duty, founded on a firm confidence in God, who would bring to light the most secret word and thought, publicly condemn the wicked, and justify his faithful servants and children.

Fear not, said he, the malice of the human race; it can extend no farther than the destruction of the body; your soul may bid defiance to their impotent rage. But dread the displeasure of that Almighty Being, who, after he hath destroyed the body, is able to confine the soul in eternal torments. Remember all things are in his power, and that nothing happens without his permission: he provides for the meanest of his creatures, and surely you may think yourselves under his protection, who numbers the very hairs of your head; nor can your enemies touch one of them without his permission. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you, whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings: and not one of them is forgotten before God? but even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." Luke xii. 4, etc.

Our Lord, to animate his followers to perseverance, admonished them to look forward unto the general judgment, when he would acknowledge them as his servants, provided they acknowledged him in this world as their master, and cheerfully and constantly obeyed his commands; but if they were ashamed of him and his doctrine before the sons of men, he would disown them before the celestial host.

And that those who reviled the Spirit, by whom they performed their miracles, should be punished by the Almighty, in proportion to the malignity of their crime; which is greater than that of reviling the Son of God himself; because it will be impossible for them to repent. "Also I say unto you, Whoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven." Luke xii. 8, etc.

He also cautioned his disciples not to be perplexed with regard to an answer when they should be brought before the rulers of the people, because they should be inspired by the Spirit of God. "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." Luke xii. 11, 12.

While our blessed Saviour was delivering these exhortations to his disciples, a certain person among the multitude begged him, that he would interpose his authority with his brother, in order to oblige him to divide their paternal inheritance between them: but as this decision properly belonged to the magistrates, our blessed Saviour, who came into the world to redeem the souls of mankind, and to purchase for them an eternal, not a temporal inheritance, declined the office. He, however, embraced the opportunity of giving his hearers the most solemn caution against covetousness; declaring that neither the length nor happiness of human life had any dependence on the largeness of possessions. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luke xii. 15.

To excite their comparative negligence of the things of this life, he placed before them, in the strongest light, an example of the bewitching influence of wealth, in the parable of the rich man who was cut off in the midst of his projects, and became a remarkable example of the folly of amassing the goods of this life, without having any regard to the commands of the Almighty. This wretched man, forgetting his own mortality, made preparations for a long and luxurious life, pleasing himself with the thoughts of possessing an inexhaustible fund of sensual enjoyments. But, alas! while he was providing repositories for his riches, the inexorable king of terrors seized him, and that very night hurried him before the awful tribunal of Omnipotence. "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul; Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Luke xii. 16, etc.

How solemn the appeal! while he lay waking on his bed, in anxious solicitude what he should do with his abundance; while his heart was dilated with the hopes of a variety of pleasures and indulgences; in that very moment the golden dream vanishes at once; all his thoughts perish, and in their stead a horrid account stares him in the face; a scene of judgment presents itself to his ter-

rified imagination! a dark night of horror, in an instant, overwhelms that soul to which he had promised so much ease, so much pleasure; and, instead of ease, instead of eating, drinking, and making merry, eternal tortures, unspeakable thirst, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth must be the portion of this miserable soul to all eternity!

“So is he,” added our blessed Saviour, “that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.” Thus shall he be taken away from all his soul desireth; thus shall he be torn from all his temporal prospects and pleasures. None of his beloved enjoyments shall follow him: naked as he came shall he depart out of the world, nor shall all his riches be able to procure him the least comfort or respite in these scenes of terror.

Having spoken this parable, our Lord proceeded to caution his disciples against anxious cares for the things of this world; from a consideration that the care of God’s providence extends to every part of the creation. The fowls of heaven are fed by his bounty, and the lillies that adorn the valleys are supplied with rain from the clouds of heaven: if, therefore, said the blessed Jesus, Omnipotence so carefully provides for the inferior parts of the creation, the children of men have surely reason to rely on his bounty, and depend for subsistence on his merciful hand. He added, that as God had called them to everlasting happiness in a future life, he would surely provide for them all the necessaries of the present. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

At the same time he gave his disciples another precept, peculiarly calculated for those times, in which the profession of the gospel exposed men to the loss of their substance. “Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Luke xii. 33, 34.

Having thus recommended to them the disengagement of their affections from the things of this world, he exhorted them to labor after improvement in grace. “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” Luke xii. 35, 36.

## CHAPTER XXII.

OUR LORD REPROVES THE IGNORANCE OF THE PEOPLE IN NOT UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNS WHICH PRECEDED HIS APPEARANCE—PERTINENTLY REPLIES TO AN IGNORANT QUESTION AND INFERENCE CONCERNING THE GALILEANS—TEACHES BY PARABLE—RELIEVES A DISTRESSED WOMAN—IS WARNED TO DEPART THE COUNTRY, IN ORDER TO ESCAPE THE RESENTMENT OF HEROD.

THE great Preacher of Israel having delivered these salutary admonitions to his disciples and followers, directed his discourse to the unbelieving crowd. You can, said he, by the signs that appear in the sky, and on the earth, form a judgment of the weather; and why can ye not also discover the time of the Messiah's appearance, by the signs which have preceded it? "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower, and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky; and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" Luke xii. 54, etc.

The prediction of the Son of man coming to punish the Jews for their rebellion and infidelity, delivered under the similitude of one who cometh secretly and unexpectedly to plunder a house, was a loud call to a national repentance.

In order, therefore, to improve that prediction, he exhorted them to a speedy reformation; telling them, that the least degree of reflection would be sufficient to point out to them the best methods they could possibly make use of, for averting the impending judgments of the Almighty; illustrating what he had said by the punishments commonly inflicted on the man who refuses to make reparation for the injuries he has done his neighbor. "When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite." Luke xii. 58, 59.

Some of his hearers thought proper to confirm this doctrine, by giving what they considered as an example of it: "There were pres-

ent at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices ;” thinking that Providence, for some extraordinary crime, had suffered these Galileans to be murdered at the altar. But our Lord showed them the error of their opinion and inference concerning this point, it being no indication that these Galileans were greater sinners than their countrymen, because they had suffered so severe a calamity ; and, at the same time, exhorted them to improve such instances of calamity, as incitements to their own repentance ; assuring them that if they neglected so salutary a work, they should all likewise perish. “ And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things ? I tell you, Nay : but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Luke xiii. 2, 3.

He illustrated this doctrine by putting them in mind of the eighteen persons on whom the tower of Siloam fell ; showing them, by this instance, the folly of interpreting the dispensations of Providence in that manner ; for, though this calamity seemed to flow immediately from the hand of God, yet in all probability it had involved people who were remarkable for their piety and goodness. “ Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem ? I tell you, Nay : but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Luke xiii. 4, 5.

To rouse them from their indolence, and to induce them to seek the aid of God’s grace and Spirit, he added the parable of the fig-tree, which the master of the vineyard, after finding it three years barren, ordered to be destroyed ; but which was spared one year longer, at the earnest solicitations of the gardener. “ A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard ; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none : cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it : and if it bear fruit, well ; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” Luke xiii. 6, etc.

By this parable our blessed Saviour represented the goodness of the Almighty towards the Jews, in choosing them for his people, giving them the outward dispensations of religion, and informing them of the improvements he expected they should make of these advantages,

and the punishments he would inflict upon them, in case they slighted such benevolent offers.

He also represented by it, in a very beautiful manner, the unbounded mercies of the Almighty, in sparing them at the intercession of his Son, and giving them a further time of trial, and still greater advantages, by the preaching of the blessed Jesus and his apostles; concluding with an intimation, that if they neglected this last opportunity, they should perish without remedy.

During the stay of Jesus in the country of Perea, he observed, while he was preaching in one of the synagogues, on the Sabbath day, a woman, who, during the space of eighteen years, had been unable to stand upright. A daughter of Abraham laboring under so terrible a disorder could not fail of attracting the compassion of the Son of God. He beheld the affecting object, he pitied her deplorable condition, he removed her complaint. She who came into the synagogue bowed down with an infirmity, was, by the all-powerful word of the Son of God, restored to her natural health, and returned to her house upright and full of vigor.

Such a display of divine power and goodness, instead of exciting the gratitude, so highly offended the master of the synagogue, that he openly testified his displeasure, and reproved the people as Sabbath-breakers, because they came on that day to be healed. "There are six days," said this surly ruler to the people, "in which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Luke xiii. 14.

But our blessed Saviour soon silenced this hypocritical Pharisee, by showing that he had not deviated from their own avowed practice. They made no scruple of loosing their cattle and leading them to water on the Sabbath day, because the mercy of the action sufficiently justified them for performing it. And surely his action of loosing, by a single word, a woman, a rational creature, a daughter of Abraham, that had been bound by an incurable distemper, during the tedious space of eighteen years, was abundantly justified; nor could this bigoted ruler have thought otherwise had not his reason been blinded by his superstition. "The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite! doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed:

and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." Luke xiii. 15, etc.

The great Redeemer, having now planted the seeds of the gospel in the country of Perea, crossed the Jordan, and travelled by slow journeys towards Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in every village, and declaring the glad tidings of salvation to all the inhabitants of those countries.

While he was thus laboring for the salvation of mankind, one of the persons who accompanied him, asked him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" In all probability the person who proposed this question had heard the Son of God describe the success of the gospel, by the parables of the mustard-seed and leaven; and his notions of the kingdom of the Messiah, being those that were then entertained by the Jews in general, he meant a temporal salvation.

But Jesus, to convince him that he never intended to erect a secular kingdom, answered the question in a spiritual manner, and told him that a small number only of the Jews would be saved! exhorting them to embrace the offers of mercy before it was too late, for that many, after the period of their trial was concluded, and their state finally and irreversibly determined, should earnestly desire these benevolent offers, but should be denied their request. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are." Luke xiii. 24, 25.

He also repeated on this occasion what he had before delivered in his famous sermon on the mount; and what he had observed to the multitude in commendation of the centurion's faith. "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last." Luke xiii. 26, etc.

Immediately after Jesus had thus preached the kingdom of God to the multitude, certain of the Pharisees came to him, and told him, that unless he departed thence, Herod would destroy him: but this concern for his safety was altogether feigned, and their real design no other than to intimidate him, hoping by that means to induce him to leave the country, and retire into Judea, where they did not doubt but the chief priests would find some method of putting him to death. Perhaps Herod himself was privy to this message, and desirous that Jesus should leave his territories, though the agonies he had suffered on account of John the Baptist, hindered him from making use of force. That this was really the case seems evident, from the answer our blessed Saviour made to the Pharisees. "Go ye," said he to these hypocritical Israelites, "and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless, I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." Luke xiii. 32, 33. Having given this answer to the Pharisees, he reflected on the treatment the prophets had received from the inhabitants of Jerusalem; pathetically lamented their obstinacy, and the terrible desolation that would in a short time overtake them. "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Luke xiii. 34, 35.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BLESSED JESUS ACCEPTS THE PHARISEE'S INVITATION A THIRD TIME—DE-  
LIVERS DIVERS PARABLES REPRESENTING THE REQUISITES FOR ADMITTANCE  
INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD—THE CARE OF THE REDEEMER FOR EVERY ONE OF  
HIS PEOPLE—THE RECEPTION OF A PENITENT SINNER, AND THE PUNISHMENT  
OF MISUSING THE BENEFITS OF THE GOSPEL.

OUR Saviour having finished this awful exclamation and prediction, was invited by one of the Pharisees to his house. Though he knew that this invitation arose not from a generous motive, yet as he never shunned any opportunity of doing good, even to his most implacable enemies, he accepted it. At his entering the Pharisee's house, they placed before him a man that had a dropsy, doubtless with an intention to accuse him of healing on the Sabbath day; being persuaded that he would work a miracle in favor of so melancholy an object. Jesus, who knew the secret thoughts of their hearts, asked the lawyers and Pharisees, whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day. But they refusing to give any answer to the question, Jesus laid his hand on the diseased person, and immediately his complexion returned, his body was reduced to its ordinary dimensions, and his former health and strength renewed in an instant.

So surprising a miracle might surely have convinced the Pharisees, that the author must have been endued with power from on high; but instead of being persuaded that he was a person sent from God, and labored only for the benefit of the children of men, they were contriving how they might turn this miracle to his disadvantage. Our Lord, however, soon disconcerted their projects, by proving that, according to their own avowed practice, he had done nothing but what was truly lawful. "Which of you," said he, "shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" If a calamity happens to one of your beasts, you make no scruple of assisting it on the Sabbath, though the action may be attended with considerable labor; and surely I may relieve a descendant of Abraham, when nothing more is requisite than touching him with my hand. This argument was conclusive, and so plain,



CHRIST WEeping OVER JERUSALEM

that even the grossest stupidity must feel its force, and the most virulent malice could not contradict it.

As the entertainment approached, our blessed Saviour, had an opportunity of observing the pride of the Pharisees, and remarking what an anxiety each of them expressed to obtain the most honorable place at the table. Nor did he let their ridiculous behavior pass without a proper animadversion; in which he observed, that pride generally exposed a person to many affronts, and that humility is the surest method of gaining respect. "When thou art bidden," said he, "of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say unto thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke xiv. 8, etc.

Having thus addressed the guests in general, he turned to the master of the house, and said unto him, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." Luke xiv. 12, 13.

Be very careful not to limit thy hospitality to the rich, but let the poor also partake of thy bounty. "And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Luke xiv. 14.

One of the Pharisees, ravished with the delightful prospect of the happiness good men enjoyed in the heavenly Canaan, cried out, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Blessed is he, who being admitted into the happy regions of Paradise, shall enjoy the conversation of the inhabitants of those heavenly countries; as those spiritual repasts must regale and invigorate his mind beyond expression. In answer to which our blessed Saviour delivered the parable of the marriage-supper, representing, by the invitation of the guests, the doctrine of the gospel, and the success those beneficent invitations to the great feast of heaven should meet with among the Jews: foretelling, that though it was attended with every inviting circumstance, they would disdainfully reject it, and prefer the pleas-

ures of a temporal existence to those of an eternal state; while the Gentiles, with the greatest cheerfulness, would embrace the beneficent offer, and thereby be prepared to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the happy mansions of the kingdom of heaven. But as this parable was afterwards spoken by our blessed Saviour in the temple, we shall defer our observations on it, till we come to the history where it was again delivered.

When Jesus departed from the Pharisee's house, great multitudes of people thronged to him, to hear his doctrine; but mistook the true intention of it, expecting he was going to establish the Messiah's throne in Jerusalem, and render all the nations of the world tributary to his power. The benevolent Jesus therefore took this opportunity to undeceive them, and to declare, in the plainest terms, that his kingdom was not of this world, and consequently that those who expected, by following him, to obtain temporal advantages, would find themselves wretchedly mistaken; as, on the contrary, his disciples must expect to be persecuted from city to city, and hated of all men for his namesake: though it was requisite for those who would be his true followers, to prefer his service to the riches, grandeur, and pleasures of the world: and to show, by their conduct, that they had much less respect and value for the dearest objects of their affections than for him. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 26, 27.

And in order to induce them to weigh this doctrine attentively in their minds, he elucidated it with two opposite cases, that of an unthinking builder, and that of a rash warrior. The former was obliged to leave the structure unfinished, because he had foolishly begun the building before he had computed the cost; and the latter, reduced to the dilemma of being ingloriously defeated, or meanly suing for peace previous to the battle; having rashly declared war, before he had considered the strength of his own and his enemy's army. "So likewise, whosoever he be of you," added the blessed Jesus, "that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 33.

The publicans\* and sinners, roused by the alarming doctrine of our

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\* The publicans were exceedingly obnoxious to the Jews, inasmuch as they were the collectors of the Roman revenue. It was the habit of the Roman Senate to form the direct taxes and the customs (*portoria*) to Capitalists who undertook to pay a given sum into the treasury (*in publicum*), from which they were called

Lord, listened to it attentively. This opportunity was readily embraced by the great Redeemer of mankind, who not only condescended to preach to them the happy tidings of eternal life, but even accompanied them to their own houses; that, if possible, the seeds of the gospel might take root in their hearts.

But this condescension of the meek and humble Jesus was considered by the haughty Pharisees as an action too mean for the character of a prophet. They murmured, and were highly displeased at a condescension, which ought to have given them the greatest joy. But Jesus soon showed them their mistake, by repeating to them the parables of the lost sheep and piece of money, intimating thereby the great care all prophets and pastors ought to take of those committed to their care, and the obligations they lay under for searching diligently for every wandering sinner, whose conversion is a grateful offering to the Almighty. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke xv. 10.

To illustrate this doctrine still further, and show to the greatest sinner the willingness of God to receive him into his grace and favor—if convinced of his unworthy and lost condition in himself, and imploring forgiveness through the merits of Jesus Christ, and the renewal of his heart by the efficacious influence of his Spirit—he delivered the expressive parable of the prodigal son.

A certain man had two sons, the younger of whom, not content to

*publicani*. Sometimes the revenues were farmed out to a society, whose affairs were managed by a director who resided at Rome, and transacted the business of the company through the *sub-magistri*, or local agents. These men were commonly natives of the provinces to which they were appointed. "The *publicani*," says Dr. Wm. Smith, "were banded together to support each other's interest, and at once resented and defied all interference. They demanded severe laws, and at once put every such law into execution. Their agents were encouraged in the most vexatious and fraudulent exactions, and a remedy was almost impossible. If this was the case with the company, we may imagine how it stood with the underlings. They overcharged whenever they had an opportunity. They brought false charges, in the hope of extorting hush money. They detained and opened letters on mere suspicion. It was the basest of all livelihoods. \* \* In Judæa and Galilee, there were special circumstances of aggravation. The employment brought out all the besetting vices of the Jewish character. The strong feeling of many Jews as to the absolute unlawfulness of paying tribute at all made matters worse. \* \* In addition to their other faults, the publicans of the New Testament were regarded as traitors and apostates, defiled by their frequent intercourse with the heathen, willing tools of the oppressor. The class thus practically excommunicated, furnished some of the earliest disciples both of the Baptist and of our Lord."

live in his father's house, safe under his protection, and happy under his eye, desired his father to give him the portion of goods which fell to his share. The indulgent father did not hesitate to grant his request: but the ungrateful son had no sooner obtained what he asked of his parent, than he left the presence and neighborhood of so kind a father, and retired into a far country, where he had an opportunity of indulging, without restraint, his wicked inclinations; and there he wasted his substance in riotous living. Having thus consumed the portion given him by his indulgent parent, he began to feel the miseries of want, and, to add to his misfortunes, a terrible famine arose in that land; so that he soon became acquainted with the sharp stings of hunger. In this distressed condition, he joined himself to a citizen of that country, willing to try every expedient, rather than return to his kind, his merciful father, and humbly confess his faults.

His master, from a just contempt of his former prodigality, employed him in the meanest and most contemptible offices; he sent him into his field to feed swine. Behold here, ye sons of extravagance, a change indeed! Behold this thoughtless prodigal, reduced at once from a life of voluptuousness and gaiety, a life of pleasure and excess, to a life of the most abject slavery, a life of penury and want. Nay, so great was his hunger, so prodigious his distress, that he would even have been contented, in this miserable state, to have satisfied the cravings of hunger with the husks eaten by the swine: but no man relieved him, no man showed the least compassion for him; so that the very swine were in a better condition than this miserable prodigal!

Thus miserably reduced, he was brought to himself: he had hitherto been in a state of utter forgetfulness; but now began to reflect on his happy condition, while he continued with his father, before he had deviated from the paths of virtue, and to compare it with his present deplorable condition. "How many hired servants of my father," said he to himself, "have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" I will therefore, undeserving as I am, have recourse to his mercy and favor. "I will arise and go to my father," for such he still is, and I, though wretched and lost, am yet his son; I will, therefore, "say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son:" that happiness is too great for me to expect or desire; I have, by my behavior, forfeited all right to so endearing, so valuable a title: "make me as one of thy hired servants." I desire nothing more, than that thou wouldst mercifully receive me as one of thy hired servants.

Having thus taken a firm resolution of throwing himself at the feet of his father, and imploring forgiveness for his past offences, he did not delay to put it immediately into execution : he arose, and with the utmost expedition came to his father.

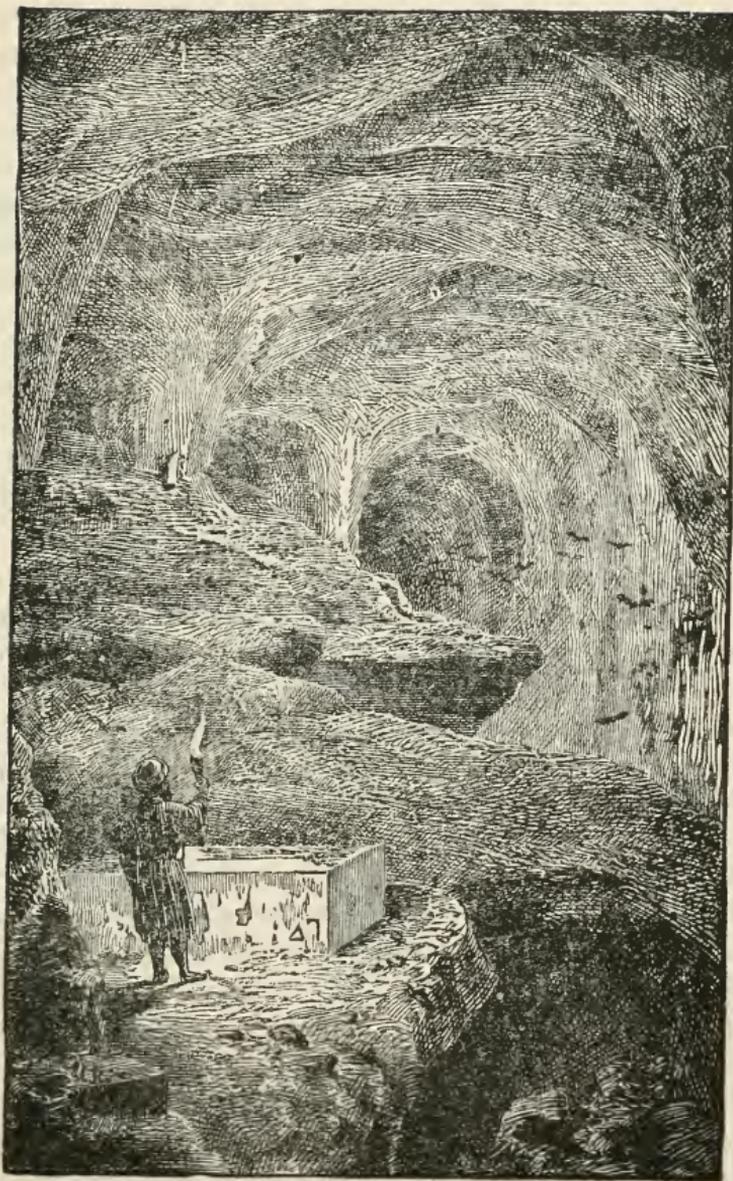
A scene of tenderness and affection, amazingly pathetic, now presents itself to our view ; his kind, his affectionate father saw him while he was yet afar off, his bowels yearned towards him, he had compassion on his lost, his ruined child ; paternal fondness would not suffer him to forbear ; he ran to meet him, he fell on his neck, he kissed him.

Encouraged by this kind reception, the son fell down at his father's feet, and began to make confession of his faults, to plead his own unworthiness, to request his father's pardon : "Father," said he, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He was not suffered to proceed any further, the love of his parent prevented the rest ; he commanded his servants to bring the best robe, and put it on him, to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; and to kill the fatted calf, that they might eat and be merry ; "for this, my son," said he, "was dead, and is alive again : he was lost, and is found."

During this transaction, the elder brother was in the field, properly employed in his father's business ; but returning from thence, and hearing the sound of mirth, music, and dancing, he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. The servant replied, that his younger brother was returned, and that his father had killed the fatted calf, because he had received him safe and sound.

This news greatly displeased the elder son ; he was very angry, and refused to go in ; upon which his father came out and entreated him : but he replied, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends : but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." Luke xv. 29, etc.

His father, with the most amiable condescending tenderness, replied : "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine : it was meet that we should make merry and be glad : for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again ; and was lost, and is found." Though he hath devoured my living with harlots, yet he is both thy



GREAT QUARRY UNDER JERUSALEM.

brother and my son ; thou shouldst not, therefore, be angry, because he has repented and is returned, after we thought him irrecoverably lost.

Thus beautifully did our Lord represent the work of grace on the heart of man, from the first conviction of sin to the absolute confession of it ; showing, at the same time, there can be no true confession without a thorough consciousness of guilt, a sense of our

lost state, and an entire reliance on the mercy of God, through Christ our Lord.

There are three expositions given of this instructive representation, each of which seems to have some place in the original design; for it should be observed, and carefully remembered, that the parables, and doctrines of our Saviour, are by no means to be confined absolutely to one single point of view, since they frequently have relation to different objects, and consequently prove the riches and depth of the manifold wisdom of God.

In this parable, for instance, the great and principal doctrine intended to be particularly inculcated is, that sinners, upon their repentance and faith, are gladly received into favor; or, that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. There are, however, two other expositions of this parable; the first is that of the greatest part of the ancients, who expound it of Adam. He was made in the image of God, and endowed with many other excellent gifts, which he might have used happily, had he been content to stay in his Father's house, but like this younger brother, who foolishly desired his portion of goods to himself, that he might be his own master, and under no confinement or restriction, he was unwilling to remain under the obedience of the divine precept: he was desirous of having a free use of things in paradise, and, by the devil's instigation, affected a wretched independency, which caused him to break the divine command, and eat of the forbidden tree, to obtain the knowledge of good and evil. Thus he lost for himself and his posterity the substance put at first into his possession: but his heavenly Father, on his and his posterity's return, hath provided such grace and compassion for them, that they may be reinstated in their former place and favor. And the same grace not being granted to the higher order of intellectual beings, the fallen spirits, is the cause of their murmuring against God and men, represented by the answer of the elder brother in this parable.

Others, secondly, with a much greater show of probability, expound this parable of the two people, the Jews and Gentiles, who have but one Father, even God; and while they both continued in their Father's house, the true church, they wanted for nothing: there was plenty of food for the soul, there was substance enough for them both. But the latter, represented by the younger brother, possessed of his share of knowledge, went into a strange country, left God, and spent his substance, the evidence and knowledge of the Almighty,

fell into idolatry, and wasted all he had in riotous living—all his knowledge of God in the loose and absurd ceremonies of idolatry. Then behold a mighty famine arose in that land, the worship of the true God was banished the country. In this dreadful dearth, and hunger, he joined himself to the devil, and worked all “uncleanness with greediness:” But finding nothing to satisfy his spiritual hunger, this prodigal, long estranged from his Father, reflecting on his spiritual famine and his own severe wants, humbly confessed his faults, returned to his offended Father, was re-admitted into favor, and blessed with the privileges of the gospel. But the elder brother, the Jewish church, daily employed in the field of legal ceremonies, and who had long groaned under the yoke of the law, seeing the Gentiles received into the covenant of the gospel, obtain the remission of sins and the hopes of everlasting life, murmured against the benevolent acts of the Almighty. God, however, out of his great compassion, pleaded pathetically the cause with the elder brother, offered him all things, upon supposition of his continuing in his obedience, and declared that he had delivered the nation from the heavy yoke of the ceremonial law.

Thus the parable has a very clear and elegant exposition; the murmuring of the elder brother is explained to us without the least difficulty; and as the offence of receiving the Gentiles to pardon and peace, through Jesus Christ, was so great a stumbling-block to the Jews, it is natural to imagine that our Saviour intended to obviate and remove it by this excellent parable.

It is, however, evident, both from the context and the occasion of delivering it, that the third interpretation is the first in design and importance. The publicans and sinners drew near to hear Jesus.

This gave occasion to a murmuring among the Pharisees; and, upon their murmuring, our Saviour delivered this and two other parables, to show, that if they would resemble God and the celestial host, they should, instead of murmuring, rejoice at seeing sinners willing to embrace the doctrines of the gospel; because there is joy in the presence of God and his angels over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that “need no repentance.”

The obstinacy and malicious temper of the Pharisees, who opposed every good doctrine, made a deep impression on the spirit of the blessed Jesus; he did not, therefore, content himself barely with jus-

tifying his receiving sinners, in order to their being justified and saved through him, but, in the presence of the Scribes and Pharisees, turned himself to his disciples, and delivered the parable of the artful steward, as an instance of the improvements made by the children of this world, in embracing every opportunity and advantage for improving their interests.

“There was,” said he, “a certain rich man, which had a steward, and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.” Luke xvi. 1, 2.

This reprimand of his lord, and the inward conviction of his own conscience that the accusation was just, induced him to reflect on his own ill management of his lord's affairs, and in what manner he should support himself when he should be discharged from his service. “What shall I do,” said he, “for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? I cannot dig, to beg, I am ashamed.” In this manner he deliberated with himself, and at last resolved on the following expedient, in order to make himself friends, who would succor him in his distress. “I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? and he said an hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and write fourscore.” Luke xvi. 4, etc.

To illustrate this parable, we beg leave to observe, that the riches and trade of the Jews originally consisted principally in the products of the earth; they were, if we may be allowed the expression, a nation of farmers and shepherds; so that their wealth chiefly arose from the produce of their flocks and herbs, and the fruits of the earth; their corn, their wine, and their oil.

Thus the steward, to secure the friendship of his lord's tenants, bound them to him under a lasting obligation; and the master, when he heard the proceedings of his steward, commended him, not because he had acted honestly, but because he had acted wisely: he commended the art and address he had shown, in procuring future subsistence; he commended the prudence and ingenuity he had used with regard to

his own private interest, and to deliver from future poverty and distress. "For the children of this world," added the blessed Jesus, "are in their generation wiser than the children of light." They are more prudent and careful, more anxious and circumspect to secure their possessions in this world, than the children of light are to secure in the next an eternal inheritance. "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Luke xvi. 9. This advice of our Saviour is worthy our most serious attention; the best use we can make of our riches being to employ them in promoting the salvation of others. For if we use our abilities and interests in turning sinners from the evil of their ways; if we spend our wealth in this excellent service, from pure motives and to the glory of God, we shall have the good will of all the heavenly beings, who will greatly rejoice at the conversion of sinners, and with open arms receive us into the mansions of felicity.

But this is not the whole application our Saviour made of this parable. He added, that if we made use of our riches in the manner he recommended, from a principle of love to God and men, we should be received into those everlasting habitations, where all the friends of virtue and religion reside; because, by our fidelity in managing the small trust of temporal advantages committed to our care, we show ourselves capable of a much greater trust in heavenly employments. But if, on the contrary, we do not apply our riches to the glory of God and the good of mankind, we shall be forever banished from the abode of the blessed, because in behaving unfaithfully in the small trust committed to us here, we render ourselves both unworthy and incapable of a share in this everlasting inheritance. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? Luke xvi. 10, etc. And if, while ye are God's stewards and servants, ye desert your trust, and become slaves to the desire of riches, you can expect no other than to be called to a strict account of your stewardship; covetousness being as absolutely inconsistent with a true concern for the cause of Christ, as it is for a man to undertake at one and the same time to serve two masters of contrary dispositions and opposite interests. "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate

the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Luke xvi. 13.

The hypocritical Pharisees treated this observation with derision: to which our Lord replied: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Luke xvi. 15.

Such is the parable, and such is our Lord's application of it, from whence the main intention and design of it is very evident. It was intended to incite us to a zealous concern for our future and eternal state, by making a due use of the means of grace, and working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, yet remembering that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. And if we thus employ our spiritual talents, we shall, through the merits of Jesus Christ, joyfully stand at the right hand of the great Judge of all the earth, and receive from him a public testimony of our faith and love. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Matt. xxv. 34.



THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

JESUS REBUKES THE INSOLENT DERISION OF THE PHARISEES—DESCRIBES BY A PARABLE THE NATURE OF FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS; AND ENFORCES THE DOCTRINE OF MUTUAL FORBEARANCE.

THE doctrines lately delivered by our Lord, being so repugnant to the avaricious principles of the Pharisees, they attended to the doctrine of our Saviour with regard to the true use of riches, and the impossibility of men serving God and mammon, at the same time they derided him as a visionary speculatist, who despised the pleasures of this world, for no other reason but because he was not able to procure them. It is, therefore, no wonder, that men who had showed such a complication of the very worst dispositions, should receive a sharp rebuke from the meek and humble Jesus: accordingly, he told them that they made, indeed, specious pretences to extraordinary sanctity, by outwardly shunning the company of sinners, while in private they made no scruple of having society with them, or even of joining with them in their wickedness, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts." Ye may, indeed, cover the foulness of your crimes with the painted cloak of hypocrisy, and in this disguise deceive those who look no farther than the outside, but ye cannot screen your wickedness from the penetrating eye of Omnipotence, to whom all things are naked and exposed, and who judges of things, not by their appearances, but according to truth; it is, therefore, no wonder that he often abhors both persons and things, that are held by men in the highest estimation: "for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God." This affected sanctity, while the mind is unrenewed, is an abomination to the God of purity and truth. Christ detested hypocrisy, and frequented the company of publicans and sinners, to bring about their conversion; the Mosaic dispensation, which made a difference between men, ceasing when John the Baptist first preached the doctrine of repentance; and the gospel dispensation, which admits all repenting sinners, without distinction, then commenced. "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Luke xvi. 16. Think

not that I mean to destroy, but to fulfil the law, which is of essential obligation ; for till the law is abrogated, the least of its precepts cannot be neglected. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail." Luke xvi. 17.

After treating of these particulars, he proceeded to consider the love of pleasure, so highly valued by the Pharisees, whose lust discovered itself by their frequent divorces, a practice which our blessed Saviour justly condemned. "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, commiteth adultery : and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Luke xvi. 18.

These reasons were clear and unanswerable : but the Pharisees, stupified and intoxicated with sensual pleasures, were deaf to every argument, how powerful soever, provided it was levelled against their lusts. In order to illustrate this truth, confirm his assertion, and rouse these hypocritical rulers from their lethargy, he delivered the awakening parable of the rich man and the beggar.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day : and there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table : moreover," so great was his misery, so exquisite his distress, "the dogs came and licked his sores." Thus afflicted in life, the Almighty at last released him : "the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Nor could the rich man's wealth rescue him from the same fate, "the rich man also died, and was buried." But behold now the great, the awful change. "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and" the late despised and afflicted "Lazarus in his bosom." In this agony of pain and distress, he cried to Abraham, his earthly father, begging that he would take pity on him, and send Lazarus to give him even the least degree of relief, that of dipping the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue, for his torment was intolerable. "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue ; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." Luke xvi. 24, etc.



CHRIST RAISING LAZARUS.

The miserable wretch, finding it impossible to procure any relief for himself, was desirous of preserving his thoughtless relations from the like distress: "Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." This also was a petition that could not be granted. It is too late to hope for relief, when the soul is cast into the bottomless pit. They may learn, said Abraham, the certainty of the immortality of the soul from the books of Moses and the prophets, if they will give themselves the trouble to peruse them attentively. To which the miserable object replied, that the books of Moses and the prophets had been ineffectual to him, and he feared would be so to his brethren. But if one actually arose from the dead, and appeared to them, they would certainly repent, and embrace those offers of salvation they had before slighted. "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." But Abraham told him, that in this he was greatly mistaken; for that if they refused to believe the evidences of a future state contained in the writings of Moses and the prophets, the testimony of a messenger from the dead would not be sufficient to convince them. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Having thus reprimanded the Pharisees, he took occasion to speak of affronts and offences, described their evil nature, and their dreadful punishment. "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." Luke xvii. 1, 2.

That is, the children of God, the followers of the Lamb, must meet with disgrace, reviling, and persecution here; but woe unto those who revile and persecute them! they had better undergo the worst of temporal judgments than the awful one which shall ensue.

He spake also against a quarrelsome temper in his servants, especially in the ministers and teachers of religion, prescribed a seasonable and prudent reprehension of the fault, accompanied with forgiveness on the part of the person injured, as the best means of disarming the temptation that may arise from thence. "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day,



CEDAR OF LEBANON.

and sever times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Luke xvii. 3, 4.

It should be observed here, that this discourse on forgiveness, uttered at a time when the Pharisees had just accused him falsely, by calling him a false teacher, sufficiently proves how truly he forgave them all the personal injuries they had committed against him; and

should be a powerful recommendation of that amiable disposition which leads to the forgiveness of injuries.

But however beautiful these discourses of our Saviour appear, when examined with attention, they seem to have staggered the faith of his disciples and followers; perhaps they still imagined that he would shortly erect a temporal kingdom, and distribute among them the rewards they expected for their services. If so, they might well desire their Master "to increase their faith;" as discourses like these had a very different tendency from what might naturally have been expected from one who was going to establish the throne of David, and extend his sceptre over all the kingdoms of the earth; but however this be, our Saviour told them, that if they had the smallest degree of true faith, it would be sufficient for overcoming all temptations, even those which seem as difficult to be conquered as the plucking up trees, and planting them in the ocean. "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." Luke xvii. 6.



AN EASTERN CARAVAN HALTING.

## CHAPTER XXV.

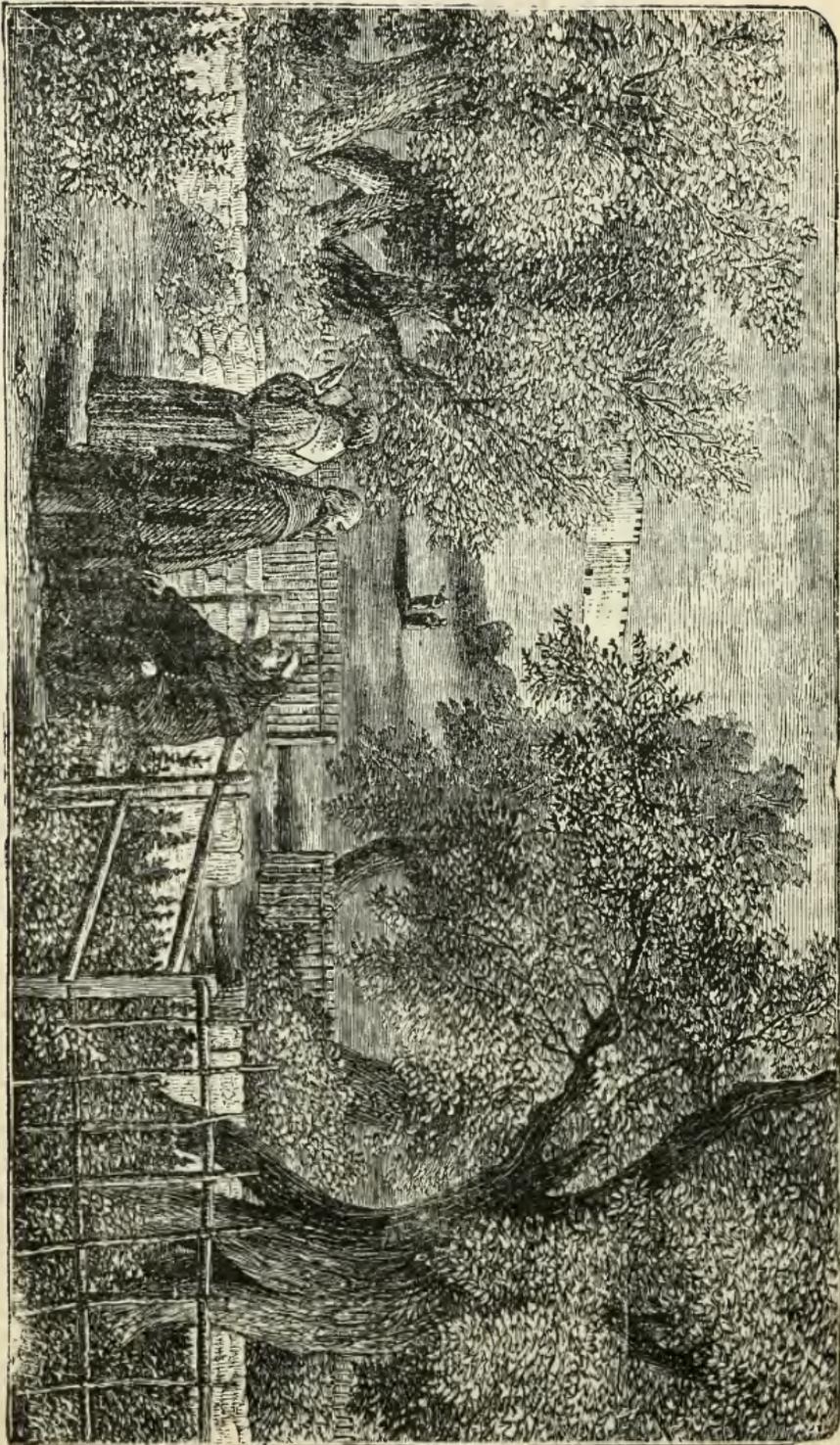
OUR LORD IS APPLIED TO IN BEHALF OF POOR LAZARUS—CURES TEN PERSONS  
OF THE LEPROSY IN SAMARIA, AND RESTORES LAZARUS TO LIFE.

SOON after our blessed Saviour had finished these discourses, one of his friends, named Lazarus, fell sick at Bethany, a village about two miles from the countries beyond Jordan, where Jesus was now preaching the gospel. The sisters of Lazarus finding his sickness was of a dangerous kind, thought proper to send an account of it to Jesus; being firmly persuaded that he who had cured so many strangers would readily come and give health to one whom he loved in so tender a manner. "Lord," said they, "behold he whom thou lovest is sick:" they did not add, come down and heal him; make haste and save him from the grave; it was sufficient for them to relate their necessities to their Lord, who was both able and willing to help them in their distress.

"When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death." This declaration of the benevolent Jesus, being carried to the sisters of Lazarus, must have strangely surprised them, and exercised both their and his disciples' faith; since it is probable that before the messenger arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had expired. Soon after, Jesus positively assured his disciples that Lazarus was dead.

The evangelist, in the beginning of this account, tells us that Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus; and also that after he had received the message, he remained two days in the same place where he was. His design in this might be to intimate that his lingering so long after the message came did not proceed from a want of concern for his friends, but happened according to the counsels of his own wisdom. For the length of time which Lazarus lay in the grave, put his death beyond all possibility of doubt, removed every suspicion of fraud, and consequently afforded Jesus a fit opportunity of displaying the love he bore to Lazarus, as well as his own divine power, in his undoubted resurrection from the dead. His sisters, indeed, were by this means kept awhile in painful anxiety, on account of their brother's life, and, at last, pierced by the sorrows of seeing him die: yet they must surely think themselves abundantly recom-

THE GARDEN OF GETHESEMAN.



peused, by the evidence accruing to the gospel from this astonishing miracle, as well as by the inexpressible surprise of joy they felt, when they again received their brother from the dead.

Jesus having declared his resolution of returning into Judea, Thomas conceiving nothing less than destruction from such a journey, yet unwilling to forsake his Master, said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Let us not forsake our Master in this dangerous journey, but accompany him into Judea, that if the Jews, whose inveteracy we are well acquainted with, should take away his life, we may also expire with him.

The journey to Judea being thus resolved on, Jesus departed with his disciples, and in his way to Bethany passed through Samaria and Galilee. "And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went they were cleansed." Luke xvii. 12. etc. Among these miserable objects, one of them was a native of the country, who perceiving that his cure was completed, came back praising God for the great mercy he had received: he had before kept at a distance from our Saviour, but being now sensible that he was entirely clean, approached his benefactor, that all might have an opportunity of beholding the miracle, and fell on his face at his feet, thanking him in the most humble manner, for his condescension in healing him of so terrible a disease.

Jesus, in order to intimate that those who were enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, ought, at least, to have shown as great a sense of piety and gratitude as this Samaritan, asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Luke xvii. 17, 18.

Jesus and his disciples now continued their journey towards Bethany, where he was informed by some of the inhabitants of that village that Lazarus was not only dead, as he had foretold, but had now lain in the grave four days. The afflicted sisters were overwhelmed with sorrow, so that many of the Jews from Jerusalem came to comfort them concerning their brother.

It seems the news of our Lord's coming had reached Bethany, before he arrived at that village; for Martha, the sister of Lazarus, being informed of his approach, went out and met him; but Mary, who was of a more melancholy and contemplative disposition, sat still

in the house. No sooner was she come into the presence of Jesus, than in an excess of grief she poured forth her complaints, "Lord," said she, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." If thou hadst complied with the message we sent thee, I well know that thy interest from heaven had prevailed, my brother had been cured of his disease, and delivered from the chambers of the grave.

Martha, doubtless, entertained a high opinion of our Saviour's power; she believed that death did not dare to approach his presence, and, consequently, if Jesus had arrived at Bethany before her brother's dissolution, he had not fallen a victim to the king of terrors; but she imagined that it was not in his power to heal the sick at a distance; though, at the same time, she seemed to have some dark and imperfect hopes that our blessed Lord would still do something for her. "But I know," said she, "that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." She thought that Jesus could obtain whatsoever he desired by prayer; and therefore did not found her hopes on his power, but on the power of God, through his intercession. She doubtless knew that the great Redeemer of mankind had raised the daughter of Jairus and the widow's son at Nain, from the dead; but seems to have considered her brother's resurrection as much more difficult; probably because he had been longer dead.

But Jesus, who was willing to encourage this imperfect faith of Martha, answered, "Thy brother shall rise again." As these words were delivered in an indefinite sense with regard to time, Martha understood them only as an argument of consolation, drawn from the general resurrection, and accordingly answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She was firmly persuaded of that important article of the Christian faith, the resurrection of the dead; at which important hour she believed her brother would rise from the chambers of the dust.

And here she seems to have terminated all her hopes, not thinking that the Son of God would call her brother from the sleep of death. Jesus, therefore, to instruct her in this great truth, replied, "I am the resurrection and the life." I am the author of the resurrection, the fountain and giver of that life they shall then receive, and therefore can, with the same ease, raise the dead now as at the last day. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this?" To which Martha answered, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the

world." I believe that thou art the true Messiah, so long promised by the prophets, and therefore believe thou art capable of performing every instance of power thou art pleased to claim.

Martha now seemed to entertain some confused expectations of her brother's immediate resurrection; and, leaving Jesus in the field, ran and called her sister, according to his order, being willing that both Mary and her companions should be witnesses of this stupendous miracle. Mary no sooner heard that Jesus was come, than she immediately left her Jewish comforters, who only increased the weight of her grief, and flew to her Saviour: and the Jews, who suspected she was going to weep over the grave of her brother, followed her to that great Prophet, who was going to remove all her sorrows.

Thus the Jews, who came from Jerusalem to comfort the two mournful sisters, were brought to the grave of Lazarus, and made witnesses of his resurrection. As soon as Mary approached the great Redeemer of mankind she fell prostrate at his feet, and in a flood of tears poured out her complaint: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." No wonder the compassionate Jesus was moved at so affecting a scene: on his side stood Martha, pouring forth a flood of tears, at his feet lay the affectionate Mary, weeping and lamenting her dear departed brother; while the Jews who came to comfort the afflicted sisters, unable to confine their grief, joined the solemn mourning, and mixed their friendly tears in witness of their love for the departed Lazarus, and in testimony to the justice of the sisters' grief for the loss of so amiable, so deserving a brother.

Jesus could not behold the affliction of the two sisters and their friends without having a share in it himself: his heart was melted at the mournful scene, "he groaned in spirit, and was troubled." To remove the doubts and fears of these pious women, he asked them where they had buried Lazarus: not that he was ignorant where the body of the deceased was laid: he who knew that he was dead when so far distant from him, and could raise him up by a single word, must know where his remains were deposited; to which they answered, "Lord, come and see."

The Son of God, now, to prove that he was not only God but a most compassionate man, and to show us that the tender affections of a human heart, when kept in due bounds—that friendly sorrow, when not immoderate, and directed to proper ends, is consistent with the highest sanctity of the soul, joined in the general mourning. He

wept even at the time that he was going to give the most ample proof of his divinity.

By his weeping, the Jews were convinced that he loved Lazarus exceedingly; but some of them interpreted this circumstance to his disadvantage; for, according to their mean way of judging, they fancied that he had suffered him to fall by the stroke of death, for no other reason in the world but for want of power to rescue him. And thinking the miracle said to have been wrought on the blind men, at the feast of tabernacles, at least as difficult as the curing an acute distemper, they called the former in question, because the latter had been neglected. "Could not this man," said they, "which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

Our Lord, regardless of their question, but grieved at the hardness of their hearts, and blindness of their infidelity, groaned again within himself, as he walked towards the sepulchre of the dead. At his coming to the grave, he said, "Take ye away the stone." To which Martha answered, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days;" or as the passage may be better rendered, hath lain in the grave four days. She meant to insinuate that her brother's resurrection was not now to be expected. But Jesus gave her a solemn reproof, to teach her that there was nothing impossible with God; and that the power of the Almighty is not to be circumscribed within the narrow bounds of human reason, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" *i. e.*, Have but faith, and I will display before thee the power of Omnipotence.

The objections of Martha being thus obviated, she, with the rest, waited the great event in silence; and, in pursuance of the command of the Son of God, took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Jesus had, on many occasions, publicly appealed to his own miracles as the proofs of his mission, though he did not generally make a formal address to his Father, before he worked those miracles. But being now to raise Lazarus from the dead, he prayed for his resurrection, to convince the spectators that it could not be effected without an immediate interposition of the divine power. "Father," said he, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." John xi. 41, &c. I entertained no doubt of thy empowering me to do this miracle, and

therefore did not pray for my own sake ; I well knew that thou hearest me always. I prayed for the sake of the people, to convince them that thou lovest me, hast sent me, and are continually with me.

After returning thanks to his Father, for this opportunity of displaying his glory, "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth !" This loud and efficacious call of the Son of God awakened the dead ; the breathless clay was instantly reanimated ; and he who had lain four days in the tomb obeyed immediately the powerful sound. "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes ; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

It would have been the least part of the miracle, had Jesus, by his powerful word, unloosed the napkins wherewith Lazarus was bound ; but he brought him out in the same manner as he was lying, and ordered the spectators to loose him, that they might be the better convinced of the miracle ; for, in taking off the grave-clothes they had the fullest evidence both of his death and resurrection ; for, on the one hand, the manner in which he was swathed must soon have killed him, had he been alive when buried ; which consequently demonstrated, beyond all exception, that Lazarus had been dead several days, before Jesus called him again to life. Besides, in stripping him, the linen probably offered, both to their eyes and smell, abundant proofs of his putrefaction ; and by that means convinced them that he had not been in a delirium, but was really dead ; on the other hand, by his lively countenance, appearing when the napkin was removed, his fresh color, and his active vigor, those who came near and handled him must be convinced that he was in perfect health, and had an opportunity of proving the truth of the miracle by the closest examination.

There is something extremely beautiful in our Lord's behavior on this occasion : he did not utter one upbraiding word, either to the doubting sisters or the malicious Jews, nor did he let fall one word of triumph or exultation. "Loose him, and let him go," were the only words we have recorded. He was in this, as on all other occasions, consistent with himself, a pattern of perfect humility and modesty.

Such was the astonishing work wrought by the Son of God, at Bethany ; and in the resurrection of Lazarus, thus corrupted and thus raised by the powerful call of Jesus, we have a striking emblem and a glorious earnest of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave at the last day, when the same powerful mandate which spoke Lazarus

again into being, shall collect the scattered particles of our bodies, and raise them to immortality.

Such an extraordinary power displayed before the face of a multitude, and near to Jerusalem, even overcame the prejudices of some of the most obstinate among them. Many believed that Jesus could be no other than the great Messiah so long promised; though others, who still expected a temporal prince, and were therefore unwilling to acknowledge him for their Saviour, were filled with indignation, particularly the chief priests and elders. But this miracle, as well as all the rest he had wrought in confirmation of his mission, was too evident to be denied: and, therefore, they pretended that his whole intention was to establish a new sect in religion, which would endanger both their church and nation. "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation." John xi. 47, etc.

The common people, astonished at his miracles, will, if we do not take care to prevent it, certainly set him up for the Messiah; and the Romans, under pretence of a rebellion, will deprive us both of our liberty and religion. Accordingly, they came to a resolution to put him to death. This resolution was not, however, unanimous, for Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and other disciples of our Saviour, then members of the council, urged the injustice of what they proposed to do, from the consideration of his miracles and innocence. But Caiaphas, the high-priest, from a principle of human policy, told them, that the nature of government often required certain acts of injustice in order to procure the safety of the state. "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." John xi. 49, 50.

The council having thus determined to put Jesus to death, deliberated for the future only upon the best methods of affecting it; and in all probability agreed to issue a proclamation, promising a reward to any person who would deliver him into their hands.

For this reason our blessed Saviour did not now go up to Jerusalem, though he was within two miles of it; but went to Ephraim, a city on the borders of the wilderness, where he abode with his disciples, being unwilling to go too far into the country, because the passover at which he was to suffer was now at hand.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GREAT PROPHET OF ISRAEL FORETELLS THE RUIN OF THE JEWISH STATE, ENFORCES MANY IMPORTANT DOCTRINES BY PARABLE—BLESSSES THE CHILDREN AS EMBLEMS OF THE HEAVENLY AND CHRISTIAN TEMPER AND DISPOSITION.

WHILE the blessed Jesus remained in retirement on the borders of the wilderness, he was desired by some of the Pharisees to inform them, when the Messiah's kingdom would commence. Nor is their anxiety on that account matter of surprise, for as they entertained very exalted notions of his coming in pomp and magnificence, it was natural for them to be very desirous of having his empire speedily erected.

But our Saviour, to correct this mistaken notion, told them, that the Messiah's kingdom did not consist in any external form of government, erected in some particular country by the terror of arms and the desolation of war, but in the subjection of the minds of men, and in rendering them conformable to the laws of the Almighty, which was to be effected by a new dispensation of religion, and this dispensation was already begun. It was, therefore, needless for them to seek in this or that place for the kingdom of God, as it had been already preached among them by Christ and his apostles, and confirmed by innumerable miracles. "The kingdom of God," said he, "cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold the kingdom of God is within you." Luke xvii. 20, 21.

Having thus addressed the Pharisees, he turned himself to his disciples, and, in the hearing of all the people, prophesied the destruction of the Jewish state; whose constitution, both religious and civil, was the chief difficulty that opposed the erection of his kingdom. But because love and compassion were eminent parts of our Saviour's temper, he mentioned that dreadful catastrophe in such a manner as might tend to the reformation and profit of his hearers.

He informed them that the prelude to this final destruction would be a state of universal distress; when they should passionately wish for the personal presence of the Messiah to comfort them, but would be denied their request. "The days will come when ye shall desire

to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it." He next cautioned them against those who shall recommend different ways of escaping the awful catastrophe, but are utterly unable: "And they shall say to you, See here; or, See there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation." Luke xvii. 23, etc.

The coming of the Son of man shall be sudden and unexpected. He will come in his own strength, and with great power; he will throw down all oppositions, destroy his enemies with swift destruction, and establish his religion and government in a great part of the world, as suddenly as lightning darts from one part of the heavens to the other. But before these things come to pass, he must suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Notwithstanding this sudden destruction and calamity that was to overwhelm the Jews, he told them their stupidity would be equal to that of the old world, at the time of the deluge, or that of Sodom before the city was destroyed: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife." Luke xvii. 26, etc.

A more proper example than that of Lot's wife could not have been produced; for if any of his hearers, through an immoderate love of the world, should be prevailed on, in order to save their goods, after they were admonished from heaven of their danger, by the signs which prognosticated the destruction of Jerusalem; or if any of them, through want of faith, should think that the calamities predicted to fall on the nation, would not be either so great or sudden as he had declared, and did not use the precaution of a speedy flight, they might

behold in Lot's wife an example both of their sin and of their punishment. He added, that those who were anxiously desirous of preserving life, from an attachment to its pleasures and vanities, should lose it; whereas those who were willing to lay down their lives in his cause should preserve them eternally. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." Luke xvii. 33.

Having foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, our blessed Saviour spake the following parable, in order to excite them to a constant perseverance in prayer, and not to be so weary and faint in their minds, as to neglect or wholly omit this necessary duty. There was in a city, said the Saviour of the world, a judge, who being governed by atheistical principles, he had no regard to the precepts of religion, and being very powerful, did not regard what was said of him by any man; so that all his decisions were influenced merely by passion or interest. In the same city was also a widow, who having no friends to assist her, was absolutely unable to defend herself from injuries, or procure redress for any she had received. In this deplorable situation she had recourse to the unjust judge, in order to obtain satisfaction for some oppressive wrong she had lately received; but the judge was so abandoned to pleasure, that he refused, for a time, to listen to her request; he would not give himself the trouble to examine her case, though the crying injustice pleaded so powerfully for this distressed widow. She was not, however, intimidated by his refusal; she incessantly importuned him, till, by repeated representations of her distress, she filled his mind with such displeasing ideas, that he was obliged to do her justice, merely to free himself from her importunity.

"Though," said he to himself, "I fear not God, nor regard man; yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." Luke xviii. 4, 5.

"Hear," said the blessed Jesus, "what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Luke xviii. 6, etc.

As if he had said, If this judge, though destitute of the fear either of God or man, was thus prompted to espouse the cause of the widow, shall not a righteous God, the Father of his people, avenge on the wicked the many evils they have done unto them, though he bear long with them. Certainly he will, and that in a most awful manner.

Our blessed Saviour having thus enforced the duty of prayer, in

this expressive parable, asked the following apposite questions: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" As if he had said, Notwithstanding all the miracles I have wrought, and the excellent doctrines I have delivered, shall I find, at my coming again, that faith among the children of men there is reason to expect? Will not most of them be found to have abandoned the faith, and wantonly ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

The blessed Jesus next rebuked the self-righteous Pharisees. But as these particulars are better illustrated by their opposites, he placed the character of this species of men in opposition to those of the humble; describing the reception each class met with from the Almighty, in a parable of the Pharisee and publican, who went up together to the temple, at the time when the sacrifice was offered, to direct their petitions to the God of their fathers.

The Pharisee, having a high opinion of his own righteousness, went far into the court of the temple, that he might be as near the place of the divine residence as possible. Here he offered his prayer, giving God the praise of his supposed righteousness; and had he been possessed of any he would have acted properly. "God," said he, "I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Having thus commended himself to God, he wrapped himself up in his own righteousness, and giving the poor publican a scornful look, walked away, perhaps to transgress some of the weightier matters of the law, judgment, justice, and truth, and to devour the houses of distressed widows and helpless orphans. But how different was the behavior of the humble publican! Impressed with a deep sense of his own unworthiness, he would not even enter the courts of the temple, but stood afar off, and smote upon his breast and, in the bitterness of his soul, earnestly implored the mercy of Omnipotence, "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner." Luke xviii. 13.

Specious as the Pharisee's behavior may seem, his prayer was an abomination to the Lord; while the poor publican, who confessed his guilt, and implored mercy, was justified in the sight of God, rather than this arrogant boaster.

The parable sufficiently indicates that all the sons of men stand in need of mercy: both the strict Pharisee and the despised publican, with the whole race of mankind, are sinners; and consequently all

must implore pardon of their gracious Creator. We must all ascend to the temple, and there pour forth our prayers before the throne of grace; for there he has promised ever to be present, to grant the petitions of all who ask with sincerity and truth, through the Son of his love.

These parables were spoken in the town of Ephraim; and during his continuance in that city, the Pharisees asked him, whether he thought it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause. Our Saviour had twice before declared his opinion of this particular, once in Galilee, and once in Perea; it is therefore probable that the Pharisees were not ignorant of his sentiments, and that they asked the question then, to find an opportunity of incensing the people against him, well knowing that the Israelites held the liberty which the law gave them of divorcing their wives as one of their chief privileges: but however that be, Jesus was far from fearing the popular resentment, and accordingly declared the third time against arbitrary divorces.

The Pharisees then asked him, why they were commanded by Moses to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away; insinuating that Moses was so tender of their happiness, that he gave them liberty of putting away their wives when they saw occasion. To which Jesus answered, Because of the hardness of your hearts, Moses suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. As divorce was not permitted in the state of innocence, so neither shall it be under the gospel dispensation. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Matt. xix. 9.

The disciples were greatly surprised at their Master's decision; and though they held their peace while the Pharisees were present, yet they did not fail to ask him the reason on which he founded his determination, when they were returned home. "And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Mark x. 10, etc.

The practice of unlimited divorces, which prevailed among the Jews, gave great encouragement to family quarrels, were very destructive of happiness, and hindered the education of their common

offspring. Besides, it greatly tended to make their children lose that reverence for them which is due to parents, as it was hardly possible for the children to avoid engaging in the quarrel. Our Lord's prohibition, therefore, of these divorces is founded on the strongest reasons, and greatly tend. to promote the welfare of society.

Our Saviour having, in the course of his ministry, performed innumerable cures in different parts of the country, several persons, who earnestly desired that his blessing might rest upon their offspring as well as themselves, brought their children to him, desiring that he would put his hands upon them and bless them. The disciples, however, mistaking the intention, were angry with the persons, and rebuked them for endeavoring to give this trouble to their Master. But Jesus no sooner saw it, than he was greatly displeased with his disciples, and ordered them not to hinder parents from bringing their children to him. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Luke xviii. 16.



THE ACROPOLIS AT ATHENS.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

OUR LORD DEPARTS FROM HIS RETIREMENT—DECLARES THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION—SHOWS THE DUTY OF IMPROVING THE MEANS OF GRACE, BY THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD—PREDICTION OF HIS SUFFERING, AND CONTENTION OF THE DISCIPLES ABOUT PRECEDENCE IN HIS KINGDOM.

THE period of our blessed Saviour's passion now approaching, he departed from Ephraim, and repaired by the way of Jericho towards Jerusalem: but before he arrived at Jericho, a ruler of the synagogue came running to him, and, kneeling down before him, asked him, "Good Master, what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Matt. xix. 16.

This young magistrate, or ruler, pretended to pay great honor to our dear Redeemer, yet the whole was no more than a piece of raillery. For though he styled him good, yet he did not believe that he was sent from God, as sufficiently appears from his refusing to observe the counsel given him by Jesus; nor could his artful insinuations escape the piercing eye of the great Saviour of the world. He well knew his secret intentions, and beheld the inmost recesses of his soul; and accordingly rebuked him for his hypocritical address, before he answered his question. "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." Matt. xix. 17.

But as he had desired the advice of our blessed Jesus, who never refused it to any of the sons of men, he readily answered his question, by telling him that he must observe all the moral precepts of the law; especially those of the second table, which can only be done by keeping those of the first. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness; Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Matt. xix. 17, etc.

These commandments perhaps he had obeyed in the vague sense put upon them by the doctors and interpreters of the law, and therefore the character he gave of himself might be very just. For though

he was far from being a person who feared God from his heart, he might have appeared, in the sight of men, as a person of a very fair character.

And having maintained that character, notwithstanding his great riches, he certainly deserved commendation; and therefore might be noticed by that benevolent person who left the bosom of his Father to redeem lost mankind. But he was, at the same time, very faulty, with regard to his love of sensual pleasures; a sin which might have escaped even his own observation, though it could not escape the all-seeing eye of the Son of God.

Our blessed Saviour, therefore, willing to make him sensible of his secret desire of possessing the riches of this world, told him, that if he aimed at perfection he should distribute his possessions among the poor and indigent, and become his disciple. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." Matt. xix. 21.

His heart being set upon his possessions, he had no inclination to a religion that enjoins self-denial and parting with our darling sins. "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Matt. xix. 22.

This melancholy instance of the pernicious influence of riches over the minds of the children of men, induced our blessed Saviour to caution his disciples against fixing their minds on things of such frightful tendency, by showing how very difficult it was for a rich man to procure an habitation in the regions of eternal happiness. "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

"When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Matt. xix. 23, etc.

If man be not assisted by the grace of God, it will be impossible for him to obtain the happy rewards of the kingdom of heaven: but, by the assistance of grace, which the Almighty never refuses to those who seek it with their whole heart, it is very possible.

This answer of the blessed Jesus was, however, far from satisfying his disciples, who had, doubtless, often reflected with pleasure on the

high posts they were to enjoy in their Master's kingdom. Peter seems particularly to have been disappointed; and therefore addressed his Master in the name of the rest, begging him to remember that his apostles had actually done what the young man had refused. They had abandoned their relations, their friends, their possessions, and their employments, on his account, and therefore desired to know what reward they were to expect for these instances of their obedience. To which Jesus replied, that they should not fail of a reward, even in this life; for, immediately after his resurrection, when he ascended to his Father and entered on his mediatorial office, they should be advanced to the honor of judging the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, of ruling the church of Christ, which they were to plant in different parts of the earth; and, after this life, to a proportionate degree of glory in heaven. "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. xix. 28.

Having given this answer to Peter, he next mentioned the rewards his other disciples should receive, both in this world and that which is to come. They, said he, who have forsaken all for my sake, shall be no losers in the end: their benevolent Father, who intends to give them possessions in the heavenly Canaan, will not fail to support them during their long and painful journey to that happy country; and raise them up friends who shall assist them with those necessaries they might have expected from their relations, had they not left them for my sake. Divine Providence will take care that they have everything valuable that could be given them by their relations, or they could desire from large possessions. They shall, indeed, be fed with the bread of sorrow; but this shall produce joys, to which all the earthly pleasures bear no proportion! and, in the end, obtain everlasting life. They shall leave this vale of tears, with all its pains and sorrows behind them, and fly to the bosom of their Almighty Father, the fountain of life and joy, where they shall be infinitely rewarded for all the sufferings they have undergone for his sake in this world.

Things shall then be reversed, and those who have been reviled and contemned on earth for the sake of the gospel, shall be exalted to honor, glory, and immortality: while the others shall be consigned to eternal infamy. "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Matt. xix. 30.

These words seem also to have been spoken to keep the disciples humble; for in all probability they at first understood the promise of their sitting on twelve thrones in a literal sense, as they were ready to construe every expression to a temporal kingdom, which they still expected their Master would erect upon earth. Our blessed Saviour, therefore, to remove all thoughts they might entertain of this kind, told them, that though he had described the rewards they were to expect for the ready obedience they had shown to his commands, and the pains they were to take in propagating the gospel among the children of men, yet those rewards were spiritual, and not confined to the Jews alone, but extended also to the Gentiles, who, in point of time, should excel the Jews, and universally embrace the gospel before that nation was converted.

To excite their ardent pressing forward in faith and good works, our Lord relates the parable of the householder, who, at different hours of the day, hired laborers to work in his vineyard. "The kingdom of heaven," says our blessed Saviour, "is like unto a man that is an householder, which went early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that is thine and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto

thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." Matt. xx. 1-16.

Such is the parable of the householder, as delivered by our Saviour, and, from the application he has made of it, it would not be difficult to interpret it. The dispensations of religion which God gave to mankind in different parts of the world are represented by the vineyard. The Jews, who were early members of the true church, and obliged to obey the law of Moses, are the laborers which the householder hired early in the morning.

The Gentiles, who were converted at several times, by the various interpositions of Providence, to the knowledge and worship of the true God, are the laborers hired at the third, sixth and ninth hours. And the invitation given at the eleventh hour implies the calling of persons in the eve of life to the knowledge of the gospel. The law of Moses was a heavy yoke; and therefore the obedience to its precepts was very elegantly represented by bearing the heat and burden of the whole day. But the proselyted Gentiles paid obedience only to some particular precepts of the law; bore but part of its weight; and were therefore represented by those who were hired at the third, sixth, and ninth hours; while those heathen, who regulated their conduct by the law of nature (so-called) only, and esteemed the works of justice, piety, temperance, and charity as their whole duty, are beautifully represented as laboring only one hour in the cool of the evening.

When the evening was come, and each laborer was to receive his wages, they were all placed on an equal footing; these rewards being the privileges and advantages of the gospel. The Jews, who had borne the grievous yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies, murmured when they found the Gentiles were admitted to its privileges, without being subject to their ceremonial worship. But we must not urge the circumstance of the reward, so far as to fancy that either Jews or Gentiles merited the blessings of the gospel, by their having labored faithfully in the vineyard, or having behaved well under their several dispensations.

The glorious gospel, with all its blessings, was bestowed entirely by the free grace of God, and without anything in men to merit it; besides, it was offered promiscuously to all, and embraced by persons of all characters. The conclusion of the parable deserves our utmost

attention; we should often meditate upon it, and take care to make our calling and election sure. After Jesus had finished these discourses, he continued his journey towards Jerusalem, where, it is said, the chief priests and elders, soon after the resurrection of Lazarus, issued a proclamation, promising a reward to any one who should apprehend him. In all probability this was the reason why the disciples were astonished at the alacrity of our Lord, during this journey, while they themselves followed him, trembling. Jesus, therefore, thought proper to repeat the prophecies concerning his sufferings, in order to show his disciples that they were entirely voluntary; adding, that though the Jews should put him to death, yet, instead of weakening, it should increase their faith, especially as he would rise again on the third day from the dead. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." Luke xviii. 31-33.

As this prediction manifestly tended to the confirmation of the ancient prophecies, it must have given the greatest encouragement to his disciples, had they understood and applied it in a proper manner; but they were so ignorant in the scriptures that they had no idea of what he meant: "And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." Luke xviii. 34.

The sons of Zebedee were so blinded by prejudice that they thought their Master, by his telling them he would rise again from the dead, meant that he would then erect his empire, and accordingly begged that he would confer on them the chief posts in his kingdom; which they expressed by desiring to be seated, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in allusion to his placing the twelve apostles upon twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel. But some writers think that this ignorant request was made at some other time. This race of mortals, ever since our Saviour's transfiguration, had conceived very high notions of his kingdom, and possibly of their own merit also, because they had been permitted to behold that miracle. But Jesus told them that they were ignorant of the nature of the honor they requested; and since they desired to share with him in glory, asked them if they were willing to share with him

also in his sufferings: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Matt. xx. 22.

The two disciples ravished with the prospect of the dignity they were aspiring after, replied without hesitation, that they were both able and willing to share any hardship their Master might meet with in the way to the kingdom. To which he answered, that they should certainly share with him in his troubles and afflictions; but that they had asked a favor which was not his to give, except as prepared and promised by the Father. "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Matt. xx. 23.

This ambitious request of the two brothers raised the indignation of the rest of the disciples, who thinking themselves equally deserving the principal post in the Messiah's kingdom, were highly offended at the arrogance of the sons of Zebedee. Jesus, therefore, in order to restore harmony among his disciples, told them that his kingdom was very different from those of the present world, and the greatness of his disciples did not, like that of secular princes, consist in reigning over others in an absolute and despotic manner. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matt. xx. 25-28. Ye know that rank and precedence denote merit of character here; but Christian greatness, and spiritual precedence consist in humility, of which Christ, your Saviour, was made ~~an~~ eminent pattern.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BENEVOLENT SAVIOUR RESTORES SIGHT TO THE BLIND—KINDLY REGARDS ZACCHEUS, THE PUBLICAN—DELIVERS THE PARABLE OF THE SERVANTS ENTRUSTED WITH THEIR LORD'S MONEY—ACCEPTS THE KIND OFFICES OF MARY—MAKES A PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

JESUS, with his disciples and the multitude that accompanied him, were now arrived at Jericho, a famous city of Palestine, and the second in the kingdom. Near this town Jesus cured two blind men, who sat by the road begging, and expressed their belief in him as the Messiah. "And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And, behold, two blind men, sitting by the way-side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David! And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David." Matt. xx. 29-31.

This importunate request had its desired effect on the Son of God. He stood still, and called them to him, that, by their manner of walking, the spectators might be convinced that they were really blind. As soon as they approached him, he asked them, what they requested with such earnestness; to which the beggars answered, that they might receive their sight. "What will ye that I shall do unto you?" they say, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." This request was not made in vain. Their compassionate Saviour touched their eyes, and immediately they received sight, and followed him, glorifying and praising God.

After conferring sight on these beggars, Zaccheus, chief of the publicans, having often heard the fame of our Saviour's miracles, was desirous of seeing his person: but the lowness of his stature preventing him from satisfying his curiosity, "he ran before, and climbed up a sycamore-tree to see him; for he was to pass that way." As Jesus approached the place where he was, "he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Luke xix. 5. The publican expressed his joy at our Lord's condescending to visit him, took him to his house



BLIND BARTIMEUS.

and showed him all the marks of civility in his power. But the people, when they saw he was going to the house of a publican, condemned his conduct, as not conformable to the character of a prophet. Zaccheus seems to have heard these unjust reflections, and therefore was willing to justify himself before Jesus and his attendants. "And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." Luke xix. 8, etc. Our Saviour further, to convince the people that the design of his mission was to seek and to restore life and salvation to lost and perishing sinners, adds: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

While Jesus continued in the house of Zaccheus, the publican, he spake a parable to his followers, who supposed, at his arrival in the royal city, he would erect the long-expected kingdom of the Messiah. "A certain nobleman," said he, "went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? and he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds (and they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds). For I say *unto*

you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." Luke xix. 12-27.

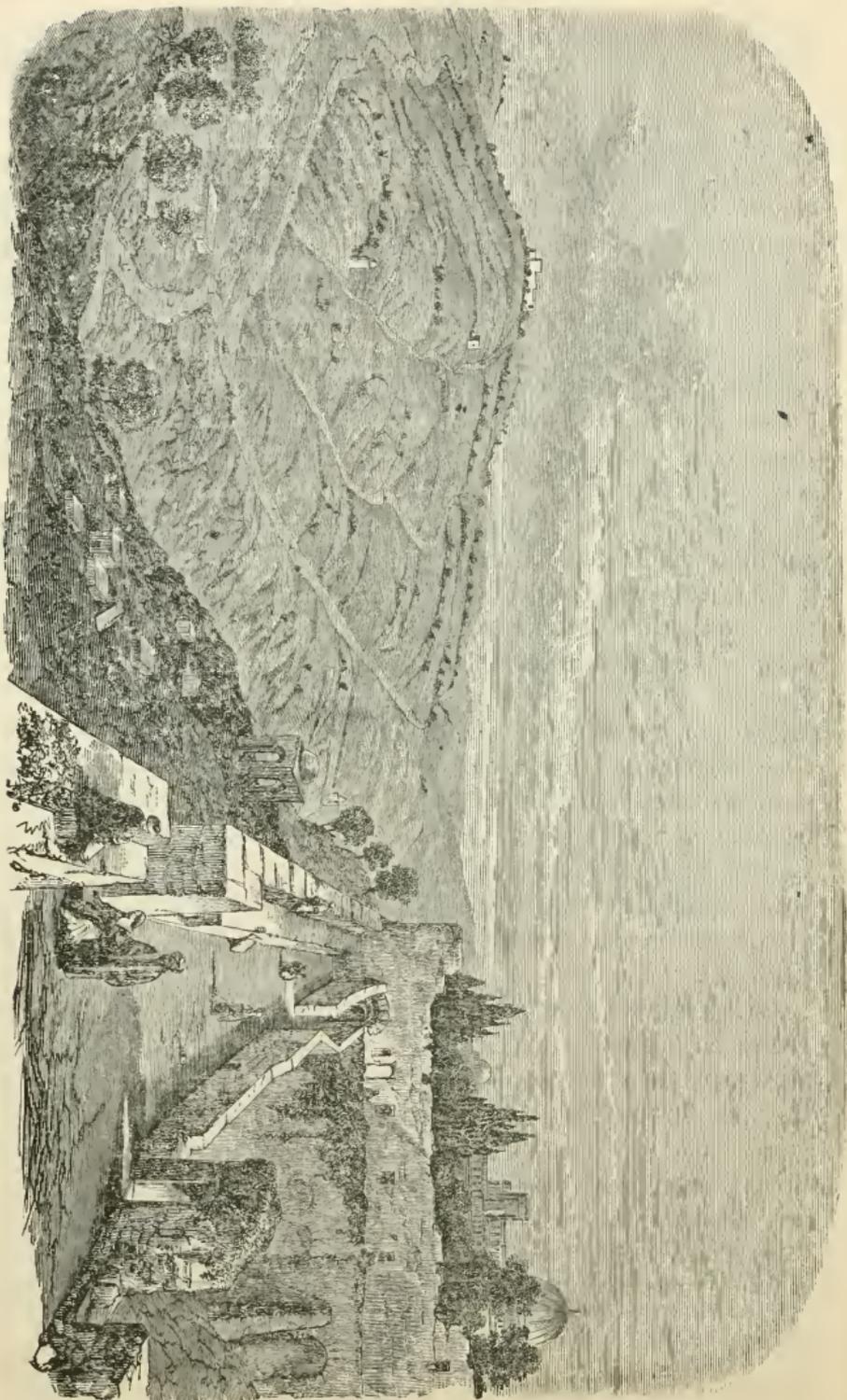
After speaking this parable, Jesus left the house of Zaccheus the publican, and continued his journey towards Jerusalem, where he proposed to celebrate the passover, and was earnestly expected by the people, who came up to purify themselves, and who began to doubt whether he would venture to come to the feast. This delay, however, was occasioned by the proclamation issued by the chief priests, promising a reward to any who would discover the place of his retirement. "Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him." John xi. 57.

Six days before the passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, and repaired to the house of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. "There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag and bare what was therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always." John xii. 2, etc.

As Bethany was not above two miles from Jerusalem, the news of his arrival was soon spread through the capital, and great numbers of the citizens came to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, together with the great Prophet who had wrought so stupendous a miracle; and many of them were convinced both of the resurrection of the former and the divinity of the latter: but the news of their conversion, together with the reason of it being currently reported in Jerusalem, the chief priests were soon sensible of the weight so great a miracle must have on the minds of the people; and therefore determined, if possible, to put both Jesus and Lazarus to death.

Our blessed Lord, though he knew the design of the Jews upon him also knew that it became him to fulfil all righteousness, and was

THE MOUNTAIN OLIVES.



far from declining to visit Jerusalem, that he even entered it in a public manner. "When they were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives,\* then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them. All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, the King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest! And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Matt. xxi. 1-11.

The prodigious multitude that now accompanied Jesus, filled the Pharisees and great men with malice and envy, because every method they had taken to hinder the people from following Jesus had proved ineffectual. "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." John xii. 19.

But when our blessed Saviour drew near the city of Jerusalem, surrounded by the rejoicing multitude, notwithstanding the many affronts he had there received, he beheld the city with a divine generosity and benevolence which nothing can equal, wept over it, and, in the most pathetic manner, lamented the calamities which he foresaw were coming upon it, because its inhabitants were ignorant of the time of their visitation. "If," said he, "thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round,

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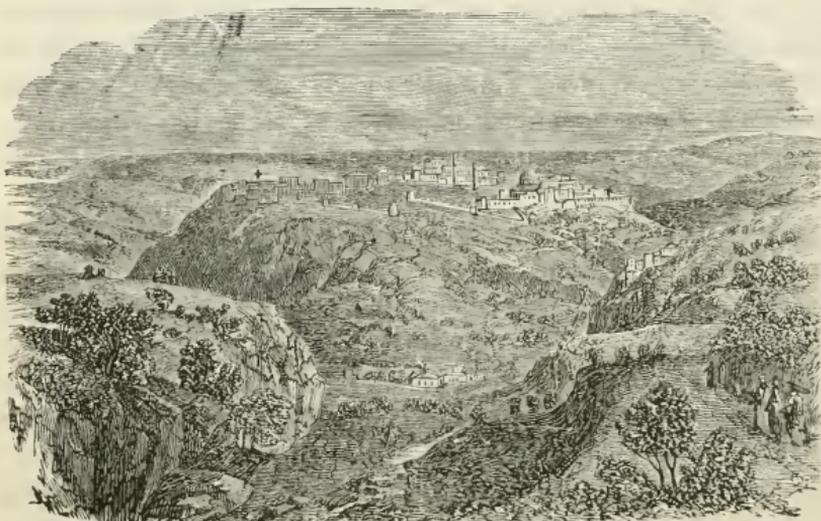
\* This is the well-known eminence lying on the east of Jerusalem. It is rounded and symmetrical in form, and is about 300 feet higher than the mount on which the Temple stood. It was the scene of David's flight from Absalom, of Solomon's idolatry, of the triumphal entry of Christ, and of His agony in the garden.

and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke xix. 42, etc.

Behold here, ye wandering mortals, behold an example of generosity infinitely superior to any furnished by the heathen world; an example highly worthy for them to imitate and admire!

When Jesus, surrounded by the multitude, entered Jerusalem, the whole city was moved on account of the prodigious concourse of people that accompanied him, and their continual acclamations.

Jesus rode immediately to the temple; but it being evening, he soon left the city to the great discouragement of the people, who expected he was immediately to have taken into his hands the reins of government. "And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve." Mark xi. 11.



JERUSALEM AND ITS VALLEYS.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

JESUS PRONOUNCES A CURSE UPON THE FIG-TREE—EXPELS THE PROFANERS OF THE TEMPLE—ASSERTS HIS DIVINE AUTHORITY, AND DELIVERS TWO PARABLES.

AT the earliest dawn our blessed Saviour left Bethany to visit again the capital of Judea. And as he pursued his journey he saw at a distance a fig-tree, which, from its fulness of leaves, promised abundance of fruit. This inviting object induced him to approach it, in expectation of finding figs, for he was hungry, and the season for gathering them was not yet arrived; but on his coming to the tree, he found it to be really barren: upon which the blessed Jesus said to it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." Matt. xxi. 19.

This action, which was purely emblematical, and prefigured the speedy ruin of the Jewish nation, on account of its unfruitfulness, under all the advantages it then enjoyed, has, by the enemies of revelation, been represented as an action unbecoming the Redeemer of mankind. But if they had fully considered its intention, they would have been clearly convinced, that, like the rest of his miracles, it was done with a gracious intention; namely, to awaken the Jews from their lethargy, and by timely repentance prevent the total ruin of their church and nation.

Being disappointed in finding fruit on the fig-tree, our blessed Saviour pursued his journey to Jerusalem; and, on his arrival, went straightway to the temple, the outer court of which he found full of merchandise.

A sight like this grieved his holy and righteous soul, so that he drove them all out of the temple, overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and would not suffer any vessel to be carried through the temple, saying unto them, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." Matt. xxi. 13.

Having dispersed this venal tribe, the people brought unto him the blind, the lame, and the diseased, who were all healed by the Son of God, so that the very children, when they saw the many miraculous cures he performed, proclaimed him to be the great Son of David, the

long expected Messiah. Such behavior not a little incensed the Pharisees: but they feared the people, and therefore only asked him if he heard what the children said; insinuating that he ought to rebuke them, and not suffer them thus to load him with the highest praises. But Jesus, instead of giving a direct answer to their question, repeated a passage out of the eighth Psalm. "Have ye never read," said the blessed Jesus, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Giving them to understand, that the meanest of God's works have been made instrumental in spreading his praise. The evening being now come, Jesus, with his disciples, left the city and retired to Bethany, where his benevolent miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead had procured him many friends, among whom he was always in safety.

The next morning, as they were returning to Jerusalem, the disciples were astonished at beholding the fig-tree that had been but the morning before declared barren dried up from the roots. They had, in all probability, forgotten what our Saviour had said to this fig-tree, till its dry and withered aspect brought it again to their memory.

Peter, on seeing this astonishing phenomenon, said unto Jesus, "Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away!" To which Jesus answered, that whoever had faith in the Almighty, or thoroughly believed in this miracle, should be able to do much greater things than the withering of the fig-tree. "And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." Mark xi. 22, 23. Our Lord added, that whatsoever they should ask by faith, they should receive; and concluded by giving them direction concerning prayer, which was necessary to increase the faith he mentioned. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark xi. 25, 26.

During the time the blessed Jesus remained in the temple, certain proselyted Greeks, who came up to worship at Jerusalem, desired to see him, having long cherished expectations of beholding the promised Messiah. Accordingly they applied to Philip, a native of Beth-

saida, who mentioned it to Andrew, and he told it to Jesus. Upon which our blessed Saviour told his disciples that he should soon be honored with the conversion of the Gentiles. "The hour is come," said he, "that the Son of man should be glorified." But declared, that before this glorious event happened, he must suffer death; illustrating the necessity there was of his dying, by the similitude of casting grain into the earth. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John xii. 24. Adding, that since it was absolutely necessary for him, their Lord and Master, to suffer the pains of death before he ascended the throne of his glory, so they, as his followers, must also expect to be persecuted and spitefully used for his name's sake; but if they persevered, and even resolved to lose their lives in his service, he would reward their constancy with a crown of glory; and at the same time he intimated to the strangers, that if their desire of conversing with him proceeded from a hope of obtaining from him temporal preferments, they would find themselves sadly disappointed. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." John xii. 26.

Our blessed Lord was now so affected, that he uttered, in a very pathetic manner, his grief, and addressed his heavenly Father for succor in his distress. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." John xii. 27. This should teach us, that prayer is the only method of easing the mind overwhelmed with distress; but at the same time to be always resigned to the divine will; for, though the weakness of human nature may shrink when persecution or sufferings of any kind appear, yet by reflecting on the wisdom, goodness, and power of God to deliver us, we ought to support every trial, however severe, with patience, as he doubtless proposes some happy ends by these afflictions.

Our blessed Lord having made a short prayer to his Father, begged him to demonstrate the truth of his mission by some token which could not be resisted. "Father, glorify thy name." Nor had he hardly uttered these words, before he was answered by an audible voice from heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The miracles thou hast already performed have glorified my name; and I will still continue to glorify it, by other miracles

to be wrought before the sons of men. This voice was evidently supernatural, resembling thunder in loudness, but sufficiently articulate to be understood by those who heard our blessed Saviour pray to his heavenly Father. And Jesus told his disciples that it was not given for his sake, but to confirm them in their faith of his mission. "This voice," said he, "came not because of me, but for your sakes." It came to confirm what I have told you relating to my sufferings, death, resurrection, and the conversion of the Gentile world to the Christian religion.

Accordingly he communicated this comfortable reflection to his disciples, telling them that the time was at hand, when the kingdom of Satan should be destroyed, and that of the Messiah exalted. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John xii. 31, 32.

The people, not understanding the meaning of this affirmation, replied, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?" John xii. 34.

Our Lord, in answer, told them that they should soon be deprived of his presence and miracles; and therefore they would do well to listen attentively to his precepts, firmly believe the doctrines he delivered, and wisely improve them to their eternal advantage; for, otherwise, they would be soon overtaken with spiritual blindness, and rendered incapable of inheriting the promises of the gospel;—that while they enjoyed the benefit of his preaching and miracles, which sufficiently proved the truth of his mission from the Most High, they should believe on him; for by that means alone they could become the children of God. "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." John xiii. 35, 36.

Having thus addressed the multitude he retired privately. But, notwithstanding the many miracles our great Redeemer had wrought in presence of this perverse and stiff-necked people, the generality of them refused to own him for the Messiah, being filled with the vain expectations of a temporal prince, who was to rule over all the kingdoms of the earth, and place his throne in Jerusalem. Some, indeed, even of the rulers, believed on him, though they thought it prudent

to conceal their faith, lest they should, like the blind man, be excommunicated, or put out of the synagogue: valuing the good opinion of men above the approbation of the Almighty.

Nevertheless, to inspire such as believed on him with courage, he cried in the temple, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." He that acknowledges the divinity of my mission, acknowledges the power and grace of God, on whose special errand I am thus sent. Adding, He that seeth the miracles I perform, seeth the operations of that omnipotent Power by which I act. I am the Sun of Righteousness, whose beams dispel the darkness of ignorance in which the sons of men are involved, and am come to deliver all who believe on me out of that palpable darkness. You must not, however, expect that I will at present execute my judgment upon those who refuse to embrace the doctrines of the gospel; for I am not come to condemn and punish, but to save the world, and consequently to try every gentle and winning method to reclaim the wicked from the error of their ways, and turn their feet into the paths of life and salvation. They shall not, however, escape unpunished who neglect the instructions and offers of salvation now made to them; for the doctrines I have preached shall bear witness against them at the awful tribunal of the last day; and as it has aggravated their sin, so it shall then heighten their punishment.

While Jesus was thus preaching in the temple, a deputation of priests and elders was sent from the supreme council, to ask him concerning the nature of the authority by which he acted, whether it was as prophet, priest, or king, as no other person had a right to make any alterations, either in church or state; and if he laid claim to either of those characters, from whom he received it. But our blessed Saviour, instead of giving a direct answer to the questions of the Pharisees, asked them another; promising, if they resolved his question, he would also answer theirs. "I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men?" Matt. xxi. 24, 25. This question puzzled the priests. They considered, on the one hand, that if it was from God, it would oblige them to acknowledge the authority of Jesus, John having more than once publicly declared him to be the Messiah; and, on the other, if they peremptorily denied the authority of John, they would be in danger of being stoned by the people, who in general considered him as a prophet. They, therefore, thought it the most

eligible method to answer, that they could not tell from whence *John's* baptism was. Thus, by declining to answer the question asked them by *Jesus*, they left him at liberty to decline giving the council the satisfaction they had sent to demand; at the same time they plainly confessed that they were unable to pass any opinion on *John the Baptist*, notwithstanding he claimed the character of a messenger from God, and they had sent to examine his pretensions. This was, in effect, to acknowledge that they were incapable of judging of any prophet whatsoever. Well, therefore, might the blessed *Jesus* say, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." You have no right to ask, since you have confessed you are unable to judge; and therefore I shall not satisfy your inquiry. But because this deputation had said that they were ignorant from whence the baptism of *John* was, our blessed Saviour sharply rebuked them, conveying his reproof in the parable of the two sons commanded to work in their father's vineyard, and asking their opinion of the two, made them condemn themselves.

The blessed *Jesus* did not only rebuke them for rejecting the preaching of the Baptist, but represented the crime of the nation, in rejecting all the prophets which had been sent since they became a nation, and among the rest, the only-begotten Son of the Most High; warning them at the same time of their danger and the punishment that would inevitably ensue, if they continued in their rebellion. The outward economy of religion, in which they gloried, would be taken from them, their relation to God as his people cancelled, and the national constitution destroyed; but because these topics were extremely disagreeable, he delivered them under the veil of the following parable.

Shocked at this awful representation, the Pharisees exclaimed, and said, "God forbid;" surely these husbandmen will not proceed to such desperate iniquity; surely the vineyard will not thus be taken from them. But, to confirm the truth of this, our Saviour added a remarkable prophecy of himself and his rejection, from Psalm *cxviii*. "Did you never," said he, "read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" *Matt. xxi. 42.*

This rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, and the reception he met with among the Gentiles, all brought to pass by the providence of God, are wonderful events; and therefore I say unto you, the kingdom

of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The chief priests and Pharisees, being afraid to apprehend Jesus, he was at liberty to proceed in the offices of his ministry: accordingly, he delivered another parable, wherein he described, on the one hand, the bad success which the preaching of the gospel was to meet with among the Jews; and, on the other, the cheerful reception given it among the Gentiles.

This gracious design of the Almighty, in giving the gospel to the children of men, our blessed Saviour illustrated by the behavior of a certain king, who, in honor of his son, made a great feast, to which he invited many guests.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.” This marriage-supper, or great feast, signifies the joys of grace and glory, which are properly compared to an elegant entertainment, on account of their exquisiteness and duration; and are here said to be prepared in honor of the Son of God, because they are bestowed on men in consequence of his sufferings in their stead and behalf.

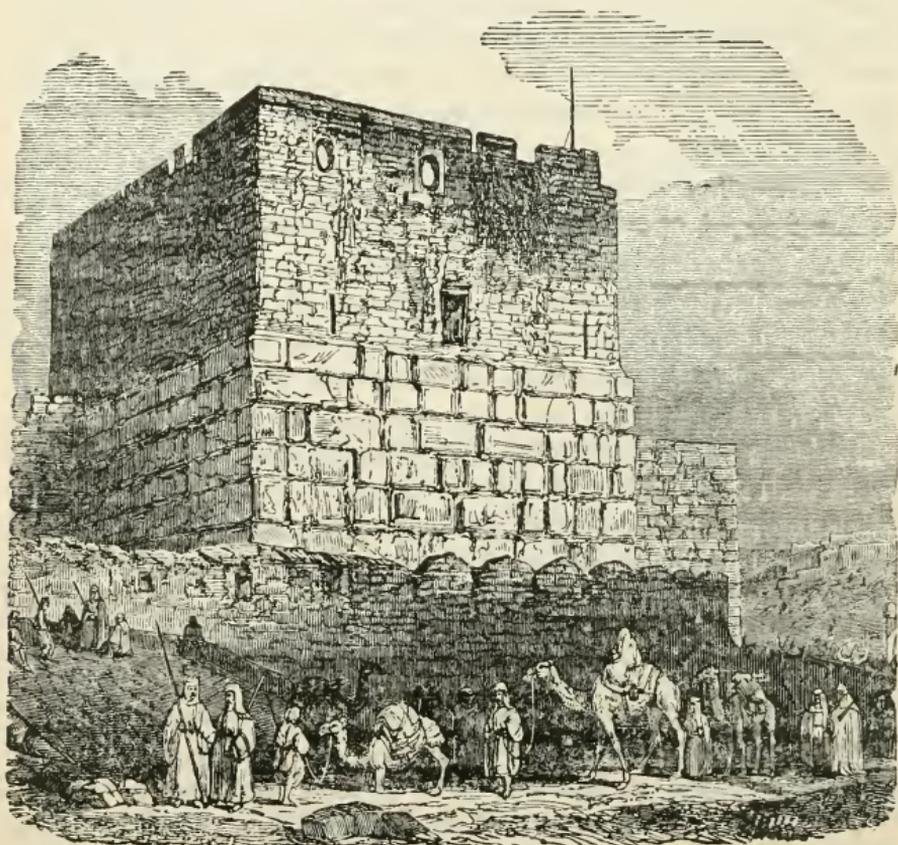
Some time before the supper was ready, the servants went forth to call the guests to the wedding: *i. e.*, when the fulness of time approached, the Jews, as being the peculiar people of God, were first called by John the Baptist, and afterwards by Christ himself; but they refused all these benevolent calls of mercy, and rejected the kind invitations of the gospel, though pressed by the preaching of the Messiah and his forerunner.

After our Saviour's resurrection and ascension, the apostles were sent forth to inform the Jews that the gospel-covenant was established, mansions in heaven prepared, and nothing wanting but the cheerful acceptance of the honor designed them. “Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.” But these messengers were as unsuccessful as the former. The Jews, undervaluing the favor offered them, mocked at the message: and some of them, more rude than the rest, insulted, beat, and slew the servants that had been sent to call them to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. “But when the king heard thereof, he was wrath: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.”

This part of the parable plainly predicted the destruction of the

Jews by the Roman armies, called here the armies of the Almighty, because they were appointed by him to execute vengeance on that once favorite, but now rebellious people.

The parable is then continued as follows: The king again sent forth his servants into the countries of the Gentiles, with orders to compel all that they met with to come unto the marriage. This was immediately done, and the wedding was furnished with guests; but when the king came into the apartment, "He saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." Matt. xxii. 11-14.



DAVID'S TOWER AT JERUSALEM.

## CHAPTER XXX.

THE BLESSED JESUS WISELY RETORTS ON THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES, WHO PROPOUND AN INTRICATE QUESTION TO HIM—SETTLES THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT OF THE LAW—ENFORCES HIS MISSION AND DOCTRINE; AND FORETELLS THE JUDGMENT THAT WOULD FALL UPON THE PHARISAICAL TRIBE.

THIS representation of the state of the finally impenitent appearing to be levelled at the Pharisees, they immediately concerted with the Herodians and Sadducees on the most proper method of putting Jesus to death. It is sufficiently evident that their hatred was now carried to the highest pitch, because the most violent enmity which had so long subsisted between the two sects was on this occasion suspended, and they joined together to execute their cruel determination on the Son of God. They, however, thought it most eligible to act very cautiously, and endeavor, if possible, to catch some hasty expression from him, that they might render him odious to the people, and find something against him that might serve as a basis for his persecution.

Accordingly they sent some of their disciples to him, with orders to feign themselves just men, who maintained the greatest veneration for the divine law, and dreaded nothing more than the doing anything inconsistent with its precepts; and under this specious cloak of hypocrisy, to beg his determination of an affair that had long lain heavy on their consciences; namely, the paying tribute to Cæsar, which they thought inconsistent with their zeal for religion. This question was, it seems, furiously debated in our Saviour's time; one Judas, a native of Galilee, having implanted in the minds of the people a notion that taxes to a foreign power were absolutely unlawful. A doctrine so pleasing to the worldly-minded Jews could not fail of friends, especially among the lower class, and therefore must have many partisans among the multitude that then surrounded the Son of God. The priests, therefore, imagined that it was not in his power to decide the point, without rendering himself obnoxious to some of the parties; if he should say it was lawful to pay the taxes, they believed that the people, in whose hearing the question was proposed, would be incensed against him, not only as a base pretender, who, on being attacked,



ONE OF THE OLD GATES OF JERUSALEM.

publicly renounced the character of the Messiah, which he had assumed among his friends, but also a flatterer of princes, and a betrayer of the liberties of his country ; one who taught a doctrine inconsistent with the known privileges of the people of God : but if he should affirm

that it was unlawful to pay the tribute, they determined to inform the governor, who, they hoped, would punish him as a framer of sedition. Highly elated with their project, they accordingly came, and after passing an encomium on the truth of his mission, his courage, and impartiality, they proposed this famous question, "Master," said they, "we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teacheth the way of God in truth." Mark xii. 14. "Tell us, therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" Matt. xxii. 17.

But the blessed Jesus saw their secret intentions; and accordingly called them hypocrites, to signify that though they pretended to make conscience of, and show a regard for the will of God, in proposing this question, he saw through the thin veil that concealed their design from the eyes of mortals, and knew that their intention was to ensnare him. He, however, did not decline answering their question, but previously desired to see a piece of the tribute money. The piece was accordingly produced, and proved to be coined by the Romans. Upon which our blessed Saviour answered them, Since this money bears the image of Cæsar it is his; and by making use of it you acknowledge his authority. But at the same time that you discharge your duty to the civil magistrate, you should never forget the duty you owe to your God; but remember that as you profess to bear the image of the great, the omnipotent King, you are his subjects, and ought to love him with all your heart, and serve him to the very utmost of your power.

The Pharisees and their followers, under a pretence of religion, often justified sedition; but the Herodians, in order to ingratiate themselves with the reigning powers, made them a compliment of their consciences, complying with whatever they enjoined, however opposite their commands might be to the Divine law. Our Lord, therefore, adapted his answer to them both, exhorting them, in their regards to God and the magistrate, to give each his due; there being no inconsistency between their rights, when their rights only are insisted on.

So unexpected an answer quite disconcerted and silenced these crafty enemies. They were astonished both at his having discovered their design, and his wisdom in avoiding the snare they had so artfully laid for him. "When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way." Matt. xxii. 22.

Though our Lord thus wisely obviated their crafty designs, enemies

came against him from every quarter. The Sadducees, who denied the doctrine of a future state, together with the existence of angels and spirits, came forward to the charge; proposing to him their strongest argument against the resurrection, which they deduced from the law given by Moses, with regard to marriage. "Master," said they, "Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife." Luke xx. 28, etc. The Sadducees, who believed the soul to be nothing more than a refined matter, were persuaded that if there were any future state it must resemble the present; and that being in that state material and mortal, the human race could not be continued, nor the individuals rendered happy, without the pleasures and conveniences of marriage; and hence considered it as a necessary consequence of the doctrine of the resurrection, or a future state, that every man's wife should be restored to him.

But this argument our blessed Saviour soon confuted, by telling the Sadducees they were ignorant of the power of God, who had created spirit as well as matter, and who can render man completely happy in the enjoyment of himself. He also observed, that the nature of the life obtained in a future state made marriage altogether superfluous, because in the world to come, men being spiritual and immortal, like the angels, there was no need of natural means to propagate or continue the kind. "Ye do err," said the blessed Jesus, "not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Matt. xxii. 29. "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Luke xx. 36. Hence we may observe, that good men are called the children of the Most High, from their inheritance at the resurrection, and particularly on account of their being adorned with immortality.

Having thus shown their folly and unbelief, he proceeded to show that they were also ignorant of the scriptures, and particularly of the writings of Moses, from whence they had drawn their objection, by

demonstrating from the very law itself the certainty of a resurrection, at least that of just men, and consequently quite demolished the opinion of the Sadducees, who, believing in the materiality of the soul, affirmed that men were annihilated after their death, and that their opinion was founded on the writings of Moses. "Now," said our Saviour, "that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." Luke xx. 37, 38. As if he had said, The Almighty cannot properly be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, unless they exist, for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Since therefore, Moses called him the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, long after these venerable patriarchs were dead, the relation denoted by the word of God still subsisted between them; consequently they were not annihilated, as you pretend, but still in being, and continue to be the servants of the Most High.

This argument effectually silenced the Sadducees, and agreeably surprised the people, to see the objection hitherto thought impregnable totally abolished, and the sect they had long abominated fully confuted.

"And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine." Matt. xxii. 33. Nor could even the Pharisees refrain from giving the Saviour of mankind the praise due to his superlative wisdom; for one of the scribes desired him to give his opinion on a question often debated among their teachers; namely, which was the great commandment of the law? The true reason for their proposing this question was to try whether he was as well acquainted with the sacred law, and the debates that had arisen on different parts of it, as he was ready in deriving arguments from the inspired writers, to destroy the tenets of those who denied a future state.

In order to understand the question proposed to our blessed Saviour by the scribe, it is necessary to observe, that some of the most learned rabbins had declared that the law of sacrifices was the great commandment; some that it was the law of circumcision, and others, that the law of meats and washings had best that title. Our blessed Saviour, however, showed that they were all mistaken; and that the great commandment of the law is the duty of piety; and particularly mentioned that comprehensive summary of it given by Moses: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all

thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment." Mark xii. 29, 30.

The first and chief commandment is, to give God our hearts. The divine Being is so transcendently amiable in himself, and has, by the innumerable benefits conferred upon us, such a title to our utmost affection, that no obligation bears any proportion to that of loving him. The honor assigned to this precept proves that piety is the noblest act of the human mind; and that the chief ingredient in piety is love, founded on a clear and extensive view of the divine perfections, harmonizing in our redemption by Christ, a permanent sense of his benefits, and a deep conviction of his being the sovereign good, our portion, and our happiness. But it is essential to love that there be a delight in contemplating the beauty of the object beloved, whether that beauty be a matter of sensation or reflection; that we frequently and with pleasure reflect on the benefits conferred on us by the object of our affections; that we have a strong desire of pleasing him, great fear of doing anything to offend him, and a sensible joy in thinking we are beloved in return. Hence the duties of devotion, prayer, and praise are the most natural and genuine exercises of the love of God.

Our blessed Saviour having thus answered the question put to him by the scribe, added, that the second commandment was that which enjoined the love of our neighbor. This had, indeed, no relation to the lawyer's question concerning the first commandment; yet our blessed Lord thought proper to show him which was the second; probably because the men of this sect did not acknowledge the importance and precedency of love to their neighbor, or because they were remarkably deficient in the practice of it, as Jesus himself had often found, in their attempt to kill him. "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

This principle of love to God will be also fruitful of every good work. It will make us readily perform the duties of all relations in which we stand. And because love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore it is the fulfilling of the law, for it will prompt us to a cheerful and ready performance of every office, whether of justice or charity, that we owe to our neighbor. All the best things we can do, if destitute of this principle, will appear either to be the effect of hypocrisy, or done to procure the esteem of men. Without love, a narrowness of soul will shut us up within ourselves, and make all we do to others only as a sort of merchandise, trading for our own advantage.

It is love only that opens our hearts to consider other persons, and to love them on their own account, or rather on account of God, who is love.

But we return to the scribe, who was astonished at the justness of our Saviour's decisions, and answered, that he had determined rightly, since there is but one supreme God, whom we must all adore; and if we love him above all temporal things, and our neighbor as ourselves, we worship him more acceptably than if we sacrifice to him all the cattle upon a thousand hills.

Our blessed Lord highly applauded the piety and wisdom of this reflection, by declaring that the person who made it was not far from the kingdom of God.

As the Pharisees, during the course of our Saviour's ministry, had proposed to him many difficult questions, with an intention to prove his prophetic gifts, he now, in his turn, thought proper to make a trial of their knowledge in the sacred writings.

For this purpose he asked their opinion of a difficulty concerning the Messiah's pedigree. "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David." Matt. xxii. 42. I know, answered Jesus, you say, Christ is the son of David; but how can you support your opinion, or render it consistent with the words of David, who himself calls him Lord; and how is he his son?

It seems that the Jewish doctors did not imagine that their Messiah would be endued with any perfections greater than those that might be enjoyed by human nature; for, though they called him the Son of God, they had no notion that he had a divine power from heaven, and therefore could not pretend to solve the difficulty.

The latter question, however, might have convinced them of their error; for, if the Messiah was only to be a secular prince, as they supposed, and to rule over the men of his own time, he never could have been called Lord by persons who died before he was born; far less would so mighty a prince as David, who was also his progenitor, have conferred on him that title. Since, therefore, he rules over not only those of former ages, but even over the kings from whence he was himself descended, and his kingdom comprehends the men of all countries and times, past, present, and to come, the doctors, if they had thought accurately upon the subject, would have expected in their Messiah a king different from all other kings. Beside,

crites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets." Matt. xxiii. 29-31. He added, that the Divine Being was desirous of trying

every method for their conversion, though all these instances of mercy were slighted, and there they must expect such terrible vengeance as should be a standing monument of the Divine displeasure against all the murders committed by the sons of men, from the foundation of the world.

Having thus laid before them their heinous guilt and dreadful punishment, he was, at the thought of the calamities which were soon to fall upon them, exceedingly moved, and his breast filled with sensations of pity to such a degree, that unable to



“BEHOLD I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK.”

contain himself, he brake forth into tears, bewailing the hard lot of the city of Jerusalem; for as its inhabitants had more deeply imbrued their hands in the blood of the prophets, they were to drink more deeply of the punishment due to such crimes. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent

unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

This benevolent, as well as pathetic exclamation of our blessed Lord, cannot fail to excite in the pious mind the warmest emotions of love to the gracious Saviour of mankind, as well as pity for that once chosen, but since degenerate race. How often had the Almighty called upon them to return from their evil way, before he sent his only-begotten Son into the world! How often, how emphatically did the compassionate Jesus entreat them to embrace the merciful terms now offered them by the Almighty, and with what unconquerable obstinacy did they refuse the benevolent offers, and resist the most winning expressions of the Divine love! By the word house, our blessed Saviour meant the temple, which was from that time to be left unto them desolate: the glory of the Lord, which Haggai had prophesied should fill the second house, was now departing from it. Adding, "I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." As if he had said, As ye have killed the prophets, and persecuted me, whom the Father hath sent from the courts of heaven, and will shortly put me, who am the Lord of the temple, to death, your holy house shall be left desolate, and your nation totally deserted by me; nor shall you see me any more till ye shall acknowledge the dignity of my character, and the importance of my mission, and say with the whole earth, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Thus did the blessed Jesus strip the scribes and Pharisees of their hypocritical mask. He treated them with severity, because their crimes were of the blackest dye; and hence we should learn to be really good, and not flatter ourselves that we can cover our crimes with the cloak of hypocrisy, from that piercing eye from which nothing is concealed.

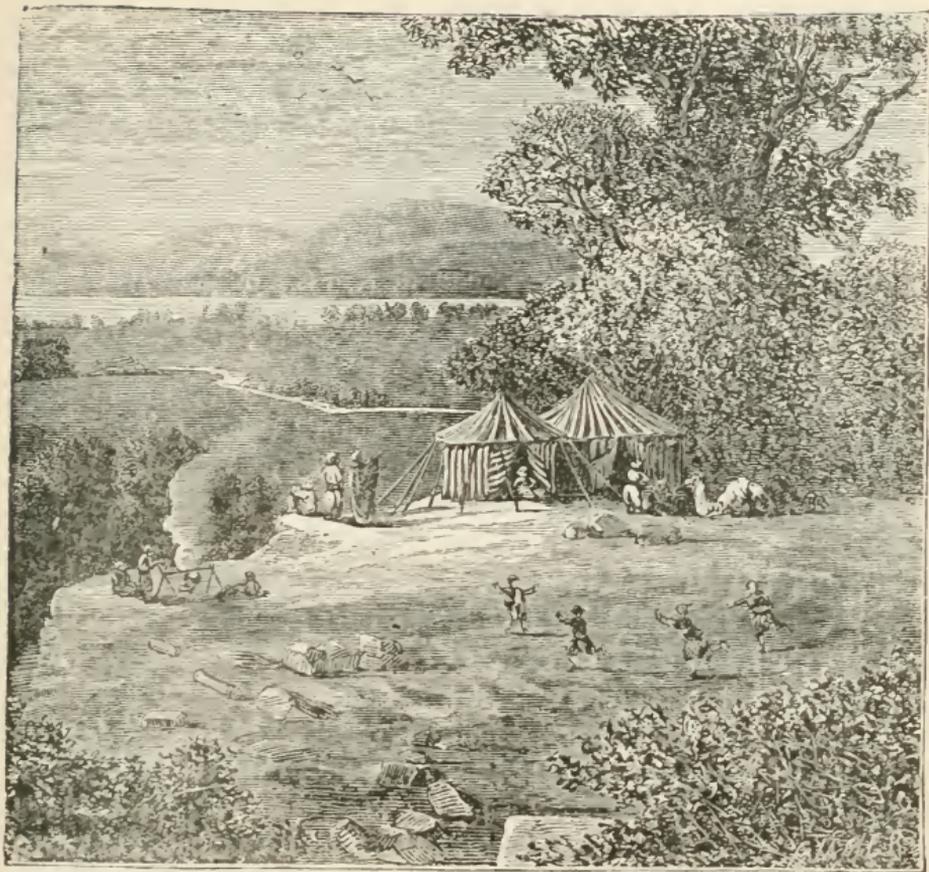
The people could not fail being astonished at these discourses, as they had always considered their teachers as the most righteous amongst the sons of men. Nay, the persons themselves, against whom they were levelled, were confounded, because their own consciences convinced them of the truth of every particular laid to their charge. They therefore knew not what course to pursue; and in the midst of their hesitation, they let Jesus depart without making any attempt to seize him, or inflict on him any kind of punishment.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

OUR SAVIOUR COMMENDS EVEN THE SMALLEST ACT, BECAUSE IT PROCEEDED FROM A TRULY BENEVOLENT MOTIVE—PREDICTS THE DEMOLITION OF THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM, AND DELIVERS SEVERAL INSTRUCTIVE PARABLES.

JESUS, the infallible preacher of righteousness, having thus exposed the secret practices of the scribes and Pharisees, repaired with his disciples into the court of the women, called the treasury, from several chests being fixed to the pillars of the portico surrounding the court, for receiving the offerings of those who came to worship in the temple. While he continued in this court, he “beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.” Mark xii. 41–44.

Though the offering given by this poor widow was in itself very small, yet, in proportion to the goods of fortune she enjoyed, it was remarkably large: for it was all she had, even all her living. In order, therefore, to encourage charity, and show that it is the disposition of the mind, not the magnificence of the offering that attracted the regard of the Almighty, the Son of God applauded this poor widow, as having given more in proportion than any of the rich. Their offerings, though great in respect of hers, were but a small part of their estates, whereas her offering was her whole stock. And from this passage of the gospel we should learn that the poor, who in appearance are denied the means of doing charitable offices, are encouraged to do all they can; for how small soever the gift may be, the Almighty, who beholds the heart, values it, not according to what it is in itself, but according to the disposition with which it is given. On the other hand, we should learn from hence that it is not enough for the rich that they exceed the poor in the gifts of charity; they should bestow in proportion to their income; and they would do well to remember that a little given, where a little only is left, appears a much nobler



EASTERN TENTS—SEA OF GENNESARETH IN THE DISTANCE.

offering in the sight of the Almighty, and discovers a more benevolent and humane temper of mind, than sums much larger bestowed out of a plentiful abundance.

The disciples now remembered that their Master, at the conclusion of his pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, had declared that the temple should not any more be favored with his presence, till they should say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

A declaration of this kind could not fail of greatly surprising his disciples; and, therefore, as he was departing from that sacred structure, they desired him to observe the beauty of the building; insinuating, that they thought it strange he should intimate an intention of leaving it desolate; that so glorious a fabric, celebrated in every corner of the earth, was not to be deserted rashly; and that they should think themselves supremely happy, when he, as the Messiah and descendant of David, should take possession of it, and erect his throne in the midst of Jerusalem. And as they went out of the temple, one

of his disciples said unto him, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!"

The eastern wall of the temple, which fronted the Mount of Olives, whither the disciples, with their Master were then retiring, was built from the bottom of the valley to a prodigious height, with stones of an incredible bulk, firmly compacted together, and therefore made a very grand appearance at a distance.

The eastern wall is supposed to have been the only remains of Solomon's temple, and had escaped when the Chaldeans burnt it. But this building, however strong or costly it appeared, our Saviour told them, should be totally destroyed, "Seest thou," said he, "these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Mark xiii. 2.

That noble edifice, raised with much labor and at vast expense, shall be razed to the very foundation. The disciples, therefore, when they heard their Master affirm, that not so much as one of these enormous stones, which had withstood the fury of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and survived the destructive hand of time, was to be left one upon another, they perceived that the whole temple was to be demolished, but did not suspect that the sacrifices were to be taken away, and a new mode of religion introduced, which rendered the temple unnecessary.

They therefore flattered themselves that the fabric then standing, however glorious it might appear, was too small for the numerous worshippers who would frequent it, when all the nations of the world were subject to the Messiah's kingdom, and was therefore to be pulled down, in order to be erected on a more magnificent plan, suitable to the idea they had conceived of his future empire. Filled with these pleasing imaginations, they received the news with pleasure, meditating, as they walked to the mountain, on the glorious things which were shortly to come to pass.

When they arrived on the Mount of Olives, and their Master had taken his seat on some eminence, from whence they had a prospect of the temple and part of the city, his disciples drew near to know when the demolition of the old structure was to happen and what were to be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world. "And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matt xxiv. 3.

The disciples, by this request, seemed desirous of knowing what signs should precede the erection of that extensive empire over which they supposed the Messiah was to reign, for they still expected he would govern a secular kingdom. They, therefore, connected the demolition of the temple with their Master's coming, though they had not the least notion that he was to destroy the nation and change the form of religious worship.

They therefore meant by the "end of the world:" or as the words should have been translated, the end of the age, the period of the political government then executed by heathen procurators, and considered their Master's coming to destroy the constitution then subsisting as a very desirable event. They also thought the demolition of the temple proper, as they expected a larger and more superb building, proportioned to the number of the Messiah's subjects, would be erected in its stead.

That this is the real sense of the disciples' question, will sufficiently appear, if we consider that they were delighted with the prospect; whereas, if they had meant by the end of the world, the final period of all things, the destruction of the temple would have exhibited to them, in their present temper of mind, a melancholy prospect which they could not have beheld without a deep concern.

Our blessed Saviour, therefore, was careful to convince them of their mistake, by telling them that he was not come to rule a secular empire, as they supposed, but to punish the Jews for their perfidy and rebellion, by destroying both their temple and nation. "Take heed," said he, "that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many."

This caution was far from being unnecessary, because, though the disciples were to see their Master ascend into heaven, they might take occasion from the prophecy to think that he would appear again on earth, and therefore be in danger of seduction by the false Christs that should arise. "And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars, see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Before this nation and temple are destroyed, terrible wars will happen in the land: "for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Matt. xxiv. 6, 7.

These are the preludes of the important event, forerunners of the evils which shall befall this nation and people. At the same time you

shall meet with hot persecutions ; walk, therefore, circumspectly, and arm yourselves both with patience and fortitude, that ye may be able to perform your duty, through the whole course of these persecutions : for you shall be brought before the great men of the earth for my sake. “ But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate ; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye : for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.” Mark xiii. 11.

During this time of trouble and confusion, he told them the perfidy of mankind should be so great towards one another, that “ brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son : and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.” The unbelieving Jews and apostate Christians shall commit the most enormous and inhuman crimes. It is, therefore, no wonder that the perfidy and wickedness of such pretended Christians should discourage many disciples, and greatly hinder the propagation of the gospel. But he who lives by faith during these persecutions, and is not led astray by the seduction of false Christians, shall escape that terrible destruction, which, like a deluge, will overflow the land.

And when Jerusalem shall be surrounded with armies, Pagan armies, bearing in their standards the images of their gods, the “ abomination of desolation ” mentioned by the prophet Daniel, then let him who readeth the predictions of that prophet understand that the end of the city and sanctuary, together with the ceasing of sacrifices and oblation there predicted is come, and consequently the final period of the Jewish polity.

“ Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains ; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out.” Luke xxi. 21. “ Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house : neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.” Matt. xxiv. 17, 18. Then shall be fulfilled the awful predictions of the prophet Daniel, and the dreadful judgments denounced against the impenitent and unbelieving.

In those days of vengeance the women who are with child, and those who have infants hanging at their breasts, shall be particularly unhappy, because they cannot flee from the impending destruction. “ But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter,” when the badness of the roads and the rigor of the season will render speedy travelling very troublesome, if not impossible, “ neither on the Sabbath

day," when you shall think it unlawful. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matt. xxiv. 21. This is confirmed by what Josephus tells us, that no less than eleven hundred thousand perished in the siege.

The heavenly prophet added, that except the days of tribulation should be shortened, none of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, of whom he was speaking, should escape destruction. In confirmation of which Josephus tells us that the quarrels which raged during the siege were so fierce and obstinate, that both within the walls of Jerusalem and without, in the neighboring country, the whole land was one continued scene of horror and desolation: and had the siege continued much longer, the whole nation of the Jews had been totally destroyed, according to our Lord's prediction. "But," added our blessed Saviour, "for the elects' sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." By the elect are meant such of the Jews as had embraced the doctrines of the gospel, and particularly those who were brought in with the believing Gentiles.

As it is natural in time of trouble to look with eager expectation for a deliverer, our blessed Saviour cautioned his disciples not to listen to any pretences of that kind, as many false Christs would arise and deceive great numbers of the people; a prediction that was fully accomplished during the terrible siege of Jerusalem by the Romans: so Josephus tells us, that many arose pretending to be the Messiah, boasting that they would deliver the nation from all its enemies. And the multitude, always too prone to listen to deceivers, who promise temporal advantages, giving credit to those deceivers, became more obstinate in their opposition to the Romans, and thereby rendered their destruction more severe and inevitable.

And what still increased the infatuation of the people was their performing wonderful things during the war; and accordingly Josephus calls them magicians and sorcerers. Hence we see the propriety of the caution given by the Son of God, who foretold that "they should show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. But take heed; behold, I have foretold you all things."

And as the partisans of the false Christs might pretend that the Messiah was concealed awhile for fear of the Romans, and the weaker sort of Christians, without this warning, have imagined that Christ was actually returned to deliver the nation in its extremity, and to

punish their enemies, who now so cruelly oppressed them, and that he would show himself as soon as it was proper, the blessed Jesus thought proper to caution them against this particular. "Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. xxiv. 26, etc.

The coming of the Son of man shall be like lightning, swift and destructive. But he will come not personally; his servants only shall come, the Roman armies, who, by his command, shall destroy this nation as eagles devour their prey.

Having thus given them a particular account of the various circumstances which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, he next described that catastrophe itself, in all the pomp of language and imagery made use of by the ancient prophets, when they foretold the destruction of cities and kingdoms. "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." Mark xiii. 24, 25. "And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke xxi. 25, 26.

By these lofty and figurative expressions, the decaying of all the glory, excellency, and prosperity of the nation, and the introduction of universal sadness, misery, and confusion are beautifully described. The roaring of the sea and the waves may justly be considered as metaphorical, as the signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars, are plainly so, and by the powers of heaven are meant the whole Jewish polity, government, laws, and religion, which were the work of heaven; these our Lord tells us should be shaken, or rather dissolved.

As the disciples had, in conformity to the repeated questions of the Pharisees, during his ministry, asked what should be the sign of his coming, our blessed Saviour told them, that after the tribulation of those days, when the sun should be darkened, and all the enemies of the Messiah should mourn, they should see the accomplishment of what Daniel foretold, by the figurative expression of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven; for they should behold the signal punishment executed on the Jewish nation by the Roman armies, sent for that purpose by the decree and permission of heaven. "Then

shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Matt. xxiv. 30. Then were the followers of Christ to be delivered from the oppression under which they had long groaned, and openly honored before the whole earth; and on this may true believers rest; because it is founded on eternal truth. "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matt. xxiv. 34, 35.

Whoever shall compare the prediction of our Saviour with the history Josephus wrote of the war, cannot fail of being struck with the wisdom of Christ, acknowledging that his prediction was truly divine; for as the Jewish nation was at this time in the most flourishing state, the event here foretold appeared altogether improbable. Besides, the circumstances of the destruction are very numerous and surprisingly great; and the whole delivered without any ambiguity. It is, therefore, a prophecy of such a kind as could never have been uttered by any impostor, and consequently the person who delivered it was acquainted with the secret councils of heaven, and was truly divine.

Many cavillers against the Christian religion have asked, why Christ should order his disciples not to flee from Jerusalem till they saw it encompassed with the Roman army, when it would then be impossible for them to make their escape? But persons, before they propose such questions, would do well to read attentively the history Josephus has given us of these terrible calamities, because they would there find a solution to the difficulty. That historian tells us, that Cestius Gallus surrounded the city with his army, and at a time when he could easily have taken the city, suddenly withdrew his forces, without any apparent reason. He adds, that as soon as the siege was raised many eminent persons fled from it as from a sinking ship. In all probability, many of these were Christians, who, being warned by this prophecy of their great Master, saved themselves by flight, as he had directed. Thus we see what frivolous objections are made by the free-thinkers of our age, against the truth of the sacred writings, and how easily they are answered.

Having thus beautifully, but awfully, described this important and striking event, the blessed Jesus assured his disciples that it would be very unexpected, and thence urged the necessity of a watchful vigi-

lance, lest they should be surprised, and have a share in those calamities. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. xxiv. 37. "Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." Mark xiii. 35, 36.

It was natural, as men were to undergo, at the destruction of Jerusalem, nearly the same miseries, and as the passions which its approach would raise in their minds were similar to those which will happen at the destruction of the world and the general judgment; it was natural, I say, for our blessed Saviour on this occasion to put his disciples in mind of that judgment, and exhort them to the faithful discharge of their duty, from the consideration of the suddenness of his coming to call every individual to account after death: "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods." Matt. xxiv. 44. etc. As if he had said, You who are the ministers of religion ought to be particularly attentive in discharging the important trust committed to your care. You are the stewards to whom is intrusted the whole household of the church; and you would do well to remember that your example will have a great effect upon the minds of those employed under you. It is your duty to be well acquainted with the stores of evangelical truths, and to understand how they may be applied to the best advantage: you should be also careful to know the characters of the different persons under your directions, that you may be able to give every one of them his portion of meat in due season; and if I find you thus employed at my coming, I will reward you with the joys of my kingdom, even as an earthly master bestows particular marks of respect on such servants as have been remarkably faithful in any important trust. But, on the other hand, if you are not true to the trust reposed in you; if you pervert your office, and watch not over the souls committed to your care, I will come to you unexpectedly, and make you dreadful examples of mine anger, by the severe punishments which I will inflict upon you. "But, and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the

lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxiv. 48, etc.

Having thus generally described the future state of retribution, our Lord passed to the consideration of the general judgment, when those rewards and punishments should be distributed in their utmost extent. This could not fail of animating his disciples to a vigorous discharge of their duty; and by the striking representation of the last judgment he has here given, must greatly tend to rouse the consciences of men from their lethargy, and consider before it be too late, the things which belong to their peace.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven, the gospel-kingdom, in the last dispensation of it, when the kingdom of grace is going to be swallowed up in the kingdom of glory, "be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish." They that were foolish, took indeed their lamps but put no oil in their vessels, while the wise, as an instance of their prudence and foresight, took both their lamps and oil in their vessels, knowing that it was uncertain when the bridegroom would arrive, and that they might, in all probability wait longer for his coming. Nor were they mistaken, for the bridegroom did not come so soon as they expected. And while he tarried "they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him; Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us." But he from within answered, and said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Matt. xxv. 12, 13.

In order to understand this parable, we must remember that it alludes to the custom of the eastern people. It was usual with them for the bridegroom to bring his bride home in the evening, sooner or

later, as circumstances might happen; and that they might be received properly at his house, his female acquaintance, especially those of the younger sort, were invited to come and wait with lamps, till some of his retinue, dispatched before the rest, informed them that he was near at hand; upon which they trimmed their lamps, went forth to welcome him, and conducted him with his bride into the house, for which they were honored as guests at the marriage feast, and shared in the usual festivities.

To ten such virgins our blessed Saviour compares those to whom the gospel is preached, because this was the general number appointed to wait on the bridegroom; and to these all Christian professors may be likened, who taking their lamps of Christian profession, go forth to meet the bridegroom; that is, consider themselves as candidates for the kingdom of heaven, and desire to be admitted with Christ, the celestial bridegroom, into the happy mansions of immortality.

We must remember that there always was, and always will be, a mixture of good and bad in the church, till the great day of separation arrives. The weakness of the foolish is represented by their taking no oil in their vessels with their lamps; that is, the foolish professors content themselves with the bare lamp of a profession, and never think of furnishing it with the oil of divine grace, the fruit of which is a life of holiness; whereas the wise, well knowing that a lamp, without the supply of oil, would be speedily extinguished; that faith, without love and holiness, will be of no consequence, take care to secure a supply for themselves of the divine grace, and to display in their lives the works of love and charity.

While all those virgins, though differently supplied, waiting the coming of the bridegroom, all slumbered and slept; that is, as some think all Christians, both good and bad, the sincere and the hypocrite, lie down together in the sleep of death; and while the bridegroom delays his coming, slumber in the chambers of the dust. But others suppose, that this argues the want of vigilance and care, even in the wise as well as the foolish; that few, if any, are so attentive as they ought to be, to the coming of the Lord.

The Jews have a tradition, that Christ's coming to judgment will be at midnight, which agrees with that particular in the parable, "At midnight there was a cry made, Go ye out to meet him." But however this be, whether he will come at midnight, or in the morning, it will be awfully sudden and alarming. The great cry will be heard to the ends of the earth. The trumpet shall sound, and the mighty

archangel's voice pierce even the bowels of the earth, and the depths of the ocean. "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

The graves, both earthly and watery, must surrender their clayey tenants, and all will then begin to think how they may prepare themselves to find admittance to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." But the foolish soon perceived their folly: their lamps were gone out, totally extinguished, and they had no oil to support the flame: in like manner the hypocrite's hope shall perish. But the wise were in a much happier condition; they had oil in their vessels, sufficient for themselves, but none to spare; for, when the foolish virgins would have procured some from them, they denied their request, fearing there would not be enough for both.

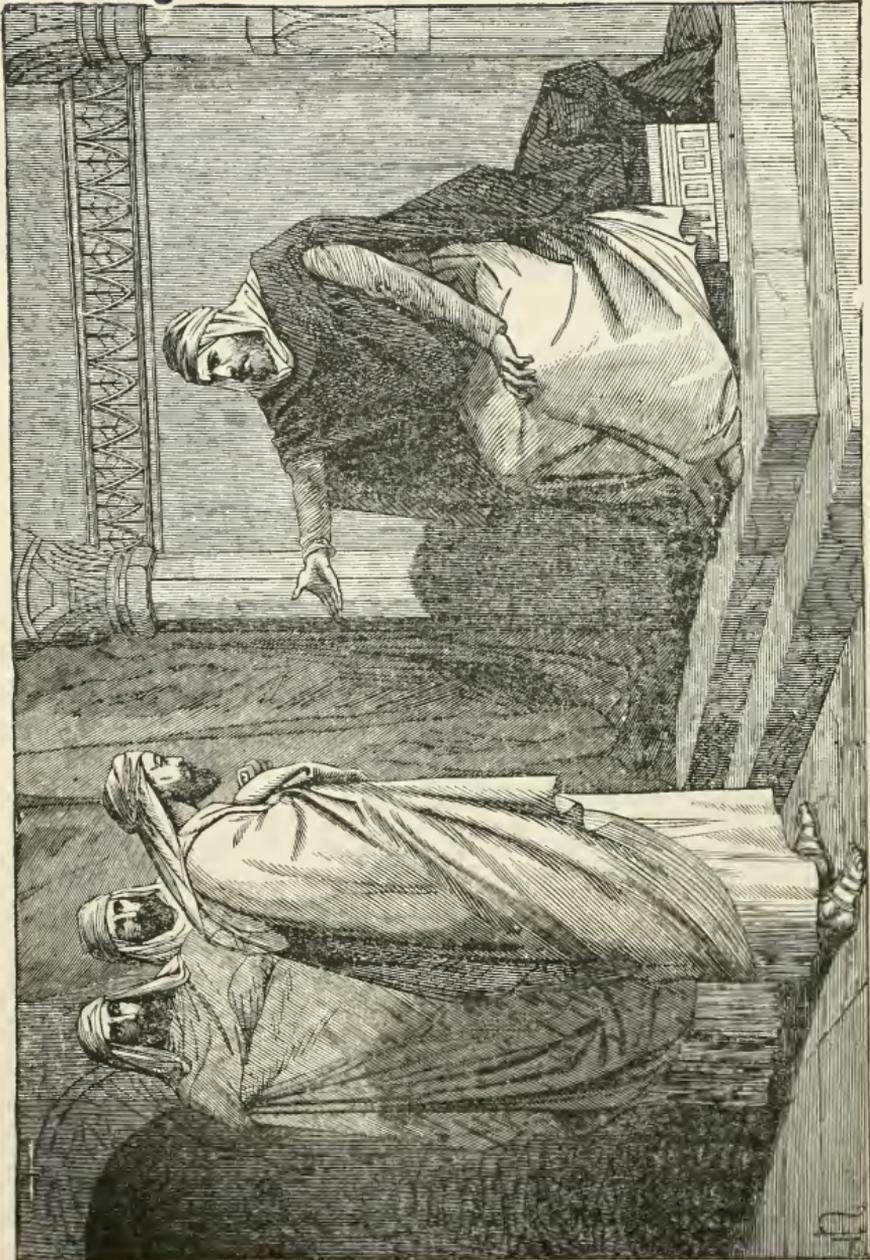
There are here beautifully represented, nominal and sincere Christians; the former having only the bare lamp of a profession; who have not been solicitous to gain the oil of divine grace, by a constant use of the means assigned, will fare like the foolish virgins; while the latter, whose hearts are stocked with divine oil, will, like the wise virgins, enter into the joy of their Lord.

But the foolish, going to purchase oil, missed the bridegroom, and behold the door was shut. They at last, however, reached the gate, and with great importunity cried, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." But he answered and said, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." As you denied me on earth, I deny you now; depart from me, I know you not!

But as this duty was of the utmost importance, our blessed Saviour, to show us more clearly the nature and use of Christian watchfulness, to which he exhorts us at the conclusion of the parable of the ten virgins, added another, wherein he represented the different characters of a faithful and slothful servant, and the difference of their future acceptance.

The Son of man, said he, may, with respect to his final coming to judge the world, be likened "unto a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several abilities; and straightway took his journey." Matt. xxv. 14, 15.

Immediately, on his master's departure, he that had received the five talents lost no time, but went and traded with the same, and his



THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

increase was equal to his industry and application; he made them other five talents. He that had received two talents did the same, and had equal success. But he that received one, very unlike the conduct of his fellow-servants, went his way, digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money, idle, useless, unemployed, and unimproved.

After a long time, and at an hour when they did not expect it, the Lord of those servants returned, called them before him, and ordered them to give an account of their several trusts. Upon which he that had received five talents, as a proof of his fidelity, produced other five talents, saying, "Lord, thou deliverdst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more." His Lord, highly applauding his industry and fidelity, said to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

In like manner, also, he that had received two talents declared he had gained two others; upon which he was honored with the same applause, and admitted into the same joy with his fellow-servant; their master having regard to the industry and fidelity of his servants, not to the number of the talents only, by the greatness of their increase.

After this, he that had received the one talent came, and, with a shameful falsehood, to excuse his vile indolence, said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." Matt. xxv. 24, 25.

This perversion of even the smallest portion of grace greatly excited the resentment of his Lord, who answered, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxv. 26-30.

Such is the parable of the talents, as delivered by our blessed Saviour; a parable containing the measures of our duty to God, and the motives that enforce it, all delivered in the plainest and simplest manner. But its views are so extensive and affecting, that while it instructs the meanest capacity, it engages reverence and attention from the greatest, and strikes an impression on the most improved understanding. We are to consider God as our Lord and Master, the author and giver of every good gift, and ourselves as his servants, or stewards, who, in various instances and measures, have received from his goodness such blessings and abilities as may fit us for the several stations and offices of life to which his providence appoints us. But then we are to observe, that these are committed to us as a trust, or loan, for whose due management we are accountable to the donor. If we faithfully acquit ourselves of this probationary charge, we shall receive far greater instances of God's regard and favor; but if we are remiss and negligent, we must expect to feel his resentment and displeasure. A time will come, and how near it may be none of us can tell, when our great Master will demand a particular account of every talent he hath committed to our care.

This time may indeed be at a distance, for it is uncertain when the king of terrors will receive the awful warrant to terminate our existence here below; yet it will certainly come, and our eternal happiness or misery depends upon it; so that we should have it continually in our thoughts, and engraven, as with the point of a diamond, on the tables of our hearts.

We shall now proceed to the third parable, or rather description, delivered at the same time by the blessed Jesus, namely, that of the last judgment. "When the Son of man," said he, "shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Matt. xxv. 31-33. It is common in the Old Testament to compare good men to sheep, on account of their innocence and usefulness, and wicked men to goats, for their exorbitant lusts. Our blessed Saviour, however, does not pursue the allegory further, but describes the remaining, and indeed the greatest part of this awful scene in terms perfectly simple; so that though the sense be profound, it is obvious. Here the judgment of all nations, Gen-

tiles as well as Christians, is exhibited; and the particulars on which these awful trials are to proceed displayed by the great Judge himself.

Here we learn that we shall be condemned or acquitted, according as we have neglected or performed works of charity, works which flow from the great principles of faith and love, and which the very heathen are, by the light of reason, invited to perform. But we must not understand that such works merited this favor from the Judge: no, all who are acquitted at that day, whether Heathen or Christians, shall be acquitted solely on account of the life and death of Christ, the true, the only meritorious cause.

“Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” Matt. xxv. 34-36.

These enraptured and amazed souls shall then ask, with great reverence and humility, when they performed these services, as they never saw him in want, and therefore could not assist him. “Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Matt. xxv. 37-40. This is truly astonishing! The united wisdom of men and angels could never have discovered a more proper method to convey an idea of the warmth and force of the divine benevolence to the sons of men, or offer a more forcible motive to charity, than that the Son of God himself should, from his seat of judgment, in presence of the whole race of mankind, and all the hosts of blessed spirits from the courts of heaven, declare that all good offices done to the afflicted for his sake are done to himself. During the time of his dwelling with human nature in this vale of tears, he suffered unspeakable injuries and afflictions; and therefore he considers all the righteous who are distressed as members of his body, loves them with the utmost tenderness, and is so greatly interested in their welfare that he rejoices when they are happy, and, humanely speaking, grieves when they are distressed.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

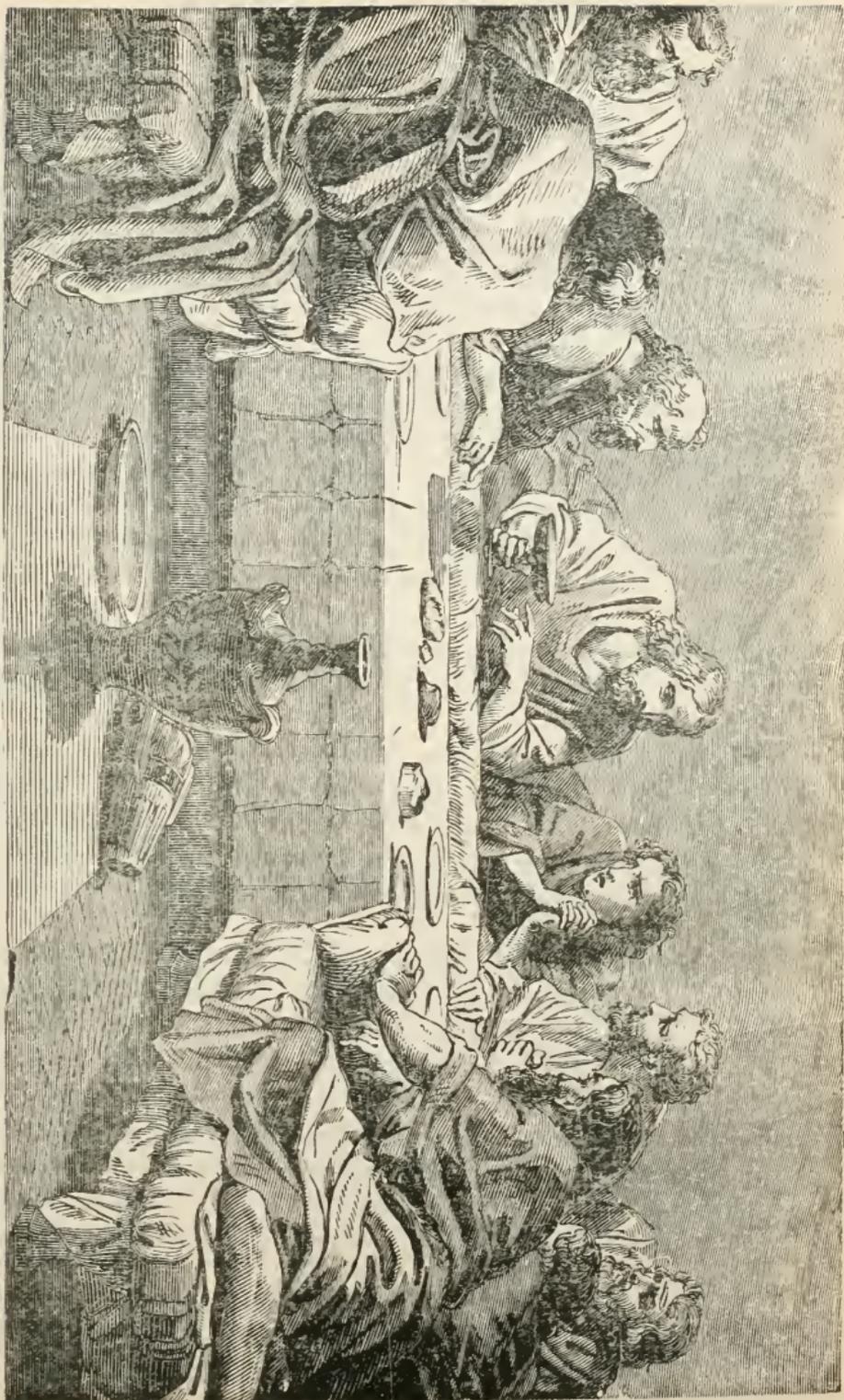
OUR BLESSED LORD IS ANOINTED BY A POOR BUT PIOUS WOMAN—THE PER-  
FIDIOUS JUDAS CONSENTS TO BETRAY HIS MASTER—THE HUMBLE JESUS  
WASHES THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES, AND FORETELLS THAT DISCIPLE WHO  
WAS TO BETRAY HIM INTO THE HANDS OF HIS INVETERATE ENEMIES

THE blessed Jesus used frequently to retire in the evening from the city to the Mount of Olives, and there spend the night, either in some village or the gardens, either to avoid falling into the hands of his enemies, or for the sake of retirement. They did not indeed presume to attack him while he was surrounded by his followers in the day-time; but in all probability, had he lodged within the city, they would have apprehended him during the darkness and silence of the night.

When our blessed Saviour had finished these parables, he added a short account of his own death, in order to fortify his disciples against a greater trial than they had yet met with, namely, the sufferings of their Master. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." Matt. xxvi. 1-5.

When the evening approached, our blessed Saviour, with his disciples, repaired to Bethany, and entered the house of Simon the leper, probably one who had experienced the healing efficacy of his power. But while he sat at meat a woman, who had also doubtless been an object of his mercy, poured a box of precious ointment upon his head.

The action displeased his disciples, who knew that their Master was not delighted with luxuries of any kind; and therefore they rebuked the woman, imagining that it would have been more acceptable to the Son of God, if the ointment had been sold and the money distributed among the sons and daughters of poverty and affliction.



THE LAST SUPPER

To reprove the disciples, Jesus told them that it pleased the divine Providence to order that there should always be persons in necessitous circumstances, that the virtuous might never want occasions for exercising their charity; but that those who did not now testify their love to him would never more have the opportunity of doing it, as the time of his ministry was near its period, when the king of terrors should enjoy a short triumph over his body; and therefore this woman had seasonably anointed him for his burial. And to make them sensible of their folly, in blaming the woman for this her expression of love to him, he assured them that she should be highly esteemed for this action in every part of the world, and her memory live to the latest period of time. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, having been more forward than the rest, in condemning the woman, thought the rebuke was particularly directed to him. Stung with the guilt of his conscience, he rose from the table, went immediately into the city, to the high priest's palace, where he found the whole counsel assembled. His passion would not suffer him to reflect on the horrid deed he was going to commit; he immediately promised, for the reward of thirty shekels of silver, to betray into their hands his Lord and Master.

Having thus engaged with the rulers of Israel to put into their hands a person who had been long laboring for their salvation, who had often invited them, in the most pathetic manner, to embrace the benevolent terms of the gospel offered by the Almighty, he sought an opportunity to betray him, in the absence of the multitude!

Our Lord, who well knew that the time of his suffering drew nigh, desired therefore to celebrate the passover with his disciples. He was now going to finish the mighty work for which he came into the world, and therefore would not neglect to fulfil the smallest particular of the law of Moses. He therefore sent two of his disciples into the city to prepare a lamb, and make it ready for eating the passover; telling them that they should meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, who would conduct them to his house, and show them a large upper room, furnished, where they were to make ready for him.

He was willing, in this last transaction, to convince his disciples that he knew everything that should befall him; that his sufferings were all predetermined by the Almighty, and that they were all on his own account submitted unto voluntarily.

When night approached, Jesus left Bethany, and everything being ready for him at the time he entered into the city, he sat down at the appointed hour. But knowing that his suffering was now near, he told his disciples, in the most affectionate manner, that he had greatly longed to eat the passover with them before he suffered, in order to show them the strongest proofs of his love. These proofs were to give them a pattern of humility and charity, by washing their feet, instructing them in the nature of his death, and a propitiatory sacrifice, instituting the sacrament in commemoration of his sufferings; comforting them by the tender discourses recorded, (John xiv. xv. xvi.) in which he gave them a variety of excellent directions, together with many gracious promises; and recommending them to the kind protection of his heavenly Father. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Luke xxii. 15, 16.

Having thus spoken, he arose from the table, laid aside his garment like a servant, and, with all the officiousness of an humble minister, washed the feet of his disciples, without distinction, though one of them, Judas Iscariot, was a monster of impiety, that they might at once behold a conjunction of charity and humility, of self-denial and indifference, represented by a person glorious beyond expression, their great Lord and Master.

He washed their feet (according to a custom which prevailed in those hot countries, both before and after meat), in order to show them an example of the utmost humility and condescension.

The omnipotent Son of the Father lays everything aside, that he may serve his followers: heaven stoops to earth, one abyss calls upon another, and the miseries of man, which were almost infinite, are exceeded by a mercy equal to the immensity of the Almighty.

He deferred this ceremony, which was a customary civility paid to honorable strangers at the beginning of their feast, that it might be preparatory to the second, which he intended should be a feast to the whole world, when all the followers of the blessed Jesus should have an opportunity, in a spiritual manner, of feeding on his flesh and drinking his blood. When our blessed Saviour came to Peter he modestly declined it; but his Master told him, if he refused to submit implicitly to all his orders, he could have no part with him. On which Peter cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But Jesus told him that the person who had

bathed himself had no reason to wash any part of the body, except his feet, which he might have dirtied by walking from the bath. And added, Ye are all clean as to the outward laver, but not as to the inward and spiritual laver. I well know that one of you will betray me.

When our gracious Lord had finished this menial service, he asked his disciples if they knew the meaning of what he had done, as the action was purely emblematical. You truly, added he, style me Master and Lord, for I am the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. But if I, your Master and your Lord, have condescended to wash your feet, you surely ought to perform, with the utmost pleasure, the humblest offices of love one to another. I have set you a pattern of humility, and I recommend it to you.

And certainly nothing can more effectually show us the necessity of this heavenly temper of mind than its being recommended to us by so great an example: a recommendation which, in the present circumstances, was particularly seasonable; for, the disciples having heard their great Master declare that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, their minds were filled with ambitious thoughts. And therefore our blessed Saviour added, Ye need not be ashamed to follow my example in this particular; for no servant can think it beneath him to condescend to perform those actions his lord has done before him. And therefore, if he knows his duty, he will be happy if he practices it. He moreover added, that though he had called them all to the apostleship, and well knew the secret dispositions of every heart before he chose them, they need not be surprised that one among them should prove a traitor, as thereby the scripture would be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lift up his heel against me. As our blessed Saviour was now to be but a short time with his disciples, he thought proper to take his farewell of them, which he did in a most affectionate manner.

These melancholy tidings greatly troubled them. They were unwilling to part with so kind a friend, so dear a master, so wise a guide, and so profitable a teacher; especially as they thought they should be left in a forlorn condition, a poor and helpless prey to the rage and hatred of a blind and malicious generation.

They seem willing to die with their Lord, if that might be accepted. Why cannot I follow thee? I will lay down my life for thee, was the language of one, and even all of them; but they could not support the thoughts of a disconsolate separation. Their great and

compassionate Master seeing them thus dejected, endeavored to cheer their drooping spirits: "Let not your hearts be troubled." Listen attentively to what I am going to deliver for your consolation, "I am going to prepare a place for you; I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also." A reviving word of promise! they were one day to meet again their dear, their affectionate Master, in a place where they should live together to all eternity.

But death makes so vast a distance between friends, and the disciples then knew so little of a future state, that they seemed to doubt whether they should, after their parting, meet their great Redeemer. They neither knew the place where he was going, nor the way that led to his kingdom. "Lord," said they, "as we know not whither thou goest, how can we know the way?" In answer to this question, he told them that he was "the way, the truth, and the life;" as if he had said, Through the propitiatory sacrifice I am about to offer; the sacred truths I have delivered, and the divine assistance, which I shall hereafter dispense, you are to obtain that happiness which I go to prepare for you.

But, lest all these arguments should not be sufficient to quiet their minds, he had still another, which could not fail of success: "If ye love me," says he, "ye will rejoice, because I said I go to the Father;" intimating that he would consider it as a proof of their love to him if they ceased to mourn.

They doubtless thought, that by grieving for his death, they expressed their love to their Master; and it might seem strange that our Saviour should put so contrary an interpretation on their friendly sorrow, or require so unnatural a thing of them, as to rejoice at his departure. What! (might they think) shall we rejoice at so amiable a friend's removal from us? or can we be glad that he retires, and leaves us in this vale of misery? No, it is impossible; the human heart, on so melancholy an occasion, can have no disposition to rejoice.

Our blessed Saviour, therefore, adds this reason to solve the seeming paradox; "because he was going to the Father;" that is, he was going to ascend to the right hand of infinite power, from whence he would send them all the assistance they could desire. It must not, however, be supposed that he meant by these words, that his disciples should not be concerned at his death, or that they could not love him unless they expressed a visible joy on this occasion. That would, indeed, have been a hard interpretation of their grief: he knew their

grief flowed from love ; and that if their love had not been strong, their sorrow had been much less. Indeed, their Master was fully convinced that love was the occasion of their sorrow ; and, therefore, he used these arguments to mitigate it, and direct it in a proper course.

Nor did our Lord intend to intimate that all sorrow for so worthy a friend was unlawful, or an unbecoming expression of their love ; doubtless he was not displeased to see his disciples so tenderly affected at his removal from them. He who shed tears at the grave of Lazarus, blended with sighs and groans, cannot be thought to forbid them wholly at his own. He, therefore, did not chide his disciples with angry reproaches, as though they had been entirely in the wrong, but gently reasoned with them by kind persuasions. "Let not your hearts be troubled," as rather pitying than condemning their sorrow.

Soon after Jesus had spoken these things, his heart was greatly troubled, to think that one of his disciples should prove his enemy : he complained of it at the table, declaring that one of them should betray him. This moving declaration greatly affected the disciples, and they began every one of them to say to their Master, "Lord, is it I?" But Jesus, giving them no decisive answer, John, the beloved disciple, whose sweet disposition and other amiable qualities is perpetuated in the peculiar love his great Master bore him, and was now reclining on his bosom, asked him, who among the disciples could be guilty of so detestable a crime. Jesus told him that the person to whom he should give the sop, when he had dipped it, was he who should betray him. Accordingly, as soon as he had dipped the sop in the dish, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, saying to him at the same time, "That thou doest do quickly."

Judas received the sop without knowing anything of what his Master had told the beloved disciple ; nor did any of the disciples, except St. John, entertain the least suspicion that Judas was the person who would betray their Master. The innocent disciples were indeed so deeply affected with his declaration, that one of them should betray him, that they did not remark the words of Jesus to his apostate disciple, but continued to ask him who was the person that should be guilty of so base a crime.

Willing at last to satisfy their importunity, the blessed Jesus declared, that the person who dipped his hand with him in the dish should betray him. This to the eleven was a joyful declaration, but

confounding in the highest degree to Judas. Impudent as he was, it struck him speechless, pointing him out plainly, and displaying the foulness of his heart.

While Judas continued mute with confusion, the blessed Jesus declared that his death should be brought about according to the decrees of Heaven, though that would not in the least mitigate the crime of the person who betrayed him; adding, "it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Judas having now recovered himself a little, asserted his innocence by a question which implied a denial of the charge. But his Master soon silenced him, by positively affirming that he was really the person.

As various conjectures have been formed concerning the motives which induced the perfidious Judas cruelly to deliver up his innocent Master into the hands of his enemies, it may not be improper to cite those which appear to be the most probable, though the decision must be entirely left to the reader.

Some are of opinion that he was induced to commit this villany by the resentment of the rebuke given him by his Master for blaming the woman who came with the precious ointment, and anointed the head of Jesus, as he sat at meat in the house of Simon the leper.

But though this had doubtless its weight with the traitor, yet it could not, I think, be his only motive, because the rebuke was given in general to all the disciples, who had certainly been forward with him in censuring the woman. Nor can we imagine, even if he had been rebuked alone, that so mild a reproof could provoke any person, however wicked, to the horrid act of murdering his friend, much less Judas, whose covetous disposition must have disposed him to bear everything from his Master, from whom he expected the highest preferment, if he should openly declare himself the Messiah, and take the reins of government into his own hands.

Others think that Judas betrayed his Master through covetousness. But if we understand by covetousness the reward given by the priests, this opinion is equally defective; for the sum was too small for the most sordid wretch to think equivalent to the life of a friend, especially when he expected from him the highest posts and advantages.

Others attribute the perfidy of Judas to his doubting whether his Master was the Messiah, and that he betrayed him in a fit of despair. But of all the solutions this is the worst founded. For if Judas believed his Master to be an impostor, he must have observed something in his behavior which led him to form such an opinion of him; and

in that case he would doubtless have mentioned it to the chief priests and elders, when he made the contract with them; which it is plain he did not, as they would have reminded him of it when he came back and expressed his remorse for what he had done.

It should also be observed, that had Judas given them any intimations of this kind, they would doubtless have urged them against our blessed Saviour himself in the course of his trial, when they were at so great a loss for witnesses to support their accusations; and against the apostles afterwards, when they reproved them for speaking in the name of Jesus. Besides had Judas thought his Master an impostor, and proposed nothing by his treachery but the price he put upon his life, how came he to sell him for such a trifle, when he well knew that the chief priests and rulers would have given him any sum, rather than not have got him into their hands?

In fine, the supposition that Judas believed his Master to be an impostor is directly confuted by the solemn declaration he made to the priests, when he declared the deepest conviction of the innocence of our great Redeemer. "I have sinned," said he, "in betraying the innocent blood."

It must be remembered that the remorse he felt for this crime, when he saw his Master condemned, was too bitter to be endured, so that he fled even to the king of terrors for relief.

The evangelist St. John tells us that he was of so covetous a disposition as to steal money out of our Lord's bag; and hence we have sufficient reason to believe that he first followed Jesus with a view of obtaining riches and other temporal advantages, which he expected the Messiah's friends would enjoy. It likewise authorizes us to think, that as he had hitherto reaped none of these advantages he might grow impatient under the delay; and the rather as Jesus had lately discouraged all ambitious views among his disciples, and neglected to embrace the opportunity of erecting that kingdom, which was offered him by the multitude who accompanied him into Jerusalem with shouts, and crying Hosanna to the Son of David. His impatience, therefore, becoming excessive, suggested to him the thought of delivering his Master into the hands of the council, firmly persuaded that he would then be obliged to assume the dignity of the Messiah, and consequently be able to reward his followers. For as this court was composed of the chief priests, elders, and scribes; that is, the principal persons of the sacerdotal order, the representatives of the great families and the doctors of the law, the traitor did not doubt

that his Master, when brought before so august an assembly, would assert his pretensions to the title of Messiah, prove his claim to their full conviction, gain them over to his interest, and immediately enter on his regal dignity. And though he must be sensible that the measures he took to compass his intention were very offensive to his Master, yet he might think the success of it would procure his pardon from so compassionate a Master, and even recommend him to favor. In the meantime his project, however plausible it may appear to one of his turn, was far from being free from difficulty; and therefore, while he revolved it in his own mind, many things might occur to stagger his resolution.

At length, thinking himself affronted by the rebuke of Jesus, at the time when the woman anointed the head of his Master, he was provoked to execute the resolution he had formed of obliging him to alter his measures. Rising, therefore, directly from the table, he went immediately into the city, to the palace of the high priest, where he found the council assembled, consulting how they might take Jesus by subtilty, in the absence of the multitude. To them he made known his intention of delivering his Master into their hands, and undertook, for a small sum of money, to conduct a band of armed men to the place where the Saviour of the world usually spent the night with his disciples, where they might apprehend him without the least danger of a tumult. Some reasons may be offered in support of this opinion concerning the motives which induced Judas to betray his Master. First—from the nature of the contract. “What will ye give me,” said he, “and I will deliver him unto you?” He did not mean that he would deliver him up to be put to death; for though the priests had consulted among themselves how they might destroy Jesus, they had not been so abominably wicked as to declare their intention publicly; they only proposed to bring him to trial for assuming the character of the Messiah, and to treat him as it should appear he deserved.

The offer, therefore, which Judas made them of delivering him up was in conformity to their public resolutions. Nor did they understand it in any other light, for had the priests thought that his design in this was to get his Master punished with death, they must also have thought that he believed him to be an impostor, in which case they would doubtless have produced him as one of their principal evidences, no person being more proper. Also, when Judas returned to them with the money, declaring that he had sinned in betraying the innocent blood, instead of replying, “What is that to us? see thou **66**

that," it was the most natural thing in the world to have upbraided him with the stain he had put upon his Master's character, by the contract they had made with him.

It is true they called the money they gave him, "the price of blood;" but they did not mean this in the strictest sense, as they had neither hired Judas to assassinate his Master, nor can they be supposed to have charged themselves with the guilt of murdering him. It was only the price of blood consequent on being the reward they had given to the traitor for putting it in their power to take away the life of Christ under the color and form of public justice.

Now it may be doubted whether Judas asked the money as a reward of his service. He covetously, indeed, kept it; and the priests, for that reason, called it the price of blood. In short, Judas knew that the rulers could not take away the life of any person whatsoever, the Romans having deprived them of that power, and therefore some think he could have no design of this kind in delivering him up: not to mention that it was a common opinion among the Jews, that the Messiah could never die: an opinion that Judas might easily embrace, having seen his Master raise several persons, and among the rest, one who had been in the grave no less than four days.

Another reason which may be assigned in confirmation of this opinion is, the traitor's hanging himself when he found him condemned not by the governor, but by the council, whose prerogative it was to judge prophets. Had Judas proposed to take away the life of his Master, the sentence of condemnation passed upon him, instead of filling him with despair, must have gratified him, being the accomplishment of his project; whereas the light wherein we have endeavored to place his conduct shows this circumstance to have been perfectly natural.

He knew him to be thoroughly innocent; and expected that he would have wrought such miracles before the council as should have constrained them to believe. Therefore, when he found that nothing of this kind was done, and that the priests had passed the sentence of condemnation upon him, and were carrying him to the governor to get it executed, he repented of his rash and covetous project, came to the chief priests and elders, the persons to whom he had betrayed him, offered them their money again, and solemnly declared the deepest conviction of his Master's innocence, hoping that they would have desisted from the prosecution. But they were obstinate, and would not relent: upon which his remorse arose to such a pitch, that, unable

to support the torments of his own conscience, he went and hanged himself.

Thus it is probable that the traitor's intention in delivering up his Master was not to get him punished with death, but only to lay him under a necessity of proving his pretensions before the grandees, whom he had hitherto shunned; thinking that if they had yielded, the whole nation would immediately have been raised forthwith to the summit of their expectations.

This account of Judas's conduct is by no means calculated to lessen the foulness of his crime, which was the blackest imaginable. For even in the light above mentioned, it implied both an insatiable avarice and a wilful opposition to the counsels of Providence, and rendered the actor of it a disgrace to human nature. But it is calculated to set the credibility of the traitor's action in a proper light, and to show that he was not moved to it by anything suspicious in the character of his Master; because, according to his view of it, his perfidy, instead of implying that he entertained suspicions of his Master's integrity, plainly proves that he had the fullest conviction of his being the Messiah. Nor was it possible for any one who had been present at the miracles which Jesus wrought and the doctrines which he delivered, to admit of a doubt of his being the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, unless blinded by the most obstinate prejudice.



JESUS SUPPORTS THE SINKING PETER.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

JESUS INSTITUTES THE SACRAMENT IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS DEATH AND SUFFERINGS—SETTLES A DISPUTE WHICH AROSE AMONG HIS DISCIPLES—PREDICTS PETER'S COWARDICE IN DENYING HIS MASTER—FORTIFIES HIS DISCIPLES AGAINST THE APPROACHING SHOCK—FORETELLS PETER'S COWARDICE AGAIN—PREACHES TO AND PRAYS WITH HIS DISCIPLES FOR THE LAST TIME—PASSIONATE ADDRESS OF OUR LORD TO HIS FATHER IN THE GARDEN.

THE great Redeemer, ever mindful of the grand design of his mission, even the salvation of lost and perishing sinners, was not in the least prevented by the treachery of his apostate disciple; for knowing that he must become a sacrifice for sin, etc., he instituted the sacrament of his supper, to perpetuate the memory of it throughout all ages.

Accordingly, as they were eating the paschal supper, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." Matt. xxvi. 26.

Observe this rite no longer in remembrance of your deliverance from Egypt, but in remembrance of me, who, by dying for you, will bring you out of a spiritual bondage, a bondage far worse than the Egyptian, under which your fathers groaned, and will establish you in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Do it in remembrance of me, who, by laying down my life, will ransom you from sin, from death, from hell, and will set open the gates of heaven to you, that you may enter immortality in triumph.

Having given the bread to his disciples, he also took the cup, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. All of you, and all of my disciples, in all ages, must drink of this cup, because it represents my blood shed for the remission of the sins of mankind; my blood, by which the new covenant between God and man is ratified. It is, therefore, my blood of the new covenant; so that this institution exhibits to your joyful meditation the grand basis of the hopes of the children of men, and perpetuates the memory of it to the end of the world. He added, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day

when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matt. xxvi. 29.

The manifestation of the Son of God is the most illustrious, the most momentous event that is possible to engage the meditations of mankind. To his life and death, his resurrection and ascension into glory, we are indebted for our hopes and assurances of pardon, for our peace, for our happiness. To procure our salvation, he made the most amazing condescension from the dignity he enjoyed with his Father, by putting on the veil of flesh; he poured divine instruction from his lips, and shone forth with an all-perfect and all-lovely example. For our benefit he submitted to a course of the most cruel treatment from his bitter enemies, to the agonies of the cross, and to the stroke of the king of terrors. For our happiness he arose again with power and lustre, ascended into the mansions of eternal happiness, manages our affairs with the Father, and holds the reins of government. With the greatest wisdom and goodness, therefore, this beneficent Jesus instituted a rite that should recall his love to our memories, and awake each pious passion in our breast; a rite which, by the breaking of bread, and the pouring out of wine, should represent to us in a striking manner that most signal proof of the affection both of himself and his heavenly Father, when his tender frame was exposed to wounds and bruises, when streams of the most precious blood issued from his sacred veins.

The important, the awful scene, now approached, when the great work was to be finished. The traitor Judas was gone to the chief priests and elders for a band of soldiers to apprehend him; but this did not discompose the Redeemer of mankind; he took occasion to meditate on the glory that would accrue both to himself and to the Almighty from those sufferings, and spake of it to his disciples. "Now," said he, "is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." He told them, that having already done honor to his Father, by the past actions of his life, and being about to honor him yet further, by his sufferings and death, which would display his perfections, particularly his infinite love to the human race, in the most astonishing and amiable light, he was, in his turn, to receive honor from his Father; intimating that his human nature was to be exalted to the right hand of Omnipotence, and that his mission from God was to be supported by irrefragable attestations.

But his disciples, imagining that he spake of the glory of a tempo-

ral kingdom, their ambition was again revived, and they began to dispute with as much keenness as ever, which of them should be greatest in that kingdom. This contention Jesus suppressed by the arguments he had formerly used for the same purpose. Among the Gentiles, said he, they are reckoned the greatest who have the greatest power, and have exercised it in the most absolute manner: but your greatness shall be very different from theirs: it shall not consist in being unlimited with regard to tyrannical power, even though it should be joined with an affectation of titles, which denote qualities truly honorable; but whosoever desires to be great, or chief among you, let him be so by his humility and the service he renders to the rest, in imitation of me, your Master, whose greatness consists in this, that I am become the servant of you all. Adding, as they had continued with him in this temptation, he would bestow upon them such a kingdom as his Father had appointed for him.

At the same time, to check their ambition, and lead them to form a just notion of his kingdom, he told them that he was soon to leave them, and that whither he was going they could not at that time follow him; for which reason, instead of contending with one another, which of them should be the greatest, they would do well to be united among themselves in the happy bond of love. For, by loving one another sincerely and fervently, they would prove themselves his disciples, to the conviction of mankind, who could not be ignorant that love was a distinguishing part of his character.

This is termed a new commandment, not because mutual love had never been enjoined to mankind before, but because it was a precept of peculiar excellency; for the word translated new, in the Hebrew language, denotes excellency and truth; he also called this a new commandment, because they were to exercise it under a new relation, according to a new measure, and from new motives. They were to love one another in the relation of his disciples, and in that degree of love which he had shown to them; for they were to lay down their lives for the brethren.

This excellent doctrine, however, did not make such an impression on Peter as the words which Jesus had spoken concerning a place whither his disciples could not come. He therefore replied, by asking where he was going; to which Jesus answered, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but shall follow me afterward." Further, in order to make his disciples humble, watchful, and kindly affectionate one towards another, he assured them that

Satan was seeking to ruin them all by his temptations. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Peter was greatly offended that his Master should have singled him out as the weakest; for so he interpreted his praying for him particularly; and supposing that he mentioned Satan's seeking to sift him, as the thing which would hinder him from following his Master, replied, "Why cannot I follow thee now? Is there any road more terrible than the dark valley of the shadow of death? Yet through these black and gloomy shades I am willing this moment to accompany thee." Jesus, knowing his weak, though sincere, resolution, answered, "Art thou so very confident of thine own strength? I tell thee, that this very night, before the cock crows, thou wilt thrice deny me to be thy Master."

Our blessed Saviour having finished what he had to say to Peter in particular, turned himself to his other disciples, and put them in mind that when they were first sent out he directed them to rely wholly upon the Almighty for assistance. "When I sent you formerly," said he "to preach the gospel, you may remember I ordered you to go without any provision, either for your sustenance or defence, assuring you, that though you would indeed meet with great opposition, yet Providence would dispose some men, in all places, to be your friends, and to furnish you with all necessaries; and accordingly you found that you wanted for nothing, but were wonderfully supported, without any care or provision of your own, in the whole journey, and finished your work with success. But now the case is very different; the time of that greatest trial and distress, whereof I have often forewarned you, is just at hand; and you may now make all the provision in your power, and arm yourselves against it as much as you are able. I have finished the work for which I was sent into the world; and nothing now remains for me but to undergo those sufferings which the prophets have foretold concerning me, and to complete this whole dispensation of Providence, by submitting at last to a cruel and ignominious death."

The disciples, thinking their great Master meant that they should arm themselves in a literal sense, and endeavor to oppose the assaults that would shortly be made upon them by the Jews, answered, "Lord, here are two swords."

But the blessed Jesus, who only intended to convey an idea of their approaching distress and temptations, and to arm them against the surprise, replied, "It is enough, you need not trouble yourselves about any more weapons of this nature for your defence. Be not terrified and disconsolate," added the compassionate Jesus, "because I have told you that I must undergo great sufferings, and be taken away from you for a time.

"You have always been taught to believe in God, who is the Almighty Preserver and Governor of all things; and to rely on him for deliverance in every affliction and distress. Learn now, in like manner, to believe in me, who have all power committed to me, as the preserver and head of my church; and trust in me to accomplish fully all things that I have promised you.

"If you do this, and persist steadfastly in the belief of my doctrine, and in obedience of my commands, nothing in this vale of misery, not even persecution or death itself, shall be able to hinder you from attaining the happiness I have proposed to you.

"For in heaven, my Father's house, there is abundant room to receive you: otherwise I would not have filled your minds with the hopes and expectation of happiness. But as there are mansions sufficient for you in another state, you may, with confidence and assurance, hope for the full accomplishment of my promises, notwithstanding all this present world may contrive or act against you. And ye ought also to bear patiently my departure from you at this time, since I only leave you to prepare a place, and open the portals of those eternal habitations where I shall be ever with you. When I have prepared a place for you in that eternal state, I will again return and take you to myself. Nor shall you ever more be separated from me, but continue with me to all eternity, in full participation of my eternal glory and happiness, in the blissful regions of the heavenly Canaan. You must now surely know whither I am going, and the way that leads to these happy seats of immortality."

But the disciples, whose minds were not yet fully weaned from the expectation of a temporal power and glory, did not understand this discourse of their great and beloved Master. Accordingly, Thomas replied, "Lord, we cannot comprehend whither thou art going; and, therefore, must needs be ignorant of the way." To which our blessed Jesus answered, "I myself, as I have often told you, am the true and only way to life; nor can any man go thither by any other way. If ye say ye do not know the Father, I tell you, that no man who know-

eth me can be ignorant of my Father, of his will, and the manner of pleasing him : if ye know me, ye must know that all my actions have been directed by the will of the Father, and for the glory of his name. Philip answered, Lord, show us but once the Father, and we shall be fully satisfied. Jesus replied, Have I been so long with you, Philip, and yet art thou a stranger to him who sends me? I tell you, that to know one is to be acquainted with both. What, then, can you mean by desiring to see the Father, as if you could still be ignorant of him, after being so long acquainted with me? Be assured, Philip, that whatsoever I speak is the declaration of his will, and whatsoever I do is the operation of his power. And if ye refuse to believe my own affirmation, yet, at least, let my works convince you; for they carry in them undeniable evidences of a divine power. 'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.' John xiv. 12. Surely, then, you have matter sufficient to comfort and support your spirits under the thoughts of my departure from you. Ye have abundant reason to believe that I have power to perform all the promises I have made you; and the design of my departure actually to perform them. When I am returned to my Father, ye shall soon receive sufficient pledges of my care and remembrance of you. You shall be endued with power not only to perform the same works ye have seen me do, as healing diseases, giving sight to the blind, casting out devils, and the like, for the conviction of the Jews, but even to do greater things than these; to speak with all kinds of tongues, and to propagate my religion among the Gentiles, even through all the nations of the earth. And whatsoever ye shall ask of my Father in my name, as being my disciples, and in order to promote the work of the gospel, shall certainly be granted you. That God may be greatly glorified, by the extraordinary success and spreading of the religion of his Son, I say, that whatsoever ye shall ask I will take care, after my return to the Father, that it shall be granted you. Only ye must remember, as the necessary condition upon which all depends, that ye be careful above all things to continue steadfast and immovable in your obedience to my commands: this is the only true mark you can give of the sincerity of your love towards me; it is more than your grieving at my departure, or any other external indication of zeal whatsoever. The Father, I say, shall send you another advocate and comforter, even the Holy Spirit, the author and teacher of truth, who shall guide and direct, assist and

comfort you in all cases. This Spirit, the sensual and corrupt world cannot receive, having no knowledge of the divine truths, nor disposition to be governed by them. But ye know them, and are disposed to entertain them. The spirit of the Father is already within you, by his secret and invisible efficacy; and shall hereafter appear in you openly, by great and visible manifestations.

“Thus, though I must depart from you, yet I do by no means leave you comfortless. I leave you with a promise of the Holy Spirit; and I leave you in expectation also of my own return. For though after a very little while I shall appear no more to the world, yet to you I will appear again, for I shall live again, and ye also shall live with me. When, therefore, I have conquered and triumphed over death, ye shall understand more fully, and it shall appear more visible by great and manifest effects, that I act in all things agreeably to my Father’s will, and am perfectly invested with his power; and that ye in like manner have my power and commission communicated to you; so that there is a perfect unity and communion between us. Only ye must remember that the one necessary condition on which all depends, is, that ye continue steadfast and immovable in your faith in me, and in your obedience to my commands. He, and he only, who embraces my doctrine, and obeys and practices it, shall be judged to be sincere in his love towards me. And he who loves me in that manner shall be loved by my Father, and I myself will also love him, and manifest myself to him.”

Here Judas Thaddeus interrupted his Master, saying, “Lord, how wilt thou choose to manifest thyself to us, a few particular persons, and not to the generality of the world?”

Jesus replied, “I have already told you the reason for my acting in this manner, because the generality of the world are not disposed to obey my commandments, the only way of maintaining communion with me. But ye are disposed to embrace my doctrine, and to obey it, and therefore I manifest myself to you. And whoever else will so love me as to keep my commandments, him also will I and my Father love, and will maintain communion with him, and all spiritual blessings shall be poured down upon him, and he shall be made a partaker of happiness and eternal life.

“On the contrary, whoever loves me not, that is, obeys not my commandments, shall have no intercourse or communion with me. Neither will my Father love or honor him, or make any manifestations of myself to him; for as my commandments are not my own, but

the Father's commandments, therefore, whoever dishonors me, my Father will look upon him as dishonoring himself.

"These things have I briefly spoken to you now, according to the shortness of the time I am to continue with you, and to comfort you for the present against my departure. But when the Comforter, whom I promised you, is come, even the Holy Spirit, whom my Father shall send you on my account, he shall instruct you more fully, recalling to your remembrance what you have forgotten, explaining what is yet obscure, and supplying what is further necessary to be taught you, and to be understood by you.

"In the meantime I take my leave of you, and my blessing I leave with you; not formally, and after the common fashion of the world, but affectionately and sincerely; retaining a careful remembrance of you, and with an earnest desire and intention of returning again speedily to you. Wherefore, be not overmuch grieved for me and my departure, nor fearful of what may then befall yourselves. I go away from you, but it is with an intention, as I have already told you, to return to you again. If you loved me with a wise and understanding affection, ye would rejoice, instead of grieving at my present departure; because I am going to my Father, the supreme Author of all glory and happiness.

"These things I have now told you before they come to pass, that when ye see them happen, your faith in me, and your expectation of the performance of all my promises, may be confirmed and strengthened. The time will not allow me to say much more to you at present; my end draweth near. The ruler of this world, the prince of the power of darkness, is at this instant employing all his wicked instruments to apprehend and destroy me. Not that either the power of the devil or the malice of man can at all prevail over me; but because the time of my suffering, according to the appointment of Divine wisdom, is arrived, and that I may demonstrate to the world my love and obedience to my Father! I willingly submit myself to be put to death by the hands of sinful and cruel men. Rise up, let us be going, that I may enter on my sufferings."

Having thus spoken, they finished the passover with singing a hymn, and went out to the Mount of Olives.

On their arrival at the place which was to be the scene of his sufferings, he desired them to fortify themselves by prayer, and forewarned them of the terrible effects his sufferings would have upon them: they would make them all stumble that very night, agreeably

to the prophecy of Zechariah. "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

To strengthen their faith, therefore, he not only mentioned his own resurrection, but told them they should see him in Galilee after he was risen from the dead. On our blessed Saviour's mentioning the offence that his disciples would take at his suffering, Peter recollected what had been said to him in particular, before they left the house. Grieved, therefore, afresh, to find his Master entertain such thoughts of him, and being now armed with a sword, the vehemence of his temper urged him to boast a second time of his courageous and close attachment to his Master. "Though all men," said he, "should be offended because of thee, yet I will never be offended." But Jesus, knowing that human confidence and security were weak and frail, thought proper to forewarn him again of his danger, and told him that the cock should not crow before he had denied him. Peter, however, still continued to repeat his confidence: "I will die with thee, but never deny thee." The disciples all joined with Peter in professing their fixed resolution of suffering death rather than they would deny their Master; but the event fully confirmed the prediction of our Saviour. From whence we may learn how ignorant men are of their own hearts, and that the strongest resolutions in their own strength avail nothing.

The compassionate Redeemer of mankind, not willing to lose one single moment of the short time of his ministry that yet remained, continued to instruct his disciples in the great truths he came into the world to explain; and from the vines, which were growing round him on the Mount of Olives, he began his excellent discourse with the parable of the vine, to the following import. "Hitherto," said the blessed Jesus, "the Jewish church and nation have been the peculiar care of Providence; as a choice and goodly vine, likely to bring forth much fruit, is the special care of the husbandman. But from henceforth, my church, my disciples, and the professors of my religion, of what country or nation soever they be, shall become the people of God, and the peculiar care of Divine Providence.

"I will be to them as the root and stock of a vine, of which they are the branches, and my Father the husbandman and vine-dresser. As in the management of a choice vine, the skilful vine-dresser cuts off all barren and superfluous branches, that they may not burden, nor exhaust the tree, and prunes and dresses the fruitful branches, that they may grow continually, and so bear more fruit; thus in the gov-

ernment of my church, all useless, wicked, and incorrigible members, my Father, sooner or later, by his judgments, cuts off and destroys; but those who are sincerely pious and good, he, by the various and merciful dispensations of his providence towards them, tries, purifies, and amends, that they may daily improve, and be more abundant in all good works.

“Now ye, my apostles, are such members as these, being purified in heart and mind, and prepared for every good work, by your lively faith in me and sincere resolutions to obey my commands. Continue steadfastly in this state, and then you may be sure of deriving all spiritual blessings from me, as the branches receive sap and nourishment from the vine. But as a branch, without continuing in the vine, cannot bear any fruit, but presently dries up and perishes, so ye, unless ye continue steadfast in your communion with me, by a lively faith and sincere obedience, so as to receive grace and spiritual blessings, can never bring forth any good fruit of true holiness and righteousness, but will fall into vanity, superstition, and wickedness, and at last utterly perish. I am, as it were, I say, the root and stock of the vine, whereof ye are the branches. He that continues to adhere to me, by a constant faith in me, shall bring forth much fruit unto everlasting life; even as a branch which continues to grow in a vine, and receives sap and nourishment from it. But he that does not continue his relation to me in this manner, becomes a false and useless professor, and shall be cast out from me, and perish for ever: even as a fruitless branch is cut off from the vine, and left to wither and dry, and is at last burned in the fire.

“If you continue in me, by believing my words, and holding fast what ye believe; and obeying and practising it accordingly, no power or malice, either of men or of devils, shall be able to hurt you or oppose your doctrines. For though I be absent from you in body, yet I will hear your prayers, and my Father himself also will hear you; and whatsoever ye shall ask, for the glory of the Almighty and the propagation of my true religion in the world, shall certainly be granted you.

“But above all things, carefully remember to demonstrate your continuance in me, by abounding in all good works of holiness, righteousness, and charity. This is the honor which my Father desires and expects from you; even as it is the glory and desire of a vine-dresser that his vine should bring forth much fruit. And this is the honor that I myself expect from you; that you should prove your-

selves to be really and indeed my disciples, by imitating my example and obeying my commands. This ye are bound to do, not only in duty, but in gratitude also; for as my Father hath loved me, so have I also loved you; and ye in like manner ought to love me again, that you may continue to be loved by me. But the way to express your love towards me, and to continue to be loved by me, is to keep my commandments: even as I, by keeping my Father's commandments, have expressed my love towards him, and continue to be loved by him.

“These things have I spoken to you before my departure, that the comfort ye have taken in my presence may be continued in my absence, and even increased until the coming of the Holy Spirit, as it will be upon this condition, which I have so often repeated to you, that you keep my commandments. And the principal of these commandments is, that ye love one another; not after the common fashion of the world, but in such a manner as I have loved you.

“Nor can you be ignorant what sort of love that is, when I tell you that I am now going to lay down my life for you. This is the highest instance in which it is possible for a man to express his love towards his greatest friends and benefactors; but this I am now going to do for you and for all mankind. I do not consider you as my benefactors, but as my friends, upon this easy condition only, that ye keep my commandments. I might, indeed, justly call you servants, considering the infinite distance between me and you, and the obligation ye have to obey my commandments; but I have not treated you as servants, who are not admitted into their master's counsels, but as friends, revealing to you the whole will of my Father, with all freedom, and plainness. I have, I say, behaved myself to you as to the nearest friends. Not that you first obliged me, or did any acts of kindness for me, but I have freely, and of my own good pleasure, chosen you to be my apostles, and the preachers of my gospel, that you may go and declare the will of God to the world, and bring forth much and lasting fruit in the conversion of men to the knowledge of the truth, and to the profession and practice of true religion. In the performance of this work, whatsoever ye shall ask of my Father in my name, in order to enable you to perform it effectually and with full success, shall certainly be granted you.

“Now all these things which I have spoken unto you concerning the greatness of my love towards you, in choosing you to be my apostles, in revealing unto you the whole will of my Father, and in laying down my life for you; I have urged and inculcated upon you this

reason chiefly, as I at first told you, that ye may learn after my example to love one another. The world, indeed, you must expect, will hate and persecute you upon my account. But this you ought not to be surprised or terrified at, knowing that it is no worse treatment than I myself have met with before you. Be not therefore surprised, when ye meet with opposition, nor think to find better treatment in the world than I myself have done. Remember what I have already told you, that the disciple is not above his Master; nor is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If men had generally and readily embraced my doctrine, you might, indeed, have had some reason to expect that they would willingly have received yours also.

“But since I myself have suffered great indignities and persecutions from wicked and perverse, from obstinate and incorrigible men, only for opposing their vices, it is highly reasonable that you should expect to undergo the like treatment upon the like account. In all which sufferings you will moreover have this further comfortable consideration to support you, that the justice of your own cause, and the injustice of your persecutors, will by that means most evidently appear; seeing ye are persecuted only for professing and preaching in my name the doctrine of true religion; and they persecute you only because they know not God, and out of mere malice will not bear to be instructed in his commands. Indeed, had not I appeared to the world with all possible demonstrations of authority and truth, teaching them a most holy and undeniable doctrine, sufficient to reform their manners and amend their lives, and moreover demonstrating my divine commission by such proofs as ought to satisfy and convince the most doubting and suspicious minds, they might have had some plea and excuse of ignorance for their unbelief.

“But now, since all reasonable evidence has been offered them, and proper methods used for their conversion and salvation, and yet they wilfully and obstinately reject these means of grace, it is plain they have no excuse for their sin, but they oppose and persecute you only because they will not forsake their worldly lusts, and out of mere malice will not bear to be instructed in the commands of the Almighty. So that they who oppose and persecute you, as they have before persecuted me, show plainly that they are haters of God and of his most holy commandments. Which is, as I have already told you, a plain evidence of the justice of your own cause, and of the injustice of your persecutors.

“If I had not, I say, done such works among them as no man ever

did, they might indeed have had some appearance of excuse for their sin. But now, having seen abundant proofs of my authority, and undeniable evidence of the truth of my doctrine, and yet wilfully and obstinately persisting in opposing it, because inconsistent with their lusts; it is plain that their dishonouring me is a dishonour done to God himself, and a direct contempt of his commands: so that they are utterly inexcusable. But it is no wonder, when men have given themselves wholly up to be governed by worldly affections, passions, and vices, they should act contrary to all the reason and evidence in the world, for this is but the natural consequence of obstinate and habitual wickedness; and hereby is only fulfilled in me what holy David long since prophetically complained of, that they hated him without a cause. But notwithstanding all the opposition that wicked and incorrigible men will make against my doctrine, there will not be wanting powerful promoters of it, who shall effectually overcome all opposition. For the Comforter, who I said I will send you from heaven, even that Spirit of Truth which cometh forth and is sent from the Father shall, when he cometh, with wonderful efficacy bear testimony to the truth of my doctrine, and cause it to be spread through the world with incredible success. Nay, and ye yourselves also, though now so weak, fearful, and doubting, shall then very powerfully bear testimony to the truth of all the things whereof ye, having been all along present with me, have been eye witnesses from the beginning.

“Thus have I warned you beforehand, of the opposition and persecution ye must expect to meet with in the world, that when it cometh ye may not be surprised and terrified, so as to be discouraged thereby from persisting in the performance of your duty. Ye must expect particularly that the chief priests and rulers of the Jews, men of great hypocrisy and superstition, zealous for their ceremonies and ritual traditions, but careless to know and obey the will of the Almighty in matters of great and eternal obligation, and invincibly prejudiced against the spiritual holiness and purity of my doctrine; these, I say, you must expect, will excommunicate you as apostates, and cast you out of all their societies, as the vilest of malefactors. Nay, to such an absurd height of malice will their superstition carry them, that they will even fancy they promote the service of God, and the cause of religion, when they most barbarously murder and destroy you.

“But I have warned you of all this beforehand, that ye may prepare

and fortify yourselves against it; and that, when it cometh to pass, ye may remember I foretold it to you, and your faith in me may thereby be strengthened. It was needless to acquaint you with these scenes of suffering while I was with you. But now, being about to leave you, I think it necessary to acquaint you what things are likely to come upon you after my departure, and also at the same time what comfort you may expect to support you under them.

“Now I must mention the melancholy part, namely, that I am going from you, and that great temptations will befall you in my absence: this, indeed, ye readily apprehend, and suffer your hearts to be overwhelmed with grief at the thoughts of it. But the comfortable part of my discourse, namely, that my departure is only in order to return to him that sent me, and that I will soon after send you the Holy Spirit; and the other advantages that will thence result to you, are neither considered, nor are you solicitous about them.

“Nevertheless, if ye will listen, I will plainly tell you the truth. Ye are so far from having reason to be dejected at the thought of my departure, that, on the contrary, it is really profitable and expedient for you that I should now depart; for such is the order and dispensation of Providence towards you, and the appointment of my Father’s eternal and all-wise counsel, that before I go and take possession of my kingdom, the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, cannot be sent unto you; but when I am departed from you, and have all power in heaven and earth committed unto me, then I will send him unto you. And when he cometh, he shall abundantly support and comfort you under all your troubles; shall powerfully plead your cause against your adversaries; and shall, with wonderful efficacy, cause the doctrines of the gospel to spread and prevail in the world against all opposition.

“He shall particularly, and in a most extraordinary and convincing manner, make the world sensible of the greatness and heinousness of a sin of which they were not aware; of the rightcousness and justice of a dispensation they did not understand, and of the execution of a most remarkable judgment they did not expect.

“First—By wonderfully attesting and confirming the truth of my doctrine, by the gift of tongues, and other wonderful signs, he shall convince the world of the greatness and heinousness of their sins, in disbelieving and rejecting me.

“Secondly—By demonstrating that my departure out of the world was not perishing and dying, but only a returning to my Father, in

order to be invested with all power, both in heaven and earth, he shall convince the world of the righteousness and justice of my cause, and of the excellency of that dispensation which I preach and declare to mankind.

“Lastly, by mightily destroying the power of the devil and the dominion of sin, and propagating the doctrine of a true religion in the world with wonderful efficacy and success, he shall convince men of my power and authority to execute judgment upon mine enemies, for the establishment of my kingdom upon the earth.

“There are yet many other things hereafter to be done in relation to the settling and establishing of my church, which, if it were proper, I would now acquaint you with, but ye art not yet prepared to understand and receive them. Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth, whom I promised you, is come, he shall enlarge your understandings, remove your prejudices, and instruct you in all necessary and divine truths, to enable you to go through that great work which I have begun in person, and which I will carry on by your ministry; for the Spirit is not to begin any new work, or to found any new doctrine of himself; but as I have taught and will teach you only in my Father’s name, so the Spirit shall instruct you only in mine and my Father’s will, and in things necessary to promote and carry on the same design.

“Everything that he does shall be only in order to manifest my glory, and establish my religion in the world; even as everything that I have done has been only to manifest my Father’s glory, and reveal his will to mankind. For as all that I have taught is only what I received from my Father, so all that the Spirit shall teach you is only what he receives from me. Whatsoever I say the Spirit shall teach you is only what he receives from me; for receiving from my Father I call receiving from me, and teaching his will is teaching mine; seeing all things that the Father hath are common to me, and all power and dominion by him committed to me.

“And now be careful to remember what matter for comfort I have given you, and support yourselves with it under the approaching distress. It is now, indeed, but a very little while before I shall be taken away from you; nevertheless, let not this cause you to despair; for, after I am departed, it will be also a little while before I appear to you again: forasmuch as my being taken away from you is not perishing, but only returning to my Father.”

At these last words of Jesus the disciples were greatly disturbed and troubled, not understanding his true meaning, that in a very

short time he should be taken from them by death; and that, after having overcome death by a glorious resurrection, he would appear to them again before his ascension into heaven. Not understanding this, I say, they inquired one of another, "What can he mean by telling us, that in a very little time he shall be taken out of our sight; and that in a very little time more we shall see him again, and this because he goeth to the Father? We cannot understand the meaning of all this."

Jesus observing their perplexity, and knowing that they were desirous of asking him, replied, "Why are ye thus disturbed and perplexed about what I told you? Is it a thing so very hard to be understood, that I said, within a very little time I should be taken away from you, and that within a very little time more I should appear to you again? Verily, verily, I tell you I must very soon depart out of this world; then the world, who are your enemies, will rejoice and triumph over you, as if they had destroyed me, and wholly suppressed you; ye for your parts will be overwhelmed with grief and sorrow.

"But within a short time I will return to you again; and then your sorrow shall be turned into exceeding great joy. Even as a woman when she is in labor hath great pain and sorrow for the present, but as soon as she is delivered, forgets all her sufferings, and rejoices greatly at the birth of her son; so ye, while ye are under the immediate apprehension of my departure from you, and during that time of distress and temptation, which shall befall you in my absence, will be full of sorrow and anxiety of mind; but when I return to you again, then ye shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and no power or malice of man shall ever be able to take from you any more the cause or continuance of it.

"But though I shall return to you again, and your hearts will thereupon be filled with inexpressible joy, and which shall never be taken from you any more; yet there will be no necessity that I should then continue long with you in person, to instruct you upon every occasion, as I have now done with my own mouth. For, besides that, the Holy Spirit will be sent to instruct you in all things necessary, my Father himself also will hear your petitions, and be ready to grant you whatsoever ye shall desire of him in my name, and as being my disciples.

"Hitherto ye have asked nothing of God in my name; but from henceforth put your petitions in my name; and whatsoever ye shall

so ask for the glory of God and in order to enable you to go through the work of your ministry successfully, shall certainly be granted you; that your joy, which will begin at my appearing to you again after my death, may be completed by the wonderful success and efficacy of your own ministry.

“These things I have told you at present imperfectly and obscurely, according as your capacities are able to bear them. But the time is coming, when I will speak to you with more openness, freedom, and plainness, the whole will of my Father concerning the nature and establishment of my kingdom, and what things and in what manner ye ought to pray unto him for. At that time ye shall with firm assurance pray to my Father in my name for what ye want.

“And I need not tell you, that I will intercede with the Father on your behalf; for besides the love he has bore for me, and the power and authority my prayers have with him, he has, moreover, of himself a great love for you, and a ready disposition to grant your prayers, because ye are become grateful and acceptable to him by your love towards me, which ye have shown in embracing willingly that holy doctrine which I have revealed to you from him.

“To conclude—the sum of what I have told you is briefly and plainly this: I came down from heaven, from God my Father, and have lived upon earth in the state of frail and mortal man, that I might reveal to mankind the will of my heavenly Father, and the way to attain eternal life and happiness; and now, having finished this great work, I am about to leave this world, and return again to my Father, from whence I at first came.”

These last words of Jesus being somewhat more plain and expressive than any he had before spoken, the disciples now clearly perceived that the departure he had so often mentioned was no other than his actual going out of this world, they replied, “Now, Lord, you speak plainly, and without any figure; so that we apprehend fully what you mean. And now that our curiosity is satisfied, you have likewise greatly confirmed our faith; having given us a certain token whereby we are assured that you know all things, even the hearts and secret thoughts of men; since you have answered us a question which gave us great perplexity, and were desirous to ask your opinion, but were afraid; but now we are convinced that you are endued with a truly divine power, and did, indeed, come forth from God.” To which Jesus answered, “And do you now, at length, believe in me? Are ye resolved to continue steadfast in this faith? Do you think yourselves

able to persevere immovably in the profession of it? Be not confident of your own strength; but pray that ye may be delivered from temptation in the time of distress, such as will come upon you much sooner than ye expect. For I tell you, that ye will all of you, within a few hours, utterly forsake me and fly, in hopes to secure yourselves, leaving me alone. And yet I should not stay alone, since my Father is with me, who is more than all. I have, therefore, acquainted you with these things beforehand, that your minds may be furnished with sufficient matter of comfort, and strength to bear up under all temptations, from the consideration of my having foretold both what distress will befall you, and how ye shall terminate your victory over all your enemies. You must, indeed, expect to meet with much affliction, but let not this discourage you. I have subdued the world: follow my example, and partake of my reward."

Having thus finished his discourse, "Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and prayed" with great fervency to his Father: (the prayer itself is recorded in John xvii. ;) the substance and import of it is as follows: "O Almighty Father, now the time of my suffering, for which I was sent into the world, is arrived, I entreat thee to support me under it, and make me triumph over death by a glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven; that by this means the glory may rebound to thee, and cause thy will to be believed and obeyed through all the world to the salvation of mankind, according to the full intent of that office and power with which thou didst originally invest me. In order to the bringing about this great design of salvation, I have declared thy will to mankind. I have published thy precepts and discharged the great mission intrusted to me; I have preached thy doctrine of repentance to salvation, and have finished the work which thou sentest me to do, to the glory of thy name upon earth; and now, to complete the great design, do thou, O Almighty Father, likewise glorify me with thine own self. Support me under my sufferings. Let me prevail and triumph over death, by a glorious resurrection, and exalt me again to the same glory in heaven which I had with thee before the creation of the universe. I have manifested thy will to the disciples, the men that thou gavest me out of the world. To those persons thou didst in thine infinite wisdom appoint, that thy truth should be made known. Therefore, to them I have revealed the mysteries of thy kingdom, the precepts of thy gospel, and the doctrine of thy salvation.

"And this doctrine they have willingly embraced, steadfastly adhered

to, and sincerely obeyed ; as they are fully satisfied and convinced that what I taught them as from thee was really a divine doctrine taught by thine immediate appointment and command ; and that I did not preach any human invention or institution of men, but was really sent by the divine authority and commission. For these persons, therefore, I now pray, that as thou hast begun the work of their salvation by my preaching and revealing to them thy will while I have been present with them here upon earth, so also that thou wouldst preserve them when I am departed from this world, and complete the work of their redemption by my resurrection and ascension into heaven, after my death. I do not pray for the unbelieving, impenitent world, but for those who have embraced that most holy doctrine, which thou hast taught them through me by my preaching ; for those who have glorified and will glorify my name by their ministry, and who consequently are to be esteemed as thine own, in common with me. I am now about to leave the world in order to return to thee ; but these, my disciples, who continue after me, I recommend to thy divine protection when I am gone : endue them with powers to persevere in preaching and practising the truth, and to deliver the same holy doctrines which I have given to them, that so they may remain inseparably united to me, as I am to thee. So long as I have been with them in the world, I have watched over them, and kept them from falling away, both by example, preaching, and continual admonition, according to the power and authority which thou didst commit to me ; nor has one of my apostles miscarried under my care, except that perfidious traitor, who, as the scripture foretold, has ungratefully conspired with my enemies to destroy me, and will perish according to his deserts.

“ While I have continued with my disciples, I have watched over them and preserved them under mine own eye ; but now, as I am going to leave the world, I beseech thee to keep and assist them by thy good Spirit ; and let the expectation of their continuing under thy special care and protection be their comfort and support in my absence. The world, indeed, will persecute and hate them on this account, as my doctrine is repugnant to the lusts and affections, the passions, designs, and inclinations of worldly men, it must necessarily be that the vicious and incorrigible world will oppose and persecute them, as it has before persecuted me. I beseech thee, therefore, to take them under thy particular care, to support them against the violence and oppression of an evil world. I do not desire that thou shouldst

take them out of the world, but preserve them in it, to be instruments of thy word, thy glory, and to be teachers of thy truth; nor suffer them to be either destroyed by the malice and violence, or corrupted by the evil customs and opinions of a perverse and wicked generation. They are of a temper and spirit very different from the current affection and common dispositions of the world, according to the example of purity which I have set before them. Do thou preserve and increase in them that moderation and candor of mind, cause them to be thoroughly affected and impressed with that true doctrine so frequently recommended to them from my mouth, so as to express it visibly in their lives and practice, and to promote it zealously in their preaching, that they may, both by word and good example, become worthy and successful ministers of my gospel. For as thou hast sent me into the world to reveal thy will to mankind, so send I these, my apostles, to continue preaching the same doctrine begun by me. And the principal design of my exemplary life, constant teaching, and now voluntarily offering myself to death, is to atone for sins, and enable these my servants to preach my doctrines with success and efficacy for the salvation of men. Neither pray I for these, my apostles, only, but for all others who shall, by their preaching and practice, promote thy true religion; and being converted from the world, may by their sincere endeavors, go on to reform others, convincing the world of the excellency of their religion, and consequently enforcing men to acknowledge the truth and divine authority thereof. For promoting which great end I have communicated to my apostles the same power and authority of doing mighty works, for the confirmation of their doctrine, and the evidence of thy truth, as thou didst communicate to me; that so, I working in them, as thou hast done in me, and thus confirming with great efficacy and demonstration of the Spirit, they may declare the same doctrine which I published in person; the world may, by this evidence, be convinced that I was really sent by thee, and that my disciples act by the same divine commission.

“Holy and Almighty Father, all those whom thou hast thus given me, who have heartily embraced my doctrine and sincerely obeyed it, I desire that thou wouldst make them partakers of the same happiness with myself, and exalt them to behold the incomprehensible glory which I had with thee, in thy eternal love, before the foundation of the world.

“The generality of mortals, O righteous Father, have not known thee, nor been willing to embrace, and obey the revelation of thy will.

But I have known thy will, and have made it known to my disciples, men of simplicity and honesty: and they have embraced and obeyed it. And I will continually make it known to them more and more, that they may grow up and improve in faith, in holiness, and in all good works, so as finally to arrive, and cause others to arrive at that eternal happiness, which is the effect of thy infinite love towards me, and through me towards them."

This pious and benevolent prayer being ended, Jesus and his disciples came down from the Mount of Olives into a field below, called Gethsemane,\* through which the brook Kedron ran, and in it, on the other side of the brook, was a garden, called the garden of Gethsemane. Here he desired his disciples to sit down, till he should retire to pray, taking with him Peter, James, and John, those three select disciples whom he had before chosen to be witnesses of his transfiguration, and now to be eye-witnesses of his passion, leaving the other disciples at the garden-door to watch the approach of Judas and his band. The sufferings he was on the point of undergoing were so great, that the very prospect of them excited this doleful exclamation, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch." On this great occasion he sustained those grievous sorrows in his soul by which, as well as by dying on the cross, he became a sin-offering, and accomplished the redemption of mankind.

He now withdrew from them about a stone's cast, and his human nature being now overburdened beyond measure, he found it necessary to retire and pray, that if it was possible, or consistent with the salvation of the world, he might be delivered from the sufferings which were then lying on him.

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\* "Gethsemane, a small 'farm,' situated across the brook Kedron, probably at the foot of Mount Olivet, to the northwest, about one-half or three-quarters of an English mile from the walls of Jerusalem. There was a 'garden,' or rather orchard, attached to it, to which the olive, fig, and pomegranate doubtless invited resort by their hospitable shade. And we know from the Evangelists Luke and John that our Lord oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples. According to Josephus the suburbs of Jerusalem abounded with gardens and pleasure grounds. But Gethsemane has not come down to us as a scene of mirth; its inexhaustible associations are the offspring of a single event—the agony of the Son of God on the evening preceding His Passion. A modern garden, in which are eight venerable olive trees, and a grotto to the north, detached from it, and in closer connection with the Church of the Sepulchre of the Virgin. Against the contemporary antiquity of the olive trees, it has been urged that Titus cut down all the trees round about Jerusalem. The probability would seem to be that they were planted by Christian hands to mark the spot; unless, like the sacred olive of the Acropolis, they may have reproduced themselves."—*Dr. Wm. Smith.*



CHRIST RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON.

It was not the fear of dying on the cross which made him speak or pray in such a manner. To suppose this, would infinitely degrade his character. Make his sufferings as terrible as possible, clothe them with all the aggravating circumstances of distress; yet the blessed Jesus, whose human nature was strengthened by being connected with the divine, could not but shrink at the prospect of such sufferings as he had to endure. He addresses his divine Father with a sigh of fervent wishes that the cup might, if possible, be removed from him; (in the Greek, it is, "O that thou wouldst remove this cup from me;") and having first kneeled and prayed he fell prostrate on his face, accompanying his address with due expressions of resignation, adding immediately, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." Having prayed, he returned to his disciples, and finding them asleep, he said to Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour?" Thou who so lately didst boast of thy courage and constancy in my service, canst thou so soon forget thy Master?

But in his great distress he never lost sight of that kind concern he had for his disciples. "Watch ye," he says, "and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Neither was he, on those extraordinary occasions in the least chagrined with the offences which they had committed through frailty and human weakness; on the contrary, he was always willing to make excuses for them, alleging in their defence, that the spirit truly was willing, but the flesh was weak.

It seems from these particulars that he spent some considerable time in his addresses ; because his disciples fell asleep in his absence, and he himself retired again to pray ; for the sorrows of our Lord continuing to increase upon him, affected him to such a degree that he retired a second time, and prayed to the same purpose, saying, "Oh, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." After which he returned again to them, and found them asleep, for their eyes were heavy.

He returned thus frequently to his disciples, that they, by reading his distress in his countenance and gesture, might be witnesses of his passion, which proves that his pains were beyond description intense and complicated ; for he went away the third time to pray, and notwithstanding an angel was sent from heaven to comfort and strengthen him, yet they overwhelmed him, and threw him into an agony ; upon which he still continued to pray more earnestly.

But the sense of his sufferings still increasing, they strained his whole body to so violent a degree that his blood, as it were, was pressed through the pores of his skin, which it pervaded, together with his sweat, and fell down in large drops on the ground. And he left them and went away again. "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

"And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly : and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke xxi. 43, 44. Thus did he suffer unspeakable sorrows in his soul, as long as the Divine Wisdom thought proper. At length he obtained relief, being heard on account of his perfect and entire submission to the will of his heavenly Father. "And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow." Luke xxii. 45. This circumstance shows how much the disciples were affected with their Master's sufferings.

The sensations of grief which they felt on seeing his unspeakable distress, so overpowered them that they sunk into a sleep. Our blessed Saviour for the last time came to his disciples, and seeing them still asleep, he said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest ; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going : behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." Matt. xxvi. 45, 46. The event will soon be over which causes your sorrow : I am betrayed, and ready to be delivered unto death.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE BLESSED REDEEMER IS TAKEN BY A BAND OF SOLDIERS, AT THE INFORMATION OF THE TRAITOR JUDAS—HEALS A WOUND GIVEN TO THE HIGH PRIEST'S SERVANT BY SIMON PETER.

JUDAS, who had often resorted to the garden of Gethsemane, with the disciples of our Lord, knowing the spot and the usual time of his Master's repairing thither, informed the chief priests and elders that the proper time for apprehending Jesus was now come. They, therefore, sent a band of soldiers with him, and servants carrying lanterns and torches to show them the way; because, though it was always full moon at the passover, the sky might be dark with clouds, and the place whither they were going was shaded with trees. At the same time a deputation of their number accompanied the band, to see that every one did his duty. Judas having thus received a band of men, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, they went thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons, for they were exceedingly anxious to secure and get him into their hands: and the soldiers having, perhaps, never seen Jesus before, found it necessary that Judas should distinguish him, and point him out to them by some particular sign.

The treacherous Judas went before the band at a small distance, to prepare them for the readier execution of their office, by kissing his Master, which was the token agreed upon, that they might not mistake him, and seize a wrong person. "And he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him." Luke xx. 47. Stung with remorse at the horrid engagement into which he had entered, and not being now able to retract from the execution of it, he determined to make use of art in his vile proceedings, and weakly imagined he could deceive him whom he was about to betray, on a supposition that when he should give the kiss, it might be considered by his Master as a singular mark of his affection. When, therefore, they approached near the spot, Judas (who was at the head of the band) suddenly ran forward, and coming up to Jesus, said, "Hail, Master! and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the Son of

man with a kiss?" Before, however, Judas could make any reply, the band (who had fixed their eyes on the person he had kissed,) arrived immediately, and surrounded Jesus.

The artifice and wicked designs of the base and perfidious Judas, are here manifestly displayed. In order to conceal his villany from his Master and his disciples, he walked hastily, and without waiting for the band, went up directly and saluted him, wishing perhaps to have that considered as a token of apprizing him of his danger.

But Jesus did not fail to convince him that he knew the meaning and intent of his salutation, saying, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Judas certainly concealed his treachery so well that Peter did not suspect him, as it is probable he would have struck at him rather than at Malchus, the high priest's servant.

The appointed time of our Lord's sufferings being now come, he did not, as formerly, avoid his enemies; but, on the contrary, on their telling him they sought Jesus of Nazareth, he replied, "I am he;" thereby intimating to them that he was willing to put himself into their hands.

At the same time, to show them that they could not apprehend him without his own consent, he, in an extraordinary manner, exerted his divine power: he made the whole band fall back, and threw them to the ground. "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also who betrayed him stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." But the soldiers and the Jews, imagining, perhaps, that they had been thrown down by some demon or evil spirit, with whom the Jews said he was in confederacy, advanced towards him a second time: "Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? and they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he," expressing again his willingness to fall into their hands. "If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way." If your business be with me alone, suffer my disciples to pass; for the party had surrounded them also.

He seems to have made this request to the soldiers, that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." For as he always proportioned the trials of his people to their strength; so here he took care that the disciples should escape the storm which none but himself could sustain.

At length, one of the soldiers, more daring than the rest, rudely caught Jesus, and bound him: upon which Peter drew his sword, and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant, who probably was showing greater forwardness than the rest in this business. "Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear: the servant's name was Malchus." John xviii. 10, etc. The enraged disciple was on the point of singly attacking the whole band, when Jesus ordered him to sheathe the sword; telling him, that his unseasonable and imprudent defence might prove the occasion of his destruction. "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matt. xxvi. 52. He told him likewise, that it implied both a distrust of God, who can always employ a variety of means for the safety of his people, and also his ignorance in the scriptures. "Thinkest thou," said he, "that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

The word legion was a Roman military term, being a name which they gave to a body of five or six thousand men; wherefore, in regard that the band which now surrounded them was a Roman cohort, our Lord might make use of this term by way of contrast, to show what an inconsiderable thing a cohort was, in comparison of the force he could summon to his assistance; more than twelve legions, not of soldiers, but of angels.

He yet was tenderly inclined to prevent any bad consequences which might have followed from Peter's rashness, by healing the servant, and adding, in his rebuke to him, a declaration of his willingness to suffer. "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" John xviii. 11.

The circumstance of his healing the ear of Malchus by touching it, evidently implies that no wound or distemper was incurable in the hand of Jesus; neither was any injury so great that he could not forgive. It seems somewhat surprising that this evident miracle did not make an impression upon the chief priests, especially as our Lord put them in mind, at the same time, of his other miracles; for having first said, "Suffer ye thus far; he touched his ear, and healed him;" adding, "Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Luke

xxii. 51-53. The priests had kept at a distance for some time, but drew near when they understood that Jesus was in their power; for they were proof against all conviction, being obstinately bent on putting him to death. And the disciples, when they saw their Master in the hands of his enemies, forsook him and fled, according to his prediction; notwithstanding they might have followed him without any danger, as the priests had no design against them. "Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. Then the band and the captain and officers took Jesus, and bound him." But it was not the cord which held him, his infinite love was by far the stronger bond. He could have broken those weak ties, and exerted his divinity in a more wonderful manner; he could have stricken them all dead, with as much ease as he had before thrown them on the ground; but he patiently submitted to this, as to every other indignity which they chose to offer him, so meek was he under the greatest injuries.

Having thus secured him they led him away. "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young man laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." This, perhaps, was the proprietor of the garden; who, being awakened with the noise, came out with the linen cloth, in which he had been lying, cast round his naked body; and having a respect for Jesus, followed him, forgetting the dress he was in.

They first led Jesus to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Annas having himself discharged the office of high priest, was consequently a person of distinguished character, which, together with his relation to the high priest, made him worthy of the respect they now paid him.

But he refused singly to meddle in the affair; they therefore carried Jesus to Caiaphas himself, at whose palace the chief priests, elders, and scribes were assembled; having staid there all night to see the issue of their stratagem. This Caiaphas was he that advised the council to put Jesus to death, even admitting he was innocent, for the safety of the whole Jewish nation. He seems to have enjoyed the sacerdotal dignity during the whole course of Pilate's government in Judea; for he was advanced by Valerius Gracchus, Pilate's predecessor, and was divested of it by Vitellius, governor of Syria. After he had deposed Pilate from his procuratorship.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## FULFILMENT OF OUR LORD'S PREDICTION CONCERNING PETER.

THE apprehending of their dear Master could not but strike his disciples with horror and amazement: though he had forewarned them of that event, such was their consternation that they fled different ways; some of them, however, recovering out of the panic that had seized them, followed the band at a distance to see what the issue would be. Of this number was Peter, and another disciple, whom John has mentioned without giving his name, and who therefore is supposed to have been John himself. This disciple being acquainted at the high priest's, got admittance for himself first, and soon after for Peter, who had come with him. "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known to the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sat down together, Peter sat down among them." The maid servant who kept the door concluding Peter to be a disciple also, followed him after to the fire, and looking earnestly at him, charged him with the supposed crime. "Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" This blunt attack threw Peter into such confusion, that he flatly denied his having any connexion with Jesus, replying, "I am not," and adding, "I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest." As if he had said, I do not understand any reason for your asking me such a question.

Thus the very apostle who had before acknowledged his Master to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and had so confidently boasted of his fortitude and firm attachment to him in the greatest dangers, proved himself to be an arrant deserter of his cause upon trial.

His shameful fears were altogether inexcusable, as the enemy who attacked him was one of the weaker sex, and the terror of the charge was in a great measure taken off by the insinuation made in it, that

John was likewise known to be Christ's disciple ; for as he was known at the high priest's, he was consequently known in that character. "Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?" Art thou not one of them, as well as he who is sitting with you? Nothing can account for this conduct of Peter, but the confusion and panic which had seized him on this occasion. As his inward perturbation must have appeared in his countenance and gesture, he did not choose to stay long with the servants at the fire. He went out, therefore, into the porch, where he was a little concealed. "And he went into the porch, after he had been some time there, another maid saw him, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man;" adding perjury to falsehood.

After Peter had been thus attacked without doors, he thought proper to return and mix with the crowd at the fire. "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself." From this circumstance it is clear that the ensuing was the third denial; and that Peter left the porch where the second denial happened, and was come again into the hall. "Here one of the servants of the high priest (being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off,) saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew."

The words of Malchus's kinsman bringing to Peter's remembrance what he had done to that man, threw him into such a panic, that when those who stood by repeated the charge, he impudently denied it: "he even began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak." For when they heard Peter deny the charge, they supported it by an argument drawn from the accent with which he pronounced his answer. Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. So that being pressed on all sides, to give his lie the better color, he profaned the name of God, by imprecating the bitterest curses on himself if he was telling a falsehood. Perhaps he hoped, by these acts of impiety, to convince them effectually that he was not a disciple of the holy Jesus.

Thus the apostle denied his Master three distinct times, with oaths and asseverations, totally forgetting the vehement protestations he had made a few hours before, that he would never deny him. He was, probably, permitted to fall in this manner, to teach us two lessons: first, that the strongest resolutions formed in our own strength cannot withstand the torrent of temptation; secondly, that the true disciples

of Christ, though they fall, may be brought to a conviction of their sin; for he no sooner denied his Master the third time, than the cock crew, and awakened in him the first consciousness of his sin. "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." St. Luke is the evangelist who particularly mentions this beautiful circumstance of Christ turning and looking on Peter. The members of the council who sat on Jesus were placed at the upper end of the hall: at the other were the servants with Peter at the fire; so that Jesus being probably placed on some eminence, that his judges, who were numerous, might see and hear him, could easily look over towards Peter, and observe him denying him, and in passionate terms, loud enough to be heard, perhaps, over all the place. The look pierced him, and with the crowing of the cock, brought his Master's prediction fresh into his mind. He was stung with deep remorse; and being unable to contain himself, he covered his face with his garment to conceal the confusion he was in, and going out into the porch, wept very bitterly.

All this passed while the priests examined Jesus with many taunts and revilings; and while the most zealous of Christ's disciples were denying him with oaths and imprecations, the people insulted him in the most inhuman manner. Thus a complication of injuries, insults, and indignities was at one time heaped upon the blessed Redeemer, the meek and mild Jesus, in order to fulfil the prophecies concerning him, and teach his followers a lesson of humility.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD IS ARRAIGNED AT THE BAR OF THE SANHEDRIM,  
AND TRIED BY THE JEWISH COUNCIL.

WHEN the band of soldiers arrived at the high priest's with Jesus, they found there all the chief priests, the scribes and the elders assembled. "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council. And the high priest asked Jesus of his disciples, and his doctrine." He inquired of him what his disciples were; for what end he had gathered them; whether it was to make himself a king; and what the doctrine was which he taught them. In these questions there was a great deal of art; for as the crime laid to our Saviour's charge was, that he had set up for the Messiah, and deluded the people, they expected he would claim that dignity in their presence, and so would, on his own confession, have condemned him, without any further process.

This was unfair, as it was artful and ensnaring. To oblige a prisoner, on his trial, to confess what might take away his life, was a very inequitable method of proceeding, and Jesus expressed his opinion thereof with very good reason, and complained of it, bidding them prove what they had laid to his charge by witnesses. "Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold they know what I said." It was greatly to the honor of our blessed Redeemer that all his actions were done in public, under the eye even of his enemies; because, had he been carrying on any imposture, the lovers of goodness and truth had thus abundant opportunities of detecting him with propriety; he, therefore, in his defence, appealed to that part of his character, but his answer was construed to be disrespectful; for "when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?" To which he meekly replied, with the greatest serenity, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest

thou me?" Show me—prove before this court wherein my crime consists, or record it in the evidence on the face of my trial; which, if you cannot, how can you answer this inhuman treatment to a defenceless prisoner, standing on his trial before the world, and in open court? Thus Jesus became an example of his own precept: "And if a man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left also," Matt. v. 44, bearing the greatest injuries with a patience that could not be provoked.

When the council found that Jesus declined answering the questions whereby they expected to have drawn from him an acknowledgment of his being the Messiah, they proceeded to examine many witnesses to prove his having assumed that character; as they considered such a pretension as blasphemy in his mouth, who being only a man, according to their opinion, could not, without the highest affront to the Divine Majesty, pretend to the title of the Son of God, as it belonged only to the Messiah.

But in this examination, they acted like interested and enraged persecutors, rather than impartial judges, forming their questions in the most artful manner, in order, if possible, to draw expressions from him which they might pervert into suspicions of guilt, as some foundation for condemning Jesus, who had so long and faithfully labored for their salvation. Their witnesses, however, disappointed them, some of them disagreeing in their story, and others mentioning things of no manner of importance. At last two persons agreed in their depositions, namely, in hearing him say, that he was able to destroy the temple of God, and to raise it in three days.

But this testimony was absolutely false; for our great Redeemer never said he could destroy and build the temple of Jerusalem in three days, as they affirmed. It is true that after banishing the traders from the temple, when the Jews desired to know by what authority he undertook to make such a reformation, he referred them to the miracle of his resurrection; bidding them "destroy this temple, (pointing probably to his body,) and in three days he would raise it up." The witnesses, therefore, either through malice or ignorance, perverted his answer into an affirmation, that he was able to destroy and build up the magnificent temple of Jerusalem in three days; and the judges considered this assertion as blasphemy, because it could be only done by the divine power.

Our Saviour made no reply to the evidence that was produced against him, which greatly provoked the high priest, who, supposing

that he intended by his silence to put an affront on the council, rose from his seat, and with great perturbation, demanded the reason for such remarkable conduct. "Answerest thou nothing?" said he: "behold how many things they witness against thee." And some of the council added, "Art thou the Christ?" To which our blessed Saviour answered, If I should tell you plainly, you would not believe me; and if I should demonstrate it to you by the most evident and undeniable arguments, ye would neither be convinced, nor let me go.

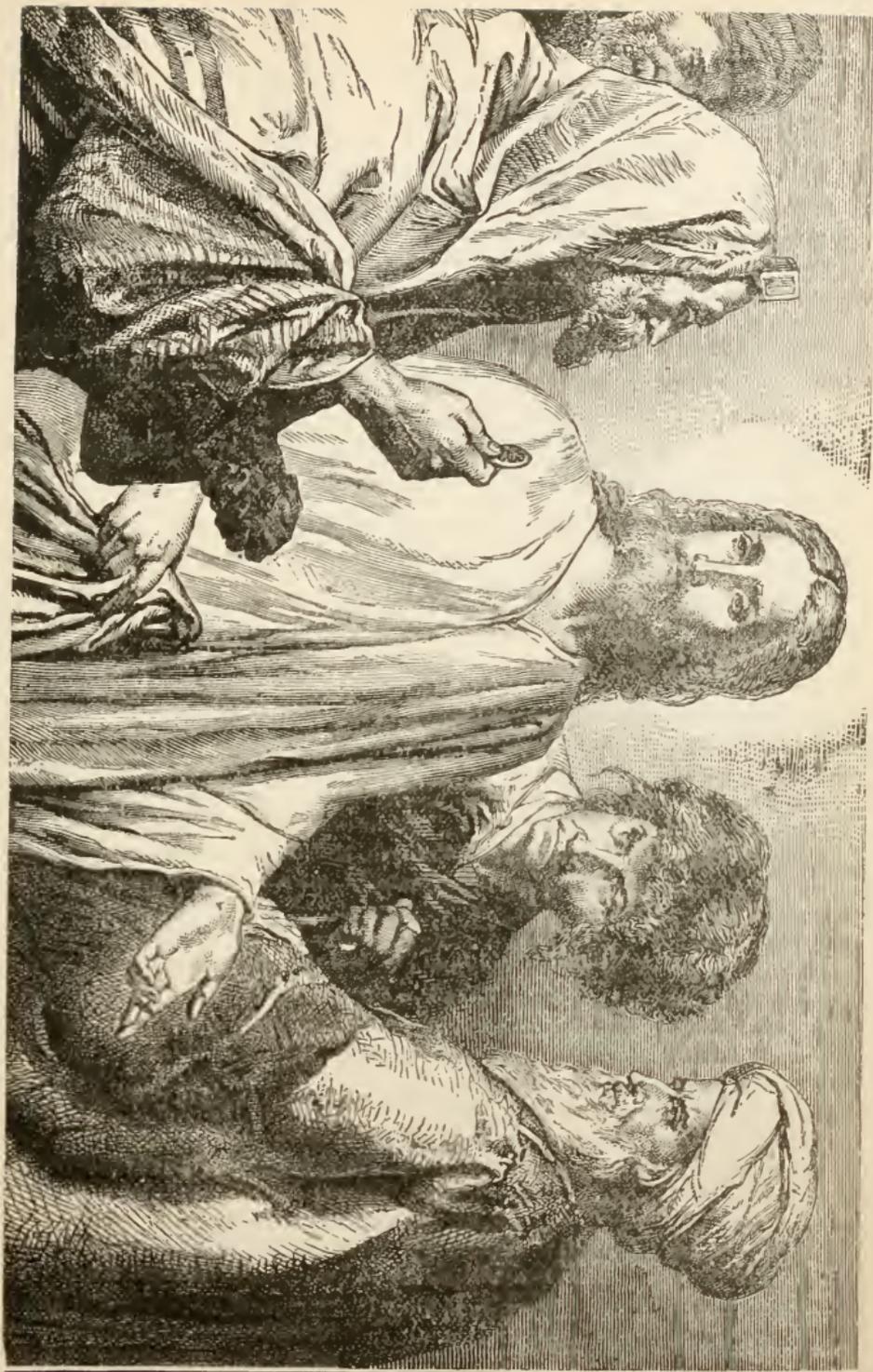
The high priest, finding all his attempts to entrap our Saviour in vain, said to him, I adjure you solemnly, by the dreadful and tremendous name of God, in whose presence you stand, that you tell us plainly and truly, whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God.

The consequence attending his confession of the truth did not intimidate the blessed Jesus; for being adjured by the chief magistrate, he immediately acknowledged the charge, adding, Ye shall shortly see a convincing evidence of this truth, in that wonderful and unparalleled destruction which I will send upon the Jewish nation; in the quick and powerful progress which the gospel shall make upon the earth: and, finally, in my glorious appearance in the clouds of heaven at the last day, the sign you have so often demanded in confirmation of my mission.

Upon our blessed Saviour's making this answer, a number of them cried out at once, "Art thou the Son of God?" To which our great Redeemer replied, "Ye say that I am:" a manner of speaking among the Jews, which expressed a plain and strong affirmation of the thing expressed.

When the high priest heard this second assertion, he rent his clothes with great indignation, and said unto the council, Why need we to trouble ourselves to seek for any more witnesses? Ye yourselves, nay, this whole assembly, are witnesses that he hath spoken manifest and notorious blasphemy; what think ye? To which they all replied, that for assuming to himself the character of the Messiah he deserved to be put to death.

Then began the servants and common people to fall upon him as a man already condemned; spitting upon him, buffeting him, and offering him all manner of rudeness and indignities. They blindfolded him; and some of the council, in order to ridicule him for having professed to be the great Prophet, bid him prophecy.



THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR IS CARRIED BEFORE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR—THE TRAITOR  
 JUDAS BECOMES HIS OWN EXECUTIONER—PILATE PUBLICLY ACQUITS JESUS,  
 AND REFERS HIS CASE TO THE DECISION OF HEROD.

THE blessed Jesus being thus condemned by the unanimous voice of the grand assembly, it was resolved to carry him before the governor, that he likewise might pass sentence on him.

The Roman governors of Judea generally resided in Cæsarea; but at the great feasts they came up to Jerusalem to prevent or suppress tumults, and to administer justice; it being a custom for the Roman governors of provinces to visit the principal towns under their jurisdiction on this latter account. Pilate,\* being accordingly come to Jerusalem some time before the feast, had been informed of the great ferment among the rulers, and the true character of the person on

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\* Pontius Pilate was a Roman of noble birth, and was the sixth Roman procurator of Judea. He was appointed in the twelfth year of Tiberius, A. D., 25, and one of his first acts was to remove the headquarters of the Roman army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. The troops, in taking up their quarters in the Holy City, brought with them their standards, on each of which was the image of the Emperor. Pilate was then residing at Cæsarea, and thither the Jews flocked in crowds, to beseech him to remove the idolatrous images from Jerusalem. Pilate withstood their entreaties for five days, and finally ordered his soldiers to massacre the petitioners; but the Jews heroically informed him that they were resolved to die rather than cease their opposition to the idolatrous innovation. Pilate then granted their request, and had the standards brought back to their old quarters. On two occasions Pilate came near driving the Jews into insurrection, and in one of these massacred a number of Galileans, (see Luke xiii. 1.) As it was the custom of the Roman Governors to reside at Jerusalem during the great feasts, for the purpose of keeping order in the city, Pilate was at Jerusalem when the events preceding the Saviour's crucifixion occurred.

Some time after the Saviour's ascension, Pilate suppressed an insurrection of the Samaritans in such a severe manner that the Samaritans brought charges against him, and he was sent to Rome to answer them before the Emperor. Tiberius was dead, and Caligula was on the throne when he reached the Capital, A. D., 36. He was harshly received by the Emperor, and Eusebius asserts that, "wearted with misfortunes," he killed himself. The place of his death is uncertain. There is a tradition that he sought to hide his sorrows on the mountain, by the Lake of Lucerne, in Switzerland, now called Mount Pilatus, and that he spent several years here, a prey to remorse and despair, and finally drowned himself in the gloomy lake which occupies the summit of the mountain.

whose account it was raised, for he entertained a just notion of it: "He knew that for envy they had delivered him." He knew the cause of their envy, was impressed with a favorable opinion of Jesus, and wished, if possible, to deliver him from his vile persecutors.

Early in the morning the Jewish council brought Jesus to the hall of judgment, or governor's palace. They themselves, however, went not into the hall, but stood without, lest they should be defiled, and rendered incapable of eating the passover.

Now Judas Iscariot, who had delivered his Master into the hands of the council, finding his project turned out very differently from what he expected, was filled with the deepest remorse for what he had done. He saw all his golden dreams of temporal honors and advantages sunk at once to nothing. He saw his kind, his indulgent Master condemned, and forsaken by all his followers. He saw all this, and determined to make all the satisfaction in his power for the crime he had committed. Accordingly, he came and confessed openly his sin before the chief priests and elders; offered them the money they had given him to commit it, and earnestly wished he could recall the fatal transaction of the preceding night. It seems he thought this was the most public testimony he could possibly give of his Master's innocence and his own repentance. I have, said he, committed a most horrid crime in betraying an innocent man to death.

But this moving speech of Judas had no effect on the callous hearts of the Jewish rulers. They affirmed, that however he might think the prisoner innocent, and for that reason had sinned in bringing the sentence of death upon his head, they were not to blame, because they knew him a blasphemer, who deserved to die. "What is that to us?" said they; "see thou to that." Nay, they even refused to take back the money they had given him as a reward for performing the base act of betraying his Master.

The deepest remorse now seized upon the wretched Judas, and his soul was agitated by the horrors of despair. The innocence and benevolence of his Master, the many favors he himself had received from him, and the many kind offices he had done for the sons and daughters of affliction, crowded at once into his mind, and rendered his torments intolerable.

Racked with those agonizing passions, and unable to support the misery, he threw down the wages of his iniquity in the temple; and confessing at the same time his own sin and the innocence of his Master, went away in despair, and hanged himself.

Thus perished Judas Iscariot, the traitor, a miserable example of the fatal influence of covetousness, and a standing monument of divine vengeance, to deter future generations from acting in opposition to the dictates of conscience, through a love of the things of this world, for which this wretched mortal betrayed his Master, his Friend, his Saviour, and accumulated such a load of guilt on himself as sunk his soul into the lowest pit of perdition. The pieces of silver cast down by Judas were gathered up and delivered to the priests, who, thinking it unlawful to put them into the treasury, because they were the wages of a traitor agreed to lay them out in purchasing the potter's-field, and to make it a common burial-place for strangers.

This the evangelist tells us was done, that a particular prophecy, relating to the Messiah, might be fulfilled: "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's-field, as the Lord appointed me."

This prophecy is found in Zachariah; but by a mistake of some copyist, the word Jeremiah is inserted in the Greek manuscripts of St. Matthew's gospel; unless we suppose, with the learned Grotius, that this remarkable prophecy was first made by Jeremiah, and afterwards repeated by the immediate direction of the Spirit, by Zachariah; and that, therefore, the evangelist has only ascribed the prophecy to its original author. But however this be, the prophecy is remarkable, and was remarkably fulfilled. And the evangelist, by thus appealing to a public transaction, puts the truth of this part of the history beyond all manner of exception.

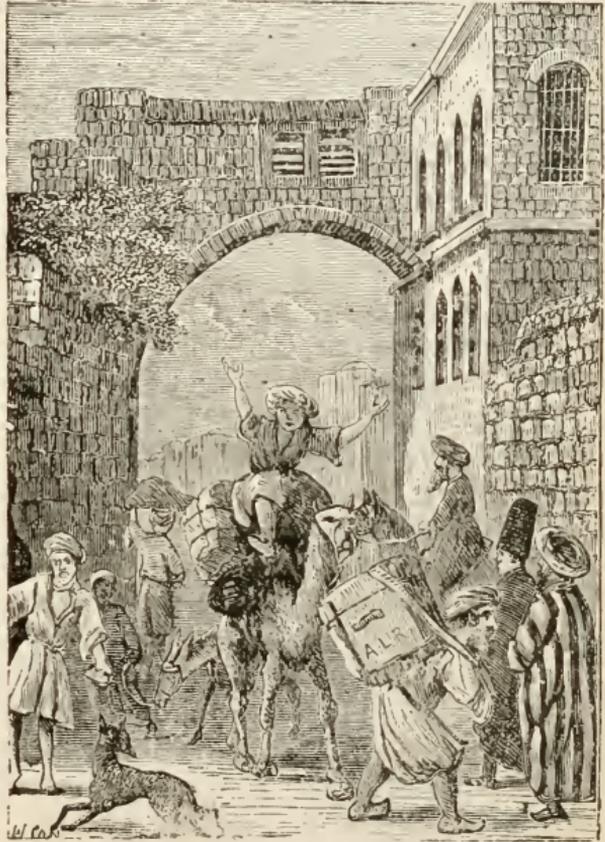
We have already observed, that the chief priests and elders refused to go themselves into the judgment-hall, lest they should contract some pollutions in the house of a heathen, which would have rendered them unfit for eating the passover. The same reason also hindered them from entering the governor's palace on other festivals, when that magistrate attended in order to administer justice: a kind of structure was, therefore erected, adjoining to the palace, which served instead of a tribunal or judgment-seat.

This structure, called in the Hebrew Gabbatha, was finely paved with small pieces of marble of different colors, being always exposed to the weather. One side of this structure joined to the palace, and a door was made in the wall, through which the governor passed to the tribunal. By this contrivance, the people might stand round the tribunal, in the open air, hear and see the governor when he spake

to them from the pavement, and observe the whole administration of justice, without danger of being defiled either by him or any of his retinue.

Before this tribunal the great Redeemer of mankind was brought, and the priests and elders having taken their places round the pavement, the governor ascended the judgment-seat, and asked them what accusation they brought against the prisoner. Though nothing could be more natural than for the governor to ask this question, yet the

Jews thought themselves highly affronted by it, and haughtily answered, If he had not been a very great and extraordinary malefactor, we should not have given you this trouble at all, much less at so unseasonable an hour. Pilate then examined Jesus, and finding he had not been guilty either of rebellion or sedition, but that he was accused of particulars relating to the religion and customs of the Jews, grew angry and said, What are these things to me? Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your



STREET IN JERUSALEM.

own law. Plainly insinuating, that in his opinion the crime they laid to the prisoner's charge was not of a capital nature; and that such punishments as they were permitted by Cæsar to inflict, were adequate to any misdemeanor that Jesus was charged with. But this proposal of the Roman governor was absolutely refused by the Jewish priests and elders, because it condemned the whole proceeding, and therefore they answered. We have no power to put any one death, as this man

certainly deserves, who has attempted not only to make innovations in our religion, but also to set himself up for a king.

The eagerness of the Jews to get Jesus condemned by the Roman governor, who often sentenced malefactors to be crucified, tended to fulfil the saying of our great Redeemer, who, during the course of his ministry, had often mentioned what kind of death he was, by the counsel of his father, appointed to die. Pilate finding it impossible to prevent a tumult, unless he proceeded to try Jesus, ascended again the judgment-seat, and commanded his accusers to produce their accusations against him.

Accordingly they accused him of seditious practices, affirming that he had used every method in his power to dissuade the people from paying taxes to Cæsar, pretending that he himself was the Messiah, the great King of the Jews, so long expected. But they brought no proof of these assertions. They only insinuated that they had already convicted him of this assertion, which was absolutely false. Pilate, however, asked him, Is it true what these men lay to your charge, that you have, indeed, attempted to set up yourself as king of the Jews? To which Jesus replied, Have you ever, during your stay in this province, heard anything of me, that gave you reason to suspect me guilty of secret practices, and seditious designs against the government? Or do you found your question only on the present clamor and tumult that is raised against me? If this be the case, be very careful lest you be imposed on merely by the ambiguity of a word: for to be king of the Jews is not to erect a temporal throne in opposition to that of Cæsar, but a thing of a very different nature; the kingdom of the Messiah is a heavenly kingdom.

To which Pilate replied, Am I a Jew? can I tell what your expectations are, and in what sense you understand these words! The rulers and chiefs of your own people, who are the most proper judges of these particulars, have brought you before me, as a riotous and seditious person: if this be not the truth, let me know what is, and the crime thou has been guilty of. Jesus answered, I have indeed a kingdom, and this kingdom I have professed to establish. But then it is not of this world, nor has my endeavors to establish it any tendency to cause disturbances in the government. For, had that been the case, my servants would have fought for me, and not suffered me to have fallen into the hands of the Jews. But I tell you plainly, my kingdom is wholly spiritual. I reign in the hearts of my people, and subdue their wills and affections into a conformity to the will of

God. You acknowledge then in general, answered Pilate, that you have professed to be a king? To which the blessed Jesus replied, In the sense I have told you I have declared, and do now declare myself to be a king. For this very end I was born, and for this purpose I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth; and whosoever sincerely loves, and is always ready to embrace the truth, will hear my testimony and be convinced by it. Pilate answered, What is truth? and immediately went out to the Jews, and said unto them, I have again examined this man, but can find him guilty of no fault, which according to the Roman law, is worthy of death.

This generous declaration made by the governor, of the innocence of our blessed Saviour, had no effect on the superstitious and bigoted Jews. They even persisted in their accusations with more vehemence than before, affirming that he had attempted to raise a sedition in Galilee: "He stirreth up," said they, "the people, beginning from Galilee to this place."

Jesus, however, made no answer at all to this heavy charge. Nay, he continued silent, notwithstanding the governor himself expressly required him to speak in his own defence.

A conduct so extraordinary, in such circumstances, astonished Pilate exceedingly; for he had great reason to be persuaded of the innocence of our dear Redeemer. The truth is, he was altogether ignorant of the divine counsel by which the whole affair was directed.

There were many reasons which induced the blessed Jesus not to make a public defence. He came into the world purely to redeem lost and undone sinners by offering up himself a sacrifice for them, but had he pleaded with his usual force, the people had, in all probability, been induced to ask his release, and consequently his death had been prevented. Besides, the gross falsehood of the accusation, known to all the inhabitants of Galilee, rendered any reply absolutely needless.

In the meantime the chief priests continued to accuse him, with great noise and tumult; and the meek and humble Jesus still continuing mute, Pilate spake again to him, saying, Wilt thou continue to make no defence? Dost thou not hear how vehemently these men accuse thee? But Pilate, recollecting what the chief priests had said with regard to a sedition in Galilee, asked if Jesus came out of that country, and on being informed he did, he immediately ordered him to be carried to Herod, who was also then at Jerusalem. The governor

supposed that Herod, in whose dominions the sedition was said to have been raised, must be a much better judge of the affair than himself. Besides, his being a Jew rendered him more expert in the religion of his own country, and gave him greater influence over the chief priests and elders; he therefore considered him as the most proper person to prevail on the Jewish council to desist from their cruel prosecution. But if, contrary to all human probability, he should, at their solicitation, condemn Jesus, Pilate hoped to escape the guilt and infamy of putting an innocent person to death. He might also propose, by this action, to regain Herod's friendship which he had formerly lost by encroaching, in all probability, on his privileges. But however that may be, or whatever motive induced Pilate to send our great Redeemer to Herod, the latter greatly rejoiced at this opportunity of seeing Jesus, hoping to have the pleasure of beholding him perform some great miracle.

In this he was however disappointed; for as Herod had apostatized from the doctrine of John the Baptist, to which he was once probably a convert, and had even put his teacher to death, the blessed Jesus, however liberal of his miracles to the sons and daughters of affliction, would not work them to gratify the curiosity of a tyrant, nor even answer one of the many questions he proposed to him.

Herod finding his expectations thus cut off, ordered our blessed Saviour to be clothed with an old robe, resembling in color those worn by kings, and permitted his attendants to insult him. From Herod's dressing him in this manner, it evidently appears that the chief priests and elders had accused him of nothing but his having assumed the character of the Messiah, for the affront put upon him was plainly in derision of that profession.

The other head of accusation, namely, his having attempted to raise a sedition in Galilee, on account of the tribute paid to Cæsar, they did not dare to mention, as Herod could not fail of knowing it to be a gross and malicious falsehood. And no crime worthy of death being laid to his charge, Herod sent him again to Pilate. It seems, that though he was displeased with the great Redeemer of mankind, for refusing to work a miracle before him, yet he did not think proper to comply with the wishes of his enemies.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ROMAN GOVERNOR FOR WANT OF EVIDENCE PROPOSES TO ACQUIT AND RELEASE JESUS THREE SEVERAL TIMES, BUT AT LENGTH, AT THE PRESSING INSTIGATION OF THE INVETERATE JEWS, HE CONDEMNS AND DELIVERS HIM UP.

THE Roman governors, in order to acquire popular applause, used generally, at the feast of the passover, to release a prisoner nominated by the people. At this feast there was one in prison named Barabbas, who, at the head of numbers of rebels, had made an insurrection in the city, and committed murder during the confusion.

The multitude being now again assembled before the governor's palace, began to call aloud on him to perform the annual office of mercy customary at that festival.

Pilate, glad of this opportunity, told them that he was very willing to grant the favor they desired ; and asked them whether they would have Barabbas or Jesus released unto them. But without waiting for an answer, he offered to release Jesus, knowing that the chief priests had delivered him through envy ; especially as Herod had not found him guilty of the crimes laid to his charge.

While these particulars were transacting, Pilate received a message from his wife, then with him at Jerusalem, and who had that morning been greatly affected by a dream which gave her great uneasiness. The dream had so great an effect on this Roman lady, that she could not rest till she had sent an account of it to her husband, who was then sitting with the tribunal on the pavement, and begged him to have no hand in the death of the righteous person he was then judging.

The people had not yet determined whether they would have Jesus or Barabbas released to them ; therefore, when Pilate received the message from his wife he called the chief priests and rulers together, and in the hearing of the multitude, made a speech to them, in which he gave them an account of the examination which Jesus had undergone, both at his own and Herod's tribunal, declaring that in both courts it had turned out honorably to his character ; for which reason he proposed to them that he should be the object of the people's favor.

Pilate did the priests the honor of desiring to know their inclinations in particular, perhaps with a design to soften their stony hearts, and, if possible, to move them for once to an injured but innocent man.

But he was persuaded that if pity was absolutely banished from their callous breasts, his proposal would have been acceptable to the people, whom he expected would embrace the first opportunity of declaring in his favor. Yet in this he was disappointed. They cried out all at once, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."

Pilate himself was astonished at this determination of the multitude, and repeated his question, for he could hardly believe what he had himself heard. But on their again declaring that they desired Barabbas might be released, he asked them what he should do with Jesus, which is called Christ? As if he had said, You demand that Barabbas should be released; but what shall I then do with Jesus? You cannot surely desire me to crucify him whom so many of you have acknowledged as your Messiah? But they cried, saying Crucify him, crucify him! Then Pilate saith unto them, Why? what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him!" They were so resolutely determined to have him destroyed, that, notwithstanding the governor urged them again and again to desire his release, declared his innocence, and offered several times to dismiss him, they would not hear it, uttering their rage, sometimes in hollow, distant, inarticulate murmurs, and sometimes in furious outcries; to such a pitch were their passions raised by the craft and artful insinuations of their priests. Pilate, finding it therefore in vain to struggle with their prejudices, called for water, and washed his hands before the multitude, crying out at the same time that the prisoner had no fault, and that he himself was innocent of his blood.

By this action and declaration Pilate seems to have intended to make an impression on the Jewish populace, by complying with the institution of Moses, which orders, in case of an unknown murder, the elders of the nearest city to wash their hands publicly, and say, "Our hands have not shed this blood." Deut. xxi. 7. And in allusion to this law the Psalmist says, "I will wash mine hands in innocence."

According therefore to the Jewish rites, Pilate made the most solemn and public declaration of the innocence of our dear Redeemer, and of his resolution of having no hand in his death. But notwith-

standing the solemnity of this declaration, the Jews continued inflexible, and cried out, with one voice, "His blood be on us and on our children."

Dreadful imprecation! It shocks humanity! An imprecation which brought on them the dreadful vengeance of Omnipotence, and is still a heavy burden on that perfidious people!

There is no madness equal to the madness of religious zeal; there are no quarrels more bitter and unreasonable than church quarrels, for conscience comes in to give intensity to the struggle. The mob that clamored for the life of Christ were as unthinking as men always are who assume that they are right and all others are wrong. Nothing would cool their fervor except blood, the blood of the innocent. Before such a rabble the robber was in luck, and gained his liberty. The Christ fared sadly, for he was not a robber.

The governor, finding it impossible to alter their choice, released unto them Barabbas. And as it was the general practice of the Romans to scourge those criminals they condemned to be crucified, Pilate ordered the blessed Jesus to be scourged before he delivered him to the soldiers to be put to death. The soldiers, having scourged Jesus, and received orders to crucify him, carried him into the Prætorium or common hall, where they added the shame of disgrace to the bitterness of his punishment; for, sore as he was by reason of the stripes they had given him, they dressed him in a purple robe, in derision of his being king of the Jews.

Having dressed him in this robe of mock-majesty, they put a reed in his hand, instead of a sceptre, and after plating a wreath of thorns, they put it on his head for a crown, forcing it down in so rude a manner that his temples were torn and his face besmeared with his most precious blood.

To the Son of God in this condition the rude soldiers bowed the knee, pretending to do it out of respect; but at the same time gave him severe blows on his head, which drove the points of the wreath afresh into his temples, and then spat on him to express their highest contempt.

The governor, whose office obliged him to be present at this shocking scene of inhumanity, was ready to burst with grief. The sight of an innocent and virtuous man treated with such shocking barbarity raised in his breast the most painful sensations of pity. And though he had given sentence that it should be as the Jews desired, and had delivered our dear Redeemer to the soldiers to be crucified, he was in

hopes that if he showed him to the people in that condition they must relent, and earnestly petition him to be released.

Filled with this thought he resolved to carry him out, and exhibit to their view a spectacle capable of softening the most envenomed, obdurate, enraged enemy. And in order to render the impression still more poignant, he went out himself, and said unto them, Though I have sentenced this man to die, and have scourged him as one that is to be crucified, yet I once more bring him before you, that I may again testify how fully I am persuaded of his innocence, and that ye may yet have an opportunity of saving his life. As soon as the governor had finished his speech, Jesus appeared on the pavement, his hair, his face, his shoulders all clotted with blood, and the purple robe bedaubed with spittle of the soldiers. And that the sight of Jesus in this distress might make the greater impression on the people, Pilate, while he was coming forward, cried out, "Behold the man!" As if he had said, Will nothing make you relent? Have ye lost all the feelings of humanity, and bowels of compassion? Can you bear to see the innocent, a son of Abraham, thus injured?

But all this was to no purpose. The priests, whose rage and malice had extinguished not only the sentiments of justice and feelings of pity natural to the human heart, but also that love which countrymen bear for each other, no sooner saw Jesus than they began to fear the fickle populace might relent; and therefore, laying decency aside, they led the way for the multitude, crying out, with all their might, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

Pilate, vexed to see the Jewish rulers thus obstinately bent on the destruction of a person from whom they had nothing to fear that was dangerous, either with regard to their church or state, passionately told them, that if they would have him crucified, they must do it themselves; because he would not suffer his people to murder a man who was guilty of no crime. But this they also refused, thinking it dishonorable to receive permission to punish a person that had been more than once publicly declared innocent by his judge. Besides, they considered with themselves, that the governor might afterwards have called it sedition, as the permission had been extorted from him.

Accordingly, they told him, that even though none of the things alleged against the prisoner were true, he had committed such a crime in presence of the council itself, as by their law deserved the most ignominious death. He had spoken blasphemy, calling himself the

Son of God, a title which no mortal could assume without the highest degree of guilt. "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard that Jesus called himself the Son of God, his fear was increased. Knowing the obstinacy of the Jews in all matters of religion, he was afraid they would make a tumult in earnest; or, perhaps, he was himself more afraid than ever to take away his life, because he suspected it might be true.

He doubtless remembered the miracles said to have been performed by Jesus, and therefore suspected that he really was the Son of God. For it is well known that the religion which the governor professed directed him to acknowledge the existence of demi-gods and heroes, or men descended from the gods. Nay, the heathen believed, that their gods themselves appeared upon earth in the form of men. Reflections of this kind induced Pilate to go again into the judgment-hall, and ask Jesus from what father he sprung, and from what country he came. But our blessed Saviour gave him no answer, lest the governor should reverse his sentence, and absolutely refuse to crucify him.

Pilate marvelled greatly at this silence, and said unto Jesus, Why dost thou refuse to answer me? You cannot be ignorant that I am invested with absolute power, either to release or crucify you. To which Jesus answered, I well know that you are Cæsar's servant, and accountable to him for your conduct. I forgive you any injury which, contrary to your inclination, the popular fury constrains you to do unto me. Thou hast thy power from above, from the emperor; for which cause the Jewish high priest, who hath put me into thy hands, and by pretending that I am Cæsar's enemy, forces thee to condemn me; or, if thou refusest, will accuse thee as negligent of the emperor's interest; he is more guilty than thou. "He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

This sweet and modest answer made such an impression on Pilate, that he went out to the people, and declared his intention of releasing Jesus, whether they gave their consent or not.

Upon which the chief priests and rulers of Israel cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." If thou releasest the prisoner, who hath set himself up for a king, and has been accused of endeavoring to raise a rebellion in the country, thou art unfaithful to the interest of the emperor, thy master.

This argument was weighty, and shook Pilate's resolution to the very basis. He was terrified at the thought of being accused to Tiberius, who in all affairs of government always suspected the worst, and punished the most minute crimes relative thereto with death. The governor being thus constrained to yield, contrary to his inclination, was very angry with the priests for stirring up the people to such a pitch of madness, and determined to affront them. He, therefore, brought Jesus out a second time into the pavement, wearing the pur-



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ple robe and the crown of thorns; and, pointing to him, said, "Behold your king!" ridiculing the national expectation of the Messiah.

This sarcastical expression stung them to the quick, and they cried out, "Away with him! away with him! Crucify him!" To which Pilate answered, with the same mocking air, "Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar." Thus did they publicly renounce their hope of the Messiah, which the whole economy of their religion had been calculated to cherish; they also publicly acknowledged their subjection to the Romans; and consequently condemned themselves when they afterwards rebelled against the emperor.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE INNOCENT AND IMMACULATE REDEEMER IS LED FORTH TO MOUNT CALVARY, AND THERE IGNOMINIOUSLY CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO NOTORIOUS MALEFACTORS—REVILED BY THE SPECTATORS—A PHENOMENON APPEARS ON THE IMPORTANT OCCASION—OUR LORD ADDRESSES HIS FRIENDS FROM THE CROSS, AND GIVES UP THE GHOST.

THE solemn, the awful period now approached, when the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, was to undergo the oppressive burden of our sins upon the tree, and submit unto death, even the death of the cross, that we might live at the right hand of God for ever and ever. Sentence being pronounced upon the blessed Jesus, the soldiers were ordered to prepare for his execution; a command which they readily obeyed, and, after clothing him in his own garments, led him away to crucify him. It is not said that they took the crown of thorns from his temples; probably he died wearing it, that the title placed over his head might be the better understood.

This title was written in Greek, and Hebrew, and Latin—significant fact; for as these were the three great languages of the world, the fact that Jesus was called King in each of them, although in derision, was nothing less than a prophecy that in all languages and among all nations his name should be known, his kingship should be acknowledged, and his peaceful reign be established. Like those three languages, all the languages of earth shall proclaim Jesus as the King.

It is not to be expected that the ministers of Jewish malice remitted any of the circumstances of affliction, which were ever laid on persons condemned to be crucified. Accordingly Jesus was obliged to walk on foot to the place of execution, bearing his cross. But the fatigue of the preceding night, spent without sleep, the sufferings he had undergone in the garden, his having been hurried from place to place and obliged to stand the whole time of his trial; the want of food, and the loss of blood he had sustained, and not his want of courage on this occasion, made him faint under the burden of his cross. The soldiers, seeing him unable to bear the weight, laid it on one Simon, a native of Cyrene, in Egypt, the father of Alexander and Rufus, well known among the first Christians, and forced him to

bear it after the great Redeemer of mankind. The soldiers did not, however, do this out of compassion to the sufferings of Jesus, but to prevent his dying with the fatigue, and by that means elude his punishment.

The blessed Jesus, in this journey to Calvary, was followed by an innumerable multitude of people, particularly of women, who lamented bitterly the severity of his sentence, and showed all the tokens of sincere compassion and grief.

Jesus, who always felt the woes of others more than he did his own, forgetting his distress at the very time when it lay heaviest upon him, turned himself about, and, with a benevolence and tenderness truly divine, said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. For, if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke xxiii. 28, etc. As if he had said, Dry up these tears, ye daughters of Jerusalem, which ye shed in compassion to me, and reserve them for the deplorable fate of yourselves and of your children; for the calamities that will soon fall on you and your offspring are truly terrible, and call for the bitterest lamentations. In those days of vengeance you will passionately wish that you had not given birth to a generation whose wickedness has rendered them the objects of the wrath of the Almighty to such a degree as never was before experienced in the world. Then shall they wish to be crushed under the weight of enormous mountains, and concealed from their enemies in the bowels of the hills. The thoughts of these calamities afflict my soul far more than the feeling of my own sufferings; for if the Romans are permitted to inflict such punishments on me, who am innocent, how dreadful must the vengeance be which they shall inflict on a nation whose sins cry aloud to Heaven, hastening the pace of the divine judgments, and rendering the perpetrators as proper for punishment as dry wood is for the flames!

Being arrived at the place of execution, which was called Golgotha, or the place of skulls, from the criminal's bones which lay scattered there, some of our Redeemer's friends offered him a stupefying potion, to render him insensible to the ignominy and exerceiating pain of his punishment. But as soon as he tasted the potion he refused to drink it, being determined to bear his sufferings, however sharp, not by in-

toxicating and stupefying himself, but by the strength of patience, fortitude, and faith. Jesus having refused the potion, the soldiers began to execute their orders by stripping him quite naked, and in that condition began to fasten him to his cross. But while they were piercing his hands and his feet with nails, instead of crying out through the sharpness of the pain, he calmly, though fervently, prayed for them, and for all those who had any hand in his death; beseeching his Heavenly Father to forgive them, and excusing them himself by the only circumstance that could alleviate their guilt; I mean, their ignorance.

“Father,” said the compassionate Redeemer of mankind, “forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This was infinite meekness and goodness, truly worthy of the only-begotten Son of God; an example of forgiveness which, though it can never be equalled by any, should be imitated by all.

But behold the appointed soldiers dig the hole in which the cross was to be erected. The cross is placed in the ground, and the blessed Jesus lies on the bed of sorrows. They nail him to it. His nerves break. His blood distils. He hangs upon his wounds naked, a spectacle to heaven and earth. Thus was the only-begotten Son of God, who came down from heaven to save the world, crucified by his own creatures; and, to render the ignominy still greater, placed between two thieves. “Hear, O heavens! O earth, earth, earth, hear! The Lord hath nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against him.”

It was usual for the crimes committed by malefactors to be written



THE WAY TO CALVARY.

on a white board with black, and placed over their heads on the cross. In conformity to this custom, Pilate wrote a title in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, that all foreigners, as well as natives, might be able to read it, and fastened it to the cross, over the head of Jesus; and the inscription was, "this is the King of the Jews." But when the chief priests and elders had read this title they were greatly displeased; because as it represented the crime for which Jesus was condemned, it insinuated that he had been acknowledged for the Messiah. Besides, being placed over the head of one who was dying by the most infamous punishment, it implied that all who attempted to deliver the Jews should perish in the same manner. The faith and hope of the nation therefore being thus publicly ridiculed, it is no wonder that the priests thought themselves highly affronted; and accordingly came to Pilate, begging that the writing might be altered. But as he had intended the affront in revenge for their forcing him to crucify Jesus contrary both to his judgment and inclination, he refused to grant their request. "What I have written," said he, "I have written." When the soldiers had nailed the blessed Jesus to the cross, and erected it, they divided his garments among them; but his coat, or vesture, being without seam, woven from the top throughout, they agreed not to rend it, but to cast lots for it, by which the prediction of the prophet concerning the death and sufferings of the Messiah was fulfilled. "They parted my garments among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots."

A sufficient indication that every circumstance of the death and passion of the blessed Jesus was long before determined in the court of heaven; and accordingly his being crucified between two malefactors was expressly foretold: "And he was numbered with the transgressors." Isa. liii. 12.

The common people, of the baser sort, whom the vile priests had incensed against the blessed Jesus, by the malicious falsehoods they had spread concerning him, and which they pretended to found on the deposition of witnesses; the common people, I say, seeing him hang in so infamous a manner upon the cross, and reading the inscription that was placed over his head, expressed their indignation at him by sarcastical expressions. "Ah thou," said they "that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." But the common people were not the only persons who mocked and derided the blessed Jesus while he was suffering to obtain the remission of sins for all mankind. The rulers, who now

imagined they had effectually destroyed his pretensions to the character of the Messiah, joined the populace in ridiculing him; and with a meanness of soul which many infamous wretches would have scorned, mocked him, even while he was struggling with the agonies of death. They scoffed at the miracles by which he demonstrated himself to be the Messiah, and promised to believe in him, on condition of his proving his pretensions by descending from the cross. "He saved others," said they, "himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him."

In the meantime nothing could be more false and hypocritical than this pretension of the stiff-necked Jews; for they afterwards continued in their unbelief, notwithstanding they well knew that he raised himself from the dead; a much greater miracle than his coming down from the cross would have been; a miracle attested by witnesses whose veracity they could not call in question. It was told them by the soldiers whom they themselves placed at the sepulchre to watch the body, and whom they were obliged to bribe largely to conceal the truth.

It was hard for the chief priests and rulers of the Jews to confess their mistake. A miracle might be wrought before their eyes, yet even this would not have produced such a miracle as changing their opinions and overcoming their prejudices. The rending of the tomb was no more marvelous than would have been the breaking of the fetters of their bigotry. When men have taken sides, and have embarked everything to bolster up their cause, standing pledged to maintain their opinions, and are too proud to acknowledge themselves in error, they can do a thing so desperate as to crucify the Christ. There is a point beyond which reason no longer rules; it has been dethroned by passion. Its kingdom is wrested away, and it is an exile from its own dominions. Then acts the most insane may be looked for; crimes are perpetrated in the very name of religion; cruelties may be accounted the achievements of justice; blood and rapine can be excused. It is folly to plead with bigotry, stubbornness and vindictive passion.

It is, therefore, abundantly evident, that if the blessed Jesus had descended from the cross, the Jewish priests would have continued in their infidelity; and consequently that their declaration was made with no other intention than to insult the Redeemer of mankind, thinking it impossible for him now to escape out of their hands.

The soldiers also joined in this general scene of mockery : " If thou be the king of the Jews," said they " save thyself." If thou art the great Messiah expected by the Jews, descend from the cross by miracle, and deliver thyself from these excruciating torments. Nor did even one of the thieves forbear mocking the great Lord of heaven and earth, though laboring himself under the most racking pains, and struggling with the agonies of death.

But the other exercised a most extraordinary faith, at a time when our great Redeemer was in the highest affliction, mocked by men, and hanged upon the cross, as the most ignominious of malefactors. This Jewish criminal seems to have entertained a more rational and exalted notion of the Messiah's kingdom than even the disciples themselves. They expected nothing but a secular empire ; he gave strong intimations of his having an idea of Christ's spiritual dominion ; for at the very time when Jesus was dying on the cross, he begged to be remembered by him when he came into his kingdom. " Lord," said he, " remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Nor did he make this request in vain : the great Redeemer of mankind answered him, " Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

But let us attentively consider the history of our blessed Saviour's passion, as it offers to our view events absolutely astonishing. For when we remember the perfect innocence of our great Redeemer, the uncommon love he bore to the children of men, and the many kind and benevolent offices he did for the sons and daughters of affliction ; when we reflect on the esteem in which he was held all along by the common people, how cheerfully they followed him to the remotest corners of the country, nay, even into the desolate retreats of the wilderness, and with what pleasure they listened to his discourses ; when we consider these particulars, I say we cannot help being astonished to find them at the conclusion rushing all of a sudden into the opposite extremes, and every individual as it were combined to treat him with the most barbarous cruelty. When Pilate asked the people if they desired to have Jesus released, his disciples, though they were very numerous, and might have made a great appearance in his behalf, remained absolutely silent, as if they had been speechless, or infatuated.

The Roman soldiers, notwithstanding their general had declared him innocent, insulted him in the most inhuman manner. The scribes and Pharisees ridiculed him.

The common people, who had received him with hosannas a few days before, mocked him as they passed by, and railed at him as a deceiver. Nay, the very thief on the cross reviled him. This sudden revolution in the humors of the whole nation may seem unaccountable. But if we could assign a proper reason for the silence of the disciples, the principles which influenced the rest might be discovered in their several speeches. The followers of the blessed Jesus had attached themselves to him in expectation of being raised to great wealth and power in his kingdom, which they expected would have been established long before this time. But seeing no appearance at all of what they had so long hoped for, they permitted him to be condemned, perhaps because they thought it would have obliged him to break the Roman yoke by miracle.

With respect to the soldiers, they were angry that any one should pretend to royalty in Judea, where Cæsar had established his authority. Hence they insulted our blessed Saviour with the title of King, and paid him, in mockery, the honors of a sovereign.

As for the common people, they seem to have lost their opinion of him, probably because he had neither convinced the council nor rescued himself when they condemned him. They began, therefore, to consider the story of his pretending to destroy the temple and build it in three days, as a kind of blasphemy, because it required Divine power to execute such an undertaking.

The priests and scribes were filled with the most implacable and diabolical malice against him, because he had torn off their masks of hypocrisy and showed them to the people in their true colors. It is, therefore, no wonder that they ridiculed his miracles, from whence he derived his reputation.

In short, the thief also fancied that he might have delivered both himself and them, if he had been the Messiah; but as no such deliverance appeared, he upbraided him for making pretensions to that high character.

But now, my soul, take one view of thy dying Saviour, breathing out his soul upon the cross! Behold his unspotted flesh lacerated with stripes, by which thou art healed! See his hands extended, and nailed to the cross; those beneficent hands which were incessantly stretched out to unloose thy heavy burdens, and to impart blessings of every kind! Behold his feet riveted to the accursed tree with nails! those feet which always went about doing good, and travelled far and near to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation!

View his tender temples encircled with a wreath of thorns, which shoot their keen afflictive points into his blessed head, that head which was ever meditating peace to poor, lost and undone sinners, and spent many a wakeful night in ardent prayers for their happiness! See him laboring in the agonies of death, breathing out his soul into the hands of his Almighty Father, and praying for his cruel enemies! Was ever love like this? Was ever benevolence so gloriously displayed?

But see the sun, that glorious luminary of heaven, as it were, hides his face from this detestable action of mortals, is wrapped in the pitchy mantle of chaotic darkness!

This preternatural eclipse of the sun continued for three hours, to the great terror and astonishment of the people present at the crucifixion of our dear Redeemer. And surely nothing could be more proper than this extraordinary alteration in the face of nature, while the Sun of Righteousness was withdrawing his beams, not only from the promised land, but from the whole world; for it was at once a miraculous testimony given by the Almighty himself to the innocence of his Son, and a proper emblem of the departure of him who was the light of the world; at least till his luminous rays, like the beams of the morning, shone out anew with additional splendor in the ministry of his apostles.

Nor was the darkness which now covered Judea and the neighboring countries, beginning about noon and continuing till Jesus expired, the effect of an ordinary eclipse of the sun. It is well known that this phenomena can only happen at the change of the moon; whereas the Jewish passover, at which time our dear Redeemer suffered, was always celebrated at the full.

Besides, the total darkness of an eclipse of the sun never exceeds twelve or fifteen minutes, whereas this continued three full hours. Nothing, therefore, but the immediate hand of that Almighty Being, which placed the sun in the centre of the planetary system, could have produced this astonishing darkness. Nothing but Omnipotence, who first lighted this glorious luminary of heaven, could have deprived it of its cheering rays. Now, ye scoffers of Israel, whose blood have ye so earnestly desired, and wished it might fall upon you and your children? Behold all nature is dressed in the sable veil of sorrow, and, in a language that cannot be mistaken, mourns the departure of its Lord and Master, weeps for your crimes, and deprecates the vengeance of heaven upon your guilty heads! Happy for you that

this suffering Jesus is compassion itself, and even in the agonies of death prays to his heavenly Father to avert from you the stroke of his justice!

This preternatural eclipse of the sun was considered as a miracle by the heathen themselves; and one of them cried out, "Either the world is at an end, or the God of nature suffers!" and well might he use the expression; for never, since this planetary system was called from its primitive chaos, was known such a deprivation of light in the glorious luminary of day.

Indeed, when the Almighty punished Pharaoh for refusing to let the children of Israel depart out of his land, the sable veil of darkness was for three days drawn over Egypt. But this darkness was confined to a part of that kingdom; whereas, this that happened at our Saviour's crucifixion was universal.

When the darkness began, the disciples naturally considered it as a prelude to the deliverance of their Master. For, though the chief priests, elders, and people had sarcastically desired him to descend from the accursed tree, his friends could not but be persuaded that he who had delivered so many from incurable diseases, who had restored limbs to the maimed and eyes to the blind, who had given speech to the dumb and called the dead from the chambers of the dust, might easily save himself, even from the cross.

When, therefore, his mother, his mother's sister, Mary Magdalene, and the beloved disciple observed the veil of darkness begin to extend over the face of nature, they drew near to the foot of the cross, probably in expectation that the Son of God was going to shake the frame of the universe, unloose himself from the cross, and take ample vengeance on his cruel and perfidious enemies.

The blessed Jesus was now in the midst of his sufferings. Yet when he saw his mother and her companions, their grief greatly affected his tender breast, especially the distress of his mother. The agonies of death under which he was now laboring could not prevent his expressing the most affectionate regard both for her and for them. For, that she might have some consolation to support her under the greatness of her sorrows, he told her, the disciple whom he loved would, for the sake of that love, supply his place to her after he was taken from them, even the place of a son: and therefore he desired her to consider him as such, and expect from him all the duties of a child. "Woman," said he, "behold thy son!"

Nor was this remarkable token of filial affection towards his mother

the only instance the dying Jesus gave of his sincere love to his friends and followers; the beloved disciple had also a token of his highest esteem. He singled him out as the only person among his friends to supply his place with regard to his mother.

Accordingly, he desired him expressly to reverence her in the same manner as if she had been his own parent. A duty which the favorite disciple gladly undertook, carried her with him to his house, and maintained her from that hour to the day of her death; her husband, Joseph, having, it seems, been dead some time.

Thus, in the midst of the heaviest sufferings that human nature ever sustained, the blessed Jesus demonstrated a divine strength of benevolence. Even at the time when his own distress was at the highest pitch, and nature was dressed in the robe of mourning for the sufferings of the Redeemer of mankind, his friends had so large a share of his concern, that their happiness interrupted the sharpness of his pains, and for a short time engrossed his thoughts.

But now the moment when he should resign his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father approached, and he repeated part, at least, of the twenty-second Psalm, uttering, with a loud voice, these remarkable words, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some believe that our blessed Saviour repeated the whole Psalm; it having been the custom of the Jews, in making quotations, to mention only the first words of the Psalm or section which they cite. If so, as this Psalm contains the most remarkable particulars of our dear Redeemer's passion, being as it were, a summary of all the prophecies relative to that subject, by repeating it on the cross, the blessed Jesus signified that he was now accomplishing the things that were predicted concerning the Messiah.

And as this Psalm is composed in the form of a prayer, by pronouncing it at this time, he also claimed of his Father the performance of all the promises he had made, whether to him or to his people.

Some of the people who stood by, when they heard our blessed Saviour pronounce the first words of the Psalm, misunderstood him; probably from their not hearing him distinctly, and concluded that he called for Elias. Upon which one of them filled a sponge with vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink; being desirous of keeping him alive as long as possible, to see whether Elias would come to take him down from the cross.

But as soon as Jesus had tasted the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." That is, the work of man's redemption is accomplished: that great work which the only-begotten Son of God came into the world to perform, is finished. In speaking these words, he cried with an exceedingly loud voice, and afterwards addressed his Almighty Father in words which form the best pattern of a recommendatory prayer at the hour of death, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And having uttered these words, "he bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost."

But, behold! at the very instant that the blessed Jesus resigned his soul into the hands of his Heavenly Father, the veil of the temple was miraculously rent from the top to the bottom, probably in the presence of the priest who burnt incense in the holy place, and who, doubtless, published the account when he came out; for our blessed Saviour expired at the ninth hour, the very time of offering the evening sacrifice.

Nor was this the only miracle that happened at the death of the great Messiah; the earth trembled from its very foundations, the flinty rocks burst asunder, and the sepulchres hewn in them were opened, and many bodies of saints, deposited there, awakened after his resurrection from the sleep of death, left the gloomy chambers of the tomb, went into the city of Jerusalem, and appeared unto many. And as the rending of the veil of the temple intimated that the entrance into the holy place, the type of heaven, was now laid open to all nations; so the resurrection of a number of saints from the dead demonstrated that the power of death and the grave was broken; the sting was taken from death, and the victory wrested from the grave. In short, our dear Redeemer's conquests over the enemies of mankind were shown to be complete, and an earnest was given of the general resurrection from the dead.

Nor did the remarkable particulars which attended that awful period when Jesus gave up the ghost affect the natives of Judea only.

The Roman centurion, who was placed near the cross to prevent disorders of any kind, glorified the Almighty, and cried out, "Truly this was the Son of God!" And others who were with them, when they beheld heaven itself bearing witness of the truth of our great Redeemer's mission, smote their breasts and retired.

They had been incessant with loud voices to have him crucified; but when they saw the face of the creation wrapt in the gloomy mantle

of darkness during his crucifixion, and found his death accompanied with an earthquake, as if nature had been in an agony when he died, they rightly interpreted these prodigies to be so many testimonies from the Almighty of his innocence; and their passions, which had been inflamed and exasperated against him, became quite calm or exerted in his behalf.

Some were angry with themselves for neglecting the opportunity the governor gave them of saving his life. Some were stung with remorse for having been active in procuring Pilate to condemn him, and even offering the most bitter insults, while he labored under the cruelest of sufferings; and others were deeply affected at beholding the pains he suffered, which were rigorously severe. These various passions being visibly painted in their countenances, afforded a melancholy spectacle; the whole multitude returning from the cruel execution with their eyes fixed upon the earth, pensive and silent; their hearts ready to burst with grief, groaned deeply within themselves, shedding floods of tears, and smiting on their breasts.

The grief they now felt for the blessed Jesus was distinguished from their former rage against him by this remarkable particular, that their rage was entirely owing to the artful insinuations of the priests; whereas their grief was the genuine and natural feeling of their own hearts, greatly affected with the truth and innocence of him who was the object of their commiseration. And as flattery had no share in this mourning, so the expressions of their sorrow were such as became a real and unfeigned passion. Thus was demonstrated, by many awful tokens, the truth, the divinity, the power of our Redeemer's mission; the blind, the obdurate Jews were struck with horror, fully convinced that the person they had cruelly put to death was nothing less than the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

## CHAPTER XL.

THE BLESSED JESUS IS TREATED WITH INDIGNITY AFTER HIS CRUCIFIXION—A  
PIOUS PERSON BEGS HIS BODY OF PILATE, IN ORDER FOR INTERMENT.

IT was expressly forbidden by the law of Moses that the bodies of those who were hanged should remain all night on the tree. In conformity to this law, and because the Sabbath was at hand, the Jews begged the governor that the legs of the three persons crucified might be broken, to hasten their death. To this request Pilate readily consented; and accordingly gave the necessary order to the soldiers to put it in execution. But on perceiving that Jesus was already dead, the soldiers did not give themselves the trouble of breaking his legs, as they had done those of the two malefactors that were crucified with him. One of them, however, either out of wantonness or cruelty, thrust a spear into his side, and out of the wound flowed blood and water. This wound, therefore, was of the greatest importance to mankind, as it abundantly demonstrated the truth of our Saviour's death, and consequently prevented all objections that the enemies to our holy faith would otherwise have raised against it. The evangelist adds, that the legs of our great Redeemer were not broken, but his side pierced, that two particular prophecies might be fulfilled: "A bone of him shall not be broken," and "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

Among the disciples of our blessed Jesus was one called Joseph of Arimathea, a person equally remarkable for his birth, fortune, and office. This man, who was not to be intimidated by the malice of his countrymen, went boldly to Pilate and begged the body of his great Master. He had indeed nothing to fear from the Roman governor, who, during the whole course of our Saviour's trial, had shown the greatest inclination to release him; but he had reason to apprehend that this action might draw upon him the malice of the rulers of the Jews, who had taken such great pains to get the Messiah crucified.

However, the great regard he had for the remains of his Master made him despise the malice of the Jews, being persuaded that Omnipotence would defend him, and cover his enemies with shame and confusion. And he well knew that if no friend procured a grant of

the body, it would be cast out among the executed malefactors. Pilate was at first surprised at the request of Joseph; thinking it highly improbable that he should be dead in so short a time. He had indeed given orders for the soldiers to break the legs of the crucified persons; but he knew it was not common for them to live many hours after that operation was performed. The governor therefore called the centurion, to know the truth of what Joseph had told him; and being convinced, from the answer of that officer, that Jesus had been dead some time, he readily gave the body to Joseph, who repaired to Mount Calvary, and being assisted by Nicodemus, took



THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

the body down from the cross. The latter showed a courage far superior to that of any of his apostles, not only assisting Joseph in taking down the body of Jesus from the cross, but bringing with him a quantity of spices necessary in the burial of his Saviour.

Accordingly they wrapped the body, with the spices, in fine linen, and laid it in a new sepulchre, which Joseph had hewn out of a rock for himself. This sepulchre was situated in a garden near Mount Calvary; and in which having carefully deposited the body of Jesus, they fastened the door by rolling to it a very large stone.

The women of Galilee, who had watched their dear Redeemer in his last moments and accompanied his body to the sepulchre, observ-

ing that the funeral rites were performed in a hurry, agreed among themselves, as soon as the Sabbath was passed, to return to the sepulchre, and embalm the body of their dead Saviour, by anointing and swathing him in the manner then common among the Jews. Accordingly they retired to the city, and purchased the spices necessary for that purpose; Nicodemus having furnished only a mixture of myrrh and aloes.

During these transactions, the chief priests and Pharisees, remembering that Jesus had more than once predicted his own resurrection, came to the governor and informed him of it, begging at the same time that a guard might be placed at the sepulchre, lest his disciples should carry away the body, and affirm that he was risen from the dead. This happened a little before it was dark in the evening, called "the next day that followed," by the evangelist, because the Jewish day began at sunset. This request being thought reasonable by Pilate, he gave them leave to take as many soldiers as they pleased out of the cohort, which at the feast came from the castle of Antonia, and kept guard in the porticos of the temple. For that they were not Jewish but Roman soldiers, whom the priests employed to watch the sepulchre, is evident from their asking them of the governor.

Besides when the soldiers returned with the news of our Saviour's resurrection, the priests desired them to report that his disciples had stolen him away while they slept; and to encourage them to tell the falsehood, boldly promised, that if their neglect of duty came to the governor's ears, proper methods should be used to pacify him, and deliver them from any punishment; a promise which there was no need of making to their own servants.

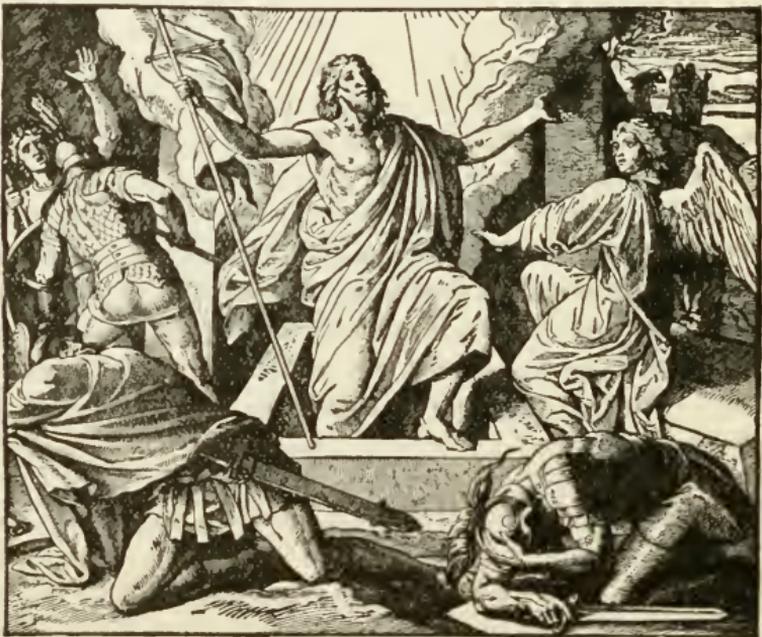
The priests having thus obtained a guard of Roman soldiers, men long accustomed to military duties, and therefore the most proper for watching the body, set out with them to the sepulchre; and to prevent these guards from combining with the disciples in carrying off any fraud, placed them at their post, and sealed the stone which was rolled to the door of the sepulchre.

Thus, what was designed to expose the mission and doctrines of Jesus as rank falsehood and vile imposture, proved in fact the strongest confirmation of the truth and divinity of the same *that* could possibly be given; and placed what they wanted to refuse, which was his resurrection from the dead, even beyond a doubt.

## CHAPTER XLI.

TWO PIOUS WOMEN GO TO VIEW THE SEPULCHRE OF THEIR CRUCIFIED LORD AND SAVIOUR—AN AWFUL PHENOMENON HAPPENS—A MINISTERING SPIRIT DESCENDS—THE REDEEMER BURSTS THE CHAINS OF DEATH, AND RISES FROM THE TOMB.

VERY early in the morning, after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to visit the sepulchre, in order to embalm our Lord's body; for the performance of which they had, in concert with several other women from Galilee, brought ointments and spices.



THE RESURRECTION.

But before they reached the sepulchre, there was a great earthquake preceding the most memorable event that ever happened among the children of men—the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead. “For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men;” they fled into the city, and the Saviour of the world rose from the dead.

The angel, who had till then sat upon the stone, quitted his station, and entered into the sepulchre. In the meantime, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were still on their way to the place, together with Salome, who joined them on the road. As they proceeded on their way they consulted among themselves with regard to the method of putting their design of embalming the body of their Master in execution; particularly with respect to the enormous stone which they had seen placed there with the utmost difficulty two days before. "Who," said they, "shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? for it is very great."

But in the midst of this deliberation about removing this great and sole obstacle to their design, (for it does not appear they knew anything of the guard,) they lifted up their eyes, and perceived it was already rolled away.

Alarmed at so extraordinary and unexpected a circumstance, Mary Magdalene concluded that the stone could not have been rolled away without some design, and that those who rolled it away could have no other intent than that of removing our Lord's body. Imagining, by appearances, that they had really done so, she ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with what she had seen, and what she suspected, leaving Mary and Salome there, that if the other women should arrive during her absence, they might acquaint them with their surprise at finding the stone removed, and of Mary Magdalene's running to inform the apostles of it.

In the meantime the soldiers, who were terrified at seeing an awful messenger from on high roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and open it in quality of a servant, fled into the city, and informed the Jewish rulers of these miraculous appearances.

This account was highly mortifying to the chief priests, as it was a proof of our Saviour's resurrection that could not be denied; they therefore resolved to stifle it immediately, and accordingly bribed the soldiers to conceal the real fact, and to publish everywhere that his disciples had stolen the body out of the sepulchre.

What! the body taken away while the place was guarded by Roman soldiers! Yes, according to these wise priests, the disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept! A story so inconsistent, and which so evidently carries the marks of its own confutation with it, deserves no answer.

The priests themselves could not be so stupid as not to foresee what construction the world would put upon the account given by persons who pretended to know and tell what was done while they were asleep.

## CHAPTER XLII.

THE ANGEL ADDRESSES THE PIOUS WOMEN—TWO DISCIPLES GO TO THE SEPULCHRE—JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE—AFTERWARDS TO A COMPANY OF WOMEN—PETER MEETS HIS LORD AND MASTER, AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.

WHILE Mary Magdalene was going to inform the disciples that the stone was rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, and the body taken away, Mary and Salome continued advancing towards the place, and at their arrival found what they expected, the body of their beloved Master gone from the sepulchre where it had been deposited by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; but at the same time beheld, to their great astonishment, a beautiful young man in shining raiment, very glorious to behold, sitting on the right side of the sepulchre.

Matthew tells us, that it was the angel who had rolled away the stone, and frightened away the guards from the sepulchre. It seems he had now laid aside his terrors in which he was then arrayed, and assumed the form and dress of a human being, in order that these pious women, who had accompanied our Saviour during the greatest part of the time of his public ministry, might be as little terrified as possible.

But notwithstanding his beauty and benign appearance, they were greatly affrighted, and on the point of turning back, when the heavenly messenger, to banish their fears, told them, in a gentle accent, that he knew their errand. "Fear not," said he, "for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said:" and then invited them to come down into the sepulchre, and view the place where the Son of God had lain: that is, to look on the linen clothes, and the napkin that was about his head, and which he had left behind him when he arose from the dead: for to look at the place in any other view would not have tended to confirm their faith of his resurrection.

The women greatly encouraged by the agreeable news, as well as by the peculiar accent with which this blessed messenger from the heavenly Canaan delivered his speech, went down into the sepulchre, when behold another of the angelic choir appeared!



"HE IS RISEN."

They did not, however, yet seem to give sufficient credit to what was told them by the angel : and therefore the other gently reproved them for seeking the living among the dead, with an intention to do him an office due to the latter, and for not believing what was told them by a messenger from heaven, or rather for not remembering the words which their great Master had himself told them with regard to his own resurrection. "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen : remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

When the women had satisfied their minds by looking at the place where the Lord had lain, and where nothing was to be found but the linen clothes, the angel who first appeared to them resumed the discourse, and bade them go and tell his disciples, particularly Peter, the glad tidings of his Master's resurrection from the dead ; that he was going before them to Galilee, and that they should there have the pleasure of seeing him.

The reason why the disciples were ordered to go into Galilee to meet their great and beloved Master seems to be this : they were now most of them in Jerusalem, celebrating the passover ; and it may be easily imagined, that on receiving the news of their Lord's resurrection, many, if not all, would resolve to tarry in Jerusalem, in expectation of meeting him there ; a thing which must have proved of great detriment to them at that time of the year, when the harvest was about to begin, the sheaf of first-fruits being always offered on the second day of the passover-week.

In order, therefore, to prevent their staying so long from home, the message was sent directing them to return into Galilee, with full assurance that they should there have the pleasure of seeing their great Lord and Master ; and by that means have all their doubts removed, and be fully convinced that he had patiently undergone all his sufferings for the sins of mankind.

The women, highly elated with the news of their Lord's resurrection, left the sepulchre immediately, and ran to carry the disciples the glad tidings.

During these transactions at the sepulchre, Peter and John, having been informed by Mary Magdalene that the stone was rolled away and the body of Jesus not to be found, were hastening to the grave, and missed the women who had seen the appearance of angels.



THE ANGEL AT THE TOMB.

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The disciples being astonished at what Mary Magdalene had told them, and desirous of having their doubts cleared up, made all the haste possible to the sepulchre; and John being younger than Peter arrived at the place first, but did not go in, contenting himself with stooping down and seeing the linen clothes lying, which had been wrapped about our Saviour's body. Peter soon arrived and went to the sepulchre, when he saw the "linen clothes lie: and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself."

Our Lord left the grave-clothes in the sepulchre, probably to show that his body was not stolen away by his disciples, who in such a case would not have taken time to have stripped it.

Besides, the circumstances of the grave-clothes induced the disciples themselves to believe when the resurrection was related to them; but at that time they had not any suspicion that he was risen from the dead.

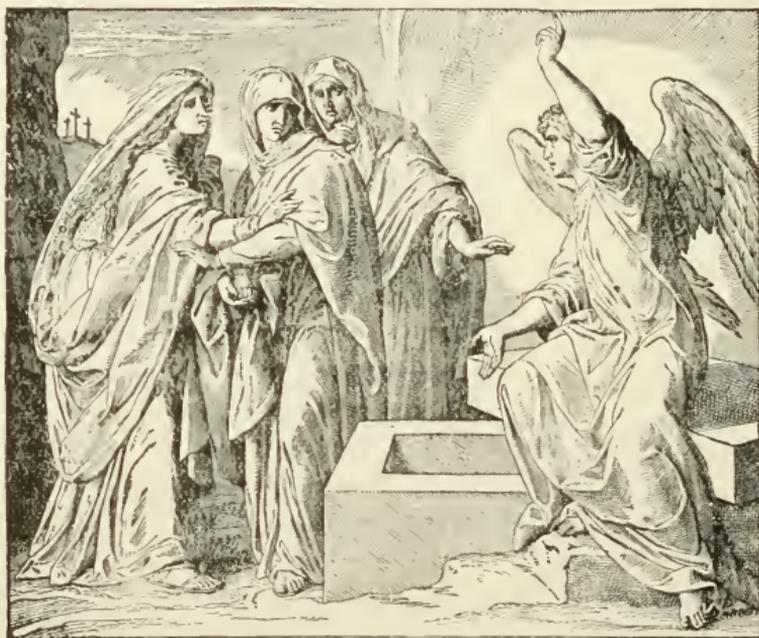
These two disciples having thus satisfied themselves that what Mary Magdalene had told them was really true, returned to their respective habitations; but Mary, who had returned, continued weeping at the door of the sepulchre. She had, it seems, followed Peter and John to the garden, but did leave it with them, being anxious to find the body.

Accordingly, stepping down into the place to examine it once more, she saw two angels sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They were now in the same position as when they appeared to the other women; but had rendered themselves invisible while Peter and John were at the sepulchre.

Mary, on beholding these heavenly messengers dressed in the robes of light, was greatly terrified. But they, in the most endearing accent, asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." On pronouncing these words she turned herself about, and saw Jesus standing near her; but the terror she was in, and the garments in which he was now dressed, prevented her from knowing him for some time. Jesus repeated the same question used before by the angel: "Woman, why weepest thou?" To which Mary, who now supposed him to be the gardener, answered, Sir, if his body be troublesome in the sepulchre, and thou hast removed him, tell me where he is deposited, and I will take him away. But our blessed Saviour,

willing to remove her anxiety, called her by her name, with his usual tone of voice. On which she immediately knew him, and falling down before him would have embraced his knees, according to that modesty and reverence with which the women of the East saluted the men, especially those who were their superiors in station.

But Jesus refused this compliment, telling her that he was not going immediately to heaven. He was often to show himself to the disciples before he ascended, so that she would have frequent opportunities of testifying her regard to him; and at the same time said to her, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Thus did the blessed Jesus contemplate with a singular pleasure the work of



THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST.

redemption he had just finished. The happy relation between God and man, which had been long cancelled by sin, was now renewed. The Almighty, who had disowned them on account of their disobedience, was again reconciled to them; he was become their God and Father; they were exalted to the honorable relation of Christ's brethren and the sons of God; and their Father loved them with an affection far exceeding that of the most tender-hearted parent. The kindness of the message sent by our dear Redeemer to his disciples will appear above all praise, if we remember their late behavior.

Simon, a Cyrenian, was compelled by the Roman soldiers to ease him of his ponderous burden. But notwithstanding they had refused to assist their Master during his sufferings for the sins of the world, he graciously, he freely forgave them: he assured them of their pardon, and called them even by the endearing name of brethren.

There is something very remarkable in this part of the history. None of the apostles, or male disciples were honored with the appearance of the angels, or with the immediate news of the resurrection of the Son of God, much less with the appearance of Jesus himself.

The angels in the sepulchre kept themselves invisible all the time that Peter and John were observing the linen clothes, and satisfying themselves that the body of their Master was not there. Perhaps the male disciples in general were treated with this mark of disrespect, both because they had, with shameful cowardice, forsaken their Master when he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and because their faith was so weak that they had absolutely despaired of his being the Messiah when they saw him expire on the cross. But how different was the conduct of the women! Laying aside the weakness and timidity natural to their sex, they showed an uncommon magnanimity on this melancholy occasion. For, in contradiction to those of the Jews who so vehemently required Jesus to be crucified as a deceiver, they proclaimed his innocence by tears, cries, and lamentations, when they saw him led forth to suffer on Mount Calvary; accompanied him to the cross, the most infamous of all punishments; kindly waited on him in his expiring moments, giving him all the consolation in their power, though at the same time the sight of his suffering pierced them to the heart; and when he expired, and his body was carried off, they accompanied him to his grave, not despairing, though they found he had not delivered himself, but to appearance was conquered by death, the universal enemy of mankind. Perhaps these pious women entertained some faint hopes that he would still revive, or, if they did not entertain expectations of that kind, they at least cherished a strong degree of love for their Lord, and determined to do him all the honor in their power.

A faith so remarkably strong, a love so ardent, and a fortitude so unshaken, could not fail of receiving distinguished marks of the divine approbation; and they were accordingly honored with the news of Christ's resurrection before the male disciples had their eyes cheered with the first sight of their beloved Lord, after he arose from the chambers of the grave, so that they preached the joyful tidings of his resurrection to the apostles themselves.

The women, on their arrival, told as many of the disciples as they could find, that they had seen at the sepulchre the appearance of angels, who assured them that Jesus was risen from the dead. This new information astonished the disciples exceedingly; and as they had before sent Peter and John to examine into the truth of what Mary Magdalene had told them concerning the body being removed out of the sepulchre, so they now judged it highly proper to send some of their number to see the angels, and learn from them the joyful tidings of that great transaction of which the women had given them an account.

That it was really the case, appears from what the disciples, in their journey to Emmaus, told their great Lord and Master, namely, that when the women came and told them that they had seen the angels, certain of their number went to the sepulchre, and found it even as the women had said, but him they saw not.

This second deputation from the apostles did not go alone; for as Mary Magdalene returned with Peter and John, who were sent to examine the truth of her information, so the women who brought an account of the appearance of angels, in all probability returned with those who were sent to be witnesses of the truth of their report. Besides curiosity, they had an errand thither. The angels had expressly ordered them to tell the news to Peter in particular; for which reason, when they understood that he was gone to the sepulchre, it is natural to think they would return with the disciples to seek him. About the time that the disciples and women set out for the sepulchre, Peter and John reached the city; but passing through a different street, did not meet their brethren.

The disciples having a great desire to reach the sepulchre, soon left the women behind, and just as they arrived, Mary Magdalene, having seen the Lord, was coming away. But they did not meet her, because they entered the garden at one door while she was coming out at another. When they came to the sepulchre they saw the angels, and received from them the news of their blessed Master's resurrection; for St. Luke tells us, "They found it even as the women had said." Highly elated with what they saw, they departed and ran back to the city with such expedition, that they gave an account of what they had seen in the hearing of the two disciples before Mary Magdalene arrived.

Nor will their speed appear at all incredible, if we consider that the nature of the tidings the apostles had to carry gave them wings,

as it were, to make their brethren partakers of their joy at this surprising transaction.

In the meantime the company of women, who followed the disciples, happened to meet Peter and John. But they had not gone far from the sepulchre before Jesus himself met them, and said, "All hail!" On which they approached their great Lord and Master, "held him by the feet and worshipped him."

This favor of embracing his knees Jesus had previously refused to Mary Magdalene, because it was not then necessary: but he granted it to the women, because the angel's words having strongly impressed their minds with the notion of his resurrection, they might have taken his appearing for an illusion of their own imagination, had he not permitted them to touch him, and convince themselves by the united reports of their senses, that he was their great Lord and Master who was then risen from the dead, after having suffered on the cross for the sins of mankind.

This company of pious women having tarried some time with Jesus on the road, did not arrive with the joyful tidings of their great Master's resurrection till some time after Peter and John; and perhaps were overtaken by Mary Magdalene on the road, unless we suppose that she arrived a few minutes before them. But be that as it may, this is certain, that they arrived either at or near the same time; so that their accounts of this miraculous event tended to confirm each other.

The disciples were now lost in astonishment at what the women had related; they considered the account they had before given them, of their having seen the angels, as an improbability, and now they seem to have considered this as something worse; for the evangelists tell us that they believed not.

Peter, indeed, to whom the angel sent the message, was disposed by his sanguine temper to give a little more credit to their words than the rest; possibly because the messengers from the heavenly Canaan had done him the honor of naming him in particular. Elated with the respect thus paid him, he immediately repaired again to the sepulchre; hoping, in all probability, that his Master would appear to him, or at least the angel who had so particularly distinguished him from the rest of the disciples.

As soon as Peter arrived at the sepulchre he stooped down, and seeing the linen clothes lying in the same manner as before, he viewed their position, the form in which they were laid, and returned, wondering greatly in himself at what had happened.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

JESUS APPEARS ON DIVERS OCCASIONS TO DIFFERENT DISCIPLES—REPROVES AND CONVINCES THOMAS OF HIS UNBELIEF—SHOWS HIMSELF TO A GREAT NUMBER OF HIS FOLLOWERS IN GALILEE.

SOON after the women's first return to the disciples with the news that they had seen the appearance of angels, who told them that Jesus was risen from the dead, two of the brethren departed on their journey to a village called Emmaus, about two miles distant from Jerusalem. The concern they were in on account of the death of their great and beloved Master, was sufficiently visible in their countenances; and as they pursued their journey, talking with one another, and debating about the things that had lately happened among them, concerning the life and doctrine, the sufferings and death of the holy Jesus, and of the report that was just spread among his disciples of his being that very morning risen from the dead, Jesus himself overtook them and joined company with them.

As he appeared like a stranger, they did not in the least suspect that their fellow-traveller was no other than the great Redeemer of the sons of men. He soon entered into discourse with them, by enquiring what event had so closely engaged them in conversation, and why they appeared so sorrowful and dejected, as if they had met with some heavy disappointment.

One of them, whose name was Cleophas, being surprised at the question, replied, Is it possible that you can be so great a stranger to the affairs of the world, as to have been at Jerusalem, and not have heard the surprising events that have happened there; events that have astonished the whole city, and are now the constant topic of conversation among all the inhabitants? Jesus asked what surprising events he meant. To which Cleophas replied, The transactions which have happened concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who appeared as a great prophet and teacher sent from God; and accordingly was highly venerated among the people, for the excellency of his doctrine, his humility of life, and the number, benefit, and greatness of his miracles. Our chief priests and elders, therefore, envying him as one who lessened their authority over the people, apprehended him, and found means to put him to death.

But we firmly believe he would have proved himself the Messiah, or great deliverer. And this persuasion we a long time supported; nor were we willing to abandon it, even when we saw him put to death. But it is now three days since these things were done, and therefore begin to fear we were mistaken.

This very morning, indeed, a thing happened which extremely surprises us, and we are very solicitous with regard to the event. Some women, who had entertained the same hopes and expectations as we, going early in the morning to pay their last duties to their Master, by embalming his body, returned with great haste to the city, and informed us that they had been at the sepulchre, but were disappointed in not finding the body: and, to increase our surprise, they added, that they had seen the appearance of angels, who told them that Jesus was risen from the dead.

This relation seemed at first to us as not probable, nay, altogether incredible; but two of the company going immediately after to the sepulchre, found everything exactly as the women had reported. They saw the angels, but heard not anything of the body; so that we are still in doubt and perplexity with regard to this wonderful event.

In reply Jesus said, Why are ye so very averse to believe all that the prophets have with one voice predicted concerning the Messiah? Is it not clearly and very expressly foretold, in all the prophetic writings, that it was appointed by the counsel of Omnipotence for the Messiah to suffer in this manner, and that after sustaining the greatest indignities, reproach, and contempt from the malice and perverseness of mankind, and even undergoing an ignominious and cruel death, he should be exalted to a glorious and eternal kingdom? Having said this, he began at the writings of Moses, and explained to them, in order, all the principal passages, both in the books of that great legislator and the writings of the other prophets, relating to his own sufferings, death, and glorious resurrection.

And this he did with such surprising plainness, clearness, and strength, that the two disciples, not yet suspecting who he was, were as much amazed to find a stranger so well acquainted with all that Jesus did and suffered, as they at first wondered at his appearing to be totally ignorant of these transactions.

They were also astonished to hear him interpret and apply the scriptures to their present purpose, with such readiness and convincing clearness of argument, as carried with it a strange and unusual authority and efficacy. When, therefore, they came to the village whither

they were going, and Jesus seemed as if he would have passed on and travelled further, they, desirous of his company, pressed him in the strongest manner to tarry with them that night, as it was then late.

To this request the great Redeemer of mankind consented; and when they were sat down to supper, he took bread and gave thanks to God, and brake it, and gave it to them, in the same manner he used to do while he conversed with them upon earth before his death. This engaged their attention, and looking steadfastly on him, they perceived it was their great and beloved Master.

But they had then no time to express their joy and astonishment to their benevolent Redeemer, for he immediately vanished out of their sight.

As soon as they found their Master was departed, they said one to another, How slow and stupid were we before, not to know him upon the road, while he explained to us the scriptures; when, besides the affability of his discourse and the strength and clearness of his arguments, we perceived such an authority in what he said, and such a powerful efficacy attending his words, even striking our hearts with an affection, that we could not but have known, if we had not been remarkably stupid, to have been the very same that used to accompany his teaching, and was peculiar to it.

This surprising event would not admit them to stay any longer in Emmaus. They returned that very night to Jerusalem, and found the apostles, with several other disciples, discoursing about the resurrection of their Master; and on their entering the room the disciples accosted them, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon."

They had given little credit to the reports of the women, supposing they were occasioned more by imagination than reality. But when a person of Peter's capacity and gravity declared he had seen the Lord, they began to think that he was really risen from the dead. And their belief was greatly confirmed by the arrival of the two disciples from Emmaus, who declared to their brethren how Jesus had appeared to them on the road, and how they discovered him to be their Master by the circumstance before related.

While the disciples from Emmaus were thus describing the manner of the appearing of Jesus to them, and offering arguments to convince those who doubted the truth of it, their great Master himself put an end to the debate, by standing in the midst of them, and saying, "Peace be unto you."

This appearance of our blessed Saviour greatly terrified the disciples, who supposed they had seen a spirit; for, having secured the doors of the house, where they were assembled, for fear of the Jews, and Jesus having opened the locks by his miraculous power, without the knowledge of any in the house, it was natural for them to think that a spirit only could enter. The circumstance, therefore, of the doors being shut is very happily mentioned by St. John, because it suggests a reason why the disciples took their Master for a spirit, notwithstanding many of them were convinced that he was really risen from the dead, and were at that moment conversing about his resurrection.

But, to dispel their fears and doubts, Jesus came forward, and spoke to them in the most endearing manner, showed them his hands and his feet, and desired them to handle him, in order to convince themselves, by the united powers of their different senses, that it was he himself, and no spectre or apparition. "Why are ye troubled," said the benevolent Redeemer of mankind, "and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

These infallible proofs sufficiently convinced the disciples of the truth of their Lord's resurrection, and they received him with rapture and exultation. But their joy and wonder had so great an effect on their minds, that some of them, sensible of the great commotion they were in, suspended their belief, till they had considered the matter more calmly. Jesus, therefore, knowing their thoughts, called for meat, and eat with them, in order to prove more fully the truth of his resurrection from the dead, and the reality of his presence with them on this occasion.

After giving this further ocular demonstration of his having vanquished the power of death and opened the tremendous portals of the grave, he again repeated his salutation, "Peace be unto you;" adding, The same commission that my Father hath given unto me I give unto you: go you, therefore, into every part of the world, and preach the gospel to all the children of men. Then, breathing on them, he said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost to direct and assist you in the execution of your commission. Whosoever embraces your doctrine, sincerely repents, and believes on me, ye shall declare unto him the free forgiveness of his sins, and your declaration shall be ratified and confirmed in the courts of heaven; and whosoever either obsti-

nately rejects your doctrine, disobeys it, or behaves himself unworthily after he hath embraced it, his sins shall not be forgiven him; but the censure ye shall pass upon him on earth shall be confirmed in heaven.

Thomas, otherwise called Didymus, was absent at this meeting of the apostles, nor did this happen without the special direction of Providence, that the particular and extraordinary satisfaction which was afterwards granted him might be an abundant and undeniable testimony of the truth of our blessed Saviour's resurrection to all succeeding generations. The rest of the apostles, therefore, told him that they had seen the Lord, and repeated to him the words he had delivered in their hearing. But Thomas replied, This event is of such great importance that, unless, to prevent all possibility of deception, I see him with mine own eyes, and feel him with mine own hands, putting my fingers into the print of the nails whereby he was fastened to the cross, and thrust my hand into his side which the soldier pierced with his spear, I will not believe that he is really and truly risen from the dead.

Thus have we enumerated, in the most explicit manner, the transactions of that day on which the great Redeemer of mankind arose from the dead; a day highly to be remembered by the children of men throughout all generations. A day in which was fully completed and displayed the conceptions lodged in the breast of infinite Wisdom; even those thoughts of love and mercy on which the salvation of the world depended. Christians have, therefore, the highest reason to solemnize this day with gladness, each returning week, by ceasing from their labor, and giving up themselves to hearing and reading the word of God, pious meditations, and other exercises of religion. The redemption of mankind, which they weekly commemorate, affords matter for eternal praise; it is a subject impossible to be equalled, and whose lustre neither length of time nor frequent reviewing can either tarnish or diminish.

Eight days after the resurrection of our great Redeemer, the blessed Jesus showed himself again to his disciples while Thomas was with them, and upbraided that disciple for his unbelief: but knowing that it did not, like that of the Pharisees, proceed from a wicked mind, but from an honest heart and a sincere desire of being satisfied of the truth, he thus addressed himself to his doubting disciple: "Thomas," said he, "since thou wilt not be contented to rely on the testimony of others, but must be convinced by the experience of thy own senses,

behold the wounds in my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and doubt no longer of the reality of my resurrection."

Thomas was immediately induced to believe, by the invitation of his dear Master, and, being fully satisfied, he cried out, I am abundantly convinced: thou art indeed my Lord, the very same that was crucified; and I acknowledge thy Almighty power in having triumphed over death, and worship thee as my God.

To which the blessed Jesus replied: Because thou hast seen, Thomas, thou hast believed that I am really risen from the dead; but blessed are they who, without such evidence of the senses, shall, upon credible testimony, be willing to believe and embrace a doctrine which tends so greatly to the glory of God and the salvation of the sons of men.

St. John adds, that the blessed Jesus appeared on several other occasions to his disciples after his resurrection; and, by many clear and infallible proofs, not mentioned by the evangelists, fully convinced them that he was alive after his passion. But that those which are mentioned are abundantly sufficient to excite men to believe that Jesus was the Son of God, the great Messiah so often foretold by the ancient prophets; and that by means of that belief they may obtain everlasting life, in the happy regions of the heavenly Canaan.

Our blessed Saviour having, first by the angels and afterwards in person, ordered his disciples to repair to their respective habitations in Galilee, it is reasonable to think they would leave Jerusalem as soon as possible. This they accordingly did, and, on their arrival at their respective places of abode, applied themselves to their usual occupations; and the apostles returned to their old trade of fishing on the lake of Tiberius. Here they were toiling with their nets very early in the morning, and saw Jesus standing on the shore, but did not then know him to be their Master, as it was somewhat dark, and they at a considerable distance from him. He, however, called to them, and asked if they had taken any fish; to which they answered, they had caught nothing. He then desired them to let down their nets on the right side of the boat, and they should not be disappointed.

The disciples, imagining that he might be acquainted with the places proper for fishing, did as he had directed them, and enclosed in their net such a prodigious multitude of fishes, that they were not able

to draw it into the boat, but were forced to drag it after them in the water towards the shore.

It seems they had toiled all the preceding night to no purpose; and therefore such remarkable success could not fail of causing various conjectures among them, with regard to the stranger on the shore who had given them such happy advice. Some of the apostles declared they could not imagine who he was; but others were persuaded that this person was no other than their great and beloved Master. John was fully convinced of his being the Lord, and accordingly told his thoughts to Simon Peter; who, making no doubt of it, girded on his fisher's coat, and leaped into the sea, in order to get ashore sooner than the boat could be brought to land, dragging after it a net full of large fishes. When the disciples came ashore they found a fire kindled, and on it a fish broiling, and near it some bread. But neither being sufficient for the company, Jesus bade them bring some of the fish they had now caught, and invited them to eat with him. Thus did the blessed Jesus prove again to his disciples the reality of his resurrection, not only by eating with them, but by working a miracle like that which, at the beginning of his ministry, had made such an impression upon them as disposed them to be his constant followers.

This was the third time that Jesus appeared publicly to a great number of his disciples in a body, besides his showing himself at several times to particular persons upon special occasions.

When they had eaten, Jesus reminded Peter how diligent and zealous he ought to be in order to wipe off the stain of his denying him when he was carried before the high priest.

Simon, son of Jonas, said our blessed Saviour to him, art thou more zealous and affectionate in thy love toward me than the rest of my disciples? To which Peter answered, "Yea, my Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He was taught modesty and diffidence by his late fall, and therefore would not compare himself with others, but humbly appealed to his Master's omniscience for the sincerity of his regard to him: Jesus answered: Express then thy love towards me by the care of my flock, committed to thy charge. "Feed my lambs—Feed my sheep." Show thy love to me by publishing the great salvation I have accomplished, and feeding the souls of faithful believers with that food which never perishes, but endures for ever and ever.

I well know, indeed, continued the blessed Jesus, that thou wilt continue my faithful shepherd even until death. For the time will

come when thou, who now girdest on thy fisher's coat voluntarily, and stretchedst out thy hands to come to me, shalt in thine old age be girt by others, and forced to stretch out thy hands against thy will, in a very different manner, for the sake of thy constant profession of my religion.

By these last words, Jesus signified the manner of Peter's death, and that he should finally suffer martyrdom for the glory of God, and the testimony of the truth of the Christian religion.

The time being now come when the disciples were to meet their great Lord and Master, according to the messages he had sent them by the women, and in all probability appointed at some former appearance not mentioned by the evangelists, the brethren set out for the mountain in Galilee, perhaps that on which he was transfigured. Here five hundred of them were gathered together, expecting the joyful sight of their great Master, after he had triumphed over death and the grave; some of them not having yet seen him after his resurrection.

They did not wait long before Jesus appeared, on which they were seized with rapture, their hearts overflowed with gladness, they approached their kind, their benevolent Master, and worshipped him. Some few, indeed, doubted; it being a thing agreeable to nature for men to be afraid to believe what they vehemently wish, lest they should indulge themselves in false joys, which vanish like a morning cloud.

But Jesus afterwards appeared frequently to them, and gave them full satisfaction, and instructed them in many things relating to their preaching the gospel, establishing the church, and spreading it through the whole earth.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

OUR BLESSED LORD INSTRUCTS HIS DISCIPLES IN WHAT MANNER THEY SHOULD CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN ORDER TO PROPAGATE THE DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL—PROMISES TO ASSIST THEM IN THIS IMPORTANT BUSINESS—GIVES THEM HIS FINAL BLESSING, AND ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN—COMPARISON BETWEEN MOSES, THE GREAT LAWGIVER, AND OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR—GENERAL REVIEW OF THE LIFE AND DOCTRINES OF THE GREAT REDEEMER OF MANKIND.

A FEW days before the feast of Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, the disciples went up to Jerusalem, where the blessed Jesus made his last appearance to them; and after instructing them in many particulars concerning the kingdom of God, and the manner they were to behave themselves in propagating the doctrine of the gospel, he put them in mind that, during his abode with them in Galilee, he had often told them, that all things written in the law, the prophets, and the Psalms concerning him were to be exactly accomplished. At the same time, "he opened their understandings by divine illumination;" he removed their prejudices by the operation of his Spirit, cleared their doubts, improved their memories, strengthened their judgments, and enabled them to discern the true meaning of the scriptures.

Having thus qualified them for receiving the truth, he again assured them that both Moses and the prophets had foretold that the Messiah was to suffer in the very manner he had suffered; that he was to rise from the dead on the third day as he had done, and that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the Messiah's name among all nations, beginning with the Jews in Jerusalem.

He next delivered unto them their commission to preach the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins, in his name, among all nations, and to testify unto the world the exact accomplishment in him of all things foretold concerning the Messiah; and to enable them to perform this important work, promised to bestow on them the gift of the Holy Spirit, which he called the promise of his Father, because the Almighty had promised them by his prophets.

Having thus strengthened them for the important work they were going to undertake, he led them on to the Mount of Olives, as far as Bethany; where, standing on a hill above the town, he told them

that he was going to ascend to his father; for which reason they might go courageously through all the world, and preach the gospel to every rational creature; that they who believed should be admitted into his church by the rite of baptism, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and be taught, in consequence of their baptism, to obey all the precepts he had enjoined them: that such baptized believers should receive the pardon of their sins, together with eternal life in the happy mansions of his Father's kingdom. But such as refused to embrace the doctrines of the gospel, should be forever excluded those happy regions, and have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. That while they were employed in this work, he would be constantly with them to assist them by his Spirit, and to protect them by his providence. Finally, that those who should, through their preaching, be induced to believe, should themselves work most astonishing miracles, by which the gospel should be propagated with the greatest rapidity.

When the blessed Jesus had spoken these things, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And in the action of blessing them, he was parted from them in the midst of the day, a shining cloud receiving him out of their sight; that is, this brilliant cloud encompassed him about and carried him up to heaven, not suddenly, but at leisure, that they might behold him departing, and see the proof of his ascending into heaven, as he had promised them.

The cloud in which the blessed Jesus ascended, was more bright and pure than the clearest lambent flame, being, as is supposed, no other than the Shechinah, or glory of the Lord! the visible symbol of the Divine presence, which had so often appeared to the patriarchs of old; which filled the temple at its dedication, and which, in its greatest splendor, cannot be beheld with mortal eyes; for which reason it is called the light inaccessible.

As he ascended, the flaming cloud that surrounded him marked his passage through the air, but gradually lost its magnitude in the eyes of those who stood below, till at last it vanished, together with their beloved Master, out of their sight.

In this illustrious manner did the great Redeemer of mankind depart, after having finished the grand work which he left the bosom of his Father to execute; which angels with joy descried was to happen, and which, through eternity to come, shall, at periods the most immensely distant from the time of its execution, be looked back upon with inexpressible delight by every inhabitant of heaven; for

though the minute affairs of time may vanish altogether and be lost, when they are removed far back by the endless progression of duration, this object is such that no distance, however great, can lessen. The kingdom of heaven is erected on the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God, the kingdom and city of the Almighty comprehending all the people of God in the universe, made happy by goodness and love, and therefore none of them can ever forget the foundation on which their happiness stands established. The human beings in particular, recovered by the labor of the Son of God, will view their deliverer, and look back on his stupendous undertaking with the highest rapture, while they are feasting without interruption on its delicious fruits. The angels likewise, the celestial inhabitants of the city of God, will contemplate it with perpetual pleasure, as the happy means of recovering their kindred that were lost; and possibly the grand confirmation of the whole rational system, in their subjection to him who reigneth forever, and whose favor is better than life itself.

Thus have we followed our dear Redeemer through all the transactions of his life, and enlarged on the stupendous miracle of his resurrection, on which glorious event the whole Christian doctrine is founded.

We shall conclude this chapter with a few observations on the general conduct of our blessed Redeemer, during his abode with men on earth.

The human character of the blessed Jesus, as it results from the accounts given of him by the evangelists, for they have not formally drawn it up, is entirely different from that of all other men whatsoever; for, whereas they have selfish passions deeply rooted in their breasts, and are influenced by them in almost everything they do, Jesus was so entirely free from them, that the most severe scrutiny cannot furnish one single action in the whole course of his life wherein he consulted his own interest only. No, he was influenced by very different motives: the present happiness and eternal welfare of sinners regulated his conduct; and while others followed their respective occupations, Jesus had no other business than that of doing the will of his Father, and promoting the happiness of the sons of men. Nor did he wait till he was solicited to extend his benevolent hand to the distressed. He went about doing good, and always accounted it more blessed to give than to receive; resembling God rather than man. He went about doing good · benevolence was the very life of his soul;

he not only did good to objects presented to him for relief, but he industriously sought them out, in order to extend his compassionate assistance. It is common for persons of the most exalted faculties to be elated with success and applause, or dejected by censure and disappointments; but the blessed Jesus was never elated by the one, nor depressed by the other. He was never more courageous than when he met with the greatest opposition and cruel treatment; nor more humble than when the sons of men worshipped at his feet. He came into the world inspired with the grandest purpose that ever was formed, that of saving from eternal perdition, not a single nation, but the whole world; and in the execution of it went through the longest and heaviest train of labors that ever was sustained, with a constancy and resolution on which no disadvantageous impression could be made by any accident whatever. Calumny, threatenings, bad success, with many other evils constantly attending him, served only to quicken his endeavors in this glorious enterprise, which he unceasingly pursued, even till he finished it by his death.

The generality of mankind are prone to retaliate injuries received, and all seem to take a satisfaction in complaining of the cruelties of those who oppress them; whereas the whole of Christ's labors breathed nothing but meekness, patience, and forgiveness, even to his bitterest enemies, and in the midst of the most excruciating torments. The words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," uttered by him when his enemies were nailing him to the cross, fitly express the temper which he maintained through the whole course of his life, even when assaulted by the heaviest provocations. He was destined to sufferings here below, in order that he might raise his people to honor, glory, and immortality in the realms of bliss above, and therefore patiently, yea, joyfully, submit to all that the malice of earth and hell could inflict. He was vilified that we might be honored, he died that we might live for ever and ever.

To conclude. The greatest and best men have discovered the degeneracy and corruption of human nature, and shown them to have been nothing more than men: but it was otherwise with Jesus. He was superior to all the men that ever lived, both with regard to the purity of his manners and the perfection of his virtues. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

Whether we consider him as a teacher, or as a man, "he did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth." His whole life was perfectly free from spot or weakness; at the same time it was remarkable



CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

for the greatest and most extensive exercises of purity and goodness. But never to have committed the least sin in word or in deed, never to have uttered any sentiment that could be censured, upon the various topics of religion and morality which were the daily subjects of his discourses, and that through the course of a life filled with action, and led under the observation of many enemies, who had always access to converse with him, and who often came to find fault, is a pite! of perfection evidently above the reach of human nature; and consequently he who possessed it must have been divine.

Such was the person who is the subject of the evangelical history. If the reader, by reviewing his life, doctrine, and miracles, as they are here represented to him, united in one series, has a clearer idea of these things than before, or observes a beauty in his actions thus linked together, which, taken separately, do not appear so fully;—if he feels himself touched by the character of Jesus in general, or with any of his sermons and actions in particular, thus simply delineated in writing, whose principal charms are the beauties of truth;—above all, if his dying so generously for men, strikes him with admiration, or fills him with hope in the prospect of that pardon which is thereby purchased for the world, let him seriously consider with himself what improvement he ought to make of the Divine goodness.

Jesus, by his death, hath set open the gates of immortality to the sons of men; and, by his word, Spirit, and example, graciously offers to make them meet for the glorious rewards in the kingdom of the heavenly Canaan, and to conduct them into the inheritance of the saints in light. Let us, therefore, remember, that being born under the dispensation of his gospel, we have, from our earliest years, enjoyed the best means of securing to ourselves an interest in that favor of God which is life, and that loving kindness which is better than life.

We have been called to aspire after an exaltation to the nature and felicity of the Almighty, exhibited to mortal eyes in the man Christ Jesus, to fire us with the noblest ambition. His gospel teaches us that we are made for eternity, and that our present life is to our future existence as infancy is to manhood. But, as in the former, many things are to be learned, many hardships to be endured, many habits to be acquired, and that by a course of exercises, which, in themselves, though painful and possibly useless to the child, yet are necessary to fit him for the business and enjoyments of manhood.

## CHAPTER XLV.

**REMARKS ON THE PECULIAR NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, THE PRINCIPLES IT INCULCATES, AND ITS FITNESS TO RENDER MEN HOLY AND HUMBLE HERE, AND HAPPILY GLORIFIED HEREAFTER.**

WE cannot close this delightful scene of the life of our dear Lord and Saviour more comfortably than by considering the benefits resulting from a due attendance of his doctrines, by all who shall by faith receive and embrace the same.

Probably none have been greater enemies to the progress of religion than those who delineate it in a gloomy and terrifying form; nor any guilty of a more injurious calumny against the gospel, than those who represent its precepts as rigorous impositions and unnecessary restraints.

True religion is the perfection of human nature, and the foundation of uniform exalted pleasure: of public order and private happiness. Christianity is the most excellent and the most useful institution, having the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It is the voice of reason; it is also the language of scripture; the ways of wisdom "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" and our blessed Saviour himself assures us that his precepts are easy, and the burden of his religion light.

The Christian religion is a rational service, a worship in spirit and in truth, a worship worthy of the majesty of the Almighty to receive and of the nature of man to pay. It comprehends all we ought to believe, and all we ought to practise; its positive rites are but few, of plain and easy significance, and manifestly adapted to establish a sense of our obligation to God. The gospel places religion not in abstruse speculation and metaphysical subtleties: not in outward show and tedious ceremony; not in superstitious austerities and enthusiastic visions, but in purity of heart, and holiness of life.

The sum of our duty, according to our great Master himself, consists in the love of God and of our neighbor; according to St. Paul, in denying ungodliness and worldly lusts; and in living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; according to St. James, in visiting the fatherless and widows in affliction, and in keep-

ing ourselves unspotted from the world. This is the constant strain and tenor of the gospel. This it inculcates most earnestly, and on this it lays the greatest stress.

But is the Christian system only a republication of the law of nature, or merely a refined system of morality? No, certainly; it is a great deal more. It is an act of grace, a stupendous plan of Providence, designed for the recovery of mankind from a state of degradation and ruin to the favor and approbation of the Almighty, and to the hopes of a happy immortality through a Mediator.

Under this dispensation, true religion consists in a repentance towards God, and in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the person appointed by the supreme authority of heaven and earth to reconcile apostate man to his offended Creator; as a sacrifice for sin; our vital head, and governing Lord. This is religion, as we are Christians. And what hardship, what exaction is there in all this? Surely none. Nay, the practice of religion is much easier than the servitude of sin.

Our rational powers, all will readily agree, are dreadfully impaired, and the soul weakened by sin. The animal passions are strong and corrupt, and oppose the dictates of the Spirit of God: objects of sense make powerful impressions on the mind. We are, in every situation, surrounded with many snares and temptations. In such a disordered state of things, we cannot please God, till created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. We must be born again; born from above.

The God of all grace has planted in the human breast a quick sense of good and evil; a faculty which strongly dictates right and wrong; and though, by the strength of appetite and warmth of passion, men are often hurried into immoral practices, yet in the beginning, especially when there has been the advantage of a good education, it is usually with reluctance and opposition of mind. What inward struggles precede! What bitter pangs attend their sinful excesses! What guilty blushes and uneasy fears! What frightful prospects and pale reviews! Terrors are upon them, and a fire not blown consumeth them. To make a mock at sin, and to commit iniquity without remorse, is, in some instances, an attainment that requires length of time and much painful labor, more labor than is requisite to attain that salvation which is the glory of the man, the ornament of the Christian, and the chief of his happiness.

The soul can no more be reconciled to acts of wickedness and injustice than the body to excess, but by suffering many bitter pains and cruel attacks.

The mouth of conscience may indeed be stopped for a while by false principles ; its secret whispers may be drowned by the noise of company, and stifled by the entertainments of sense ; but this principle of conscience is so deeply rooted in human nature, and, at the same time, her voice is so clear and strong, that the sinner's arts will be unable to lull her into a lasting security.

When the hour of calamity arrives, when sickness seizes and death approaches the sinner, conscience then constrains him to listen to her accusations, and will not suffer the temples of his head to take any rest, "there is no peace to the wicked." The foundations of peace are subverted, they are at utter enmity with their reason, with their conscience, and with their God.

Not so is the case of true religion. For when religion, pure and genuine, forms the tempers, and governs the life, conscience applauds, and peace takes her residence in the breast. The soul is in its proper state. There is order and regularity both in the faculties and actions.

Conscious of its own integrity, and secure of the divine approbation, the soul enjoys a calmness not to be described. But why do I call this happy frame calmness only ? It is far more than mere calmness. The air may be calm, and the day overcast with thick mists and dark clouds. The pious and virtuous mind resembles a serene day, enlightened and enlivened with the brightest rays of the sun. Though all without may be clouds and darkness, there is light in the heart of a devout man. "He is satisfied with favor, and is filled with peace and joy in believing." In the concluding scene, the awful moment of dissolution, all is peaceful and serene. The immortal part quits its tenement of clay with the well-grounded hopes of ascending to happiness and glory.

Nor does the gospel enjoin any duty but what is fit and reasonable. It calls upon all its professors to practise reverence, submission, love and gratitude to God ; justice, truth, and universal benevolence to men ; and to maintain the government of our minds. And what has any one to object against this ? From the least to the greatest commandment of our dear Redeemer, there is not one which impartial reason can find fault with. "His law is perfect ; his precepts are true, and righteous altogether." Not even those excepted which require us to love our enemies, to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross. To forgive an injury is more generous and manly than to revenge it ; to control a licentious appetite than to indulge it ; to suffer poverty, reproach, and even death itself, in the sacred cause of truth and integ-

riety, is much wiser and better, than, by base compliances, to make “shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.”

Thus in a storm at sea, or a conflagration on the land, a man with pleasure abandons his lumber to secure his jewels. Piety and virtue are the wisest and most reasonable things in the world; vice and wickedness the most irrational and absurd.

The all-wise Author of our being hath so framed our natures, and placed us in such relations, that there is nothing vicious but what is injurious; nothing virtuous but what is advantageous to our present interest, both with respect to body and mind. Meekness and humility, patience, universal charity, and grace give a joy unknown to transgressors.

The divine virtues of equity and love, are the only bands of friendship, the only supports of society. Temperance and sobriety are the best preservatives of health and strength; but sin and debauchery impair the body, consume the substance, reduce to poverty, and form the direct path to an immature and untimely death. Now this is the chief excellency of all laws, and what will always render their burden pleasant and delightful, is, that they enjoin nothing unbecoming or injurious.

Besides, to render our duty easy, we have the example, as well as the commands of the blessed Jesus. The masters of morality among the heathen gave excellent rules for the regulation of men's manners; but they wanted either the honesty or the courage to try their own arguments upon themselves. It was a strong presumption that the yoke of the Scribes and Pharisees was grievous, when they laid heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, which they themselves refused to touch with one of their fingers. Not thus our great lawgiver, Jesus Christ the righteous. His behavior was, in all respects, conformable to his doctrine. His devotion how sublime and ardent! his benevolence towards men, how great and diffusive! He was, in his life, an exact pattern of innocence, for he “did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth.” In the Son of God incarnate is exhibited the brightest, the fairest resemblance of the Father that earth or heaven ever beheld, an example peculiarly persuasive, calculated to inspire resolution, and to animate us to use our utmost endeavors to imitate the divine pattern, the example of “the author and finisher of our faith, of him who loved us, and gave himself for us.” Our profession and character as Christians oblige us to make his example the model of our lives. Every motive of decency, gratitude, and interest constrain us to tread the paths he trod before us.

We should also remember that our burden is easy; because God, who "knoweth whereof we are made, who considereth that we are but dust," is ever ready to assist us. The heathen sages themselves had some notions of this assistance, though guided only by the glimmering lamp of reason. But what they looked upon as probable, the gospel clearly and strongly asserts. We there hear the apostle exhorting, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We there hear the blessed Jesus himself arguing in this convincing manner: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

I would not here be understood to mean that the agency of the Spirit is irresistible, and lays a necessitating bias on all the faculties and affections of men. Where this is the case, precepts and prohibitions, promises and threatenings, would signify nothing, and duty and obligation would be words without a meaning. The Spirit assisteth in a manner agreeable to the frame of human nature, not controlling the free use of reason; but by assisting the understanding, influencing the will, and renewing the affections. But though we may not be able to explain the mode of his operations, the Scriptures warrant us to assert, that when men are renewed and prepared for heaven, it is through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. How enlivening the thought! how encouraging the motive! We are not left to struggle alone with the difficulties which attend the practice of religion in the present imperfect state. The merciful Father of our spirits is ever near to help our infirmities, to enlighten the understanding, to strengthen good resolutions, and, in concurrence with our own endeavors, to make us conquerors over all opposition. Faithful is he to his promises, and will not suffer the sincere and faithful to be tempted above what they are able to bear. What can be desired more than this? To promote the happiness of his people, everything is done that is requisite, his grace is all-sufficient, his Spirit is able to conduct us through this vale of tears to never-fading bliss.

We should also remember that the great doctrine of the gospel concerning the infinite mercy of God to all penitents, through Christ Jesus, greatly contributes to the consolation of Christians. Let it be granted that the hope of pardon is essential to the religion of fallen creatures, and one of its first principles; yet, considering the doubts

and suspicions which are apt to arise in a mind conscious of guilt, it is undoubtedly a great, an inestimable favor, to be relieved in this respect by a messenger from Omnipotence himself. This is our happiness. We are not left to depend upon consequential reasonings, which the bulk of mankind are little used to; but we are assured, that, upon our true repentance and believing in Christ, we shall, through his mediation, receive the full remission of past sins, and be restored to the same state of favor with our Maker as if we had never transgressed his laws. Here the gospel triumphs. With these assurances it abounds. Upon this head the declarations of our blessed Saviour and his apostles are so express and full, that every one who believes them, and knows himself to be a true penitent, ought to banish every doubt and fear, and rejoice with joy unspeakable. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Matt. xii. 31. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts xiii. 38, 39. "The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin." John i. 17. What grace and favor is this! Who can dwell upon the transporting theme too long! Now our way is plain before us, and the burden we are to bear is made easy. Our sins are pardonable if repented of and forsaken.

Consider this, all ye who have never yet regarded religion, but pursued a course of vice and sensuality all your lives long. Though your conduct has been base to the last degree, your case is not desperate—far from it. The God whom you have so highly offended commiserates your errors, is ever ready to extend his pardoning mercy to his most degenerate creatures upon their faith and repentance, and "is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to himself, not imputing unto penitent sinners their trespasses." 2 Cor. v. 10. "Let the wicked therefore forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord," who will so liberally extend his mercy to him, "and to our God, who will thus abundantly pardon." Isaiah lv. 7.

Another particular which renders the Christian religion delightful, is its leading us to the perfect eternal life of heaven. It cannot be denied but that we may draw from the light of reason strong presumptions of a future state. The present existence does not look like

an entire scene, but rather like the infancy of human nature, which is capable of arriving at a much higher degree of maturity; but whatever solid foundation the doctrine of a future state may have in nature and reason, certain it is, through the habitual neglect of reflection, and the force of irregular passions, this doctrine was, before the coming of our blessed Saviour, very much disfigured, and in a great measure lost among the sons of men.

In the heathen world a future state of rewards and punishments was a matter of mere speculation and uncertainty, sometimes hoped for, sometimes doubted of, and sometimes absolutely denied. The law of Moses, though of divine original, is chiefly enforced by promises of temporal blessings; and even in the writings of the prophets a future immortality is very sparingly mentioned, and obscurely represented; but the doctrine of our Saviour hath brought life and immortality to light. In the gospel we have a distinct account of another world, attended with many engaging circumstances, about which the decisions of reason were dark and confused. We have the testimony of the Author of our religion, who was raised from the dead, and who afterwards, in the presence of his disciples, ascended into heaven. In the New Testament it is expressly declared that good men, when absent from the body, are present with the Lord. Here we are assured of the resurrection of the body in a glorious form, clothed with immortal vigor, suited to the active nature of the animating spirit, and assisting its most enlarged operations and incessant progress towards perfection. Here we are assured that the righteous shall go into life everlasting, that they shall enter into the kingdom of the heavenly Canaan, where no ignorance shall cloud the understanding, no vice disturb the will. In these regions of perfection nothing but love shall possess the soul, nothing but gratitude employ the tongue, there the righteous shall be united to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born. There they shall see their exalted Redeemer at the right hand of Omnipotence, and sit down with him on his throne; there they shall be admitted into the immediate presence of the supreme Fountain of life and happiness, and beholding his face, be farther changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Here language, here imagination fails me! It requires the genius, the knowledge, and the pen of an angel to paint the happiness, the blissful scene of the New Jerusalem, which human eyes cannot behold till this mortal body shall be purified from its corruption, and dressed in the robes of immortality. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither

hath it entered into the heart to conceive the joys which God hath prepared for them that love him."

What is the heaven of the heathen compared with the heaven of the Christians? The hope, the prospect of this is sufficient to reconcile us to all the difficulties that may attend our progress, sweeten all our labors, alleviate every grief, and silence every murmur.

But why, says the libertine, in the gayety of his heart, should there be any difficulties or restraint at all? God hath made nothing in vain. The appetites he hath planted in the human breast are to be gratified. To deny or restrain them is ignominious bondage; but to give full scope to every desire and passion of the heart, without check or control, is true manly freedom.

In opposition to this loose and careless way of reasoning, let it be considered, that the liberty of a rational creature doth not consist in an entire exemption from all control, but in following the dictates of reason as the governing principle, and in keeping the various passions in due subordination. To follow the regular motion of those affections which the wise Creator hath implanted within us is our duty; but as our natural desires in this state of trial are too often irregular, we are bound to restrain their excesses, and not to indulge them, but in a strict subserviency to the integrity and peace of our minds, and to the order and happiness of human society established in the world. Those who allow the supreme command to be usurped by sensual and brutal appetites may promise themselves liberty, but are truly and absolutely the servants of corruption. To be vicious is to be enslaved. We behold with pity those miserable objects that are chained in the galleys, or confined in dark prisons and loathsome dungeons; but much more abject and vile is the slavery of the sinner! No slavery of the body is equal to the bondage of the mind: no chains press so closely or gall so cruelly as the fetters of sin, which corrode the very substance of the soul, and fret every faculty.

It must, indeed, be confessed that there are some profligates so hardened by custom as to be past all feeling; and, because insensible of their bondage, boast of this insensibility as a mark of their native freedom and of their happiness. Vain men! they might extol with equal propriety the peculiar happiness of an apoplexy, or the profound tranquillity of a lethargy.

Thus have I endeavored to place, in a plain and conspicuous light, some of the peculiar excellencies of the Christian religion; and from hence many useful reflections will naturally arise in the mind of every

attentive reader. It is the religion of Jesus that hath removed idolatry and superstition, and brought immortality to light, when concealed under the veil of darkness almost impenetrable. This hath set the great truths of religion in a clear and conspicuous point of view, and proposed new and powerful motives to influence our minds and to determine our conduct. Nothing is enjoined to be believed but what is worthy of God, nothing to be practiced but what is friendly to man. All the doctrines of the gospel are rational and consistent: all its precepts are truly wise, just, and good. The gospel contains nothing grievous to an ingenuous mind: it debars us from nothing but doing harm to ourselves or to our fellow-creatures; and permits us to range anywhere but in the paths of danger and destruction. It only requires us to accept the remedy provided, to act up to its excellent commands, and to prefer to the vanishing pleasure of sin, the smiles of a reconciled God and an eternal weight of glory. And is this a rigorous exaction, a heavy burden, not to be endured? How can sinful mortals harbor so unworthy a thought?

Surely no man who is a real friend to the cause of religion and to the interest of mankind can ever be an enemy to Christianity, if he truly understands it, and seriously reflects on its wise and useful tendency. It conducteth us to our journey's end by the plainest and securest path; where the "steps are not straitened, and where he that runneth stumbleth not." Let us, who live under this last and most gracious dispensation of God to mankind, "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord;" and not suffer ourselves, by the slight cavils of unbelievers, to be "moved away from the hope of the gospel." Let us demonstrate that we believe the superior excellency of the Christian dispensation, by depending on Christ, and conforming to his precepts. Let us show that we are Christians in deed and in truth; not by endless disputes about trifles, and the transports of a blind zeal, but by abounding in those "fruits of righteousness which are through Christ to the praise and glory of God."

From what has been said, we may clearly perceive how groundless all those prejudices are which some conceive against religion, as if it were a peevish, morose scheme, burdensome to human nature, and inconsistent with the true enjoyment of life. Such sentiments are too apt to prevail in the heat of youth, when the spirits are brisk and lively, and the passions warm and impetuous; but it is wholly a mistake, and a mistake of the most dangerous tendency. The truth is,

there is no pleasure like that of a good conscience, no real peace but what results from a sense of the Divine favor. This strengthens the mind, and can alone support it under all the various and unequal scenes of the present state of trial. This lays a sure foundation of an easy, comfortable life, of a serene, peaceful death, and of eternal joys and happiness hereafter; whereas, vice is ruinous to all our most valuable interests; spoils the native beauty and subverts the order of the soul; renders us the scorn of man, the rejected of God, and, without timely repentance, will rob us of a happy eternity. Religion is the health, the liberty, and the happiness of the soul. Sin is the disease, the servitude, and the destruction of it.

If this be not sufficient to convince you, let me lead you into the chamber of an habitual rioter, the lewd debauchee, worn out in the cause of iniquity, his bones full of the sin of his youth, that from his own mouth, as he lies on his expiring bed, you may learn that the way of transgression is hard; and that however sweet sin may be in the commission, it strikes like a serpent, and bites like an adder.

I am going, reader, to represent to you the last moments of a person of high birth and spirit; of great parts and strong passions; every way accomplished, but unhappily attached to those paths which lead to vice and destruction.

His unkind treatment was the death of a most amiable wife; and his monstrous extravagance, in effect, disinherited his only child. And surely the death-bed of a profligate is next in horror to that abyss to which it leads. It has the most of hell that is visible upon earth, and he that has seen it has more than faith to confirm him in his creed. I see now, says the worthy divine from whom I shall borrow this relation; for who can forget it? Are there in it no flames and furies? You are ignorant then of what a sacred imagination can figure; what a guilty heart can feel! How dismal is it! The two great enemies of soul and body, sickness and sin, sink and confound his friends; silence and darkness are the dismal scene. Sickness excludes the light of heaven, and sin its blessed hope. Oh, double darkness! more than Egyptian! acutely to be felt!

The sad evening before the death of that noble youth, whose last hours suggested these thoughts, I was with him. No one was there but his physician and an intimate acquaintance whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming, he said:

“You and the physician are come too late. I have neither life nor hope. You both aim at miracles. You would raise the dead.”

Heaven, I said, was merciful.

“Or I could not (he replied) have been thus guilty. What has it not done to bless and to save me? I have been too strong for Omnipotence. I plucked down ruin.”

I said, The blessed Redeemer—

“Hold! hold! (said he,) you wound me! This is the rock on which I have split! I denied his name.”

Refusing to hear anything from me, or take anything from the physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then he cried out with vehemence, “Oh, time! time! It is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart. How art thou fled for ever! A month! Oh, for a single week! I ask not for years, though an age were too little for the much I have to do.”

On my saying to him, we could not do too much; that heaven was a blessed place; “So much the worse (replied he): ’tis lost! ’tis lost! Heaven is to me the severest part of hell!”

Soon after I proposed prayer, to which he answered, saying, “Pray you that can; I never prayed; I cannot pray: my conscience is too much wounded. I have deserted my benevolent Maker, and my soul is enveloped in the deepest horrors.”

His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this, (for who could forbear? I could not,) with a most affectionate look, said:

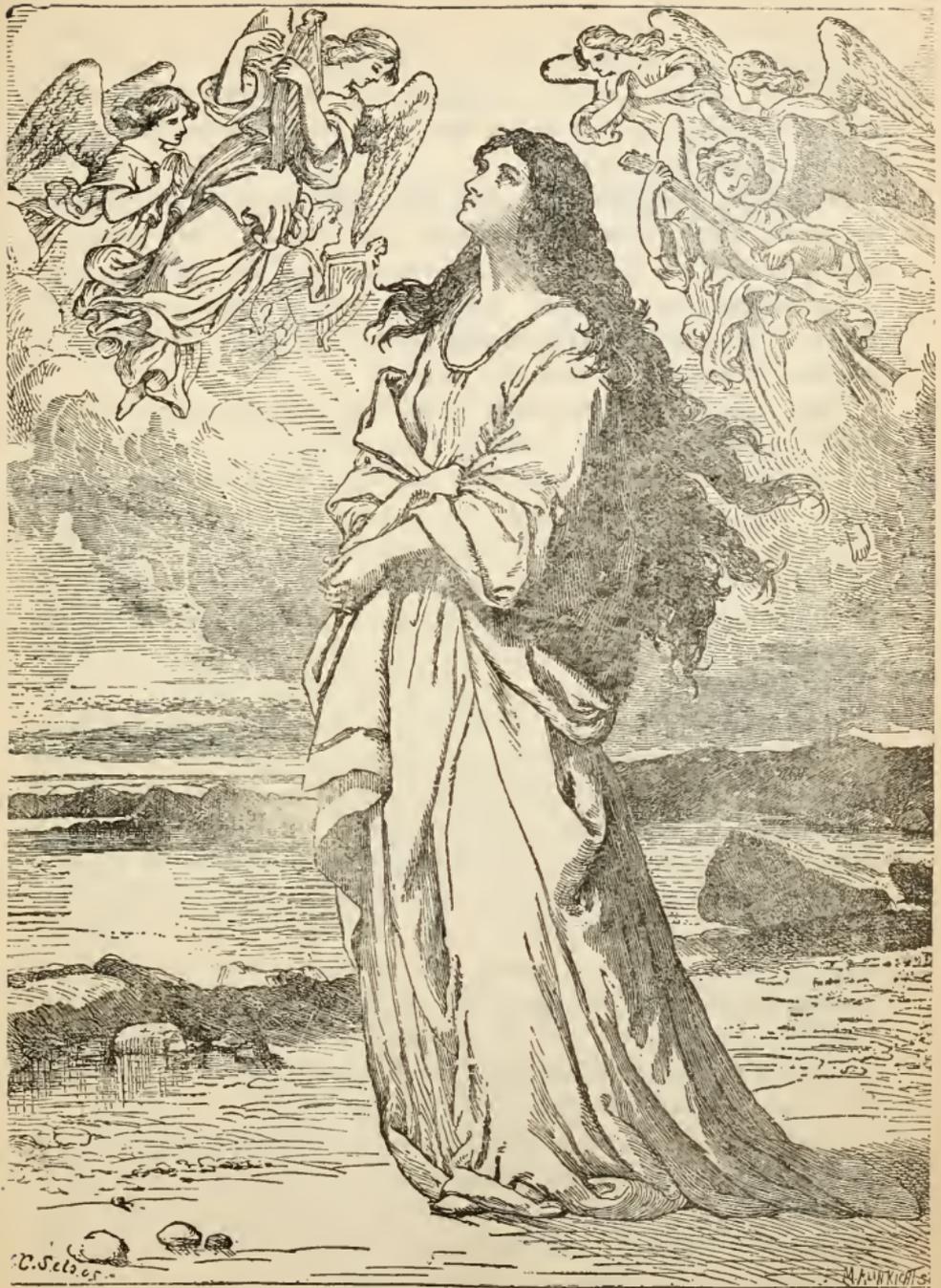
“Keep these tears for thyself! I have undone thee. Dost thou weep for me? That’s cruel. What can pain me more?”

Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him.

“No, (said he,) stay. Thou still mayst hope: therefore hear me. How madly have I talked! How madly hast thou listened and believed! But look on my present state as a full answer to thee and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain; but my soul, as if strung up by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason; full mighty to suffer; and that which thus triumphs within the jaws of mortality, is doubtless immortal. And as for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict the pains I feel.”

I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary confession, in his asserting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus very passionately added:

“No, no! let me speak on. I have not long to speak. My much-injured friend! my soul, as my body, lies in ruins, in scattered fragments of broken thought. Remorse for the past throws my thoughts



C. Sells. sc.

H. W. Wright. sc.

THE UPWARD LOOK OF FAITH.

on the future. Worse dread of the future strikes it back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flame, that is not an everlasting flame, that is not an unquenchable fire."

How were we struck! yet, soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, what a face of despair, he cried out, "My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife! And is there another hell? Oh, thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord God! Hell itself is a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown."

Soon after, his understanding failed; his terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgotten; and before the sun (which I hope has seen few like him) arose, this gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched mortal expired.

It must, indeed, be owned, it sometimes happens that men who have led very wicked lives, have gone out of the world as they have lived in it, defying conscience, and deriding a future judgment as an idle fiction; but these instances are very rare, and only prove that there are monsters in the moral as well as in the natural world.

It will, perhaps, be said, that the sons of vice and riot have pleasure in sensual indulgences. Allowed: but it is altogether of the lowest kind, empty, fleeting, and transient; "Like the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the mirth of the wicked." It makes a noise and a blaze for the present; but soon vanishes away in smoke and vapor.

On the other hand, the pleasure of religion is solid and lasting, and will attend us through all, even the last stages of life. When we have passed the levity of youth, and have lost our relish for the gay entertainments of sense; when old age steals upon us, and stoops us towards the grave, this will cleave fast to us, and give us relief. It will be so far from terminating at death, that it then commences perfect, and continually improves with new additions.

Clad in this immortal robe, we need not fear the awful summons of the king of terrors, nor regret our retiring into the chambers of the dust. Our immortal part will wing its way to the arms of its Omnipotent Redeemer, and find rest in the heavenly mansions of the Almighty. And though our earthly part, this tabernacle of clay, return to its original dust, and is dissolved, our joy, our consolation, our confidence is, that "We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

THE  
LIVES OF THE APOSTLES  
AND  
HOLY WOMEN.

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ST. PETER.

ST. PETER was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, situate on the banks of the Lake of Genesareth, called also the Sea of Galilee from its being situated in that country; and the Lake of Tiberias, from that city being built on its banks. But the particular time of this great apostle's birth cannot be known; the evangelists, and other writers among the primitive Christians, having been silent with regard to this particular. It is, however, pretty certain, that he was at least ten years older than his Master; the circumstances of his being married, and in a settled course of life, when he first became a follower of the great Messiah, and that authority and respect the gravity of his person procured him among the rest of the apostles, are thought sufficiently to declare this conjecture to be very near the truth.

As he was a descendant of Abraham, he was circumcised according to the rites of the Mosaic law, and called by his parents Simon, or Simeon, a name common at that time among the Jews. But after his becoming a disciple of the blessed Jesus, the additional title of Cephas was conferred upon him by his Master, to denote the firmness of his faith—the word cephas, in the Syriac, the common language of the Jews at that time, signifying a stone, or rock; and thence he is called, in Greek, Petros, and by us Peter, which implies the same thing.

With regard to the parents of St. Peter, the evangelists have also been silent, except in telling us that his father's name was Jonas, who was highly honored by our blessed Saviour, who chose two of his

sons, Andrew and Peter, to be his apostles, and preachers of the glad tidings of salvation to the children of men. St. Peter, in his youth, was brought up to the trade of fishing on the lake of Bethsaida, famous for different kinds of fish, which excelled all others in the fineness of their taste.

Here he followed the trade of fishing, but afterwards removed to Capernaum, where he settled; for we find he had a house there when our Saviour began his public ministry, and there he paid tribute.

The business of Peter was both mean and servile; it exposed him to all the injuries of the weather, the tempestuousness of the sea, and the darkness and horror of the night, and all to acquire a mean livelihood for himself and family. But meanness of worldly degree is no obstacle to the favor of God. Nay, if we review the state of Christianity, from its rise to the present period, we shall find that its friends and votaries consist rather of persons of humble and lowly stations in life, than of the great, the dignified, and the opulent.

And herein are manifested the wise and admirable methods made use of by Divine Providence, in making choice of such mean and unlikely instruments in planting and propagating the Christian religion in the world. Men who were destitute of the advantages of education, and brought up to the meanest employments, were chosen to confound the wise, and overturn the learning of the great.

Sacred history hath not ascertained of what sect the apostle was. We know, indeed, that his brother Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist, that preacher of repentance; and it is very unlikely that he who was ready to carry his brother the early tidings of the Messiah, that the sun of righteousness was already risen in those parts, should not be equally solicitous to bring him under the discipline and influences of John the Baptist, the day-star which appeared to usher in the glorious advent of the Son of God. Besides, Peter's great readiness and curiosity, at the first news of Christ's appearance, to come to him and converse with him, shows that his expectations had been awakened, and some glimmering rays of hope conveyed to him by the preaching and ministry of John, who was the "voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

He became acquainted with the immaculate Lamb of God in the following manner: the blessed Jesus, having spent thirty years in the solitudes of a private life, had lately been baptized by John in Jordan, and there owned by the solemn attestation of heaven to be the

Son of God ; whereupon he was immediately hurried into the wilderness, and there for forty days maintained a powerful contest with the devil. But having conquered this great enemy of mankind, he returned to "Bethabara beyond Jordan," where John was baptizing his proselytes, and endeavoring to answer the Jews, who had sent a deputation to him to inquire concerning this new Messiah that appeared among them. To satisfy these curious inquirers of Israel, John faithfully related everything he knew concerning him, gave him the greatest character, and soon after pointed him out to his disciples ; upon which two of them presently followed the great Redeemer of mankind, one of which was Andrew, Simon's brother.

Nor did he conceal the joyful discovery he had made ; for early in the morning he hastened to acquaint his brother Simon that he had found the Messiah. It is not enough to be happy alone ; grace is a communicative principle, that, like the circles in the water, delights to multiply itself and to diffuse its influences all around, especially on those whom nature has placed nearest to us. I have, said he, with rapture, to his brother, found that eminent person so long and signally foretold by the prophets, and whom all the devout and pious among the sons of Jacob so earnestly expected.

Simon, who was one of those who waited for redemption in Israel, ravished with this joyful news, and impatient of delay, presently followed his brother to the place ; and on his arrival our blessed Saviour immediately gave him a proof of his divinity, saluting him at first sight by his name, and telling him both who he was, his name and kindred, and what title should soon be conferred upon him.

But whether these two sons of Jonas constantly attended, in person, from that time, on the great Redeemer of mankind, and became his disciples, the sacred history is silent. It is, however, probable, that they staid with him some time, till they were instructed in the first rudiments of his doctrines ; and then, by the leave of their great and benevolent Master, returned to their families and to their callings ; for it is reasonable to suppose that the blessed Jesus was not at this time willing to waken the jealousy of the rulers of Israel and the suspicion of the Romans, by a numerous retinue, and therefore dismissed his disciples, and among the rest Andrew and Peter, who returned to their trade of fishing on the lake, and where our blessed Redeemer afterwards found them.

The holy Jesus had now more than a year entered on his public

ministry, going into every part of the country, to seek opportunities of doing good to the children of men; so that, by the constancy of his preaching and the reputation of his miracles, his fame was spread throughout all Judea; and multitudes of people flocked to him from all parts, to hear his doctrine and be spectators of his mighty works.

But, to avoid this prodigious throng of people, our great Redeemer often retired to some solitary place, to indulge the privacies of contemplation. In one of these retreats, on the banks of the sea of Galilee, the multitude found him out, and ran to him from the city. Our Saviour, therefore, to avoid the crowd, stepped into a fishing-boat, which lay near the shore and belonged to Simon Peter, who, together with his companions, were on the shore, drying their nets after an unsuccessful night spent in toil and labor. The blessed Jesus, who might have commanded, was pleased to entreat Peter, who now returned to his boat, to thrust off a little from the land, that he might instruct the people, who were gathered in prodigious crowds on the borders of the lake.

Peter gladly complied with the request of his Master, who delivered his heavenly doctrine to the people on the shore. As soon as he had ended his discourse he resolved to seal his miracle, that the people might be persuaded he was a teacher come from God. Accordingly, he ordered Simon to row further from the shore, and cast his net into the sea. To which Simon answered, that they had labored the preceding night, and had taken nothing, and if they could not then succeed, there was little hopes of it now, as the day was far less proper for fishing than the night. But as his Master was pleased to command, he would obey, and accordingly he let down his net, when, to the astonishment both of himself and of his companions, so great a multitude of fishes were enclosed, that they were obliged to call their partners to their assistance. Amazed at this miraculous draught of fishes, Simon Peter, in an ecstasy of admiration, blended with awe and humility, fell prostrate at his Master's feet, acknowledging himself a vile and sinful person, and thinking himself unworthy of being admitted into the presence of one so immediately sent from God. But the compassionate Son of the Most High kindly removed his fears, telling him that this miracle was wrought to confirm his faith and indicate to him that the Almighty had appointed a more noble employment for him, that of saving the souls of the children of men.

From this time Peter and his companions became the inseparable and constant disciples of the great Messiah, submitting themselves to the rules of his discipline, and living under his institutions.

Soon after our blessed Saviour returned to Capernaum with his disciples, where they found the mother-in-law of Peter dangerously ill of a fever. But the compassionate Jesus, who never omitted any opportunity of doing good to the human race, rebuked the disease, and, taking her by the hand, restored her in a moment to her former health.

The blessed Jesus, having entered upon his important mission, thought proper to select some particular persons from among his followers to be constant witnesses of his miracles and doctrines, and who, after his departure, might be entrusted with the care of building his church, and planting that religion in the world for which he himself left the mansions of heaven and put on the veil of immortality. In order to this, he withdrew privately, in the evening, to a solitary mountain, where he spent the night in solemn addresses to his Almighty Father, for rendering the great work he was going to undertake prosperous and successful.

Early the next morning the disciples came to him, out of whom he made choice of twelve to be his apostles and the constant attendants on his person. These he afterwards invested with the power of working miracles, and sent them into different parts of Judea in order to carry on with more rapidity the great work which he himself had so happily begun.

All the evangelists, in their enumeration of these apostles, constantly place St. Peter first. But we must not, on that account, suppose that St. Peter was invested with any personal prerogative above his brethren; none of them ever intimated any such thing, and St. Paul says expressly, that he himself was not inferior to the very chiefest apostle.

Soon after this election, the blessed Jesus, attended by Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, followed Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, to his house, in order to restore his daughter, an only child, who lay at the point of death; but before their arrival a messenger arrived with the news that the damsel was dead, and therefore it was unnecessary for our Saviour to give himself any further trouble. But our blessed Saviour bid the ruler not despair; for if he believed, his daughter should yet be restored to her former health. And accordingly, on his arrival, he took the maid by the hand, and with the power of a word

recalled her fleeting spirit, which had quitted its earthly tabernacle, and restored her again to life and health.

We have no further account of St. Peter in particular till the night after our Saviour's miraculously feeding the multitude in the wilderness. Jesus had ordered his disciples to take ship and pass over to the other side, while he sent the multitude away. But a violent storm arising, they were in great danger of their lives, when their great Master came unto them, walking on the surface of the boisterous billows, with the same ease as if it had been dry ground.

At his approach the disciples were greatly terrified, supposing they had seen a spirit. But their compassionate Master soon dispelled their fears, by telling them it was he himself, and therefore they had no reason to be terrified.

Peter, who was always remarkable for bold resolutions, desired his Master to give him leave to come to him on the water, and on obtaining permission he left the ship and walked on the sea to meet his Saviour. But when he heard the deep roar around him, and the waves increase, he began to be afraid, and as his faith declined his body sunk in the water, so that, in the greatest agony, he called for assistance to him who was able to save. Nor was his cry in vain; the compassionate Redeemer of mankind stretched out his hand, and again placed him on the surface of the water, with this gentle reproof, "O, thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And no sooner had the blessed Jesus and his disciple entered into the ship than the winds ceased, the waves subsided, and the ship was at the land whither they were going.

A miracle of this kind could not fail of astonishing the disciples, and convincing them of the divinity of his mission: accordingly they drew near and worshipped him, with this confession: "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

The next day our blessed Saviour entered the synagogue of Capernaum, and from the miracle of the loaves, took occasion to discourse concerning himself as the true manna, and the bread which came down from heaven, opening to them the more sublime and spiritual mysteries of the gospel. On which great part of the audience, who expected he was going to erect a temporal kingdom, and re-establish the throne of David in Jerusalem, offended at his representing his dominion as entirely spiritual, departed from him, and came no more to hear his discourses. Jesus, on beholding this defection, turned himself towards his disciples, and asked them whether they also would go



CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA.

away. To which Peter replied, "Lord, whither shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." To whom should we apply for life and salvation? "thou art the way, the truth, and the life."

The inhabitants of Judea, who beheld with astonishment the miracles wrought by the blessed Jesus, had formed many conjectures concerning him. Our great Redeemer was not ignorant of this, but being willing to hear what account his disciples would give of the various opinions of the people, asked them what the world said concerning him. To which they replied, that some took him for John the Baptist, risen from the dead; some thought him to be Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the old prophets. He asked them what they themselves thought of him; to which Peter, in the name of the rest, answered, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," anointed and set apart by the Most High to be the great King, Priest, and Prophet of Israel.

This full and comprehensive declaration of Peter satisfied the inquiry of our blessed Saviour, who answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." That is, this faith which thou hast now confessed is not human, or built upon the testimony of man, but upon that knowledge which I was sent from God to reveal unto the world: therefore I say also unto thee, "that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As thy name signifies a rock, so shalt thou prove firm, solid, and immovable in building my church, which shall be so firmly established by thy care and diligence upon that faith thou hast now professed, that all the assaults of men and devils shall not be able to destroy it.

The disciples had no idea that their Master was to suffer death for the sins of the world; on the contrary, they considered him as immortal, having imbibed the opinion of the Scribes and Pharisees, that "Christ abideth forever;" so that when the blessed Jesus told them of the sufferings he must undergo at Jerusalem, what affronts and indignities he must suffer, and be at last put to death, with all the acts of torture and disgrace, by a sentence of the Jewish Sanhedrim, Peter, who could not endure the thoughts of his Master's suffering even the least punishment, much less those cruelties he had mentioned, and at last death itself, interrupted him very unseasonably, and said, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." He considered these sufferings as inconsistent with the character of the great

Messiah, whom he expected would restore the splendor of the throne of David, his father, and reduce all the kingdoms of the earth to his obedience. But our blessed Saviour, who came down from heaven to give his life a ransom for the sins of the world, and who valued the redemption of mankind infinitely more than his own ease and safety, highly resented this speech of St. Peter, and accordingly returned this sharp reproof, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me." Thy pernicious counsel, in seeking to oppose the design for which I purposely left the courts of heaven, is offensive; and thou "savourest not the things of God, but those that be of men."

Some time after, the great Redeemer of the souls of men, being to receive a specimen of his future glorification, took with him three of his most intimate apostles, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and went up into a very high mountain; and while they were employed in earnest addresses to the Almighty, he was transfigured before them, darting such lustre from his face, as exceeded the meridian rays of the sun in brightness; and such beams of light issued from his garments as exceeded the light of the clearest day: an event and sensible representation of that state when "the just shall walk in white robes, and shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." During this heavenly scene, the great prophets, Moses and Elias, appeared in all the brightness and majesty of a glorified state, familiarly conversing with him, and discoursing of the death and sufferings he was shortly to undergo, and his ascension to the heavenly regions of bliss and happiness.

After this heavenly scene, our blessed Lord travelled through Galilee, and at his return to Capernaum, the tax-gatherers came to Peter, and asked him whether his Master was not obliged to pay tribute. When our blessed Saviour was informed of this demand, rather than give offence he wrought a miracle to pay it. Our great Redeemer was now going for the last time to Jerusalem, and he ordered two of his disciples, probably Peter and John, to fetch him an ass, that he might enter into the city on it, as had been foretold. The disciples obeyed their Master, and brought the ass to Jesus, who being mounted thereon, he entered the city amidst the hosannahs of a numerous multitude, with palm-branches in their hands, proclaiming at once both the majesty of a prince and the triumph of a Saviour.

The blessed Jesus proceeded from Jerusalem to Bethany, from whence he sent two of his disciples, Peter and John, to make preparations for his celebrating the passover. Everything being ready, our

blessed Saviour and his apostles entered the house, and sat down to table. But their great Master, who often taught them by example, as well as precept, arose from his seat, laid aside his upper garment, took the towel, and, pouring water into a basin, began to wash his disciples' feet, to teach them humility and charity by his own example. But, on his coming to Peter, he would by no means admit his Master to perform so mean and condescending an office. What! the Son of God stoop to wash the feet of a sinful mortal! A thought which shocked the apostle, who strenuously declared, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" But the blessed Jesus told him, that if he washed him not, he could have no part with him—insinuating that this action was mystical, and signified the remission of sins, and the purifying virtue of the Spirit of the Most High, to be poured upon all true Christians. This answer sufficiently removed the scruples of Peter, who cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Wash me in every part, rather than let me lose my portion in thee.

The blessed Jesus having set them this pattern of humility, began to reflect on his approaching sufferings, and on the person who should betray him into the hands of wicked and cruel men, telling them that not a stranger or an enemy, but one of his friends, one of his apostles, and even one of them who then sat at table with him, would betray him.

This declaration exceedingly affected them all in general, and Peter in particular, who made signs to St. John, to ask him particularly who it was. Jesus complied with this request, and gave them to understand that it was Judas Iscariot.

Our great Redeemer now began the institution of his supper, that great and solemn institution which he resolved to leave behind him, to be constantly celebrated in his church, as a standing monument of his love in dying for mankind; telling them at the same time, that he himself was now going to leave them, and that "whither he went they could not come." Peter, not well understanding what he meant, asked him whither he was going; to which our great Redeemer replied, that he was going to that place whither he could not now, but should hereafter follow him, intimating the martyrdom he was to suffer for his Master's religion.

Peter answered that he was ready now to follow him, even if it required him to lay down his life. This confident presumption was not at all agreeable to the blessed Jesus, who told him he had promised

great things, but would be so far from performing them, that before the cock crew he would thrice deny his Master.

Supper being now ended, they sung a hymn, and departed to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus again put them in mind how greatly the things he was going to suffer would offend them. To which Peter replied, that though all men should be offended, because of him, yet he himself would never be offended.

They now repaired to the garden of Gethsemane; and leaving the rest of the apostles near the entrance, our blessed Saviour, taking with him Peter, James, and John, retired into the most solitary parts of the garden, to enter on the preparatory scene of the great tragedy that was now approaching. Here the blessed Jesus labored under the bitterest agony that ever human nature suffered, during which he prayed with the utmost fervency to his Father, "offering up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground."

While our blessed Redeemer was thus interceding with the Almighty, his three disciples were fallen asleep, though he had made three several visits to them, and calling to Peter, asked him if he could not watch one hour with him, advising them all to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation, adding, "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak."

While he was discoursing with them, a band of soldiers from the chief priests and elders, preceded by the traitor Judas to conduct and direct them, rushed into the garden, and seized the great High Priest of our profession. Peter, whose ungovernable zeal would admit of no restraint, drew his sword, and, without the least order from his Master, struck at one of the persons who seemed to be remarkably busy in binding Jesus, and cut off his right ear. This wild and unwarrantable zeal was very offensive to his Master, who rebuked Peter, and entreated the patience of the soldiers while he miraculously healed the wound.

But now the fidelity of the apostles, which they had urged with so much confidence, was put to the trial. But, alas! instead of assisting or comforting their Master, they all forsook him and fled.

The soldiers who had bound Jesus, led him away, and delivered him to the chief priests and elders, who carried him from one tribunal to another; first to Annas, and then to Caiaphas, where the Jewish Sanhedrim were assembled, in order to try and condemn him.

In the meantime, Peter, who had followed the other disciples in

their flight, recovered his spirits, and being encouraged by his companion, St. John, returned to seek his Master; and seeing him led towards the high priest's hall, followed at a distance to know the event; but on his coming to the door was refused admittance, till one of the disciples, who was acquainted there, came out, and prevailed upon the servant who kept the door to let him in. Peter, being admitted, repaired to the fire burning in the middle of the hall, round which the officers and servants were standing; where, being observed by the maid-servant who let him in, she charged him with being one of Christ's disciples; but Peter publicly denied the charge, declaring that he did not know him, and presently withdrew into the porch, where he heard the cock crow, an intimation seemingly sufficient to awaken his conscience into a quick sense of his duty, and the promise he had a few hours before made to his Master. But, alas! human nature, when left to itself, is remarkably frail and inconstant. This Peter sufficiently experienced; for while he continued in the porch, another maid met him, and charged him with being one of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, which Peter firmly denied, and, the better to gain belief, ratified it with an oath.

About an hour after this, the servant of the high priest, he whose ear Peter had cut off, charged him with being a disciple of Christ, and that he himself had seen him in the garden with him; adding, that his very speech sufficiently proved that he was a Galilean.

Peter, however, still denied the fact; and added to his sin, by ratifying it not only by an oath, but by a solemn curse and execration, that he was not the person, that he knew not the man. But no sooner had he uttered this denial than the cock crew; at which his Master turned about and earnestly looked upon him, a look that pierced him to the heart, and brought to his remembrance what his Saviour had more than once foretold, that he would basely and shamefully deny him. Peter was now no longer able to contain his sorrow; he flew from the palace of the high priest, and wept bitterly, passionately bewailing his folly and the aggravations of his sin.

We have in St. Peter a sad warning for our instruction. The opinion of his own strength proved his ruin. So dangerous and fatal is it to lean on our own understandings; to be wise, good, and safe in our own conceits, when all our sufficiency, all our safety is of God.

It is certain, from various circumstances, that Peter, after the crucifixion of his Lord and Master, staid at Jerusalem, or at least in the

neighborhood; for when Mary Magdalene returned from the sepulchre, to inform the disciples that the stone was rolled away from the door, and the body not to be found, Peter and John set out immediately towards the garden. John, who was the younger, arrived at the sepulchre first, looked into it, but did not enter, either out of fear or reverence to his Saviour. Peter came soon after, and resolutely went into the sepulchre, where he found the linen clothes lying together in one place, and the napkin that was about his head wrapped together in another: a sufficient indication that the body was not stolen away, for, had that been the case, so much care and order would not have been observed in disposing of the linen clothes.

But Peter did not wait long in suspense with regard to his great Lord and Master, for the same day Jesus appeared to him, and as he was the first of the disciples who had made a signal confession of the divinity of the Messiah's mission, so it was reasonable he should first see him after his resurrection; at the same time to convince him that the crime he had been guilty of in denying him was pardoned, and that he was come, like the good Samaritan, to pour oil into his wounded conscience. Soon after the apostles prepared to obey the command of their great Master, by retiring into Galilee; and we find that Peter, Nathaniel, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, returned to their old trade of fishing on the lake.

One morning, early, as they were laboring at their employment, having spent the whole night to no purpose, they saw on the shore a grave person, who called to them, and asked them if they had any meat, to which they answered, No. Cast, then, replied he, the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They followed his directions, and enclosed a prodigious number of large fish. Astonished at such remarkable success, the disciples looked one upon another for some time, till St. John told Peter that the person on the shore was doubtless their great Lord and Master, whom the winds, the sea, and the inhabitants of the watery regions were so ready to obey.

Peter no sooner heard the beloved disciple declare his opinion concerning the stranger, than his zeal took fire, and notwithstanding the coldness of the season, girt on his fisher's coat, threw himself into the sea, and swam to shore; his impatience to be with his dear Lord and Master not suffering him to stay the few minutes necessary to bring the ship to land.

As soon as the disciples came on shore they found a fire kindled, and fish laid upon it, either immediately created by the power of their Divine Master, or which came ashore of its own accord, and offered itself to his hand. But notwithstanding there were fish already on the fire, he ordered them to bring of those they had now caught, and dress them for their repast, he himself eating with them; both to give them an instance of mutual love and friendship, and also to assure them of the truth of his human nature, since he was risen from the dead.

When the repast was ended our blessed Saviour addressed himself particularly to Peter, urging him to the utmost diligence in his care of souls: and because he knew that nothing but a sincere love to himself could support him under the troubles and dangers of so laborious and difficult an employment, he inquired of him whether he loved him more than the rest of the apostles, mildly reproving him for his over-confident resolution. Peter, whom fatal experience had taught humility, modestly answered, that none knew so well as himself the integrity of his affections. Thou knowest the hearts of all men, nothing is hid from thee, and therefore thou knowest that I love thee. The question was three several times repeated by our blessed Saviour, and as oftentimes answered by the apostle; it being but just that he, who, by a threefold denial, had given so much reason to question his affection, should now, by a threefold confession, give more than common assurance of his sincere love for his Master; and to each of these confessions our great Redeemer added this signal trial of his affection, "Feed my sheep." Instruct and teach them with the utmost care and the utmost tenderness.

The blessed Jesus having thus engaged Peter to a cheerful compliance with the dangers that might attend the discharge of his office, particularly intimated to him the fate that would attend him; telling him, that when he was young he girt himself, lived at his pleasure, and went wherever his fancy directed him; but when he should reach the term of old age, he should stretch forth his hands, and another should gird and bind him, and lead him whither he had no desire to go, intimating, as the evangelist tells us, "by what death he should glorify God."

Peter was well pleased to drink the bitter cup, and make his confession as public as his denial, providing all would be sufficient to prove the sincerity of his love. And seeing John following, he asked his great Master, what should be his, and whether he who

had been the object of his Master's love in his lifetime, should not have as honorable a death as he that had denied him. To which Jesus replied, It doth not concern thee to know how I shall dispose of events with regard to him: he shall see the destruction of the Jewish nation, and then go down to the chambers of the dust in peace.

Not long after our blessed Saviour appeared to his disciples at Jerusalem, to take his last farewell of them who had attended him during his public ministry among the sons of men.

He now led them out as far as Bethany, a small village on the Mount of Olives, where he briefly told them that they were the persons he had chosen to be the witnesses both of his death and resurrection; a testimony which they should publish in every part of the world. In order to which he would, after his ascension into heaven, pour out his Spirit upon them in an extraordinary manner, that they might be the better enabled to struggle with that violent rage and fury with which the doctrine of the gospel would be opposed by men and devils. Adding, that in the meantime they should return to Jerusalem, and there wait till those miraculous powers were given them from on high.

Having finished this discourse, he laid hands upon them, and gave them his solemn benediction; during which he was taken from them, and received up into the regions of the heavenly Canaan. The apostles, who beheld their Master visibly ascend into heaven, were filled with a greater sense of his glory than they had ever been while he conversed with them familiarly on earth. And having performed their solemn adorations to him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, there to wait for the accomplishment of their great Master's promise.

The apostles, though deprived of the personal presence of their dear Lord and Master, were indefatigable in fulfilling the commission they had received from him. The first object that engaged their attention, after their return to Jerusalem, was to fill up the vacancy in their number, lately made by the unhappy fall and apostasy of Judas. In order to this, they called together the church and entered into an upper room, when Peter, as president of the assembly, proposed to them the choice of a new apostle.

After filling up the vacancy in the apostolic number, they spent their time in prayer and meditation till the feast of Pentecost, when the promise of their great Master in sending the Holy Ghost was

fulfilled. The Christian assembly were met, as usual, to perform the public services of their worship, when suddenly a sound, like that of a mighty wind, rushed in upon them, representing the powerful efficacy of that Divine Spirit which was now to be communicated to them.

After which there appeared small flames of fire, which, in the shape of cloven tongues, descended and sat upon the head of each of them, to denote that the enjoyment of this gift should be constant and perpetual, and not like the prophets of old, who were inspired only at some particular times and seasons. Upon this they were all immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, which, in an instant, enabled them to speak fluently several languages which they had never learned, and probably never heard.

The report of so sudden and strange an action was soon spread through every part of Jerusalem, which at that time was full of Jewish proselytes, "devout men out of every nation under heaven; Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia and Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, from Rome, from Crete, and from Arabia."

These no sooner heard of this miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit than they flocked in prodigious numbers to the Christian assembly, where they were amazed to hear these Galileans speaking to them in their own native language, so various, and so very different from one another. And it could not fail of exceedingly increasing the wonder, to reflect on the meanness of the speakers, who were neither assisted by genius, polished by education, nor improved by use and custom. The disciples were destitute of all these assistances; their parts were mean, their education trifling, and their experience in speaking before great assemblies nothing. Yet these persons spoke boldly, and with the greatest propriety, in various languages. Nor were their discourses filled with idle stories, or the sallies of a luxuriant fancy. No, they expatiated on the great and admirable works of Omnipotence, and the mysteries of the gospel, which human apprehension could never discover.

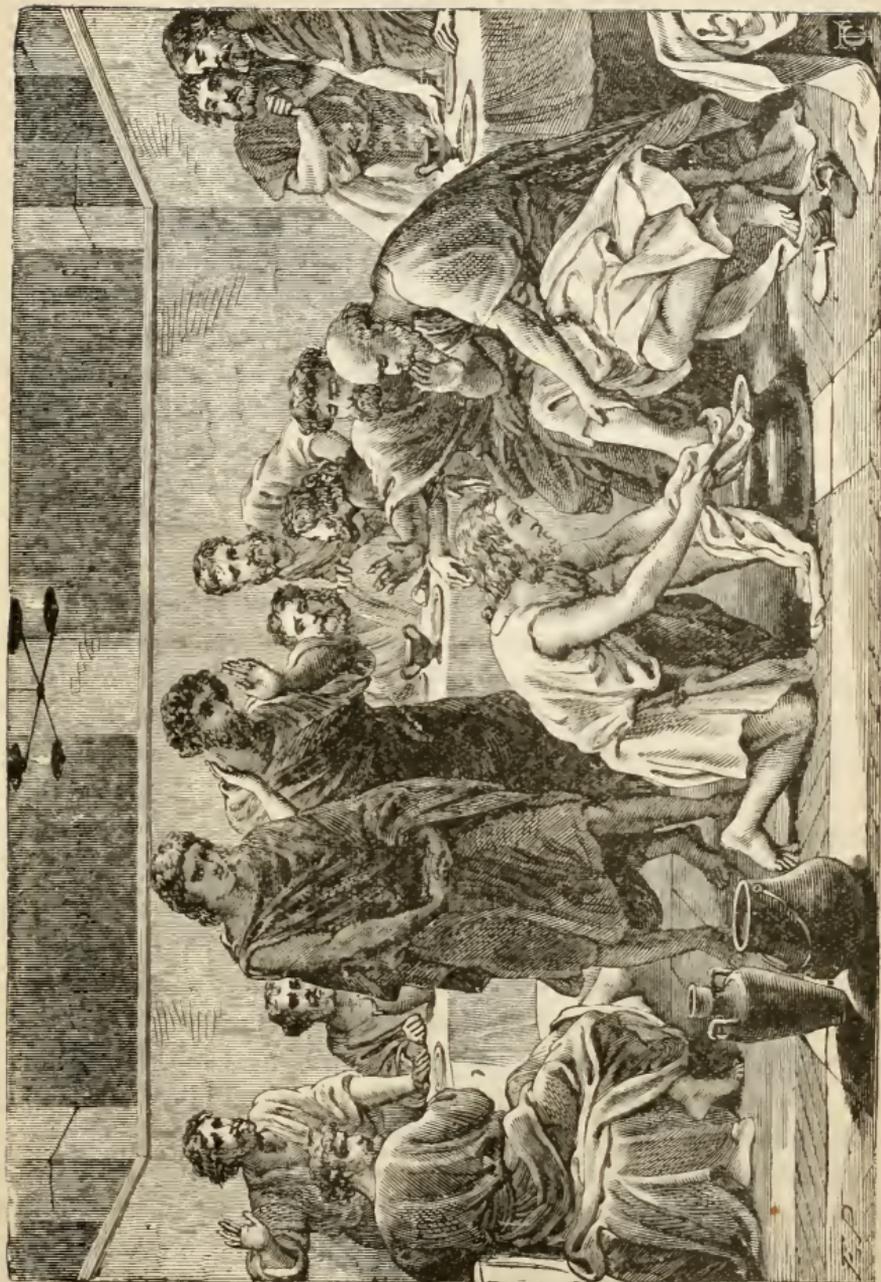
This surprising transaction had different effects on the minds of the people, some attributing it to the effect of a miracle, and others to the power and strength of new wine. Upon which the apostles all stood up, and Peter, in the name of the rest, undertook to confute this injurious calumny.

The effect of his discourse was equally wonderful and surprising;



CONVERSION OF SAUL.





JESUS WASHING PETER'S FEET.

for vast numbers of those who before ridiculed the religion of Jesus, now acknowledged him for their Saviour, and flew to him for refuge from the impending storm: and St. Luke tells us, that there were that day added to the church no less than three thousand souls, who were all baptized and received into the flock of the great Shepherd of Israel, the bishop of our souls. A quick and plentiful harvest indeed! "This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Soon after this wonderful effusion of the Holy Spirit, Peter and John going up to the temple, about three in the afternoon, near the conclusion of one of the solemn hours of prayer, they saw a poor impotent cripple, near forty years of age, who had been lame from his birth, lying at the beautiful gate of the temple, and asking alms of those who entered the sacred edifice. This miserable object moved their compassion; and Peter, beholding him with attention, said, The riches of this world, the silver and gold so highly coveted by the sons of men, are not in my power to bestow; but I possess the power of restoring life and health, and am ready to assist thee.

Then, taking the man by the hand, he commanded him, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, to rise up and walk. Immediately his nerves and sinews were enlarged, and the several parts of his diseased members performed their natural functions. Upon which the man accompanied them into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God.

So strange and extraordinary a cure filled the minds of the people with admiration, and their curiosity drew them around the apostles to view the men who had performed it. Peter, seeing the multitude gathering round them, took the opportunity of speaking to them and assuring them that this miracle was wrought not through his own power, but through that of the same Jesus of Nazareth whom they had crucified, but whom God had raised up from the dead the third day. He urged them to repent of their sins, and take hold of the atoning merits of Christ, and be saved.

While Peter was speaking to the people in one part of the temple, John was, in all probability, doing the same in the other, and the success plainly indicated how powerful the preaching of the apostles was, five thousand persons embracing the doctrines of the gospel, and acknowledging the crucified Jesus for their Lord and Saviour.

Such amazing success could not fail of exciting the attention and envy of the rulers of Israel. Accordingly the priests and Sadducees repaired to the Roman magistrate, and intimated to him, that in all

probability this concourse of people would prove the cause of a tumult and insurrection. Upon this information the captain of the temple seized on the apostles and cast them into prison.

The next day they were carried before the Jewish sanhedrim; and being asked by what power and authority they had done this, Peter boldly answered, Be it known unto you, and to all the descendants of Jacob, that this miracle was wrought wholly in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye yourselves have crucified and slain, and whom the Almighty hath raised again from the dead. This is the stone which you builders refused, and which is become the head of the corner. Nor is there any other way by which you, or any of the sons of men, can be saved, but by this crucified Saviour.

This boldness of the apostle was admired by all, even by the court of the sanhedrim. And it should be remembered that these very judges were the persons who had so lately condemned the blessed Jesus himself, and had no other way of justifying their proceedings than by a second act of cruelty; that the apostles did not charge them with the crime of crucifying the Son of God in secret, but in the open court of judicature, and in the hearing of all the people.

The court after beholding them with a kind of astonishment, remembered that they had seen them with Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore ordered them to withdraw, while they debated among themselves what was proper to be done. It was impossible to deny the miracle; for it was performed before all the people, and the person on whom it was wrought, no stranger in Jerusalem. They therefore resolved to charge them strictly not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. Accordingly they were again called in, and acquainted with this resolution of the council; to which the apostles answered, that as they had received a commission from Heaven, to declare to all nations what they had seen and heard, it was certainly their duty to obey God rather than man.

This was a fair appeal to the consciences of their very judges; but these rulers of Israel, instead of being satisfied with it, would, in all probability, have proceeded to a greater violence, had not the people's veneration for the apostles checked their malice: so that all they dared to do was to enforce their menaces, and dismiss them.

When the apostles were returned to their brethren, they informed them of the treatment they had met with from the Jewish magistrates; upon which they all joined in prayer to the Almighty for an extraordinary supply of courage and assistance, to enable them to

execute their commission in these perilous times, and plant the religion of their crucified Saviour. Nor were their prayers offered in vain; for before they had concluded their fervent addresses to the throne of grace, the house was again shaken with a mighty wind, as on the day of Pentecost, and they were instantly replenished with fresh measures of the Holy Ghost; and notwithstanding all the threatenings of the Jewish rulers, found themselves enabled to preach the gospel of their great and beloved Master, with more boldness than ever.

The labors of the apostles were crowned with abundant success, and it seems that such was the aversion of the inveterate Jews to those who became converts to the faith of Christ, that they were deprived of business in their respective callings; for we find that the professors of the religion of the holy Jesus sold their effects, and brought the money to the apostles, that they might deposit it in one common treasury, and from thence supply the several exigencies of the church.

But hypocrisy was not unknown among the professors of religion, even in these primitive times. Ananias, and his wife Saphira, having embraced the doctrines of the gospel, pretended to follow the free and generous spirit of others, by consecrating and devoting their estate to the honor of God, and the necessities of the church. Accordingly they sold their possessions, and brought part of the money and laid it at the apostles' feet, hoping to deceive them, though guided by the Spirit of Omnipotence. But Peter, at his first coming in, asked Ananias how he could suffer Satan to fill his heart with such enormous wickedness, as to think to deceive the Holy Ghost. That before it was sold it was wholly in his own power, and afterwards the money entirely at his own disposal; so that his action was capable of no other interpretation than that he had not only abused and injured man, but mocked the Almighty himself, who he must know was privy to his most secret thoughts.

The apostles had no sooner finished, than Ananias, to the great surprise of all that were present, fell down dead by a stroke from Heaven.

Not long after this his wife came in, whom Peter reproved in the same manner he had done her husband, adding, that she should immediately end her life in the same awful manner; upon which she was smitten by the hand of Omnipotence, and fell down dead, sharing with her husband in the punishment, as she had before in the heinous

crime. This remarkable instance of severity filled all the converts with fear and trembling, and prevented, in a great measure, that hypocrisy and dissimulation by which others might flatter themselves to deceive the church.

But such instances of severity were very extraordinary, the power of the apostles was generally exerted in works of mercy and beneficence towards the sons and daughters of affliction. They cured all kinds of diseases, and cast out devils, so that they brought the sick into the streets, and laid them upon beds and couches, that the shadow, at least, of Peter, as he passed by, might cover some of them; well knowing that a single touch or word from either of the apostles was sufficient to remove the most inveterate diseases.

But the stupendous works of the apostles, and the growing numbers of the church alarmed the rulers of Israel, who seized the apostles and cast them into prison. Their power, however, was limited, and like the drop of a bucket to the ocean, when opposed to the Almighty arm of the great Jehovah. The prison-doors, though fastened with the utmost caution, opened of themselves at the approach of a messenger from the courts of heaven, who commanded the apostles to leave the dungeon, repair to the temple, and preach the glad tidings of the gospel to the people.

The officers returning in the morning, found the prison-doors shut and guarded, but the prisoners were gone. This remarkable circumstance greatly alarmed them, and they repaired to the council to acquaint them with what had happened. The rulers were astonished at the news; but hearing that the apostles were preaching in the temple, they sent an officer to bring them, with the least violence to their persons, before the sanhedrim. Their orders were soon obeyed, and the disciples of Jesus placed before the same court that had so lately condemned their Master.

The apostles being thus brought before the sanhedrim, the high priest asked them how they dared to propagate a doctrine they had lately so strictly charged them not to preach; to which Peter, in the name of the rest, replied, We certainly ought to obey God rather than man. And though you have so barbarously and contumeliously treated the Saviour of the world, yet God hath risen him up to be a prince and Saviour, to give both repentance and remission of sins. And of these things both we and the miraculous powers which the Holy Ghost hath conferred on all Christians are witnesses.

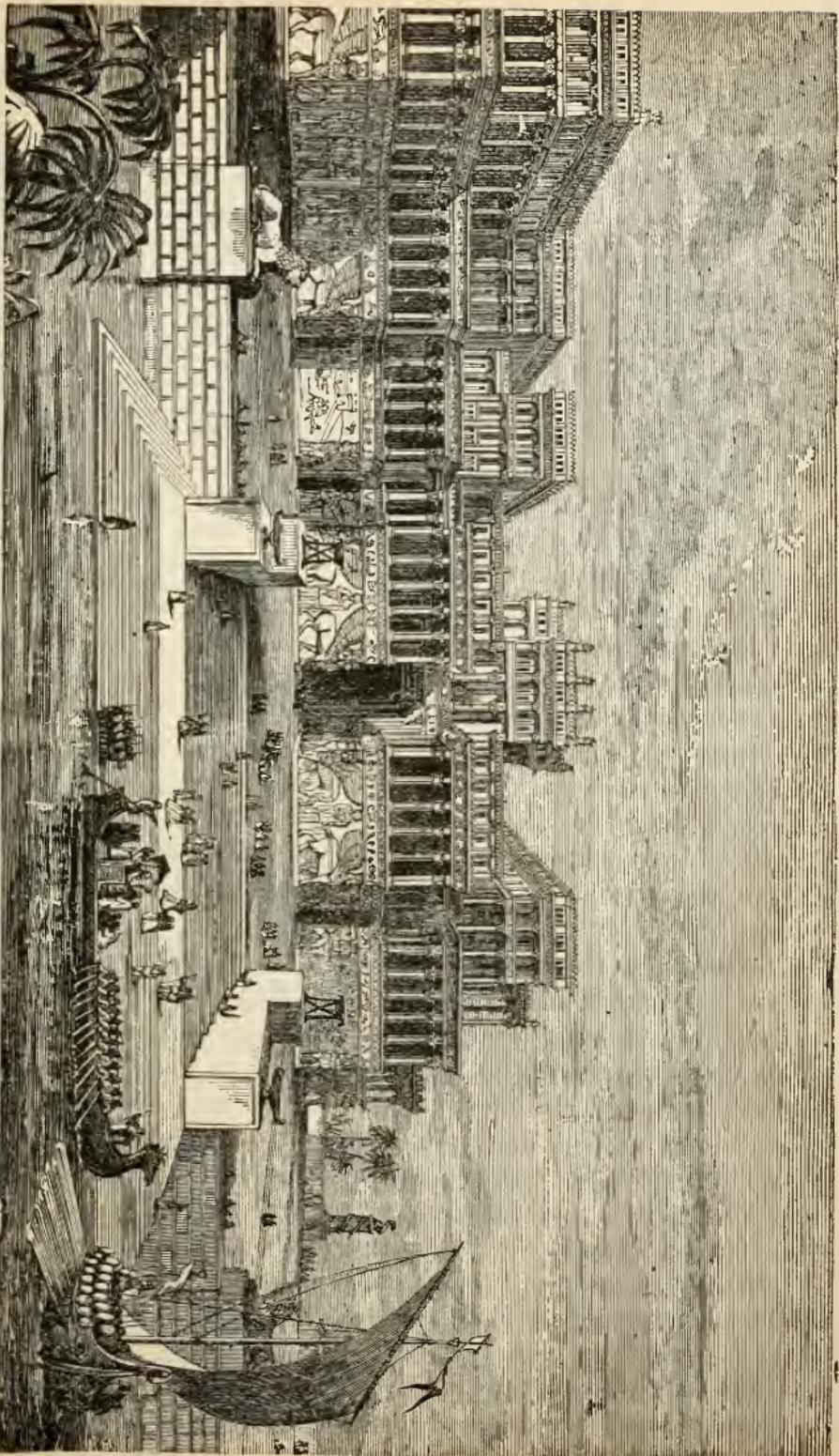
This answer, delivered with remarkable boldness, exasperated the council, and they began to consult how they might destroy them. But Gamaliel, a grave and learned counsellor, after commanding the apostles to withdraw, desired them to proceed with caution in an affair of this nature, reminding them that several persons had already raised parties, and drawn great numbers of persons after them, but that every one of them had miscarried, and all their designs were rendered abortive, without the interposition of that court. That they would, therefore, do well to let the apostles alone; for if their doctrines and designs were of human invention, they would come to nothing, but if they were of God, all their power and policy would be of no effect, and sad experience would too soon convince them that they had themselves opposed the counsels of the Most High.

This prudent and rational advice had the desired success; the council were satisfied, and after commanding the apostles to be scourged they strictly charged them to preach no more in the name of Jesus and set them at liberty. But this charge had little effect on the disciples of the blessed Jesus; they returned home in triumph, rejoicing that they were thought worthy to suffer in so righteous a cause, and to undergo shame and reproach for so kind and so powerful a Master.

The Christian doctrine had been propagated hitherto without much violence of opposition in Jerusalem, but now a storm commenced with the death of the proto-martyr Stephen; nor did it end but with the dispersion of the disciples, by which means the glad tidings of the gospel, which till now had been confined to Judea, were preached to the Gentile world, and an ancient prophecy fulfilled, which says, "Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Among the dispersed followers of the blessed Jesus was Philip, the deacon, who had retired to Samaria, where, by his preaching, exhortations, and miracles, he had converted many souls. The apostles, who continued at Jerusalem, were soon informed of this remarkable success of Philip's ministry in Samaria, and thought it necessary to send him assistance. Accordingly, Peter and John were deputed to this infant church, who having prayed and laid their hands on the new converts, they received the Holy Ghost.

Among Philip's converts was one, Simon, who, by magic arts and diabolical sorceries, had gotten himself much fame, and was ever



ROYAL PALACE AT NINEVEH.

claimed to have the power of a god. This man came to the apostles, and offered them money if they would invest him with a portion of their power, so that whosoever he laid hands on might receive the Holy Ghost. Peter sternly rebuked his sinful presumption, and showed him his sin with such startling truthfulness, that the magician prayed him to make intercession with God, that his sin might be forgiven and he escape the heavy judgments he deserved.

The apostles did not stay any longer in Samaria than was necessary to confirm the new converts in the faith they had embraced, and to preach the glad tidings of salvation in the adjacent villages; after which they returned to Jerusalem, to assist the rest of the disciples with their power.

The storm, though violent, being at length blown over, the church enjoyed a time of calmness and serenity; during which St. Peter went to visit the churches lately planted in those parts, by the disciples whom the persecution had dispersed. And at his arrival at Lydda, he miraculously healed Æneas, who had been afflicted with the palsy, and confined to his bed eight years; but on Peter's bidding him arise in the name of Jesus, he was immediately restored to perfect health. Nor was the success of this miracle confined to Æneas and his family: the fame of it was blazed through all the neighboring country, and many believed in the doctrine of the Son of God. It was even known at Joppa, a seaport town about six miles from Lydda, and the brethren immediately sent for Peter, on the following melancholy occasion:

Tabitha, whose Greek name was Dorcas, a woman venerable for her piety and extensive charity, was newly dead, to the great loss of all mankind who loved genuine benevolence, especially the poor and afflicted, who were supported by her charity. At Peter's arrival he found her dressed for the funeral solemnity, and surrounded by mournful widows, who showed the coats and garments wherewith she had clothed them, the monuments of her liberality. But Peter put them all out, and, kneeling down, prayed with the utmost fervency; then turning the body, he commanded her to arise, and, taking her by the hand, presented her in perfect health to her friends and others, who were assembled to pay their last duties to so good a woman. This miracle confirmed those who had newly embraced the gospel of Jesus, and converted many more to the faith. After which he stayed a considerable time at Joppa, lodging in the house of one Simon, a tanner.

During his abode in this city, one day, when he was offering up his prayers to the Almighty, he found himself hungry, and called for meat; but while it was dressing for him he fell into a trance, wherein was presented to him a large sheet let down from heaven, containing all sorts of creatures, clean and unclean, at the same time a voice said to him, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." But this apostle, as yet tenacious of the rites and institutions of the Mosaic law, answered, that his conscience refused to comply, having never eaten anything that was common or unclean. To which the voice replied, that it was unjust to consider that as common which God had cleansed. This was done thrice, after which the vessel was again drawn up to heaven and the vision disappeared. By this symbolical representation St. Peter was given to understand that the Almighty was now going to send him on a new embassy, which the Spirit at the same time commanded him to undertake. While he was still wondering with himself what the event would prove, three messengers knocked at the gate, inquiring for him; and from them he received the following account: that Cornelius, a Roman, captain of a band of Italian soldiers at Cæsarea, a person of great benevolence and religion, one who had been long a proselyte, had, by an immediate command from God, sent for him.

The next day Peter, accompanied by some of the brethren, went with the messengers, and the day after arrived at Cæsarea. Cornelius, having information of his coming, had summoned his friends and kindred to Cæsarea; and, at the apostle's entering his house, fell at his feet, a method of address frequent in the eastern countries. But Peter, who considered that honor as due only to the Almighty, lifted him up, and declared to the company the reason of his coming, saying, he had lately learned that there was no respect of persons with God.

When the apostle had ended his speech, Cornelius, at his request, related the particular reason for his sending for him. Four days ago, said this Roman officer, being conversant in the duties of fasting and prayer, an angel from the courts of heaven appeared to me, declaring that my prayers and alms were come up as a memorial before the throne of the Most High; and at the same time ordered me to send to Joppa for one, Simon Peter, who lodged in the house of a tanner, near the sea-side, who would give me further information in the mysteries of salvation. Accordingly, I made no hesitation to obey the heavenly messenger; I sent immediately for thee; and now thou art

come, and we are met together to hear what instructions thou hast to communicate.

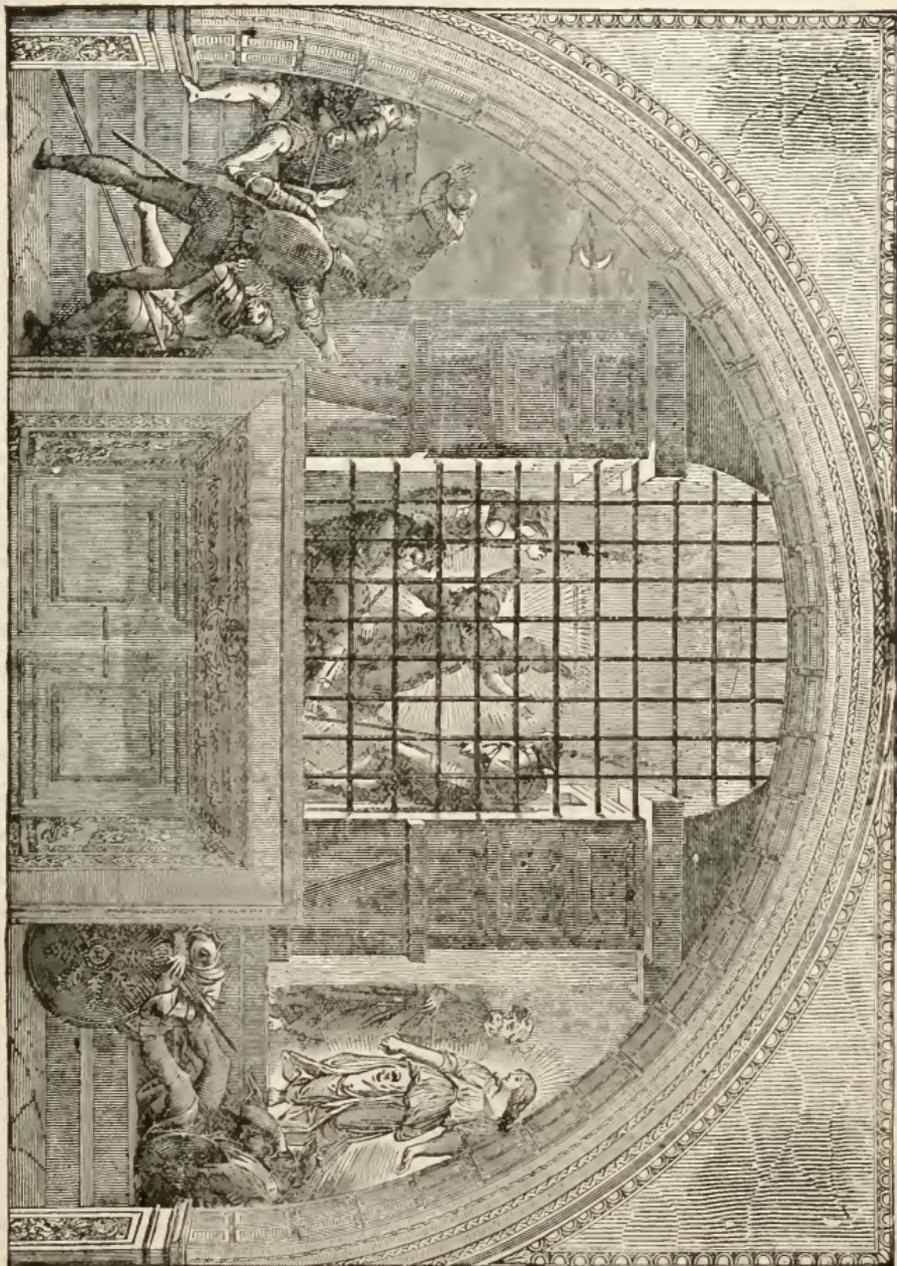
The relation of the Roman centurion astonished the apostle; but he was soon convinced that God had broken down the partition wall, and no longer maintained a peculiar kindness for the sons of Jacob; but that he was now pleased to extend salvation and all his mercies to the Gentiles as well, that henceforth God's peculiar people were to be all those of every land and tongue who should confess the faith of Christ crucified, and own him as their Lord and Master.

The Apostle at once gave utterance to this conviction in glowing words, and while he was thus speaking to his hearers, the Holy Ghost fell upon the greatest part of them. At this the Jews who accompanied Peter marvelled exceedingly, to see that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured upon the Gentiles; and Peter seeing this told the company that he knew no reason why these persons should not be baptized, as they had received the Holy Ghost as well as they; and accordingly he gave orders that they should be baptized; and to confirm them in the holy faith they had embraced, he stayed with them some time.

Peter now returned to Jerusalem where he labored incessantly, in behalf of the church. Herod Agrippa, who had greatly pleased the Jews by putting the Apostle James to death, had Peter thrown into prison soon after his return to Jerusalem, intending to slay him also. But the churches prayed earnestly for the apostle's deliverance, and God heard their prayers. On the very night before the day appointed for the execution, an angel was sent from heaven to the dungeon where he found Peter asleep between his keepers. The angel raised him up, and took off his chains, ordered him to gird on his garments and follow him. Peter obeyed, and having passed through the first and second watch they came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. The angel also accompanied him through one of the streets, and then departed from him; on which Peter came to himself and perceived that it was no vision, but that his great and beloved Master had really sent a messenger from above, and released him from prison. He therefore repaired to the house of Mary, where many pious persons were assembled, offering up their prayers to the throne of grace for his safety. On his knocking at the door, a maid who came to let him in, knowing his voice, ran back to tell them that Peter was at the door: which they at first considered as the effect of fancy; but the damsel continuing to affirm that it was

really true, they concluded it was his angel, or some messenger sent from the court of heaven. But opening the door they were con-

DELIVERANCE OF PETER FROM PRISON.



vinced of their mistake, finding that it was really Peter himself, who briefly told them how he was delivered and, desiring them to inform his brethren of his being set at liberty, retired to another place.

Some time after this miraculous deliverance of Peter, a controversy arose between the Jewish and Gentile converts, with regard to observing the Mosaic law; a dispute which gave great uneasiness to many persons; the Jews zealously contended that it was absolutely necessary to salvation to be circumcised, and observe the precepts of the ceremonial law, as well as those of the gospel. To compose this difference, it was thought necessary to summon a general council of the apostles and brethren to meet at Jerusalem. This was accordingly done, and the case thoroughly debated. At last Peter stood up, and declared that God having chosen him out of all the apostles to be the first preacher of the gospel among the Gentiles, God, who was best able to judge of the hearts of men, had borne witness to them, that they were accepted of him, by giving them his Holy Spirit, as well as he had done the Jews, and consequently, that there was no difference between them. They could not therefore place the Jewish yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, upon the necks of the disciples, without tempting and provoking the Almighty, who had given sufficient reasons to believe that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, would be saved by the grace of the gospel.

This declaration of St. Peter convinced the church, and it was unanimously decreed that no other burden than the strict observance of a few particular precepts, equally convenient to the Jew and Gentile, should be imposed on them. And the decision was drawn up into a synodical epistle, and sent to the several churches for allaying the heats and controversies this dispute had occasioned.

Thus early in the history of the Christian Church did differences of opinion arise concerning doctrine and government. Such differences are only to be expected, as every individual has a right to his own opinion and convictions, and it is important that, as in this case, a spirit of charity and toleration should prevail.

Soon after this council Peter left Jerusalem, and went down to Antioch, where, using the liberty given him by the gospel, he freely ate, and conversed with the Gentile proselytes, considering them now as "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." This he had been taught by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven; this had been lately decreed at Jerusalem; this he had before practiced with regard to Cornelius and his family, and justified the action to the satisfaction of his accusers, and this he had freely and innocently done at Antioch, till some of the Jewish brethren coming thither, he, for fear of offending them, withdrew himself from the Gentiles, as if

it had been unlawful for him to hold conversation with uncircumcised persons, notwithstanding he knew and was fully satisfied that our blessed Saviour had broken down the wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile.

By thus acting against the light of his own mind and judgment, he condemned what he had approved, and destroyed the superstructure he had before erected; at the same time he confirmed the Jewish zealots in their inveterate errors, filled the minds of the Gentiles with scruples, and their consciences with fears. Nor was this all; the old prejudices between Jew and Gentile were revived, and the whole number of Jewish converts following the apostle's example, separated themselves from the company of Gentile Christians. Nay, even Barnabas himself was carried away by this torrent of unwarrantable practice.

St. Paul was now at Antioch, and resolutely opposed St. Peter to his face; he publicly reproved him as a person worthy to be blamed for his gross prevarication. He reasoned and severely expostulated with him, that he who was himself a Jew, and consequently under a more immediate obligation of observing the Mosaic law, should throw off the yoke himself, and at the same time endeavor to impose it on the Gentiles, who were never under the necessity of observing the ceremonies of the Israelites. A severe though an impartial charge; but the remarkable eagerness of St. Paul to place things on a proper foundation, though he succeeded for the present, made a great noise afterwards in the world, and gave occasion to the enemies of Christianity to represent the whole as a compact of forgery and deceit: of such pernicious consequence are disputes among the principals of the church, and so fatal are the effects of pusillanimity, and a fear of offending persons bigoted to insignificant ceremonies.

As we have already related all the transactions of this apostle that are founded on Scripture authority, we shall now have recourse to ancient history for the residue of his life.

Some time before this contest at Antioch, St. Peter preached the gospel in various parts of the world, enlarging the kingdom of his great Master, and spreading the glad tidings of salvation among the inhabitants of various countries; and among the rest, those of Rome, then the mistress of the world. In that capital he is said to have continued several years, till the emperor Claudius, taking advantage of some seditious tumults raised by the Jews, published an edict, whereby they were banished from Rome, and among the rest St. Peter,

who returned to Jerusalem, and was present at the synod already mentioned. But how long he continued in the capital of Judea is uncertain; for we have no account of his transactions for many years. This however is certain, that he was not idle in the service of his great Master; and Eusebius tells us, from Metaphrastes, that he visited several of the western parts, where he continued several years, spreading the glad tidings of salvation in these remote places, and converting the several nations to the Christian faith.

But however this be, whether St. Peter was or was not in these parts, it is certain that towards the latter end of Nero's reign he returned to Rome, where he found the minds of the people strangely bewildered and hardened against the doctrines of the gospel by the sorceries of Simon Magus, who, as has already been observed, was chastised by Peter for his wickedness at Samaria. This monster of impiety not only opposed the preaching of the apostles, but also did all in his power to render them and their doctrine odious to the emperor. St. Peter foreseeing that the calumnies of Simon and his adherents would hasten his death, took the greater pains, and was still more assiduous to confirm those who had been any ways instrumental in converting to the sublime truths they had received; and in order to this, he strongly opposed that great deceiver of mankind; for in the last years of his life he seems to have wrote his two epistles to the dispersed Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bythinia; and in an appointed encounter with Simon, discovered his magical impostures, and, through the power and assistance of the Almighty, brought him to an exemplary and miserable death.

The circumstances which attended this remarkable event are related as follows: The apostle, meeting with Simon at Rome, and finding him still pretending to be some great person, even the promised Messiah, he could not help opposing zealously his presumptuous arrogance. But Simon, more incensed by the opposition, offered to give the people such an evident demonstration of his being what he pretended, that he would place the whole beyond contradiction by immediately ascending up into heaven. Upon this, by the help of some unperceived device, he raised himself from the earth, and seemed to be moving towards the regions of heaven. St. Peter and St. Paul beholding the delusion, had recourse to prayers, and obtained their petitions of the Almighty, namely, that the impostor should be soon discovered, for the honor of the blessed Jesus. Accordingly, he fell headlong to the ground, by which he was so bruised that he died in a very short time.

Such was the end of this miserable, this unhappy man. But the news of it no sooner reached the emperor's ears than he vowed revenge, both for the death of his favorite, and the endeavors used by the apostles to "turn mankind from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Accordingly he issued orders for apprehending St. Peter, together with his companion, St. Paul. St. Ambrose tells us that when the people perceived the danger to which St. Peter was now exposed, they prayed him to quit Rome, and repair for awhile to some secure retreat, that his life might be preserved for the benefit of the church. Peter, with great reluctance, yielded to their entreaties, and made his escape by night; but as he passed the gate, he was met by a person in the form of his great and beloved Master, and on his asking him whither he was going, answered, "To Rome, to be crucified a second time;" which Peter, taking for a reproof of his cowardice, returned again into the city, and was soon after apprehended, and cast, together with St. Paul, into the Mamertine prison. Here they were confined eight or nine months, but spent their time in the exercises of religion, especially in preaching to the prisoners and those who resorted to them: and during this confinement it is generally thought St. Peter wrote the second Epistle to the dispersed Jews; wherein he endeavors to confirm them in the belief and practice of Christianity, and to fortify them against those poisonous and pernicious principles and actions which even then began to break in upon the Christian church.

Nero at last returned from Acaia, entered Rome in triumph, and soon after his arrival resolved that the apostles should fall as victims and sacrifices to his cruelty and revenge. While the fatal stroke was expected, the Christians in Rome were continually offering up their prayers to Heaven to protect those two holy persons. But the Almighty was now willing to put an end to their sorrows, and after sealing the truth they had preached with their own blood, to receive them into the regions of eternal bliss and happiness, and exchange their crowns of martyrdom for crowns of glory. Accordingly they were both condemned by the cruel emperor of Rome; and St. Peter having taken his farewell of the brethren, especially of St. Paul, was taken from the prison and led to the top of the Vatican Mount, near the Tiber, where he was sentenced to surrender up his life on the cross.

At his coming to the place of execution, he begged the favor of the officers that he might not be crucified in the common manner, but

with his head downwards; affirming that he was unworthy to suffer in the same posture in which his Lord had suffered before him. This request was accordingly complied with, and the great apostle, St. Peter, surrendered up his soul into the hands of his great and beneficent Master, who came down from heaven to ransom mankind from destruction, and open for them the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem.

His body, being taken down from the cross, is said to have been embalmed by Marellinus, the presbyter, after the manner of the Jews, and then buried in the Vatican, near the Appian Way, two miles from Rome.

Here it remained till the time of pope Cornelius, who re-conveyed it to Rome, where it rested in an obscure place till the reign of Constantine, who, from the great reverence he entertained for the Christian religion, erected many churches at Rome, and rebuilt and greatly enlarged the Vatican in honor of St. Peter.



## ST. PAUL.

THIS great apostle of the Gentiles was a native of Tarsus, and a descendant from the ancient stock of Abraham. He was born about two years before the blessed Jesus, and belonged to the tribe of Benjamin.

Tarsus, the birth-place of the apostle, was the metropolis of Cilicia, and was about three hundred miles from Jerusalem. It was exceedingly rich and populous, and a Roman municipium, or free corporation, invested with the privileges of Rome by the first two emperors, as a reward for the citizens' firm adherence to the Cæsars in the rebellion of Crassus. St. Paul was, therefore, born a Roman citizen, and he often pleads this privilege on his trials.

It was common for the inhabitants of Tarsus to send their children into other cities for learning and improvement, especially to Jerusalem, where they were so numerous that they had a synagogue of their own, called the synagogue of the Cilicians. To this capital our apostle was also sent, and brought up at the feet of that eminent rabbi Gamaliel, in the most exact knowledge of the law of Moses. Nor did he fail to profit by the instructions of that great master, for he so diligently confirmed himself to its precepts, that, without boasting, he



THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

asserts of himself, that touching the righteousness of the law he was blameless, and defied even his enemies to allege anything to the contrary, even in his youth. He joined himself to the sect of the Pharisees, the most strict order of the Jewish religion, but at the same time the proudest, and the greatest enemies to Christ and his holy religion.

With regard to his double capacity of Jewish extraction and Roman freedom, he had two names, Saul and Paul, the former Hebrew, and the latter Latin. It was common for the descendants of Benjamin to give the name of Saul to their children ever since the time of the first king of Israel, who was chosen out of that tribe; and Paul was a name as common among the Romans. We must also consider his trade of tent-making as a part of his education, it being the constant practice of the Jews to bring up their children to some honest calling, that in case of necessity they might provide for themselves by the labor of their own hands.

Saul having obtained a thorough knowledge of the sciences cultivated by the Jews, and being naturally of a very hot and fiery temper, became a great champion of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders, which he considered as zeal for God. This rendered him impatient of all opposition to the doctrine and tenets he had imbibed, and a vehement persecutor of the Christians, who were commonly reputed the enemies and destroyers of the Jewish economy.

The first action we find him engaged in was the disputation he and his countrymen had with the martyr Stephen, with regard to the Messiah. The Christian was too hard for them in the dispute, but they were too powerful for him in their civil interests; for being enraged at his convincing arguments, they carried him before the high priest, who by false accusations condemned him to death. How far Saul was concerned in this cruel action it is impossible to say; all we know is that he kept the raiment of them that slew him.

The storm of persecution against the church being thus begun, it increased prodigiously, and the poor Christians of Jerusalem were miserably harassed and dispersed. In this persecution our apostle was a principal agent, searching all the adjacent parts for the afflicted saints, beating some in the synagogue, inflicting other cruelties, confining some in prison, and procuring others to be put to death. Nor could Jerusalem and the adjacent parts confine his fiery zeal; he applied to the sanhedrim, and procured a commission from that council to extend his persecution to Damascus.



PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA.

But it was the will of Providence that he should be employed in a work of a very different nature, and accordingly stopped him in his journey; for as he was travelling between Jerusalem and Damascus, to execute the commission of the Jewish sanhedrim, a refulgent light, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, darted upon him, at which both he and his companions were terribly amazed and confounded, and immediately fell prostrate on the ground. While they lay in this state a voice was heard in the Hebrew language, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" To which Saul replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" And was immediately answered, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." As if the blessed Jesus had said, All thy attempts to extirpate the faith in me will prove abortive, and, like kicking against the spikes, wound and torment thyself.

Saul was sufficiently convinced of his folly in acting against Jesus, whom he was now assured to be the true Messiah, and asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" On which the blessed Jesus replied, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The company which were with him heard the voice but did not see the person who spoke from heaven. In all probability they were ignorant of the Hebrew language, and therefore only heard a confused

sound; for the apostle himself tells us, that "they heard not the voice of him that spake;" that is, they did not understand what was spoken.

The apostle now arose from the earth, but found himself deprived of sight, the resplendent brightness of the vision being too intense for mortal eyes to behold. His companions, therefore, led him by the hand to the city of Damascus, where he entered the house of Judas, and remained there three days without sight, nor did he either eat or drink, but spent his time in prayer to the Almighty, beseeching him to pardon the sins of his ignorance and blinded zeal.

In the meantime our blessed Saviour appeared in a vision to Ananias, a very devout and religious man, highly esteemed by all the inhabitants of Damascus, though he professed the religion of the crucified Jesus, commanding him to go into such a street in the city, and inquire in the house of Judas for one, Saul of Tarsus, then offering up the most fervent prayers to the throne of grace. "And the Lord said unto him, arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

Ananias, who was ever ready to obey the commands of the Most High, was startled at the name, having heard of his bloody practices at Jerusalem, and what commission he was now come to execute in Damascus. He, therefore, suspected that his pretended conversion was nothing more than a snare artfully laid by him against the Christians. But our blessed Saviour soon removed his apprehensions, by telling him that his suspicions were entirely destitute of foundation, and that he had now taken him as a chosen vessel to preach the gospel both to the Jews and Gentiles, and even before the greatest monarchs of the earth; at the same time acquainting him with the great persecutions he should undergo for the sake of the gospel. "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

This quieted the fears of Ananias, who immediately obeyed the heavenly vision, repaired to the house of Judas, and laid hands upon Saul, saying, That Jesus, who appeared to thee in the way, hath sent me to restore thy sight, and, by the infusion of his Spirit, to give thee the knowledge of those truths which thou hast blindly and ignorantly persecuted, but who now is willing to receive thee by baptism



ANANIAS AND SAUL

into his church, and make thee a member of his body. This speech was no sooner pronounced than there fell from his eyes thick films, resembling scales, and he received his sight; and after baptism conversed freely with the Christians of Damascus. Nor did he only converse with them; he also, to the great astonishment of the whole church, preached the gospel to those Christians he came down with an intention to destroy, at the same time boldly asserting that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God; and proving it to the Jews with such demonstrative evidence that they were confounded, and were utterly unable to answer him.

This wonderful convert, at the instance of the divine command, retired into Arabia Petraea, where he received a full revelation of all the mysteries of Christianity; for he himself declares that he conversed not with flesh and blood.

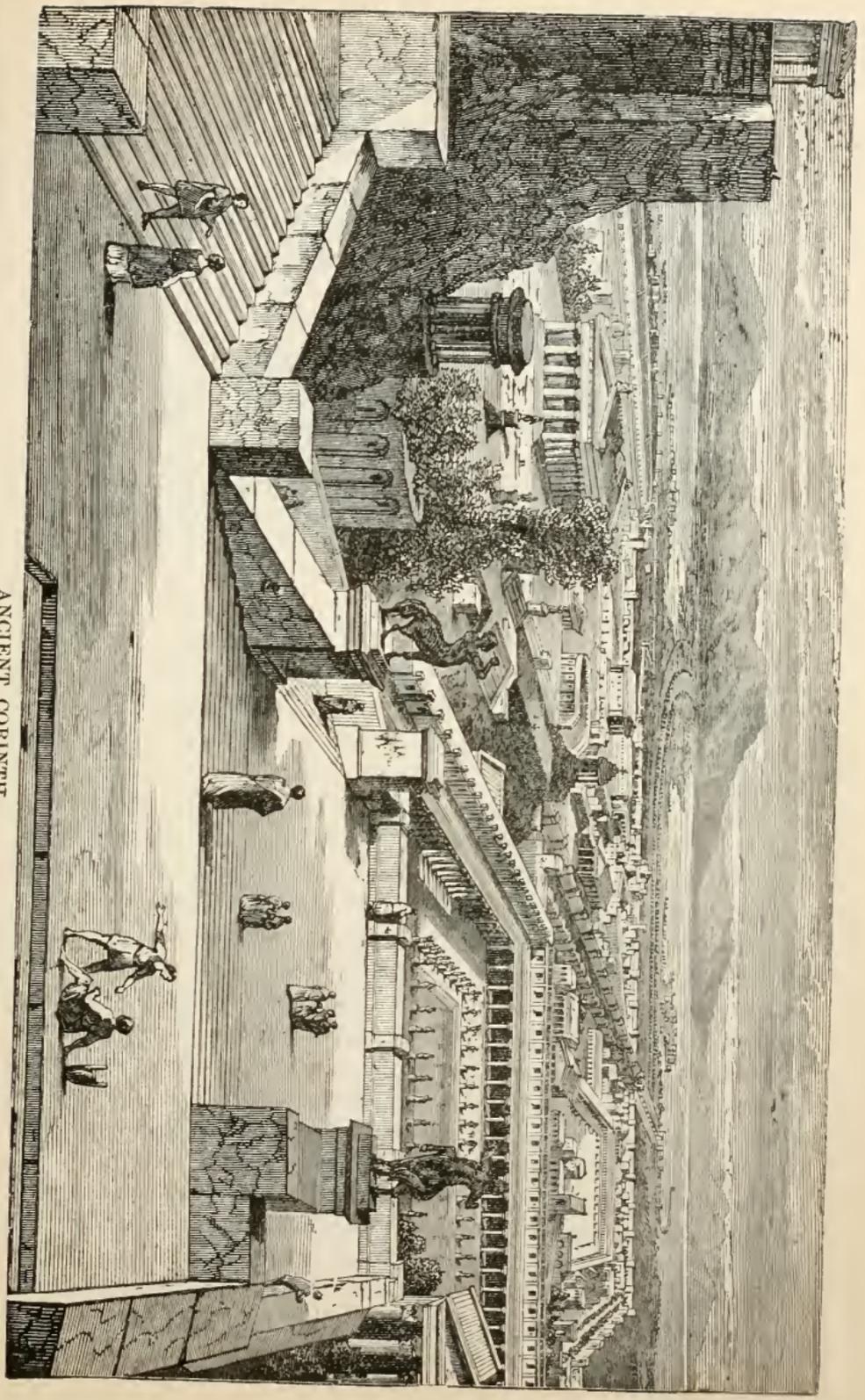
Having preached in several parts of that country some time, he returned again to Damascus, applying himself with the utmost assiduity to the great work of the ministry, frequenting the synagogues there, powerfully confuting the objections commonly made by the descendants of Jacob against Jesus of Nazareth, and converting great numbers of Jews and Gentiles.

He was, indeed, remarkably zealous in his preaching, and blessed with a very extraordinary method of reasoning, whereby he proved the essential doctrines of Christianity beyond exception. This irritated the Jews to the highest degree; and at length, after two or three years' continuance in those parts, they found means to prevail on the governor of Damascus to have him put to death. But they knew it would be difficult to take him, as he had so many friends in the city; they therefore kept themselves in a continual watch, searched all the houses where they supposed he might conceal himself, and also obtained a guard from the governor, to observe the gates, in order to prevent his escaping from them.

In this difficulty his Christian friends were far from deserting him; they tried every method that offered to procure his escape; but finding it impossible for him to pass through either of the gates of the city, they let him down from one of their houses, through a window, in a basket, over the wall, by which means the cruel designs of his enemies were rendered abortive.

Having thus escaped from his malicious persecutors, he repaired to Jerusalem, and on his arrival addressed himself to the church. But they, knowing well the former temper and principles of this great

ANCIENT CORINTH.



persecutor, shunned his company, till Barnabas brought him to Peter, who was not yet cast into prison, and to James, bishop of Jerusalem, informing them of his miraculous conversion, and that he had preached the gospel with the greatest boldness in the synagogue of Damascus; upon which they gladly received him, and familiarly entertained him fifteen days.

During this interval he was remarkably assiduous in preaching the gospel of the Son of God, and confuting the Hellenist Jews\* with the greatest courage and resolution. But snares were soon laid for him, as malice can as easily cease to be as to remain inactive; and being warned by God in a vision, that his testimony would not be received at Jerusalem, he thought proper to depart and preach the gospel to the Gentiles; he accordingly, being conducted by the brethren to Cæsarea Philippi, set sail for Tarsus, his native city, from whence he was soon after brought by Barnabas to Antioch, to assist him in propagating Christianity in that city.

In this employment he spent one whole year, and had the satisfaction of seeing the gospel flourish in a very remarkable manner. In this city it was that the disciples first acquired the name of Christians, for before they were styled Nazarenes; but this appellation soon prevailed all over the world, and the former was, in a few ages, almost entirely forgotten.

About this time a terrible famine, foretold by Agabus, happened in several parts of the Roman empire, particularly Judea, which induced the Christians at Antioch to compassionate the miseries of their brethren at Jerusalem; and accordingly they raised considerable contributions for their relief, which they sent to the capital of Judea by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, who, immediately after executing their commission, returned to Antioch. But while they were performing the public exercises of religion, it was revealed to them by the Holy Ghost, that they should set apart Barnabas and Saul to preach the gospel in other places; which was accordingly done, and they were immediately deputed for that service by prayer, fasting, and the imposition of hands.

The first place they visited was Seleucia, where they did not continue long, but sailed for Cyprus; at Salamis, a great city in that island, they preached in the synagogue of the Jews. From hence they removed to Paphos, the residence of Sergius Paulus, the pro-

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\* The Hellenist Jews were those who spoke the Greek instead of the Hebrew language. Paul was himself a Hellenist Jew.



ANTIOCH.

consul of the island, a man of great wisdom and prudence, but miserably seduced by the wicked artifices of Bar-Jesus, a Jewish impostor, who styled himself Elymas, or the magician, who also vehemently opposed the apostles, and kept the pro-consul from embracing the faith.

The pro-consul, however, called for the apostles, who, after severely checking Elymas for his malicious opposition to the truth, told him the divine vengeance was now ready to seize upon him; and immediately he was deprived of his sight. The vengeance of the Almighty observing in this punishment a remarkable proportion, in depriving him of his bodily eyes who had so wilfully and maliciously shut those of his mind against the light of the gospel, and also endeavored to keep others in darkness and ignorance. This miracle convinced the pro-consul of the truth of the doctrines taught by the apostles, and made him a convert to the faith.

St. Paul, after this remarkable success in Cyprus, repaired to Phrygia in Pamphilia, taking Titus with him in the room of Mark, who was gone to Jerusalem, and travelled to Antioch, the metropolis of Pisidia.

Soon after their arrival, they entered the synagogue of the Jews, on the Sabbath day, and, after the reading of the law, Paul, being invited by the rulers of the synagogue, addressed the multitude present in strains of powerful eloquence. He related to them, step by step, how God had set apart and cared for Israel, how he had favored

it above all nations, and how he had gradually led them forward to the time of the coming of His Son, the blessed Jesus. The apostle then proceeded to declare to them the Christian faith, and to entreat them to embrace it.

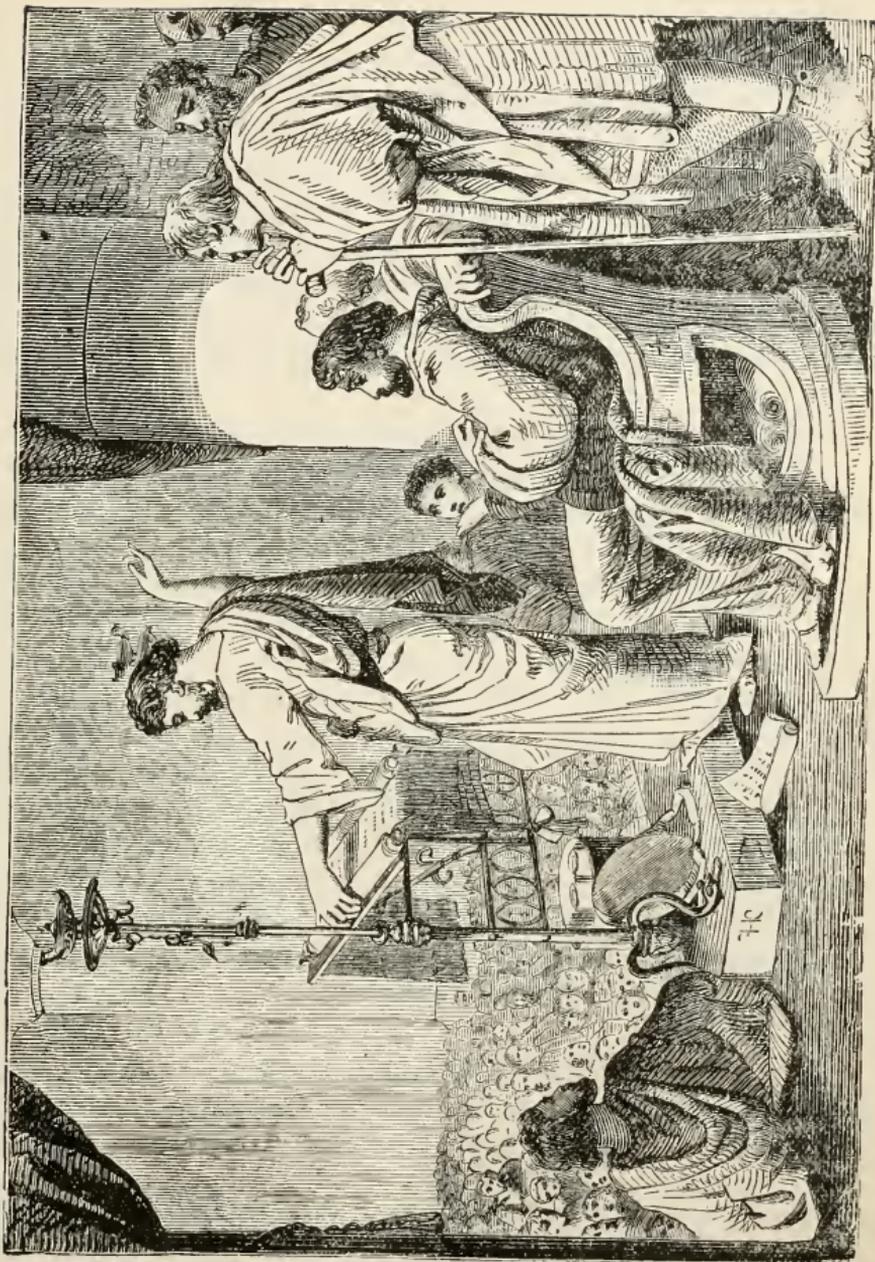
His address made so powerful an impression upon many of his hearers, that they requested him to repeat it on the following Sabbath. At the appointed time the whole city flocked to hear him. The principal Jews endeavored to dispute with him, and uttered many blasphemous expressions against the name of Jesus of Nazareth; whereupon Paul told them, that, as the Jews would not accept the salvation offered them, the gospel was henceforth to be preached to the Gentiles as well.

This declaration caused the Gentile hearers of the apostles to rejoice exceedingly, magnifying the words of the Almighty, and many of them embraced the doctrines of the Gospel. But this only increased the malice and fury of the Jews, who, by false and artful insinuations, succeeded in having Paul and Barnabas driven out of the city. At which the apostles departed, shaking off the dust of their feet as a testimony against their ingratitude and infidelity.

From Antioch they went to Iconium, the metropolis of Lycaonia, a province of Lesser Asia, where they again entered into the synagogue of the Jews, notwithstanding the ill treatment they had received from them in other places, and preached so successfully that they converted a large part of the city; but the Jews succeeded in gathering a mob for the purpose of stoning the apostles, who, however, receiving timely warning of their danger, fled from the city, and went to Lystra, where they renewed their labors.

Among the converts at Lystra was a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, and had never walked. Paul perceiving his change of heart, thought it proper to make him a public example of the power of Christ, and standing in the midst of the congregation, said to him in an audible voice, "Stand upright on thy feet;" and the words were no sooner pronounced, than his strength was at once restored, and he leaped up and walked.

The people who beheld this miracle well knew that it was not wrought by any human power, and at once declared that the gods were come down to them in the likeness of men. They called Barnabas Jupiter, on account of his venerable gravity, and Paul Mercury, from his eloquence. The whole city flocked out to do honor to the apostles, who, with great difficulty, persuaded them that they were



PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ANTIOCH.

simply men like themselves. This accomplished, they proceeded to explain the gospel to them. While they were thus engaged some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium, and succeeded by false statements in so enraging the populace against the apostles, that they seized them and stoned them in such a cruel manner that Paul was supposed to be dead, and was dragged out of the city. The Christians of Lystra took charge of his body, and while they were probably preparing it for burial, he arose, and returned with them into the city, and the next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe, where they preached the gospel and converted many ; no danger being able to terrify them from the work of the ministry, and publishing the glad tidings of salvation in every place.

They did not, however, long continue at Derbe, but returned to Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, and Pisidia, confirming the Christians of those places in the faith, earnestly persuading them to persevere, and not be discouraged with those troubles and persecutions which they must expect would attend the profession of the gospel. And that the affairs of the church might be conducted with more regularity, they ordained elders and pastors to teach, to instruct, and to watch over them, and then left them to the protection of the Almighty, to whose care they recommended them by prayer and fasting.

After leaving Antioch they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphilia ; and after preaching the gospel at Perga they went down to Attalia. Having thus finished the circuit of their ministry, they returned back to Antioch in Syria, from whence they at first departed. Here they summoned the church, and gave them an account of their ministry, the success it had met with in these different parts, and how great a door had thus been opened for the conversion of the Gentile world.

While St. Peter continued at Antioch, that famous controversy with regard to the observation of the Jewish ceremonies under the Christian dispensation, was set on foot by certain Jewish converts, to the great disturbance of the whole church. And it was determined to send Paul and Barnabas to consult with the apostles and church at Jerusalem, that this affair might be settled on the most solid foundation. On their arrival at Jerusalem, they first addressed themselves to Peter, James, and John, the pillars of that church, by whom they were kindly entertained, and admitted to the right hand of fellowship. And perceiving by the account given them by St. Paul, that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to him, as that of the circumcision was to

Peter, they agreed that Peter should preach to the Jews, and Paul to the Gentiles. This being determined, a council was summoned, wherein Peter declared his opinion, and Paul and Barnabas acquainted them with the great things God, by their ministry, had done among the Gentiles. A plain evidence that they were accepted by the Almighty, though uncircumcised, as well as the Jews with all their legal rights and privileges. Accordingly it was unanimously determined, that the Gentiles were not under the obligation of the law of Moses, and therefore that some persons of his own church should be joined with Paul and Barnabas to carry the decrees of the council to Antioch, for their fuller satisfaction in this matter. Nothing tends more to impede the progress of vital religion than a bigoted attachment to unessential forms and modes.

The controversy concerning the observation of Jewish ceremonies in the Christian church being decided in favor of the latter, St. Paul and his companions returned back to Antioch, and soon after Peter himself came down. On reading the decretal epistle in the church, the converts conversed freely and inoffensively with the Gentiles, till some of the Jews coming thither from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew his conversation, as if it had been a thing unwarrantable and unlawful. By such a strange method of proceeding the minds of many were dissatisfied, and their consciences very uneasy. St. Paul with the greatest concern observed it, and publicly rebuked Peter, with that sharpness and severity his unwarrantable practice deserved.

Soon after this dispute Paul and Barnabas resolved to visit the churches they had planted among the Gentiles, and Barnabas was desirous of taking with them his cousin Mark; but this Paul strenuously opposed, as he had left them in their former journey. This trifling dispute arose to such a height that these two great apostles and fellow-laborers in the gospel parted. Barnabas, taking Mark with him, repaired to Cyprus, his native country; and Paul, having made choice of Silas, and recommended the success of his undertaking to the care of Divine Providence, set forward on his intended journey.

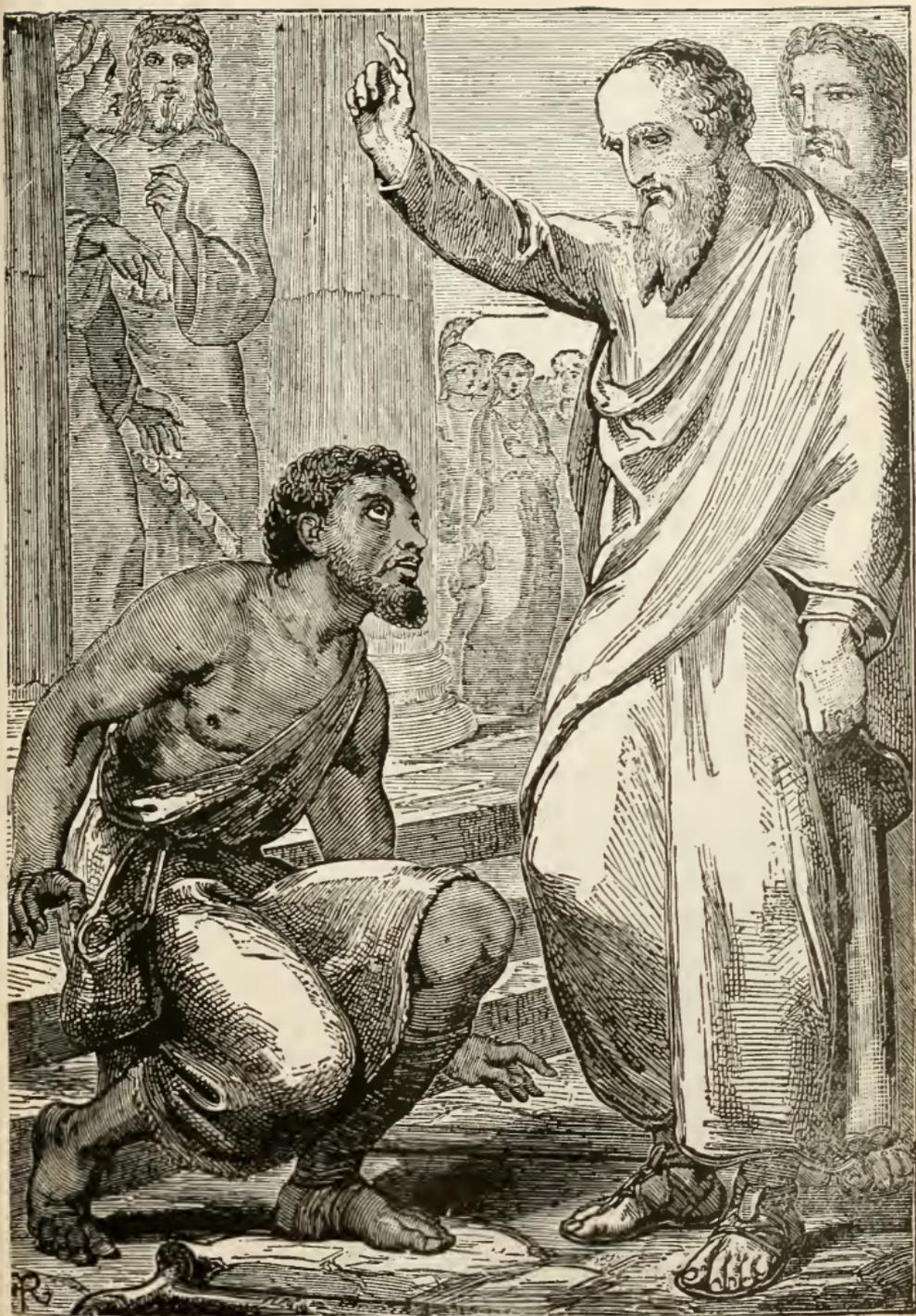
They first visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, confirming them in the faith by their instructions and exhortations. Hence they sailed to Crete, where Paul preached the gospel, and constituted Titus as the first bishop and pastor of the island, leaving him to settle those affairs of the church which time would not permit the apostle to settle himself. From hence Paul and Silas returned back into Cilicia, and

came to Lystra, where they found Timothy, whose father was a Greek, but his mother a Jewish convert, and by her he had been brought up under all the advantages of a pious and religious education, especially with regard to the holy scriptures, which he had studied with the greatest assiduity and success. This person St. Paul designed for the companion of his travels, and a special instrument in the ministry of the gospel. But knowing that his being uncircumcised would prove a stumbling-block to the Jews, he caused him to be circumcised; being willing, in lawful and indifferent matters, to conform himself to the tempers and apprehensions of men, in order to save their souls. In this instance the apostle evinced much prudence, well knowing that inveterate prejudices in religious matters are not easily overcome; for which reason he is said to become all things to all men.

Everything being ready for their journey, St. Paul and his companions departed from Lystra, passing through Phrygia and the country of Galatia, where the apostle was entertained with the greatest kindness and veneration, the people looking upon him as an angel sent immediately from heaven; and being by revelation forbidden to go into Asia, he was commanded by a second vision to repair to Macedonia, to preach the gospel. Accordingly, our apostle prepared to pass from Asia into Europe.

Here St. Luke joined them, and became ever after the inseparable companion of St. Paul, who being desirous of finding the speediest passage into Macedonia, took ship with his companions, Silas, Luke, and Timothy, and came to Samothracia, an island in the *Ægean* sea, not far from Thrace; and the next day he went to Neapolis, a port of Macedonia. Leaving Neapolis, they repaired to Philippi, the metropolis of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, where they staid some days.

In this city Paul, according to his constant practice, preached in a *proseucha*, or oratory of the Jews, which stood by the river's side, at some distance from the city, and was much frequented by the devout women of their religion, who met there to pray and hear the law. To these St. Paul preached the glad tidings of the gospel; and by the influence of the Holy Spirit converted many, especially a certain woman named Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, a seller of purple in that city, but a native of Thyatira. This woman, being baptized with her whole family, was so importunate with St. Paul and his companions to abide at her house, that they were constrained to accept of her invitation. During the time of the apostles' residing in this city they continued



PAUL COMMANDING THE CRIPPLE TO STAND UP.

their daily course of worshipping at the same oratory. And after several days, as they were repairing to the same place of devotion there met them a damsel who was possessed of a spirit of divination, by whom her masters acquired very great advantage. This woman followed Paul and his companions, crying out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation." Paul at first took no notice of her, not being willing to multiply miracles without necessity. But when he saw her following them several days together he began to be troubled, and in imitation of his great Master, who would not suffer the devil to acknowledge him, lest his false and lying tongue should prejudice the truth in the minds of men, commanding the spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of her. The evil spirit with reluctance obeyed, and left the damsel that very instant.

This miraculous cure proving a great loss to her masters, who acquired large gains from her soothsaying, they were filled with envy and malice against the apostles, and by their instigation the multitude arose, and, seizing upon Paul and his companions, hurried them before the magistrates and governors of the colony, accusing them of introducing many innovations which were prejudicial to the State, and unlawful for them to comply with as being Romans.

The magistrates being concerned for the tranquillity of the State and jealous of all disturbances, were very forward to punish the offenders, against whom great numbers of the multitude testified, and therefore commanded the officers to strip them, and scourge them severely, as seditious persons.

This was accordingly executed ; after which the apostles were committed to close custody, the gaoler receiving more than ordinary charge to keep them safely ; and he accordingly thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But the most obscure dungeon, or the pitchy mantle of the night, cannot intercept the beams of divine joy and comfort from the souls of pious men. Their minds were all serenity ; and at midnight they prayed and sung praises so loud, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Nor were their prayers offered to the throne of grace in vain : an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opened the doors, loosed the chains, and set the prisoners at liberty. This convulsion of nature roused the gaoler from his sleep ; who, concluding from what he saw that all his prisoners were escaped, was going to put a period to his life, but, Paul observing him, hastily cried out, "Do

thyself no harm, for we are all here." The keeper was now as greatly surprised at the goodness of the apostles, as he was before terrified at the thought of their escape; and calling for a light, he came immediately into the presence of the apostles, fell down at their feet, took them from the dungeon, brought them to his own house, washed their stripes, and begged of them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God who was so mighty to save.

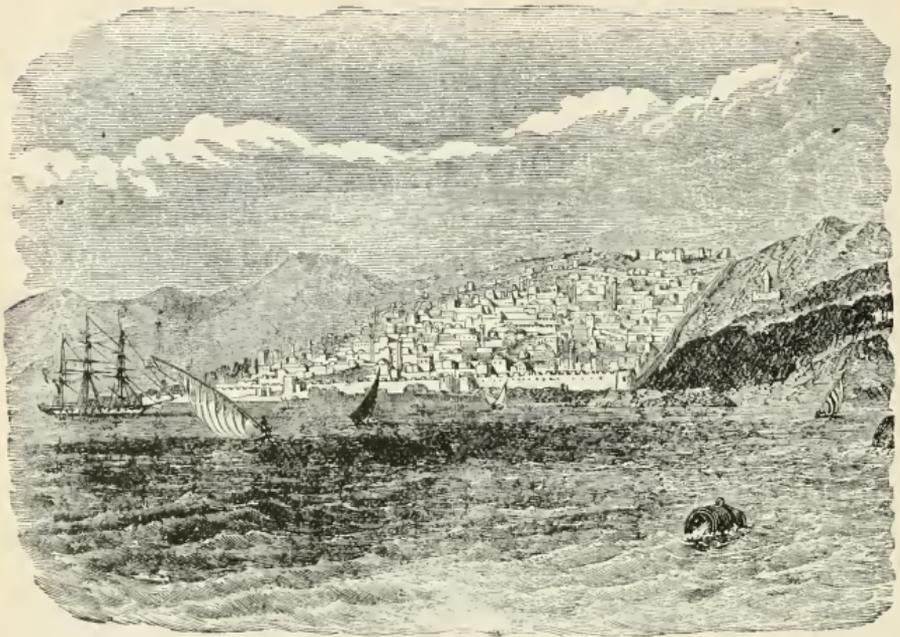
St. Paul readily granted his request, and replied, that, if he believed in Jesus Christ, he might be saved, with his whole house. Accordingly, the gaoler, with all his family, were, after competent instruction, baptized, and received as members of the Church of Christ.

As soon as it was day, the magistrates, either hearing what had happened, or reflecting on what they had done as too harsh and unjustifiable, sent their serjeant to the gaoler, with orders to discharge the apostles. The gaoler joyfully delivered the message, and bid them "depart in peace." But Paul, that he might make the magistrates sensible what injury they had done them, and how unjustly they had punished them without examination or trial, sent them word, that as they thought proper to scourge and imprison Romans, contrary to the laws of the Empire, he expected they should come themselves, and make them some satisfaction.

The magistrates were terrified at this message, well knowing how dangerous it was to provoke the formidable power of the Romans, who never suffered any freeman to be beaten uncondemned. They came therefore to the prison, and very submissively entreated the apostles to depart without any further disturbance.

This small recompense for the cruel usage they had received was accepted by the meek followers of the blessed Jesus. They left the prison, and retired to the house of Lydia, where they comforted their brethren with an account of their deliverance, and departed, having laid the foundation of a very eminent church, as it appears from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians.

Leaving Philippi, Paul and his companions continued their journey towards the west, till they came to Thessalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia, about a hundred and twenty miles from Philippi. On their arrival at Thessalonica, Paul, according to his custom, went into the synagogue of the Jews, and preached unto his countrymen—the ungrateful usage he had met with in other places not discouraging him from persevering in so glorious a work. His doctrine, however,



THESSALONICA.

was strenuously opposed by the Jews, who would not allow Jesus to be the Messiah, because of his ignominious death.

During the stay of the Apostles at Thessalonica, they lodged in the house of a certain Christian named Jason, who entertained them very courteously. But the Jews would not suffer the apostles to continue at rest. They refused to embrace the gospel themselves, and therefore envied its success, and determined to oppose its progress. Accordingly they gathered together a great number of lewd and wicked wretches, who beset the house of Jason, intending to take Paul and deliver him up to an incensed multitude. But in this they were disappointed, Paul and Silas being removed from thence by the Christians, and concealed in some other part of the city.

Their fury, however, was rather exasperated than lessened at losing their prey; and as they could not find the apostles of the blessed Jesus, they determined to be revenged on Jason, who had concealed them. Accordingly they seized on him, with some others of the brethren, and carried them before the magistrates of the city, accusing them, as they had before done the apostles themselves at Philippi, of disturbing the peace of the Empire, and setting up Jesus as a king, in derogation of the Emperor's dignity and authority. This accusation induced both the people and the magistrates to be their enemies.

And though Jason was only accused of harboring those innovators, yet the magistrates could not be prevailed upon to dismiss him and his companions, till they had given security for their appearance.

As soon as the tumult was over, the Thessalonians, who had been converted by them, sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berea, a city about fifty miles south of Thessalonica, but out of the power of their enemies. Here also Paul's great love for his countrymen, the Jews, and his earnest desire of their salvation, excited him to preach to them in particular. Accordingly, he entered into their synagogue, and explained the gospel unto them, proving, out of the scriptures of the Old Testament, the truth of the doctrines he advanced. These Jews were of a more ingenuous and candid temper than those of Thessalonica; and as they heard him with great reverence and attention expound and apply the scriptures, so they searched diligently whether his proofs were proper and pertinent, and consonant to the sense of the texts he referred to. And having found everything to be agreeable to what Paul had advanced, many of them believed; and several Gentiles, following their example, became obedient to the faith, among whom were several women of quality.

The news of this remarkable success was carried to Thessalonica, and greatly incensed the inveterate enemies of the gospel there, who accordingly repaired to Berea, and raised tumults against the apostles. So that Paul, in order to avoid their fury, was forced to leave the town. But Silas and Timothy, either less known or less envied, continued still there.

Paul leaving Berea under the conduct of certain guides, it was pretended he designed to retire by sea out of Greece, that his restless enemies might cease their persecution; but the guides, according to Paul's order, brought him to Athens, and left him there, after receiving from him an order for Silas and Timothy to repair to him as soon as possible.

While St. Paul continued at Athens, expecting the arrival of Silas and Timothy, he walked up and down, to take a more accurate survey of the city, which he found miserably overrun with superstition and idolatry. The inhabitants were remarkably religious and devout. They had a great number of gods whom they adored. False indeed they were, but such as they, being destitute of revelation, accounted true. And so very careful were they that no deity should want due honor from them, that they had an altar inscribed "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."



The Areopagus, the supreme court of the city, was to judge of all gods to whom public worship might be allowed, and Paul was brought before those judges, to give an account of his doctrine.

Paul being placed before the judges of this high assembly, readily gave them an account of his doctrine, in a grave and elegant speech; wherein he did not tell them they were horrible and gross idolaters, lest he should offend them, and thereby prevent them from listening to his reasons; but having commended them for their religious dispositions, he took occasion, from the altar inscribed to the unknown God, to make a proper defence of his doctrine. I endeavor, said he, only to explain that altar to you, and manifest the nature of that God whom ye ignorantly worship. The true God is he that made the world and all things therein; and who, being Lord of all, dwells not in temples made with hands, nor is to be worshipped in lifeless idols. As he is the Creator of all things, he cannot be confined to the workmanship of man, whether temples or statues; nor stands in need of sacrifices, since he is the fountain of life to all things. He made from one common original the whole race of mankind, and hath wisely determined their dependence on him, that they might be obliged to seek after him and serve him. A truth perceivable in the darkest state of ignorance, and acknowledged by one of your own poets. If this be the nature of God, it is surely the highest absurdity to represent him by an image or similitude. The divine patience hath been too much exercised already with such gross abuses in religion; but now God expects a thorough reformation; having sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to make him known to the world, and at the same time to inform them that he hath appointed a day of general judgment, when the religion of mankind shall be tried by the test of the gospel, before his only-begotten Son, who is appointed sole judge of quick and dead, and whose commission to that high office hath been ratified by the Almighty in raising him from the dead.

On this mention of the resurrection some of the philosophers mocked and derided him; others, more modest, but not satisfied with the proofs he had given, gravely answered, "We would hear thee again of this matter." After which Paul departed from the court, but not without some success, for a few of his auditors believed and attended his instructions.

During St. Paul's stay at Athens, Timothy, according to the order he had received, came to him out of Macedonia, and brought an ac-

count that the Christians at Thessalonica were under persecution from their fellow-citizens ever since his departure, at which St. Paul was greatly concerned, and at first inclined to visit them in person to confirm them in the faith they had embraced; but being hindered by the enemies of the gospel, he sent Timothy to comfort them, and put them in mind of what they had at first heard, namely, that persecution would be the constant attendant on their profession.

On Timothy's departure St. Paul left Athens and travelled to Corinth, a very populous place, and famous for its trade. Here he found Aquila, and Priscilla, his wife, lately come from Italy, having been banished from Rome by the decree of Claudius; and they being of the same trade he himself had learned in his youth, he wrought with them, that he might not be burdensome to the new converts: honest ministers are not mercenary.

After some stay in Corinth, the apostle was joined by Silas and Timothy, and disputed frequently in the synagogue, reasoning and proving that Jesus was the true Messiah. This exasperated the Jews to the greatest degree, and what they could not conquer by argument and force of reason, they endeavored to carry by noise and clamor, blended with blasphemies and revilings, the last refuge of an impotent and baffled cause. But St. Paul, to testify his resentment, shook his garments, and told them, that since they were determined to pull down the vengeance of heaven upon their own heads, he was absolutely guiltless and innocent, and would henceforth address himself to the Gentiles. Accordingly, he left them, and repaired to the house of Justus, a religious proselyte, where, by his preaching and miracles, he converted great numbers to the faith; among which were Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, Garus and Stephanus, who, with their families, were baptized, and admitted members of the Christian church.

About this time he seems to have written his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, Silas and Timothy being lately returned from thence, and delivered the message for which he had sent them thither.

During the apostle's stay at Corinth, he wrote his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, to supply his absence.

St. Paul, on his leaving the church at Corinth, took ship at Cencrea, the port of Corinth, for Syria, taking with him Aquila and Priscilla; and on his arrival at Ephesus he preached awhile in the



PAUL PREACHING AT EPHEBUS.

synagogue of the Jews, promising to return to them, after keeping the passover at Jerusalem. Accordingly, he again took ship, and landed at Cæsarea, and from thence travelled to Jerusalem, where he kept the feast, visited the church, and then repaired to Antioch. Here he staid some time, and then traversed the country of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the newly-converted Christians till he came to Ephesus.

During the time he spent in this large circuit, Providence took care of the churches of Ephesus and Corinth, by means of one Apollos, an eloquent Jew of Alexandria, and well acquainted with the law and writings of the prophets. This man coming to Ephesus, though he was only instructed in the rudiments of Christianity and John's baptism, yet taught with great courage and a most powerful zeal. After being fully instructed in the faith by Aquila and Priscilla, he passed over into Acaia, being furnished with recommendatory letters by the churches of Ephesus and Corinth. He was of the greatest service in Acaia, in watering what Paul had planted, confirming the disciples, and powerfully convincing the Jews that Jesus was the true Messiah promised in the scriptures.

While Apollos was thus employed, St. Paul returned to Ephesus, where he fixed his abode for three years, bringing with him Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica, Timotheus, and Erastus of Corinth, and Titus. The first thing he did after his arrival was to examine certain disciples, "whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed." To which they answered, that the doctrine they had received promised nothing of that nature, nor had they ever heard that such an extraordinary spirit had of late been bestowed upon the church.

This answer surprised the apostle, who asked them in what name they had been baptized, since, in the Christian form, the name of the Holy Ghost was always expressed. They replied, that they had only received John's baptism; upon which the apostle informed them, that though John's baptism commanded nothing but repentance, yet it tacitly implied the whole doctrine of Christ and the Holy Ghost. When they heard this they were baptized according to the form prescribed by Christ himself, that is, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and after the apostle had prayed, and laid his hands over them, they received the gifts of tongues, and other miraculous powers.

After this he entered into the Jewish synagogues, where, for the

first three months, he contended and disputed with the Jews, endeavoring, with great earnestness and resolution, to convince them of the truth of the Christian religion. But when, instead of success, he met with nothing but obstinacy and infidelity, he left the synagogue, and taking those with him whom he had instrumentally converted, instructed them and others who resorted to him, in the school of one Tyrannus, a place where scholars used to be instructed.

In this manner he continued to preach the gospel two whole years, by which means the Jews and proselytes had an opportunity of hearing the glad tidings of salvation. And because miracles are the clearest evidence of a divine commission, the Almighty was pleased to testify the doctrine which St. Paul delivered by amazing and miraculous operations, many of which were of a peculiar and extraordinary nature, for he not only healed those that came to him, but if napkins or handkerchiefs were only touched by him, and applied to the sick, their diseases immediately vanished, and the evil spirits departed out of those that were possessed by them.

About this time the apostle wrote his Epistle to the Galatians, for he had heard, that, since his departure, corrupt opinions had crept in among them, with regard to the necessity of observing the legal rites, and that several impostors had found admittance into the church.

During St. Paul's stay at Ephesus, an incident happened which came near resulting seriously for him. There stood in Ephesus a magnificent Temple of Diana, which was so famous for its beauty that it was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. It was held in the greatest veneration by all the believers in the faith of the Greeks and Romans, for it contained an image of Diana, which was said to have been made by Jupiter, himself, and dropped down from heaven. The silversmiths of Ephesus carried on a large trade in gold and silver models or shrines of this temple, some of which were so small as to be carried in the pocket as charms. One Demetrius, the chief of the silversmiths, perceiving that the establishment of the Christian faith would do away with this trade, stirred up the Ephesians against the apostles, by working on the popular zeal for Diana. The result was, that failing to find Paul, the mob seized two of his companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, and hurried them to the theatre, intending to throw them to the wild beasts. Paul, hearing of this, prepared to go to the theatre, to endeavor to plead in behalf of his brethren, but was prevented by the Christians of the place, and by

several of the prominent Gentiles who were his friends, who represented to him that he would only expose himself to the popular rage without accomplishing any good for his companions.

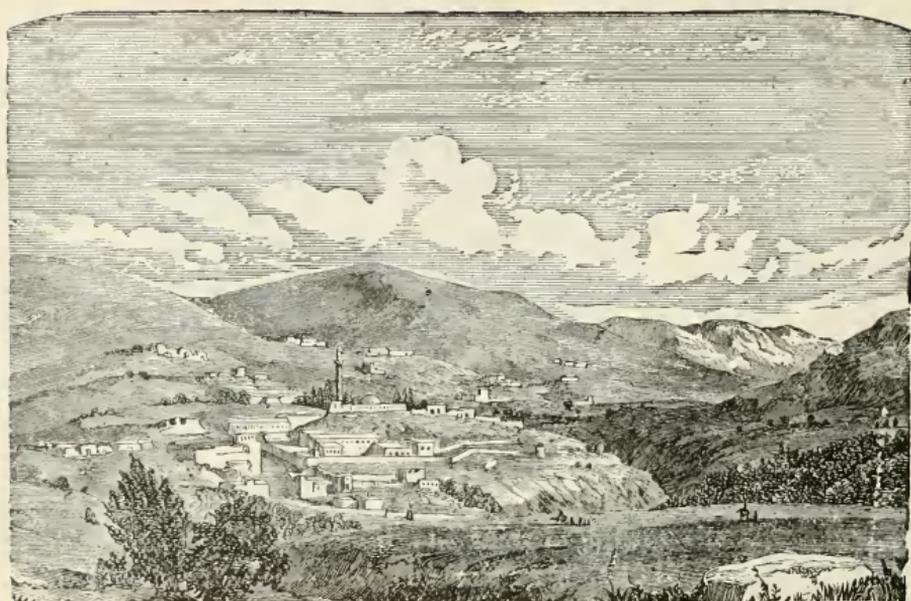
The mob created a frightful tumult, and nothing prevented the murder of the friends of the apostle, but the timely interposition of the town-clerk, who having obtained silence reminded the people that their zeal in behalf of Diana was too well known throughout the world to need any such bloody attestation, and declared that if the silversmiths had anything to charge against Paul and his friends, they ought to do so through the civil courts, which were open to them, and reminded them that they would do well to do this, as they had already rendered themselves liable to be punished for inciting so great a tumult. His words had the desired effect. Gaius and Aristarchus were released, and the crowd dispersed. St. Paul regarded the escape of himself and his friends as miraculous, and so speaks of it in his writings.

About this time he wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, to cure some dissensions and heresies which false teachers had caused in the infant church at Corinth.

Soon after the tumult at Ephesus, Paul called the Christians together, and took his leave of them with the most tender expressions of love and affection. He had now spent almost three years at Ephesus, and had founded there a very considerable church, of which he ordained Timothy the first Bishop. From Ephesus he went to Troas, two hundred miles distant. He expected to meet Titus here, but failing to find him continued his voyage to Macedonia, where he preached the gospel, even going as far as Illyricum, now called Slavonia. He met with many dangers and trials on this voyage and in his journeys by land, but God mercifully sustained and brought him through them all. Soon after, Titus came to him, and cheered him with the account of the good effects his epistle had produced at Corinth, bringing with him also a liberal contribution from the Corinthian Christians for the church at Jerusalem. Influenced by this example, the Macedonian Christians made contributions for the same purpose.

During the stay of Titus in Macedonia, Paul wrote his second Epistle to the Corinthians, and sent it to them by Titus and Luke, and about this time he wrote his first Epistle to Timothy, whom he had left at Ephesus. From Macedonia he went to Corinth, from which





NAZARETH.

place he wrote his Epistle to the Romans, which he sent by Phœbe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, near Corinth.

St. Paul now set out on his journey to Jerusalem to carry the contributions of the Grecian churches, but hearing that the Jews had laid a plot to rob and murder him on the route, he returned to Macedonia, and went, by way of Philippi, to Troas, where he stayed seven days. On the Lord's day he preached to the Christians, intending to depart the next day, and while he was speaking, a young man named Eutychus, overcome by sleep, fell from the third story window in which he had been sitting, and was taken up for dead; but the apostle, by his prayers to the throne of grace, presently restored him to life and health.

On his arrival at Miletus he sent to Ephesus, to summon the elders of the church, and, on their coming, addressed them at length, reminding them of his labors in their behalf, assuring them of his love for them, and exhorting them to remain steadfast in the faith of their crucified and risen Redeemer. He told them they would see his face no more, and then, commending them to the care of God, took a tender farewell of them.

Having finished his discourse, he knelt down and joined with them in prayer; when they all melted into tears, and, with the greatest expressions of sorrow, attended him to the ship, grieving in the



PAUL PARTING FROM HIS DISCIPLES

most passionate manner for what he had told them, that "they should see his face no more."

From Miletus Paul went to Tyre, in Phœnicia, by way of Rhodes, in the Ægean sea, and Patara, the metropolis of Lycia. Upon reaching Tyre he remained a week with the brethren, who warned him not to go up to Jerusalem, as he would be exposed to great danger there; but he refused to be turned from his purpose, and, after parting with them affectionately, passed on to Cæsarea. There he was warned by a Christian prophet named Agabus, that if he went up to Jerusalem, the Jews would bind him and deliver him over to the Gentiles; but he declared he was "ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus," and, resisting the entreaties of his friends, he went up to Jerusalem, where he was kindly received by the Christians.

The day after their arrival, Paul and those who had come with him went to the house of St. James the apostle, where the rest of the bishops and governors of the church were met together. After mutual salutations, the apostle gave them a particular account of the success with which God had blessed his labors among the Gentiles; for which they all joined in thanksgiving to God.

St. Paul was now told that there were thousands of Jewish converts in Jerusalem, who were all zealous for the law of Moses, and that, as these had heard of his doing away with the rite of circumcision in the case of his Gentile converts, they would watch him closely, to see if he conformed to the ceremonial law, now that he was in Jerusalem; and he was advised, that, in order to prevent them from creating any disturbance, it would be better for him to conform to that law in some specified particulars. To this he readily consented; but while in the temple, attending to these ceremonies, he was seen by some Jews from Asia, who seized him, and excited the multitude against him, by falsely declaring that he had everywhere preached doctrines derogatory to the Jewish nation, and destructive to the institutions of the law. Paul was, therefore, dragged out of the temple, the gates of which were shut, to prevent his return to that holy place. By appealing to the governor, and stating that he was a free citizen of the rich and honorable city of Tarsus, he obtained leave to speak to the people, and addressed them in the Hebrew language, reciting to them the principal events of his early life, and his miraculous conversion, and telling them how Christ had sent him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.



PAUL, BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

The Jews, who despised the Gentiles, now refused to listen to him any longer, and the captain of the guard had him taken to the castle, intending to scourge him until he should confess the true cause of the popular fury against him. Paul, however, avoided this degrading and painful suffering by demanding, as a free-born Roman citizen, that he should first be tried and sentenced for his alleged offence, according to the laws of the empire, before being punished. This demand terrified the military authorities, who knew well the danger they would incur from maltreating a citizen of Rome. Accordingly, the apostle was freed from his chains, and the governor, in order to satisfy himself of the cause of so unusual a commotion, summoned the sanhedrim to meet him, and brought Paul before them.

Being thus confronted with the great council of his nation, Paul told them he had always governed his actions by the severest rules of duty and conscience. This declaration, though perfectly true and appropriate, so offended the high priest Ananias, that he commanded those who stood next to the apostle to strike him in the face; at which the apostle smartly replied, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall;" on which some of the spectators replied, "It is not lawful to revile the high priest of the Almighty," and Paul answered, "I did not know that Ananias was appointed by God to be a high priest. But as he is invested with authority, it is unjust to revile him. God himself commanded that no man should speak evil of the rulers of the people." Paul perceiving that the council consisted partly of Sadducees, who denied the resurrection from the dead, and partly of Pharisees, who affirmed it, cried aloud, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and am now brought before this tribunal for asserting the resurrection from the dead."

This declaration threw the whole court into confusion, the Pharisees inclining to take sides with Paul, and the Sadducees demanding his punishment. The dissensions spread to the spectators, and produced such a commotion that the captain of the guard, to save Paul from being torn to pieces, took him back to the castle. During the night God comforted him with a revelation that he should live, in spite of the malice of his enemies, to bear the gospel to Rome itself.

The next day Paul's sister's son detected a plot on the part of the Jews to kill the apostle, and accordingly the governor sent Paul to Cæsarea, under a strong military escort, with letters to Felix, the Roman governor of that province, relating the whole transaction.



PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

Paul's accusers were also ordered to appear before Felix, who, finding that the apostle was a native of Cilicia, told him he would determine the matter as soon as his accusers presented themselves. Meanwhile, he ordered Paul to be confined in the place called Herod's judgment hall.

Soon after this Felix heard the case. Tertullus made an eloquent speech against Paul, charging him with heresy, sedition, and the profanation of the Temple; but Paul replied with such force that Felix refused to pass any sentence until he could consult the governor of the castle at Jerusalem, who had first arrested Paul. He remanded the apostle to prison, but allowed him to receive the visits and kind offices of his friends.

Shortly after, Felix's wife, Drusilla, a Jewess, and daughter of the elder Herod, came down to him at Cæsarea, in whose presence the governor sent for Paul, and gave him leave to explain the doctrines of Christianity. Paul did so in words of powerful eloquence, and described the terrors of the last judgment so vividly that Felix trembled on his throne, and abruptly interrupted the apostle, telling him he would hear the rest at a more convenient season.

Felix was soon succeeded in his government by Portius Festus, before whom, as soon as he came to Jerusalem, the high priest and sanhedrim brought charges against Paul, requesting that he might be sent up to Jerusalem to be tried, intending to assassinate him on the way; but the governor replied that he was going down to Cæsarea very soon, and that they must accuse Paul before him at that place. This they were prompt to do, and as soon as Festus had reached Cæsarea, they brought charges against Paul of which he soon cleared himself, nor were his enemies able to prove anything against him. Festus, however, willing to win the favor of the Jews at the outset of his career, asked Paul whether he would be willing to go up and be tried before him at Jerusalem. But the apostle, well knowing the consequences of such a proposal, answered, as a Roman, "I appeal unto Cæsar."

This method of appealing was common among the Romans, and introduced to defend and secure the lives and fortunes of the people from the unjust encroachments and rigorous severities of the magistrates, whereby it was unlawful, in cases of oppression, to appeal to the people for redress, a thing more than once settled by the sanction of the Valerian law.

Some time after St. Paul had appealed unto Cæsar, king Agrippa,

who succeeded Herod in the tetrarchate of Galilee, and his sister Bernice, came to Cæsarea to visit the new governor. Festus embraced this opportunity of mentioning the case of our apostle to king Agrippa, together with the remarkable tumult this affair had occasioned among the Jews, and the appeal he had made to Cæsar. This account excited the curiosity of king Agrippa; and he was desirous of hearing himself what St. Paul had to say in his own vindication. Accordingly, the next day the king and his sister, accompanied by Festus, the governor, and several other persons of distinction, came into the court with a pompous and splendid retinue, where the prisoner was brought before them. On his appearing, Festus informed the court how greatly he had been importuned by the Jews, both at Cæsarea and Jerusalem, to put the prisoner to death as a malefactor; but having, on examination, found him guilty of no capital crime, and the prisoner himself having appealed unto Cæsar, he was determined to send him to Rome; but was willing to have his cause debated before Agrippa, that he might be furnished with some material particulars to send with him; it being highly absurd to send a prisoner without signifying the crimes alleged against him.

Few scenes in history are more impressive than the one here depicted, in which the bold apostle faces Agrippa and his royal attendants. For sublime courage, eloquence of speech, lordly bearing, and consummate tact, accompanied with the frank utterance of earnest conviction, this scene is almost unrivalled in the annals of Christianity. There is king Agrippa, while a man calmly faces him who is more than a king. There, too, is Festus, another Roman official; yet, in the presence of the empire that rules the world, Paul tells his thrilling story, and makes his appeal to Cæsar. But, in our admiration for the apostle, let us not anticipate the order of events.

Festus having finished his speech, Agrippa told Paul he was now at liberty to make his own defence: and, silence being made, he delivered himself in the following manner, addressing his speech particularly to Agrippa:

“I consider it as a peculiar happiness, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence against the accusations of the Jews before thee; because thou art well acquainted with all their customs, and the questions commonly debated among them: I therefore beseech thee to hear me patiently. All the Jews are well acquainted with my manner of life from my youth, the greatest part of it having been spent with mine own countrymen at Jerusalem. They also know that I

was educated under the institutions of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion, and am now arraigned for a tenet believed by all their fathers; a tenet sufficiently credible in itself, and plainly revealed in the scriptures; I mean, the resurrection of the dead. Why should any mortal think it either incredible or impossible that God should raise the dead? I, indeed, formerly thought myself indispensably obliged to oppose the religion of Jesus of Nazareth. Nor was I satisfied with imprisoning and punishing with death itself the saints I found at Jerusalem; I even persecuted them in strange cities, whither my implacable zeal pursued them, having procured authority for that purpose from the chief priests and elders. Accordingly, I departed for Damascus, with a commission from the sanhedrim; but, as I was travelling towards that city, I saw at mid-day, O king, a light from heaven, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, encompassing me and my companions. On seeing this awful appearance we all fell to the earth, and I heard a voice, which said to me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. To which I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he replied, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. But be not terrified, arise from the earth; for I have appeared unto thee, that thou mightest be both a witness of the things thou hast seen, and also of others which I will hereafter reveal unto thee. My power shall deliver thee from the Jews and Gentiles, to whom now I send thee to preach the gospel; to withdraw the veil of darkness and ignorance; to turn them from falsehood unto truth, and from the power of Satan unto God. Accordingly, king Agrippa, I readily obeyed the heavenly vision; I preached the gospel first to the inhabitants of Damascus, then to those of Jerusalem and Judea, and afterwards to the Gentiles; persuading them to forsake their iniquities, and, by sincere repentance, turn to the living God.

“These endeavors to save the souls of sinful mortals exasperated the Jews, who caught me in the temple, and entered into a conspiracy to destroy me; but, by the help of Omnipotence, I still remain a witness to all the human race, preaching nothing but what Moses and all the prophets foretold; namely, that the Messiah should suffer, be the first that should rise from the chambers of the grave, and publish the glad tidings of salvation, both to the Jews and Gentiles.”

While the apostle thus pleaded for himself, Festus cried out, “Paul, thou art mad; too much study hath deprived thee of thy reason.”

But Paul answered, "I am far, most noble Festus, from being transported with idle and distracted ideas; the words I speak are dictated by truth and sobriety; and I am persuaded that king Agrippa himself is not ignorant of these things; for they were transacted openly before the world. I am confident, king Agrippa, that thou believest the prophets; and therefore must know that all their predictions were fulfilled in Christ." To which Agrippa answered, "Thou hast almost persuaded me to embrace the Christian faith." And Paul replied, "I sincerely wish that not only thou, but also all that hear me, were not almost, but altogether the same as I myself, except being prisoners."

It being now fully determined that Paul should be sent to Rome, he was, with several other prisoners of consequence, committed to the care of Julius, commander of a company belonging to the legion of Augustus; and was accompanied in this voyage by St. Luke, Aristarchus, Trophimus, and some others not mentioned by the sacred historian.

In the month of September, they embarked on board a ship at Adramyttium, and sailed to Sidon, where the centurion courteously gave the apostle leave to go on shore to visit his friends and refresh himself. After a short stay they sailed for Cyprus, and arrived opposite the Fair-Havens, a place near Myra, a city of Lycia. Here the season being far advanced, and Paul foreseeing it would be a dangerous voyage, persuaded them to put in and winter there. But the Roman centurion preferring the opinion of the master of the ship, and the harbor being at the same time incommodious, resolved, if possible, to reach Phœnice, a port of Crete, and winter there; but they soon found themselves disappointed, for the fine southerly gale, which had favored them for some time, suddenly changed into a stormy and tempestuous wind from the northeast, which blew with such violence that the ship was obliged to sail before it; and to prevent her sinking, they threw overboard the principal part of her lading.

In this desperate and uncomfortable condition they continued fourteen days, and on the fourteenth night the sailors, upon sounding, found they were near some coast, and therefore, to avoid the rocks, thought proper to come to an anchor till the morning might give them better information.

During the time they continued at anchor, waiting for the light of the morning, St. Paul prevailed upon them to eat and refresh them-

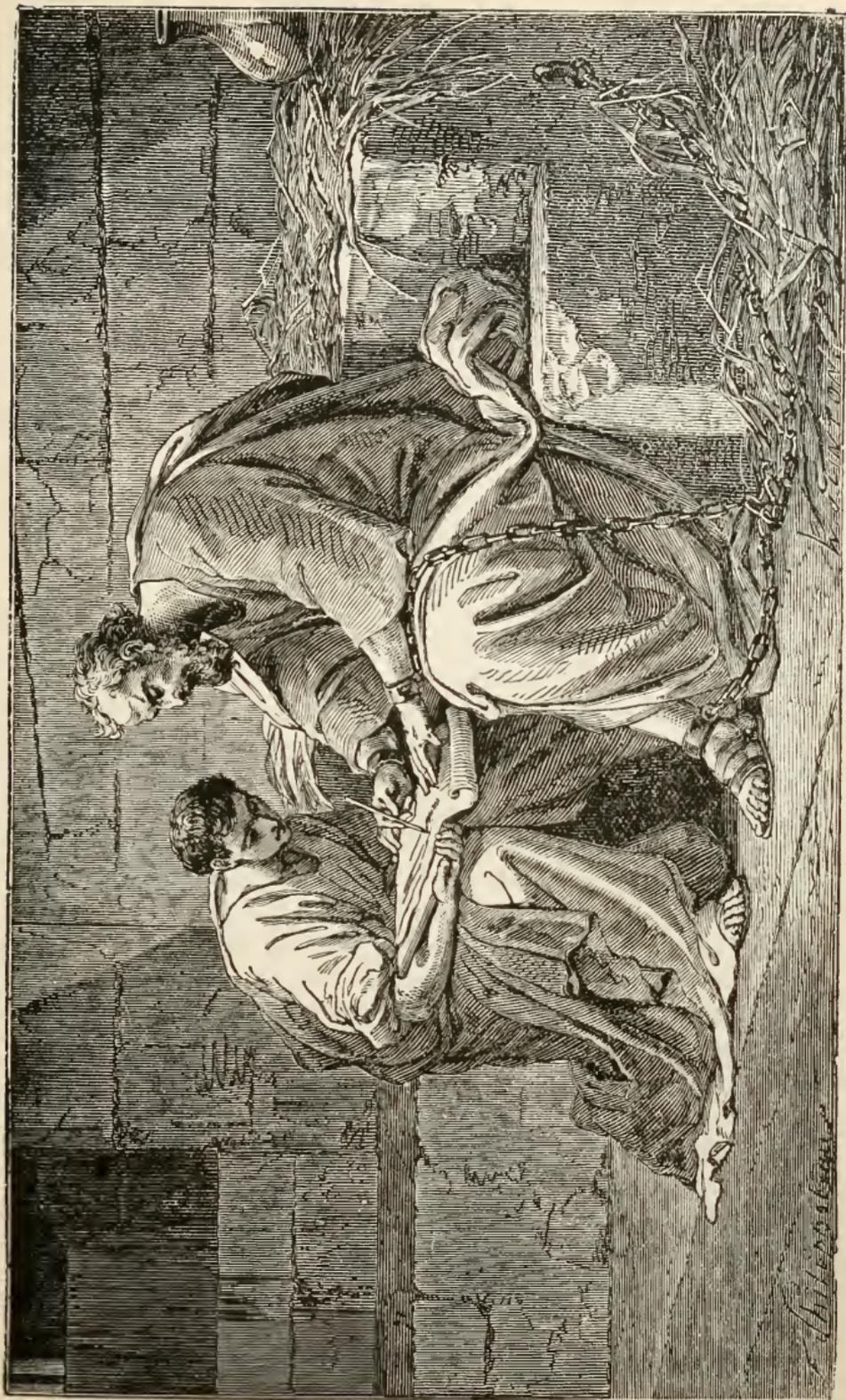
selves, having fasted a long time, assuring them they should all escape.

The country near which they were, as St. Paul had foretold, an island called Melita, now Malta, situated in the Libyan Sea, between Syracuse and Africa. Here they landed, and met with great civility from a barbarous people, who treated them with humanity, entertaining them with all the necessary accommodations. But while St. Paul was laying a few sticks on the fire, a viper, enlivened by the heat, came from among the wood and fastened on his hand. On seeing this, the inhabitants of the island concluded that he was certainly some notorious murderer, whom the Divine vengeance, though it suffered him to escape the sea, had reserved for a more public and solemn execution. But when they saw him shake off the venomous creature into the fire, and no manner of harm ensue, they changed their sentiments, and cried out that he was a god.

After three months' stay in this island, the centurion, with his charge, went on board the *Castor and Pollux*, a ship of Alexandria, bound to Italy. They put in at Syracuse, where they tarried three days, sailed thence to Regium, and so to Puteoli, where they landed; and, finding some Christians there, staid, at their request, a week with them, and then set forward on their journey to Rome. The Christians of this city, hearing of the apostle's coming, went to meet him as far as Three Taverns, about thirty miles from Rome, and others as far as the *Apiiforum*, fifty-one miles distant from the capital. They kindly embraced each other, and the liberty he saw the Christians enjoy at Rome, greatly tended to enliven the spirits of the apostle.

Having refreshed himself after the fatigue of his voyage, the apostle sent for the heads of the Jewish consistory there, and related the cause of his coming to them, in the following manner: "Though I have been guilty of no violation of the laws of our religion, yet I was delivered by the Jews at Jerusalem to the Roman governors, who more than once would have acquitted me, as innocent of any capital offence; but by the perverseness of my persecutors, I was obliged to appeal unto Cæsar. Not that I had anything to accuse my nation of. I had recourse to this method merely to clear my own innocency."

Having thus removed a popular prejudice, he added, that the true cause of his sufferings was what their own religion had taught him, the belief and expectation of a future resurrection. But his discourse had different effects on different hearers, some being convinced, and others persisting in their infidelity.



† PAUL WRITING HIS EPISTLES IN PRISON.

For two whole years Paul dwelt at Rome, in a house he had hired for his own use ; wherein he assiduously employed himself in preaching and writing for the good of the church. Among other's of the apostle's converts at Rome, was one Onesimus, who had formerly been a servant to Philemon, a person of distinction in Colosse, but had run away from his master, and fraudulently taken with him some things of value.

Having rambled as far as Rome he was now converted by St. Paul, and by him returned to his master, with a short recommendatory letter, earnestly desiring him to pardon him ; and, notwithstanding his former faults, to treat him kindly, and use him as a brother, promising withal, that if he had wronged or owed him anything, he himself would repay it.

The Christians at Philippi hearing of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, and not knowing what straits he might be reduced to, raised a contribution for him, and sent it by Epaphroditus, their bishop, by whom he returned an epistle to them.

St. Paul had lived three years at Ephesus, preaching the gospel to the numerous inhabitants of that city, and was, therefore, well acquainted with the state and condition of the place, so that taking the opportunity of Tychicus's going thither, he wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians.

St. Paul himself had never been to Colosse ; but Epaphras, who was then at Rome, a prisoner with him, had preached the gospel there with great success ; and from him he might learn that certain false teachers had endeavored to persuade the people that they ought not to apply to God by Jesus Christ, who, since his ascension, was so far exalted above them that angels were now become the proper mediators between God and man, and therefore in opposition to this, as well as other seductions of the same nature, he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians.

By what means St. Paul was released from imprisonment, and discharged from the accusation the Jews brought against him, we have no account in history ; but it is natural to suppose, that not having sufficient proof of what they alleged, or being informed that the crimes they accused him of were no violations of the Roman law, they durst not implead him before the emperor, and so permitted him to be discharged of course. But by whatever means he procured his liberty it is thought he wrote his Epistle to the Hebrews before he left Italy, from whence he dates his salutations.

Having thus discharged his ministry, both by preaching and writing, in Italy, St. Paul, accompanied by Timothy, prosecuted his long-intended journey into Spain, and according to the testimony of several writers, crossed the sea, and preached the gospel in Britain.

What success he had in these western parts is not known; he, however, continued there, eight or nine months, and then returned again to the East, visited Sicily, Greece, and Crete, and then repaired to Rome.

Here he met with Peter, and was, together with him, thrown into prison, doubtless in the general persecution raised against the Christians, under pretence that they had set fire to the city. How long he remained in prison is uncertain; nor do we know whether he was scourged before his execution. He was, however, allowed the privilege of a Roman citizen, and therefore beheaded.

Being come to the place of execution, which was the Salvian waters, three miles from Rome, he cheerfully, after a solemn preparation, gave his neck to the fatal stroke; and from this vale of misery passed to the blissful regions of immortality, to the kingdom of his beloved Master, the great Redeemer of the human race. He was buried in the Via Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome: and about the year 317, Constantine the Great, at the instance of Pope Sylvester, built a stately church over his grave, adorned it with an hundred marble columns, and beautified it with the most exquisite workmanship.

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## ST. ANDREW.

THIS apostle was born at Bethsaida a city of Galilee, built on the banks of the lake of Genesareth, and was son to John or Jonas, a fisherman of that town. He was brother to Simon Peter, but whether older or younger is not certainly known, though the generality of the ancients intimate that he was the younger. He was brought up to his father's trade, at which he labored till our blessed Saviour called him to be a fisher of men, for which he was, by some preparatory institutions, qualified even before the appearance of the Messiah.

John the Baptist had lately preached the doctrine of repentance,



SEA OF GALILEE.

and was, by the generality of the Jews, from the impartiality of his precepts, and the remarkable strictness and austerity of his life held in great veneration.

In the number of his followers was our apostle, who accompanied him beyond Jordan, when the Messiah, who had some time before been baptized, came that way. Upon his approach the Baptist pointed him out as the Messiah, styling him "the Lamb of God," the true sacrifice, that was to expiate the sins of the world. As soon as the Baptist had given this character of Jesus, Andrew, and another disciple, probably St. John, followed the Saviour of mankind to the place of his abode.

After some conversation with him Andrew departed, and having found his brother Simon, informed him that he had discovered the great Messiah, so long expected by the house of Jacob, and accordingly brought him to Jesus. They did not, however, stay long with their Master, but returned to their calling.

Something more than a year after, Jesus passing through Galilee, found Andrew and Peter fishing on the sea of Galilee, where he fully satisfied them of the greatness and divinity of his person by a miraculous draught of fishes, which they took at his command. He now told them that they should enter on a different series of labors, and, instead of fish, they should, by the efficacy and influence of their doc-

trine upon the heart and conscience, catch men ; commanding them to follow him as his immediate disciples and attendants ; and accordingly they left all and followed him.

After the ascension of the blessed Jesus into heaven, and the descension of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, to qualify them for their great undertaking, St. Andrew, according to the generality of ancient writers, was chosen to preach the gospel in Scythia and the neighboring countries. Accordingly he departed from Jerusalem, and first travelled through Cappadocia, Galatia, and Bythynia, instructing the inhabitants in the faith of Christ, and continued his journey along the Euxine Sea into the deserts of Scythia. An ancient author tells us that he first came to Amynsus, where, being entertained by a Jew, he went into the synagogue, preached to them concerning Jesus, and from the prophecies of the Old Testament proved him to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world. Having converted many here, he settled the times of their public meetings, and ordained them priests.

He went next to Trapezium, a maritime city on the Euxine Sea ; from whence, after visiting many other places, he came to Nice, where he staid two years, preaching and working miracles with great success. After leaving Nice he passed to Nicomedia, and from thence to Chalcedon, whence he sailed through the Propontis, afterwards to Amastris. In all these places he met with the greatest difficulties, but overcame them by invincible patience and resolution.

He next came to Sinope, a city situated on the same sea, and famous both for the birth and burial of king Mithridates. Here he met with his brother Peter, and staid with him a considerable time.

The inhabitants of Sinope were mostly Jews, who, partly from a zeal for their religion, and partly from their barbarous manners, were exasperated against St. Andrew, and entered into a confederacy to burn the house in which he lodged. But being disappointed in their design, they treated him with the most savage cruelty, throwing him on the ground, stamping upon him with their feet, pulling and dragging him from place to place ; some beating him with clubs, some pelting him with stones, and others, to satisfy their brutal revenge, biting off his flesh with their teeth ; till, apprehending they had entirely deprived him of life, they cast him out into the fields. But he miraculously recovered, and returned publicly into the city ; by which, and other miracles he wrought among them, many were converted from the error of their ways, and induced to become disciples of the blessed Jesus.

Departing from Sinope, he returned to Jerusalem. But he did not continue long in his native country, returning again to the province allotted him for the exercise of his ministry, which greatly flourished through the power of the divine grace that attended it.

He travelled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, and Epirus, preaching the gospel, propagating Christianity, then confirming the doctrine he taught with signs and miracles. At last he came to Petraë, a city of Achaia, where he gave his last and greatest testimony to the gospel of his divine Master, sealing it with his blood.

Ægenas, pro-consul of Achaia, came at this time to Petraë, where, observing that multitudes had abandoned the heathen religion and embraced the gospel of Christ, he had recourse to every method, both of favor and cruelty, to reduce the people to their old idolatry. The apostle, whom no difficulties or dangers could deter from performing the duties of his ministry, addressed himself to the pro-consul, calmly put him in mind that, being only a judge of men, he ought to revere him who was the supreme and impartial Judge of all, pay him the divine honors due to his exalted majesty, and abandon the impieties of his idolatrous worship; observing to him, that if he would renounce his idolatries, and heartily embrace the Christian faith, he should, with him and the members who had believed in the Son of God, receive eternal happiness in the Messiah's kingdom. The pro-consul answered, that he himself should never embrace the religion he mentioned; and that the only reason why he was so earnest with him to sacrifice to the gods was, that those whom he had everywhere seduced, might, by his example, be brought back to the ancient religion they had forsaken. The apostle replied, that he saw it was in vain to endeavor to persuade a person incapable of sober counsels, and hardened in his own blindness and folly; that, with regard to himself, he might act as he pleased, and if he had any torment greater than another, he might heap that upon him, as, the greater constancy he showed in his sufferings for Christ, the more acceptable he should be to his Lord and Master. Ægenas could hold no longer, and after treating him with very opprobrious language, and showing him the most distinguished marks of contempt, he passed sentence on him that he should be put to death. He first ordered him to be scourged, seven lictors successively whipping his naked body; and seeing his invincible patience and constancy, commanded him to be crucified; but to be fastened to the cross with cords instead of nails, that his death might be more lingering and tedious. As he was led to the

place of execution, walking with a cheerful and composed mind, the people cried out, that a good and innocent man was unjustly condemned to die. On his coming near the cross, he saluted it in the following manner: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it, and adorned with his members as with so many inestimable jewels. I therefore come joyfully and triumphing to it, that it may receive me as a disciple and follower of him who once hung upon it, and be the means of carrying me safe to my Master, being the instrument on which he redeemed me." After offering up his prayers to the throne of grace, and exhorting the people to constancy and perseverance in the faith he had delivered to them, he was fastened to the cross, on which he hung two whole days, teaching and instructing the people. In the meantime great interest was made to the pro-consul to spare his life; but the apostle earnestly begged of the Almighty, that he might now depart, and seal the truth of his religion with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he expired, it is said, on the last day of November, but in what year is uncertain.

There seems to have been something peculiar in the form of the cross on which he suffered, and it is commonly thought to have been a cross decussate, or two pieces of timber crossing each other in the centre, in the form of the letter X, and hence usually known by the name of St. Andrew's cross.

His body being taken down from the cross, was decently and honorably interred by Maximillia, a lady of great quality and estate, and who, Nicephorus tells us, was wife to the pro-consul.

Constantine the Great afterwards removed his body to Constantinople, and buried it in the great church he had built to the honor of the apostles; but this structure being taken down some hundred years after, in order to rebuild it, by Justinian, the emperor, the body of St. Andrew was found in a wooden coffin, and again deposited in its proper place.

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## ST. JAMES THE GREAT.

THIS apostle, who was surnamed the Great, by way of distinction from another of that name, was the son of Zebedee, and by trade a fisherman, to which he applied himself with remarkable assiduity,

and was exercising his employment when the Saviour of the world, passing by the Sea of Galilee, saw him with his brother in the ship, and called them both to be his disciples. Nor was the call in vain; they cheerfully complied with it, and immediately left all to follow him; readily delivering themselves up to perform whatever service he should appoint them.

Soon after this he was called, from the station of an ordinary disciple, to the apostolical office, and even honored with some particular favors beyond most of the apostles, being one of the three whom our Lord made choice of as his companions in the more intimate transactions of this life, from which the rest were excluded. Thus, with Peter and his brother John, he attended his Master when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. He was admitted to Christ's glorious transfiguration on the Mount; and when the holy Jesus was to undergo his bitter agonies in the garden, as preparatory sufferings to his passion, James was one of the three taken to be a spectator of them. Nor was it the least instance of that particular honor our Lord conferred on these apostles, that at his calling them to the apostleship, he gave them a new name and title: Simon he called Peter, or a rock, and James and John, who were brothers, Boanerges, or the sons of thunder.

Some think that this name was given them on account of their loud and bold preaching the gospel to the world, fearing no threatenings, despising all opposition, and going on thundering in the ears of a drowsy and sleepy world; rousing and awakening the consciences of men with the earnestness and vehemence of their preaching, which resembled thunder, as the voice of God powerfully shakes the natural world, and breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. Others think it relates to the doctrines they delivered, teaching the great mysteries and promulgating the gospel in a more profound and lofty strain than the rest.

But however this be, our blessed Saviour, doubtless, alluded by this term, to the naturally furious and resolute disposition of these two brothers, who seem to have been of a more fiery temper than the rest of the apostles, of which we have this memorable instance. When our Lord was determined on his journey to Jerusalem, he sent some of his disciples before him to make preparations for his coming; but on their entering a village of Samaria, they were rudely rejected, from the old grudge that subsisted between the Samaritans and Jews; and because our Saviour, by going up to Jerusalem, seemed to slight their

place of worship on Mount Gerizim. This piece of rudeness and inhumanity was so highly resented by St. James and his brother, that they came to Jesus desiring to know if he would not imitate Elias, by calling down fire from heaven to consume this barbarous, inhospitable people.—Thus we find that the best of men are but men, and that corrupt nature will sometimes appear even in renewed minds. But the holy Jesus soon convinced them of their mistake, by telling them, that instead of destroying, he was come to save the lives of the children of men.

Sophronius tells us, that after the ascension of the blessed Jesus, this apostle preached to the dispersed Jews, that is, to those converts who were dispersed after the death of Stephen. The Spanish writers affirm, that after preaching the gospel in several parts of Judea and Samaria, he visited Spain, where he planted Christianity, and appointed some select disciples to perfect what he had begun; but if we consider the shortness of St. James's life, and that the apostles continued in a body at Jerusalem, even after the dispersion of the other Christians, we shall find it difficult to allow time sufficient for so tedious and difficult a voyage as that was in those early ages; and therefore it is safest to confine his ministry to Judea and the adjacent countries.

Herod, who was a bigot to the Jewish religion, as well as desirous of acquiring the favor of the Jews, began a violent persecution of the Christians, and his zeal against them animated him to pass sentence of death on St. James immediately.

As he was led to the place of execution, the officer that guarded him to the tribunal, or rather his accuser, having been converted by that remarkable courage and constancy shown by the apostle at the time of his trial, repented of what he had done, came and fell down at the apostle's feet, and heartily begged pardon for what he had said against him. The holy man, after recovering from the surprise, tenderly embraced him. "Peace," said he, "my son, peace be unto thee, and pardon of thy faults." Upon which the officer publicly declared himself a Christian, and both were beheaded at the same time. Thus fell the great apostle St. James, being the first who gained the crown; and taking cheerfully that cup of which he had long since told his Lord he was ready to drink.

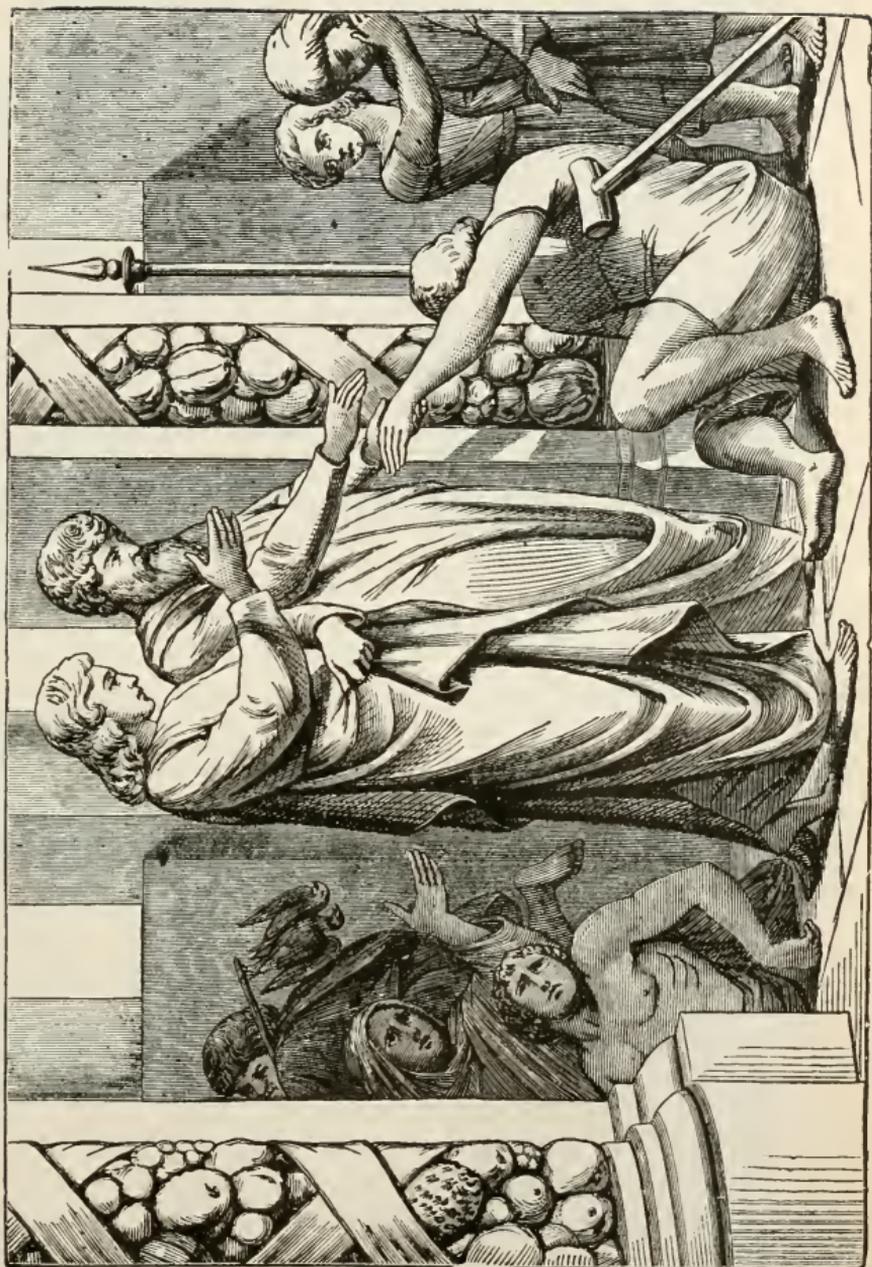
## ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

FROM the very minute and circumstantial account this evangelist gives of John the Baptist, he is supposed to have been one of his followers, and is thought to be that other disciple, who, in the first chapter of his gospel, is said to have been present with Andrew when John declared Jesus to be "the Lamb of God," and thereupon to have followed him to the place of his abode.

He was by much the youngest of the apostles, yet he was admitted into as great a share of his Master's confidence as any of them. He was one of those to whom he communicated the most private transactions of his life; one of those whom he took with him when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead; one of those to whom he displayed a specimen of his divinity, in his transfiguration on the Mount; one of those who were present at his conference with Moses and Elias, and heard that voice which declared him the beloved Son of God; and one of those who were companions in his solitude, most retired devotions, and bitter agonies in the garden.

These instances of particular favor our apostle endeavored, in some measures, to answer, by returns of particular kindness and constancy. For though he at first deserted his Master on his apprehension, yet he soon recovered himself, and came back to see his Saviour, confidently entered the high priest's hall, followed our Lord through the several particulars of his trial, and at last waited on him at his execution, owning him, as well as being owned by him, in the midst of armed soldiers, and in the thickest crowds of his most inveterate enemies. Here it was that our great Redeemer committed to his care his sorrowful and disconsolate mother, with his dying breath; and certainly the holy Jesus could not have given a more honorable testimony of his particular respect and kindness to St. John, than by leaving his own mother to his trust and care, and substituting him to supply that duty he himself paid her while he resided in this vale of sorrow.

After the ascension of the Saviour of the world, when the apostles made a division of the provinces among themselves, that of Asia fell to the share of St. John, though he did not immediately enter upon his charge, but continued at Jerusalem till the death of the blessed Virgin, which might be about fifteen years after our Lord's ascension. Being released from the trust committed to his care by his dying





THE NEW JERUSALEM.

Master, he retired into Asia, and industriously applied himself to the propagation of Christianity, preaching where the gospel had not yet been known, and confirming it where it was already planted. Many churches of note and eminence were founded by him, particularly those of Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others; but his chief place of residence was at Ephesus, where St. Paul had, many years before, founded a church, and constituted Timothy bishop of it.

After spending several years at Ephesus, he was accused to Domitian, who had begun a persecution against the Christians, as an eminent asserter of atheism and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire; so that, by his command, the pro-consul sent him bound to Rome, where he met with the treatment that might have been expected from so barbarous a prince, being thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. But the Almighty, who reserved him for further services in the vineyard of his Son, restrained the heat, as he did in the fiery furnace of old, and delivered him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction. And surely one would have thought that so miraculous a deliverance should have been sufficient to have persuaded any rational man that the religion he taught was from God, and that he was protected from danger by the hand of Omnipotence. But miracles themselves were not sufficient to convince this cruel



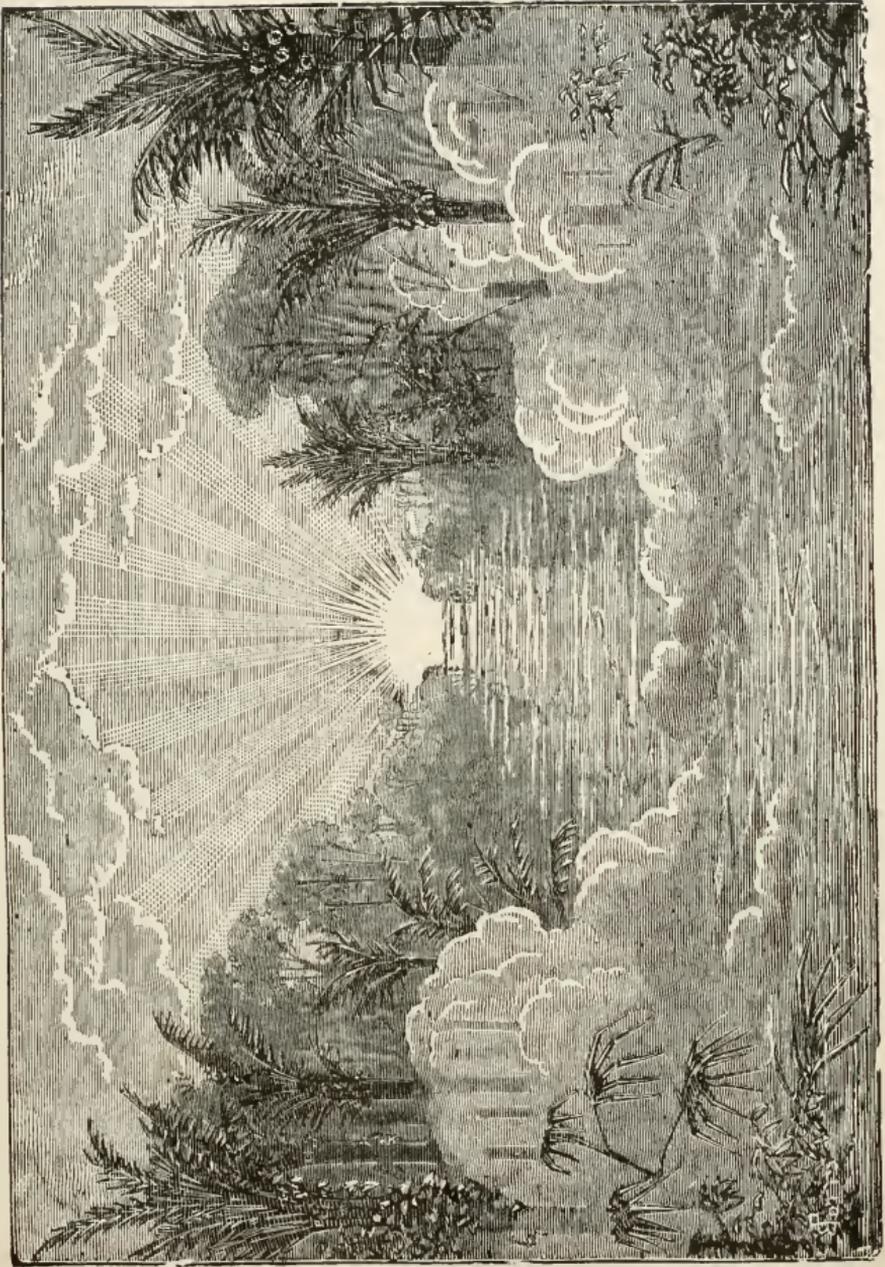
JOHN WRITING TO THE CHURCHES.

emperor, or abate his fury. He ordered St. John to be transported to an almost desolate island in the Archipelago, called Patmos, where he continued several years, instructing the poor inhabitants in the knowledge of the Christian faith; and here, about the end of Domitian's reign, he wrote his book of Revelations, exhibiting, by visions and prophetic representations, the state and condition of Christianity in the future periods and ages of the church.

Upon the death of Domitian, and the succession of Nerva, who repealed all the odious acts of his predecessor, and, by public edicts, recalled those whom the fury of Domitian had banished, St. John returned to Asia, and fixed his seat again at Ephesus, the rather because the people of that city had lately martyred Timothy, their bishop. Here, with the assistance of seven other bishops, he took upon himself the government of the large diocese of Asia Minor, and disposed of the clergy in the best manner that the circumstances of those times would permit, spending his time in an indefatigable execution of his charge, travelling from east to west to instruct the world in the principles of the holy religion he was sent to propagate.

In this manner St. John continued to labor in the vineyard of his great Master until death put a period to all his toils and sufferings, which happened in the beginning of Trajan's reign, in the ninety-eighth year of his age, and, according to Eusebius, his remains were buried near Ephesus.

St. John seems always to have led a single life; though some of the ancients tell us he was a married man. He was polished by no study or arts of learning, but what was wanting from human art was abundantly supplied by the excellent faculties of his mind, and that fullness of divine grace with which he was adorned. His humility was admirable, studiously concealing his own honor: for, in his epistles, he never styles himself either apostle or evangelist; the title of presbyter, or elder, is all he assumes, and probably in regard to his age as much as his office. In his gospel, when he speaks of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," he constantly conceals his own name, leaving the reader to discover whom he meant. Love and charity he practised himself, and affectionately pressed them upon others. The great love of his Saviour towards him seems to have inspired his soul with a larger and more generous charity than the rest. This is the great vein that runs through all his writings, especially his epistles, where he urges it as the great and peculiar law of Christianity, and without which



THE RIVER OF LIFE.

all other pretences to the religion of the holy Jesus are vain and frivolous, useless and insignificant. And this was his constant practise to the very hour of his dissolution; for, when age and the decays of nature had rendered him so weak that he was unable to preach to the people any longer, tradition says, he was constantly led, at every public meeting, to the church at Ephesus, and always repeated to them the same precept, "Little children, love one another;" and when his hearers, wearied with the constant repetition of the same thing, asked him why he never varied his discourse, he answered, "Because to love one another was the command of our blessed Saviour, and consequently one grand guide of our conduct through life, he that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him; but he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."

The greatest instance of our apostle's care for the souls of men is the writings he left to posterity. The first of which in time, though placed last in the sacred canon, is his Apocalypse, or book of Revelations, which he wrote during his banishment to the isle of Patmos.

Next to the Apocalypse, in order of time, are his three Epistles, the first of which is catholic, calculated for all times and places, containing the most excellent rules for the conduct of a Christian life, pressing to holiness and pureness of manners, and not to be satisfied with a naked and empty profession of religion, not to be led away with the crafty insinuations of seducers, and cautioning men against the poisonous principles and practices of the Gnostics. The apostle here, according to his usual modesty, conceals his name, it being of more consequence to a wise man what is said than he who says it. It appears from St. Augustine that this Epistle was anciently inscribed to the Parthians, because, in all probability, St. John preached the gospel in Parthia. The other two Epistles are but short, and directed to particular persons; the one to a lady of great quality, the other to the charitable and hospitable Gaius, the kindest and the most courteous entertainer of all indigent Christians.

Before he undertook the task of writing his gospel he caused a general fast to be kept by all the Asiatic churches, to implore the blessing of Heaven on so great and momentous an undertaking. When this was done he set about the work, and completed it in so excellent and sublime a manner, that the ancients generally compared him to an

eagle soaring aloft among the clouds, whither the weak eye of man was not able to follow him. "Among all the evangelical writers," says St. Basil, "none are like St. John, the son of thunder, for the sublimity of his speech, and the height of his discourses, which are beyond any man's capacity fully to reach and comprehend." "St. John, as a true son of thunder," says Epiphanius, "by a loftiness of speech peculiar to himself, acquaints us, as it were, out of the clouds and dark recesses of wisdom, with the divine doctrine of the Son of God."

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### ST. PHILIP.

THIS apostle was a native of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. He had the honor of being first called to be a disciple of the great Messiah, which happened in the following manner: Our blessed Saviour soon after his return from the wilderness, where he had been tempted by the devil, met with Andrew and his brother Peter, and after some discourse parted from them. The next day, as he was passing through Galilee, he found Philip, whom he presently commanded to follow him, the constant form he made use of in calling his disciples, and those that inseparably attended him. So that the prerogative of being first called evidently belongs to St. Philip, he being the first of our Lord's disciples; for though Andrew and Peter were the first that came and conversed with the Saviour of the world, yet they immediately returned to their occupation, and were not called till a whole year after.

It cannot be doubted, that notwithstanding St. Philip was a native of Galilee, yet he was excellently skilled in the law and the prophets. Metaphrastes assures us, that he had, from his childhood, been excellently educated; that he frequently read over the books of Moses, and attentively considered the prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah.

Nor was our apostle idle after the honor he had received of being called to attend the Saviour of the world; he immediately imparted the glad tidings of the Messiah's appearance to his brother Nathanael, and conducted him to his beloved Saviour.

After his being called to the apostolate, we have very little recorded of him by the evangelists. It was, however, to him that our Saviour

proposed the question, as to where they should find bread sufficient to satisfy the hunger of so great a multitude. Philip answered, that it was not easy to procure so great a quantity; not considering that it was equally easy for Almighty Power to feed double the number, when it should be his divine will. It was also to the same apostle that the Gentile proselytes, who came up to worship at Jerusalem, applied, when they were desirous to see the Saviour of the world. And it was with him our Lord had the discourse a little before the paschal supper, recorded by St. John.

The compassionate Jesus had been fortifying their minds with proper considerations against his departure from them, and had told them that he was going to prepare for them a place in the mansions of the heavenly Canaan; that he was "the way, the truth, and the life; that no man could come to the Father but by him;" Philip, not thoroughly understanding the force of his Master's reasoning, begged of him that he would show them the Father. Our blessed Lord gently reprov'd his ignorance, that after attending so long to his instructions, he should not know that he was the image of his Father, the express character of his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness appearing in him; that he said and did nothing but by his Father's appointment, which, if they did not believe, his miracles were a sufficient evidence: that such demands were, therefore, unnecessary and impertinent; and that it was an indication of great weakness in him, after three years' education under his discipline and instruction, to appear so ignorant with regard to these particulars.

The ancients tell us, that in the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the world, the Upper Asia fell to his share, where he labored with an indefatigable diligence and industry. By the constancy and power of his preaching, and the efficacy of his miracles, he gained numerous converts, whom he baptized into the Christian faith, curing at once their bodies of infirmities and distempers, and their souls of errors and idolatry. He continued with them a considerable time in settling churches, and appointing them guides and ministers of religion.

After several years successfully exercising his apostolical office in all those parts, he came at last to Hierapolis, in Phrygia, a city remarkably rich and populous, but at the same time overrun with the most enormous idolatry.

St. Philip being grieved to see the people so wretchedly enslaved by error and superstition, continually offered his addresses to Heaven,



JACOB'S WELL.

till by his prayers and often calling on the name of Christ, i.e. procured the death, or, at least, the vanishing of an enormous serpent, to which they paid adoration.

Having thus demolished their deity, he demonstrated to them how ridiculous and unjust it was for them to pay divine honors to such odious creatures; showed them that God alone was to be worshipped as the great Parent of all the world, who, in the beginning, made man after his glorious image, and when fallen from that innocent and happy state, sent his own Son into the world to redeem him; that, in order to perform this glorious work, he died on the cross, and rose again from the dead, and at the end of the world will come again to raise all the sons of men from the chambers of the dust, and sentence them to everlasting rewards and punishments. This discourse roused them from their lethargy; they were ashamed of their late idolatry, and great numbers embraced the doctrines of the gospel.

This provoked the great enemy of mankind, and he had recourse to his old methods—cruelty and persecution. The magistrates of the

city seized the apostle, and, having thrown him into prison, caused him to be scourged. When this preparatory cruelty was over, he was led to execution, and being bound, was hanged against a pillar; or, according to others, crucified. The apostle being dead, his body was taken down by St. Bartholomew, his fellow-laborer in the gospel, and Mariam e, St. Philip's sister, the constant companion of his travels, and decently buried; after which they confirmed the people in the faith of Christ, and departed from them.

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### ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

THIS apostle is mentioned amongst the twelve immediate disciples of our Lord, under the appellation of Bartholomew, though it is evident, from divers passages of scripture, that he was also called Nathanael; we shall, therefore, in our account of his life, consider the names of Nathanael and Bartholomew as belonging to one and the same person.

With regard to his descent and family, some are of opinion that he was a Syrian, and that he was descended from the Ptolemies of Egypt. But it is plain, from the evangelical history, that he was a Galilean, St. John having expressly told us that Nathanael was of Cana, in Galilee.

The scripture is silent with regard to his trade and manner of life, though, from some circumstances, there is room to imagine that he was a fisherman. He was, at his first coming to Christ, conducted by Philip, who told him they had now found the long-expected Messiah, so often foretold by Moses and the prophets, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And when he objected, that the Messiah could not be born at Nazareth, Philip desired him to come and satisfy himself that he was the Messiah.

At his approach, our blessed Saviour saluted him with this honorable appellation, that he was an "Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." Not as possessed by nature, but as obtained by grace; for such perfection cannot be attached to human nature, but in the character of the blessed Jesus, of whom it is said, with peculiar propriety, that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; also, that he knew no sin, neither was guile," that is, fraud nor decei-

tion, found in his tongue. Our Saviour knew that Bartholomew's doubt of his Messiahship arose from Philip's announcing him in the character of Jesus of Nazareth, a place stigmatized for the vices of its inhabitants; which, on a similar occasion, caused an interrogatory, which accords with Bartholomew's opinion, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" In this, therefore, he appeared to be a true Israelite, one that waited for redemption in Israel, which, from the times mentioned in the scripture predictions, he knew to be near at hand.

He was greatly surprised at our Lord's salutation, wondering how he could know him at first sight, thinking he had never before seen his face. But he was answered, that he had seen him while he was yet under the fig-tree, even before Philip called him. Convinced by this instance of our Lord's divinity, he presently made this confession, that he was now sure that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, whom he had appointed to govern his church. Our blessed Saviour told him, that if from this instance he could believe him to be the Messiah, he shou'd have far greater arguments to confirm his faith; for that he should hereafter behold the heavens opened to receive him, and the angels visibly appearing to attend his triumphant entrance into the heavenly Canaan.

Each of the apostles had his own peculiarities and his own field of labor. They were most unlike in disposition and ability. How different the mild, sweet-tempered, beloved John from impulsive, stormy Peter! There are diversities of gifts although only one spirit. Bartholomew was not the loftiest mountain-peak; the morning sun did not strike him first. Others, like James and John and Peter, moved with more force and shook the earth more heavily, but in patience, laborious endeavor, and missionary zeal he proved himself worthy of the name he bore. Thus every man has his influence, and in due time will find his field of usefulness.

Our apostle, having his peculiar spot allotted him for the promulgation of the gospel of his blessed Master, (who had now ascended into heaven, and dispensed his Holy Spirit to fit and qualify his disciples for the important work,) visited different parts of the world to preach the gospel, and penetrated as far as the higher India.

After spending a considerable time in India and the eastern extremities of Asia, he returned to the northern and western parts, and we find him at Hierapolis, in Phrygia, laboring, in concert with St. Philip, to plant Christianity in those parts, and to convince the blind idolaters of the evil of their ways, and direct them in the paths that lead to eternal salvation. This enraged the bigoted magistrates,

and he was, together with St. Paul, designed for martyrdom, and in order to this fastened to a cross. But their consciences pricking them for a time—they took him immediately down from the cross and set him at liberty.

From hence he retired into Lyaconia, and St. Chrysostom assures us that he instructed and trained up the inhabitants in the Christian discipline. His last remove was to Albanople, in Great Armenia, a place miserably overrun with idolatry, from which he labored to reclaim the people. But his endeavors to “turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God,” were so far from having the desired effect, that it provoked the magistrates, who prevailed on the governor to put him to death, which he cheerfully underwent, sealing the truth of the doctrine he had preached with his blood.

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## ST. MATTHEW.

ST. MATTHEW, called also Levi, though a Roman officer, was a true Hebrew, and probably a Galilean. His trade was that of a publican, or tax-gatherer to the Romans—an office detested by the generality of the Jews, on two accounts. First, because, having formed the custom of the Romans, they used every method of oppression in order to pay their rents to them; secondly, because they demanded tribute of the Jews, who considered themselves as a free people, having received that privilege from God himself. And hence they had a common proverb among them, “Take not a wife out of that family in which there is a publican, for they are all publicans.” That is, they are all thieves, robbers, and notorious sinners. And to this speech, and proverbial custom, our blessed Saviour alludes, when, speaking of an hardened sinner on whom neither private reproofs, nor the public censures and admonitions of the church can prevail, “Let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

Our blessed Saviour having cured a person long afflicted with the palsy, retired out of Capernaum, to walk by the sea-side, where he taught the people that flocked after him.

Here he saw Matthew sitting in his office, and called him to follow him. The man was rich, had a large and profitable employment, was a wise and prudent person, and doubtless understood what would

be his loss to comply with the call of Jesus. He was not ignorant that he must exchange wealth for poverty, a custom-house for a prison, and rich and powerful masters for a naked and despised Saviour. But he overlooked all these considerations, left all his interest and relations, to become our Lord's disciple, and to embrace a more spiritual way of living.

The Pharisees, who sought all opportunities of raising objections against the doctrine of the blessed Jesus, took this opportunity of suggesting to his disciples, that it was highly unbecoming, so pure and holy a person as their Master pretended himself to be, to converse so familiarly with the worst of men, with publicans and sinners, persons infamous to a proverb. But he presently replied to them, that these were the sick, and therefore needed the physician; that his company was of most consequence, where the souls of men most required it; that God preferred works of mercy and charity, especially in doing good to the souls of men, infinitely above all ritual observances; and that the principal design of his coming into the world was not to call the righteous, or those who, like themselves, vainly pretend to be so, but sinners—humble, self-convinced sinners—to repentance.

After St. Matthew's election to the apostolate, he continued with the rest till the ascension of his great and beloved Master; but the evangelical writers have recorded nothing particular concerning him during that period.

After our blessed Saviour's ascension into heaven, St. Matthew, for the first eight years, at least, preached in different parts of Judea; but afterwards, he left the country of Palestine to convert the Gentile world. Before his departure, he was entreated by the Jewish converts to write the history of the life and actions of the blessed Jesus, and leave it among them as a standing monument of what he had so often delivered to them in his sermons. This he readily complied with, as we shall more particularly mention in giving an account of his gospel.

After his leaving Judea he travelled into several parts, especially Ethiopia, but the particular places he visited are not known with any certainty. However, after laboring indefatigably in the vineyard of his Master, he suffered martyrdom at a city of Ethiopia, called Naddabar: but by what kind of death is not absolutely known; though the general opinion is, that he was slain with an halbert.

The last thing we shall remark in the life of this apostle is his gospel, written at the entreaty of the Jewish converts, while he abode in Palestine; but at what time is uncertain; some believe it to have been written eight, some fifteen, and some thirty years after our Lord's ascension. It was first written in Hebrew; but soon after translated into Greek by one of the disciples.

After the Greek translation was admitted, the Hebrew copy was chiefly owned and used by the Nazaræi, a middle sect between Jews and Christians; with the former, they adhered to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and with the latter they believed in Christ, and embraced his religion; and hence this gospel has been styled, "The Gospel according to the Hebrews," and "The Gospel of the Nazarenes."



## ST. THOMAS.

EVANGELICAL history is entirely silent with regard either to the country or kindred of St. Thomas. It is, however, certain that he was a Jew, and in all probability a Galilean.

He was, together with the rest called to the apostleship, and not long after gave an eminent instance of his being ready to undergo the most melancholy fate that might attend him. For when the rest of the apostles dissuaded their Master from going into Judea, at the time of Lazarus's death, because the Jews lately endeavored to stone him, Thomas desired them not to hinder his journey thither, though it might cost them all their lives. "Let us go," said he, "that we may die with him;" concluding that instead of Lazarus being raised from the dead, they should all, like him, be placed in the chambers of the dust.

When the holy Jesus, a little before his sufferings, had been speaking to them of the joys of heaven, and had told them that he was going to prepare mansions for them, that they might follow him, and that they knew both the place whither he was going, and the way thither; our apostle replied, that they knew not whither he was going much less the way that would lead them thither. To which our Lord returned this short but satisfactory answer, "I am the way." I am the person whom the Father hath sent into the world, to show mankind the paths that lead to eternal life, and therefore you cannot miss the way if you follow my example.

After the disciples had seen their great Master expire on the cross, their minds were distracted by hopes and fears concerning his resurrection, about which they were not then fully satisfied, which engaged him the sooner to hasten his appearance, that by the sensible manifestations of himself he might put the matter beyond all possibility of dispute. Accordingly, the very day in which he arose from the dead, he came into the house where they were assembled, while, for fear of the Jews, the doors about them were close shut, and gave them sufficient assurance that he was risen from the dead. At this meeting Thomas was absent, having probably never rejoined their company since their dispersion in the garden, where every one's fears prompted him to consult his own safety. At his return they told him that the Lord had appeared to them, but he obstinately refused to give credit to what they said, or to believe that it was really he, presuming it rather a spectre, or apparition, unless he might see the very print of the nails, and feel the wounds in his hands and side.

But our compassionate Saviour would not take the least notice of his perverse obstinacy, but on that day seven-night came again to them, as they were solemnly met for their devotions, and calling to Thomas, bade him look upon his hands, put his fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, to satisfy his faith by a demonstration from the senses. Thomas was soon convinced of his error and obstinacy, confessing that he now acknowledged him to be his Lord and Master, saying, "My Lord and my God." Our Lord answered, that it was happy for him that he believed the testimony of his own senses; but that it would have been more commendable in him to have believed without seeing, because it was foretold that the Son of God should burst the chains of death, and rise again from the dead.

The reputation of Thomas has suffered on account of his action on this occasion. He has always had the name of being a doubter, and it must be admitted that he gave good ground for being so considered. It will not do, however, to overlook the peculiar characteristics of this man's mind. He was one of those who require to know the reason of everything, the why and wherefore. Having obtained satisfactory evidence, he was firm in his belief. On several occasions he showed his loyalty to Christ, and proved himself worthy to be numbered among the holy apostles.

Our great Redeemer having, according to promise before his ascension, poured an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples, to qualify them for the great work of preaching the gospel,

St. Thomas, as well as the rest, preached the gospel in several parts of Judea; and after the dispersion of the Christian church in Jerusalem, repaired into Parthia, the province assigned him for his ministry. After which, as Sempronius and others inform us, he preached the gospel to the Medes, Persians, Carminians, Hyreani, Bactarians, and the neighboring nations. During his preaching in Persia he is said to have met with the magi, or wise men, who had taken that long journey at our Saviour's birth to worship him whom he baptized, and took with him as his companions and assistants in propagating the gospel.

Leaving Persia, he travelled into Ethiopia, preaching the glad tidings of the gospel, healing their sick, and working other miracles, to prove he had his commission from on high; and after travelling through these countries, he entered India.

When the Portuguese first visited these countries, after their discovery of a passage by the Cape of Good Hope, they received the following particulars, partly from constant and uncontroverted traditions, preserved by the Christians in those parts; namely, that St. Thomas came first to Socotora, an island in the Arabian Sea, and thence to Cranganor, where having converted many from the error of their ways, he travelled further into the East; and having successfully preached the gospel returned back to the kingdom of Coromandel, where at Meliapur, the metropolis of the kingdom, not far from the mouth of the Ganges, he began to erect a place for divine worship, till prohibited by the idolatrous priests and Sagamo, prince of that country. But after performing several miracles, the work was suffered to proceed, and Sagamo himself embraced the Christian faith, whose example was soon followed by great numbers of his friends and subjects.

This remarkable success alarmed the Brahmins, who plainly perceived that their religion would be soon extirpated, unless some method could be found of putting a stop to the progress of Christianity, and therefore resolved to put the apostle to death. At a small distance from the city was a tomb, whither St. Thomas often retired for private devotion. Hither the Brahmins and their armed followers pursued him, and while he was at prayer they first shot at him a shower of darts, after which one of the priests ran him through with a lance.

His body was taken up by his disciples, and buried in the church he had lately erected, and which was afterwards improved into a fabric of great magnificence.

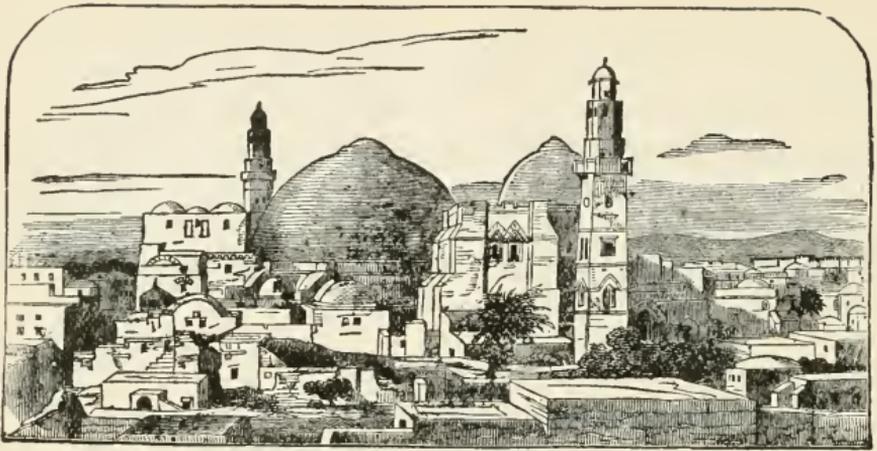
St. Chrysostom says that St. Thomas, who at first was the weakest and most incredulous of all the apostles, became, through Christ's condescending to satisfy his scruples, and the power of the Divine grace, the most active and invincible of them all; travelling over most parts of the world, and living without fear in the midst of barbarous nations; through the efficacy of that Almighty arm, which can give power to the faint, and to them that have no might, and thus make the weakest vessels to perform acts of the greatest difficulty and moment.

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### ST. JAMES THE LESS.

It has been doubted by some, whether this was the same with that St. James who was afterwards bishop of Jerusalem, two of this name being mentioned in the sacred writings, namely, St. James the Great and St. James the Less, both apostles. The ancients mention a third, surnamed the Just, which they will have to be distinct from the former, and bishop of Jerusalem. But this opinion is built on a sandy foundation, for nothing is plainer than that St. James the apostle, whom St. Paul calls our Lord's brother, and reckons, with Peter and John, one of the pillars of the church, was the same who presided among the apostles, doubtless by virtue of his episcopal office, and determined the causes in the synod of Jerusalem. It is reasonable to think that he was the son of Joseph, afterwards the husband of Mary, by his first wife, whom St. Jerome styles Escha, and adds, that she was the daughter of Aggi, brother to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. Hence he was reputed our Lord's brother. We find, indeed, several mentioned as the brethren of our Saviour in the evangelical history, but in what sense, was greatly controverted by the ancients. St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, and some others, will have them to be so-called from their being the sons of Mary, cousin-german, or, according to the Hebrew idiom, sister to the Virgin Mary. But Eusebius, Epiphanius, and many others, tell us they were the children of Joseph by a former wife.

After the resurrection, he was honored with a particular appearance of our Lord to him, which, though passed over in silence by the evangelists, is recorded by St. Paul. Some time after this appearance, he was chosen bishop of Jerusalem, preferred before all the rest



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

for his near relation to Christ. For the same reason, we find Simon chosen to be his immediate successor in that see, because, after St. James, he was our Lord's next kinsman—a consideration that made Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, though they had been particularly honored by our Saviour, not to contend for this high and honorable station, but freely choose James the Just bishop of Jerusalem.

When St. Paul came to Jerusalem after his conversion, he applied to St. James, and was by him honored with the right hand of fellowship. And it was to St. James that Peter sent the news of his miraculous deliverance out of prison. "Go," said he, "show these things unto James, and to the brethren;" that is, to the whole church, especially to St. James, the pastor of it.

He performed every part of his duty with all possible care and industry, omitting no particular necessary to be observed by a diligent and faithful guide of souls: strengthening the weak, instructing the ignorant, reducing the erroneous, reproofing the obstinate, and, by the constancy of his sermons, conquering the stubbornness of that perverse and refractory generation he had to deal with, many of the nobler and richer sort being persuaded to embrace the Christian faith.

But a person so careful, so successful in his charge, could not fail of exciting the spite and malice of his enemies: a sort of men of whom the apostle has given too true a character, that they "please not God, and are contrary to all men." They were vexed to see St. Paul had escaped their hands by appealing unto Cæsar, and therefore turned their fury against St. James. But, being unable to effect

their design under the government of Festus, they determined to attempt it under the procuratorship of Albinus, his successor; Ananus the younger, of the sect of the Sadducees, being high-priest. In order to this, a council was summoned, and the apostle, with others, arraigned and condemned as violators of the law. But that the action might appear more plausible and popular, the Scribes and Pharisees, masters in the art of dissimulation, endeavored to ensnare him; and, at their first coming, told him that they had all placed the greatest confidence in him; that the whole nation, as well as they, gave him the title of a just man, and one that was no respecter of persons. That they therefore desired he would correct the error and false opinion the people had conceived of Jesus, whom they considered as the Messiah, and take this opportunity of the universal confluence to the paschal solemnity, to set them right in their opinions in this particular—and would go with them to the top of the temple, where he might be seen and heard by all.

The apostle readily consented, and being advantageously placed on a pinnæle of the temple, they addressed him in the following manner: "Tell us, for we have all the reason in the world to believe, that the people are thus generally led away with the doctrine of Jesus, who was crucified: tell us, what is this institution of the crucified Jesus?" To which the apostle answered, with an audible voice, "Why do you inquire of Jesus, the Son of man? he sits in heaven, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again in the clouds of heaven." The people below hearing this, glorified the blessed Jesus, and openly proclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

The Scribes and Pharisees now perceived that they had acted foolishly; that, instead of altering, they had confirmed the people in their belief; and that there was no way left but to dispatch him immediately, in order to warn others, by his sufferings, not to believe in Jesus of Nazareth. Accordingly, they suddenly cried out, that James himself was seduced and become an impostor, and they immediately threw him from the pinnacle on which he stood into the court below; but not being killed on the spot, he recovered himself so far as to rise on his knees, and pray fervently to heaven for his murderers. But malice is too diabolical to be pacified with kindness, or satisfied with cruelty. Accordingly, his enemies, vexed that they had not fully accomplished their work, poured a shower of stones upon him, while he was imploring their forgiveness at the throne of grace; and one of

them, dissatisfied with this cruel treatment, put an end to his misery with a fuller's club.

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## ST. SIMON THE ZEALOT.

St. Simon, in the catalogue of the apostles, is styled Simon the Canaanite, whence some conjecture he was born in Cana of Galilee; and others will have him to have been the bridegroom mentioned by St. John, at whose marriage our blessed Saviour turned the water into wine. But this word has no relation to his country, or the place of his nativity, being derived from the Hebrew word *kana*, which signifies zeal, and denotes a warm and sprightly temper. What some of the evangelists, therefore, call Canaanite, others, rendering the Hebrew by the Greek word, style him Zealot: not so much from his great zeal, his ardent affection to his Master, and his desire of advancing his religion in the world, as from his warm active temper, and zealous forwardness in some particular sect of religion before his coming to our Saviour.

In order to understand this the better, it will be necessary to observe, that as there were several sects and parties among the Jews, so there was one, either a distinct sect, or at least a branch of the Pharisees, called the sect of the Zealots. This sect of the Zealots took upon them to execute punishments in extraordinary cases; and that not only by the connivance, but with the permission both of the rulers and people, till in process of time their zeal degenerated into all kinds of licentiousness and wild extravagance; and they not only became the pests of the commonwealth at home, but opened the door for the Romans to break in upon them, to their final and irrevocable ruin. They were continually prompting the people to throw off the Roman yoke, and assert their natural liberty, taking care, when they had thrown all things into confusion, to make their own advantage of the tumult. Josephus gives a large account of them, and everywhere bewails them as the great plague of the nation.

Many attempts were made, especially by Annas, the high priest, to reduce them to order, and oblige them to observe the rules of sobriety, but all were in vain: they continued their violent proceedings, and joining with the Idumeans, committed every kind of outrage. They broke into the sanctuary, slew the priests themselves before the altar,

and filled the streets of Jerusalem with tumults, rapine, and blood. Nay, when Jerusalem was closely besieged by the Roman army, they continued their detestable proceedings, creating fresh tumults and factions, and were indeed the principal cause of the ill success of the Jews in that fatal war.

This is a true account of the sect of the Zealots; though, whatever St. Simon was before, we have no reason to suspect but that after his conversion he was very zealous for the honor of his Master, and considered all those who were enemies to Christ as enemies to himself, however near they might be to him in any natural relation. And as he was very exact in all the practical duties of the Christian religion, so he showed a very serious and pious indignation towards those who professed religion and a faith in Christ with their mouths, but dishonored their sacred profession, by their irregular and vicious lives, as some of the first professing Christians really did.

St. Simon continued in communion with the rest of the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem; and at the feast of Pentecost received the same miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, so that he was qualified, with the rest of the brethren, for the apostolic office; and in propagating the gospel of the Son of God, we cannot doubt of his exercising his gifts with the same zeal and fidelity, though in what part of the world is uncertain. Some say he went into Egypt, Cyrene, and Africa, preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of those remote and barbarous countries. And others add, that after he had passed through those burning wastes, he took ship and visited the frozen regions of the north, preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of the western parts, and even in Britain, where, having converted great multitudes, and sustained the greatest hardships and persecutions, he was at last crucified, and buried, but the place where is unknown.

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## ST. JUDE.

THIS apostle is mentioned by three several names in the evangelical history, namely, Jude, or Judas, Thaddeus, and Lebbeus.

He was brother to St. James the Less, afterwards bishop of Jerusalem, being the son of Joseph, the reputed father of Christ, by a former wife. It is not known when, or by what means he became a disciple

of our blessed Saviour, nothing being said of him till we find him in the catalogue of the twelve apostles; nor afterwards, till Christ's last supper, when discoursing with them about his departure, and comforting them with a promise that he would return to them again, meaning after his resurrection, though the "world should see him no more," our apostle said to his Master, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?"

Paulinus tells us, that the province which fell to the share of St. Jude in the apostolic division of the provinces, was Lybia, but he does not tell us whether it was the Cyrenian Lybia, which is thought to have received the gospel from St. Mark, or the more southern parts of Africa. But however that be, in his first setting out to preach the gospel, he travelled up and down Judea and Galilee; then through Samaria into Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia and the neighboring countries, and afterwards to Syria and Mesopotamia. Nicephorus adds, that he came at last to Edessa, where Abagarus governed, and where Thaddeus, one of the seventy, had already sown the seeds of the gospel. Here he perfected what the other had begun; and having by his sermons and miracles established the religion of Jesus, he died in peace; but others say that he was slain at Berytus, and honorably buried there. The writers of the Latin church are unanimous in declaring that he travelled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolical ministry for many years, he was at last, for his freely and openly reproving the superstitious rites and customs of the magi, cruelly put to death.

St. Jude left only one Epistle, which is placed the last of those seven styled catholic in the sacred canon. It has no particular inscription, as the other six have, but is thought to have been primarily intended for the Christian Jews, in their several dispersions, as St. Peter's Epistles were. In it he tells them, that he at first intended to write to them in general of the common salvation, and establish and confirm them in it; but seeing the doctrine of Christ attacked on every side by seducers, he conceived it more necessary to spend his time in exhorting them to fight manfully in defence of the faith once delivered to the saints, and oppose the false teachers who labored so indefatigably to corrupt it.

It was some time before this epistle was generally received in the church. The author, indeed, like St. James, St. John, and sometimes St. Paul himself, does not call himself an apostle, styling himself only the servant of Christ. But he has added what is equivalent, "Jude,

the brother of James," a character that can belong to no one but our apostle. And surely the humility of a follower of Jesus should be no objection against his writings.

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## ST. MATTHIAS.

As Matthias was not an apostle of the first election, immediately called and chosen of the Son of God himself, it cannot be expected that any account of him can be found in the evangelical history. He was one of our Lord's disciples, probably one of the seventy, that had attended on him the whole time of his public ministry, and after his death was elected into the apostleship to supply the place of Judas, who, after betraying his great Lord and Master, laid violent hands on himself.

The defection of Judas having made a vacancy in the family of the apostles, the first thing they did after their return from Mount Olivet, when their great Master ascended to the throne of his glory, was to fill up this vacancy with a proper person.

Accordingly two persons were proposed, Joseph, called Barsabas, and Matthias, both duly qualified for the important office. The method of election was by lots, a way common both among the Jews and Gentiles for determining doubtful and difficult cases, especially in choosing judges or magistrates. And this course seems to have been taken by the apostles, because the Holy Ghost was not yet fully given, by whose immediate dictates and inspirations they were afterwards chiefly guided. The prayer being ended, the lots were drawn, by which it appeared that Matthias was the person, and he was accordingly numbered among the twelve apostles.

Not long after this election, the promised powers of the Holy Ghost were conferred upon the apostles, to qualify them for that great and difficult employment upon which they were sent, namely, the establishing the holy religion of the Son of God among the children of men.

St. Matthias spent the first year of his ministry in Judea, where he reaped a very considerable harvest of souls, and then travelled into different parts of the world, to publish the glad tidings of salvation to a people who had never yet heard of a Saviour; but the particular parts he visited are not certainly known.

It is uncertain by what kind of death he left the regions of mortality, and sealed the truth of the gospel he had so assiduously preached with his blood. Dorotheus says he finished his course at Sebastople, and was buried there near the Temple of the Sun. An ancient martyrology reports him to have been seized by the Jews, and as a blasphemer to have been stoned and then beheaded. But the Greek offices, supported herein by the authority of several ancient breviaries, tell us that he was crucified.

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### ST. MARK.

ST. MARK was descended from Jewish parents, and of the tribe of Levi. Nor was it uncommon among the Jews to change their names on some remarkable revolution or accident of life, or when they intended to travel into any of the European provinces of the Roman empire.

The ancients generally considered him as one of the seventy disciples; and Epiphanius expressly tells us that he was one of those who, taking exception at our Lord's discourse of "eating his flesh and drinking his blood, went back, and walked no more with him." But there appears no manner of foundation for these opinions, nor likewise for that of Nicephorus, who will have him to be the son of St. Peter's sister.

Eusebius tells us that St. Mark was sent into Egypt by St. Peter, to preach the gospel, and accordingly planted a church in Alexandria, the metropolis of it; and his success was so very remarkable, that he converted multitudes, both of men and women, persuading them not only to embrace the Christian religion, but also a life of more than ordinary strictness.

St. Mark did not confine himself to Alexandria, and the oriental parts of Egypt, but removed westward to Lybia, passing through the countries of Marmacia, Pentapolis, and others adjacent, where, though the people were both barbarous in their manners and idolatrous in their worship, yet by his preaching and miracles he prevailed on them to embrace the tenets of the gospel; nor did he leave them till he had confirmed them in the faith.

After this long tour he returned to Alexandria, where he preached with the greatest freedom, ordered and disposed of the affairs of the

church, and wisely provided for its prosperity, by constituting governors and pastors of it. But the restless enemy of the souls of men would not suffer our apostle to continue in peace and quietness; for while he was assiduously laboring in the vineyard of his Master, the idolatrous inhabitants, about the time of Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, tumultuously entered the church, forced St. Mark, then performing divine service, from thence; and, binding his feet with cords, dragged him through the streets, and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, leaving him there in a lonesome prison for that night; but his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision, comforting and encouraging his soul, under the ruins of his shattered body. The next morning early the tragedy began afresh, for they dragged him about in the same cruel and barbarous manner till he expired. But their malice did not end with his death; they burnt his mangled body after they had so inhumanly deprived it of life. But the Christians, after the horrid tragedy was over, gathered up his bones and ashes, and decently interred them near the place where he used to preach. His remains were afterwards, with great pomp, removed from Alexandria to Venice, where they were religiously honored, and he adopted as the titular saint and patron of that state.

It is said he suffered martyrdom on the 25th of April, but the year is not absolutely known; the most probable opinion, however, is, that it happened about the end of Nero's reign.

His gospel, the only writing he left behind him, was written at the entreaty and earnest desire of the converts at Rome, who, not content with having heard St. Peter preach, pressed St. Mark, his fellow-disciple, to commit to writing an historical account of what he had delivered to them, which he performed with equal faithfulness and brevity, and being perused and approved by St. Peter, was commanded to be publicly read in their assemblies. It was frequently styled St. Peter's gospel, not because he dictated it to St. Mark, but because the latter composed it in the same manner as St. Peter usually delivered his discourses to the people. And this is probably the reason of what St. Chrysostom observes, that in his style of expression he delights to imitate St. Peter, representing a great deal in a few words. The remarkable impartiality he observes in all his relations is plain, and hence, so far from concealing the shameful lapse and denial of Peter, he describes it with more aggravating circumstances than any other evangelist.

## ST LUKE.

THIS disciple of the blessed Jesus was born at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, a city celebrated for the pleasantness of its situation, the fertility of its soil, the riches of its commerce, the wisdom of its senate, and the civility and politeness of its inhabitants, by the pens of some of the greatest writers of those times. It was eminent for schools of learning, which produced the most renowned masters in the arts and sciences; so that being born, as it were, in the lap of the muses, he could not well fail of acquiring an ingenious and liberal education. But he was not contented with the learning of his own country; he travelled for improvement into several parts of Greece and Egypt, and became particularly skilled in physic, which he made his profession. But those who would, from this particular, infer the quality of his birth and fortune, forget that the healing art was in those early times practised by servants; and hence Grotius is of opinion, that St. Luke was carried to Rome, and lived there as servant to some noble family, in quality of physician; but after obtaining his freedom he returned into his own country, and probably continued his profession till his death, it being so highly consistent with, and in many cases subservient to the care of souls.

He was also famous for his skill in another art, namely, painting, and an ancient inscription, found in a vault near the church of St. Maria de Via Latta, at Rome, supposed to have been the place where St. Paul dwelt, which mentions a picture of the blessed Virgin *Una ex vii ab Luca depictis*, being one of the seven painted by St. Luke.

St. Luke was a Jewish proselyte; but at what time he became a Christian is uncertain. It is the opinion of some, from the introduction to his gospel, that he had the facts from the reports of others, who were eye-witnesses, and suppose him to have been converted by St. Paul; and that he learned the history of his gospel from the conversation of that apostle, and wrote it under his direction; and that when St. Paul, in one of his Epistles, says, "according to my gospel," he means that of St. Luke, which he styled *his* from the great share he had in the composition of it.

On the other hand, those who hold that he wrote his gospel from his own personal knowledge, observe, that he could not receive it from St. Paul, as an eye-witness of the matters contained in it, because all

those matters were transacted before his conversion ; and that he never saw our Lord before he appeared to him in his journey to Damascus, which was some time after he ascended into heaven. Consequently, when St. Paul says, "according to my gospel," he means no more than that gospel in general which he preached ; the whole preaching of the apostles being styled the gospel.

But however this be, St. Luke became the inseparable companion of St. Paul in all his travels, and his constant fellow-laborer in the work of the ministry. This infinitely endeared him to that apostle, who seems delighted with owning him for his fellow-laborer, and in calling him the "beloved physician," and the "brother whose praise is in the gospel."

St. Luke wrote two books for the use of the church, his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles ; both of which he dedicated to Theophilus which many of the ancient suppose to be a feigned name, denoting a lover of God, a title common to all sincere Christians. But others think it was a real person, because the title of "Most Excellent" is attributed to him ; the usual title and form of address in those times to princes and great men.

His gospel contains the principal transactions of our Lord's life ; and the particulars omitted by him are, in general, of less importance than those of the other evangelists.

With regard to the Acts of the Apostles, written by St. Luke, the work was no doubt performed at Rome, about the time of St. Paul's imprisonment there, with which he concludes his story. It contains the actions, and sometimes the sufferings of the principal apostles, especially St. Paul, whose activity in the cause of Christ made him bear a great part in the labors of his Master ; and St. Luke being his constant attendant, an eye-witness of the whole carriage of his life, and privy to his most intimate transactions, was consequently capable of giving a more full and satisfactory account of them. Among other things, he enumerates the great miracles the apostles did in confirmation of their doctrine.

In both these treatises his manner of writing is exact and accurate, his style noble and elegant, sublime and lofty, yet clear and perspicuous, flowing with an easy and natural grace and sweetness, admirably adapted to an historical narrative. In short, as an historian, he was faithful to his relations, and elegant in his writings ; as a minister careful and diligent for the good of souls ; as a Christian devout and pious ; and to crown all the rest, laid down his life in testimony of the gospel he had both preached and published to the world.

## ST. BARNABAS.

ST. BARNABAS was at first called Joses, a softer termination, generally given by the Greeks to Joseph. His fellow disciples added the name of Barnabas, as significant of some extraordinary property in him. St. Luke interprets it, "the son of consolation," from his being ever ready to administer to the afflicted, both by word and action.

He was a descendant of the tribe of Levi, of a family removed out of Judea, and settled in the Isle of Cyprus, where they had purchased an estate, as the Levites might do out of their country. His parents, finding their son of a promising genius and disposition, placed him in one of the schools of Jerusalem, under the tuition of Gamaliel, St. Paul's master; an accident which, in all probability, laid the foundation for that intimacy which afterwards subsisted between those two eminent servants of the blessed Jesus.

The first mention we find of St. Barnabas, in the holy scripture, is the record of that great and worthy service he did the church of Christ, by succoring it with the sale of his patrimony in Cyprus, the whole price of which he laid at the apostles' feet, to be put into the common stock, and disposed of as they should think fit, among the indigent followers of the holy Jesus. This worthy example was followed by those who were blessed with temporal good, none kept their plenty to themselves, but turned their houses and lands into money, and devoted it to the common use of the church. St. Barnabas is indeed mentioned as selling a most valuable estate on this occasion; being the most forward and ready to begin a common stock, and set others a laudable pattern of charity and benevolence.

And now St. Barnabas became considerable in the ministry and government of the church; for we find that St. Paul, coming to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, and not readily procuring admittance into the church, because he had been so grievous a persecutor of it, and might still be suspected of a design to betray it, addressed himself to Barnabas, a leading man among the Christians, and one that had personal knowledge of him. He accordingly introduced him to Peter and James, and satisfied them of the sincerity of his conversion, and in what a miraculous manner it was brought about. This recommendation carried so much weight with it, that Paul was not only received into the communion of the apostles, but

taken into Peter's house, "and abode with him fifteen days." Gal. 1. 18.

About four or five years after this, the agreeable news was brought to Jerusalem, that several of their body, who had been driven out of Judea by the persecutions raised about St. Stephen, had preached at Antioch with such success that a great number, both of Jews and proselytes, embraced Christianity, and were desirous that some of the apostles would come down and visit them. This request was immediately granted, and Barnabas was deputed to settle the new plantation; and being himself "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," his charitable deeds accompanying his discourses, and his pious life exemplifying his sound doctrine, the people were greatly influenced by him, and very considerable additions were made to the Christian church. But there being too large a field for one laborer, he went to fetch Saul from Tarsus, who came back with him to Antioch, and assisted him a whole year in establishing that church. Their labors prospered; their assemblies were crowded, and the disciples, who, before this, were called among themselves "brethren, believers, elect," and by their enemies, "Nazarenes and Galileans, were now called Christians first in Antioch."

When the apostles had fulfilled their charitable embassy, and staid some time at Jerusalem to see the good effect of it, they returned again to Antioch, bringing with them John, whose surname was Mark, the son of Mary, sister to Barnabas, and at whose house the disciples found both security for their persons and conveniency for the solemnities of their worship. But soon after the apostles returned to Antioch, an express relation was made to the church, by the mouth of one of the prophets who ministered there, that Barnabas and Saul should be set apart for an extraordinary work, unto which the Holy Ghost had appointed them. Upon this declaration, the church set apart a day for a solemn mission; after devout prayer and fasting, they laid their hands upon them, and ordained them to their new work; which was to travel over certain countries, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. From this joint commission, Barnabas obtained the name of an apostle, not only among later writers of the church, but with St. Paul himself, as we find in the history of the Acts of the Apostles. Paul and Barnabas being thus solemnly appointed "the apostles of the Gentiles," entered upon their province, taking with them John Mark for their minister or deacon, who assisted them in many ecclesiastical offices, particularly in taking care of the poor

The first city they visited after their departure from Antioch was Selucia, a city of Syria, adjoining to the sea. From whence they sailed for the island of Cyprus, the native place of St. Barnabas, and arrived at Salamis, a port formerly remarkable for its trade. Here they boldly preached the doctrines of the gospel, in the synagogue of the Jews, and from thence travelled to Paphos, the capital of the island, and famous for a temple dedicated to Venus, the titular goddess of Cyprus. Here their preaching was attended with remarkable success; Servius Paulus, the pro-consul, being among others converted to the Christian faith.

Leaving Cyprus, they crossed the sea to preach in Pamphylia, where their deacon, John, to the great grief of his uncle Barnabas, left them, and returned to Jerusalem—either tired with continual travels, or discouraged at the unavoidable dangers and difficulties which experience had sufficiently informed him would constantly attend the first preachers of the gospel, from hardened Jews and idolatrous Gentiles.

Soon after their arrival at Lystra, Paul cured a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, which so astonished the inhabitants that they believed them to be gods who had visited the world in the form of men. Barnabas they treated as Jupiter, their sovereign deity, either because of his age, or the gravity and comeliness of his person. For all the writers of antiquity represent him as a person of a venerable aspect, and a majestic presence. But the apostles, with the greatest humility, declared themselves to be but mortal. And the inconstant populace soon satisfied themselves of the truth of what they had asserted; for at the persuasion of their indefatigable persecutors, who followed them hither also, they made an assault upon them, and stoned Paul till they left him for dead. But, supported by an invisible power from on high, he soon recovered his spirits and strength, and the apostles immediately departed for Derbe. Soon after their arrival they again applied themselves to the work of the ministry, and converted many to the religion of the blessed Jesus. From Derbe they returned back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, in Pisidia, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith; and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts xiv. 22. After a short stay they again visited the churches of Pamphylia, Perga, and Attalia, where they took ship for Antioch, in Syria, the place from whence they first set out. Soon after their arrival they called the church of

this city together, and gave them an account of their travels, and the great success with which their preaching to the Gentiles had been attended.

But they had not long continued in this city before their assistance was required to compose a difference in the church, occasioned by some of the Jewish converts, who endeavored to persuade the Gentiles that they were bound to observe the law of Moses, as well as that of Christ, and be circumcised as well as baptized. Barnabas endeavored to dissuade the zealots from pressing such unnecessary observances. But all his endeavors proving ineffectual, he was deputed, with St. Paul and others, to the church at Jerusalem, to submit the question to be determined there in full assembly. During their stay at Jerusalem, Mark, in all probability, reconciled himself to Barnabas, and returned with him and St. Paul to Antioch, after they had succeeded in their business at Jerusalem, and obtained a decree from the synod there, that the Gentile converts should not have circumcision and other Mosaic rites imposed upon them.

This determination generally comforted and quieted the minds of the Gentiles, but it did not prevent the bigoted Jews from keeping up a separation from them; and that with so much obstinacy, that when St. Peter some time after came to Antioch, he, for fear of offending them, deviated from his former practice, and late speech and vote in the synod of Jerusalem, by refraining from all kind of communion with the Gentiles. And Barnabas himself, so great and good a man, was induced, by the authority of his example, to commit the same error; though doubtless, on being reproved by St. Paul, they both took more courage, and walked according to the true liberty and freedom of the gospel.

Some days after this last occurrence Paul made a proposal to Barnabas that they should repeat their late travels among the Gentiles, and see how the churches they had planted increased in their numbers, and improved in the doctrines they had taught them. Barnabas very readily complied with the motion, but desired they might take with them his reconciled nephew, John Mark. This Paul absolutely refused, because in their former voyage, Mark had not shown the constancy of a faithful minister of Christ, but consulted his own ease at a dangerous juncture, departed from them, without leave, at Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem. Barnabas still insisted on taking him, and the other continuing as resolute to oppose it, a short debate arose, which terminated in a separation, whereby these two holy men, who

had for several years been companions in the ministry, and with united endeavors propagated the gospel of the Son of God, now took different provinces. Barnabas, with his kinsman, sailed to his own country, Cyprus; and Paul, accompanied by Silas, travelled to the churches of Syria and Cilicia.

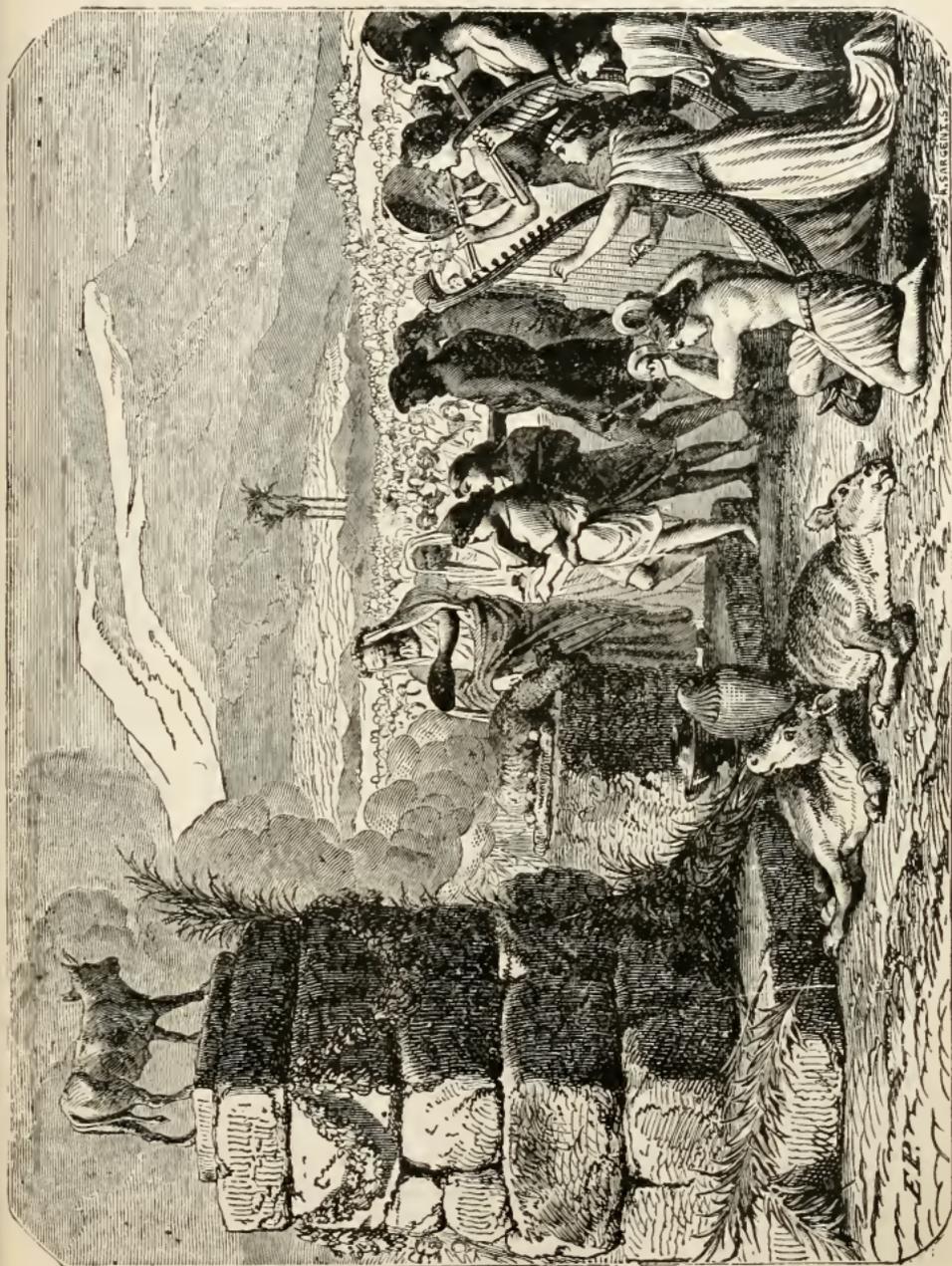
After this separation from St. Paul, the sacred writings give us no account of St. Barnabas; nor are the ecclesiastical writers agreed among themselves with regard to the actions of this apostle after his sailing for Cyprus. This, however, seems to be certain, that he did not spend the whole remainder of his life in that island, but visited different parts of the world, preaching the glad tidings of the gospel, healing the sick, and working other miracles among the Gentiles. After long and painful travels, attended with different degrees of success in different places, he returned to Cyprus, his native country, where he suffered martyrdom in the following manner: Certain Jews coming from Syria to Salamis, where Barnabas was then preaching the gospel, being highly exasperated at his extraordinary success, fell upon him as he was disputing in the synagogue, dragged him out, and after the most inhuman tortures, stoned him to death. His kinsman, John Mark, who was a spectator of this barbarous action, privately interred his body in a cave; where it is said it remained till the time of the Emperor Zeno, in the year of Christ 485, when it was discovered, with St. Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew, written with his own hand, lying on his breast.

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## ST. STEPHEN.

BOTH the scriptures and the ancient writers are silent with regard to the birth, country, and parents of St. Stephen. Epiphanius is of opinion that he was one of the seventy disciples; but this is very uncertain. Our blessed Saviour appointed his seventy disciples to teach the doctrines and preach the glad tidings of the gospel; but it does not appear that St. Stephen and the six other first deacons had any particular designation before they were chosen for the service of the tables; and, therefore, St. Stephen could not have been one of our Lord's disciples, though he might have often followed him and listened to his discourses.

He was remarkably zealous for the cause of religion, and full of the



THE MOLTEN CALE.

Holy Ghost ; working many wonderful miracles before the people, and pressing them with the greatest earnestness to embrace the doctrines of the gospel.

This highly provoked the Jews ; and some of the synagogue of the freed men of Cyrenia, Alexandria, and other places entered into dispute with him ; but being unable to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake, they suborned false witnesses against him, to testify that they heard him blaspheme against Moses and against God. Nor did they stop here ; they stirred up the people by their calumnies, so that they dragged him before the council of the nation, or great sanhedrim, where they produced false witnesses against him, who deposed that they had heard him speak against the temple and against the law, and affirm that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the holy place, and abolish the law of Moses. Stephen, supported by his own innocence and an invisible power from on high, appeared undaunted in the midst of this assembly, his countenance shining like that of an angel ; when the high priest asked him what he had to offer against the accusations laid to his charge, he answered by reminding them of God's great mercies to them as a nation, and by showing them how they had resisted him, and refused to receive the blessings he held out to them, closing his remarks as follows :

“Ye stiff-necked, ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye will forever resist the Holy Ghost. Ye tread in the paths of your fathers. As they did, so do you still continue to do. Did not your fathers persecute every one of the prophets ? Did not they slay them who showed the coming of the Holy One, whom ye yourselves have betrayed and murdered ? Ye have received the law by the disposition of angels, but never kept it.”

At these words, they were so highly enraged that they all gnashed their teeth against him. But Stephen, lifting up his eyes to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of Omnipotence. Upon which, he said to the council, “I see the heavens open, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.” This so greatly provoked the Jews, that they cried out with one voice, and stopped their ears, as if they had heard some dreadful blasphemy ; and falling upon him, they dragged him out of the city, and stoned him to death. It was the custom of the Jews, on these occasions, for the witnesses to throw the first stone. Whether they observed this particular at the martyrdom of Stephen, is uncertain. But the evangelist tells us that the witnesses were principally concerned in this

action ; for they stripped off their clothes, and laid them at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul, then a violent persecutor of the Christian church, but afterwards one of the most zealous preachers of the gospel.

Stephen, while they were mangling his body with stones, was praying to his heavenly Father for their pardon. "Lord," said he, "lay not this sin to their charge." And then, calling on his dear Redeemer to receive his spirit, he yielded up his soul.

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### ST. TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY was a convert and disciple of St. Paul. He was born, according to some, at Lystra ; or, according to others, at Derbe. His father was a Gentile, but his mother a Jewess, whose name was Eunice, and that of his grandmother Lois.

These particulars are taken notice of because St. Paul commends their piety, and the good education which they had given Timothy. When St. Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, about the year of Christ 51 or 52, the brethren gave a very advantageous testimony of the piety and good disposition of Timothy ; and the apostle would have him along with him, but he initiated him at Lystra, before he received him into his company. Timothy applied himself to labor with St. Paul in the business of the gospel, and did him very important services through the whole course of his preaching. It is not known when he was made a bishop. But it is believed that he received very early the imposition of the apostles' hands, and that in consequence of a particular revelation or direction from the Holy Ghost. St. Paul calls him not only his dearly-beloved son, but also his brother, the companion of his labors, and a man of God. He declared that there was no one more united with him in heart and mind than Timothy.

This holy disciple accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia, to Philippi, to Thessalonica, to Berea ; and when the apostle went from Berea he left Timothy and Silas there to confirm the converts. When he came to Athens he sent for Timothy to come thither to him ; and when he was come, and had given him an account of the churches at Macedonia, St. Paul sent him back to Thessalonica, from whence he afterwards returned with Silas, and came to St. Paul at Corinth.

There he continued with him, and the apostle mentions him with Silas, at the beginning of the two Epistles which he then wrote to the Thessalonians.

Some years after this St. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia; and gave Timothy orders to call at Corinth, to refresh the minds of the Corinthians with regard to the truths which he had inculcated upon them. And some time after, writing to the same Corinthians, he recommends them to take care of Timothy, and send him back in peace. After this Timothy returned to St. Paul in Asia, who there staid for him. They went together into Macedonia; and the apostle puts Timothy's name with his own, before the second Epistle to the Corinthians, which he wrote to them from Macedonia, about the middle of the year of Christ 57; and he sends his recommendations to the Romans in the letter which he wrote them from Corinth the same year.

When St. Paul returned from Rome, in 64, he left Timothy at Ephesus, to take care of that church, of which he was the first bishop, as he is recognized by the council of Chalcedon. St. Paul wrote to him from Macedonia the first of the two Epistles which are addressed to him. He recommends him to be more moderate in his austerities, and to drink a little wine, because of the weakness of his stomach, and his frequent infirmities. After the apostle came to Rome, in the year 65, being now very near his death, he wrote to him his second letter, which is full of the marks of his kindness and tenderness for this his dear disciple, and which is justly looked upon as the last will of St. Paul. He desires him to come to Rome to him before winter, and bring with him several things which St. Paul had left at Troas. If Timothy went to Rome, as it is probable he did, he must have been a witness there of the martyrdom of this apostle, in the year of Christ 66.

If he did not die before the year 97, we can hardly doubt but that he must be the pastor of the church of Ephesus, to whom St. John writes in his Revelations; though the reproaches with which he seems to load him for his declension in having left his first love, do not seem to agree to so holy a man as Timothy was, or show that men eminently holy may yet fall from their steadfastness. Thus he speaks to him, "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast borne and hast patience, and for my name's

sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." The greater number of interpreters think that these reproaches do not so much concern the person of Timothy, as that of some members of his church, whose zeal was grown cool. But others are persuaded that they may be applied to Timothy himself, who made ample amends by the martyrdom which he suffered for the reproaches mentioned by St. John in this place. It is supposed that Timothy had Onesimus for his successor.

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## TITUS.

TITUS was a Gentile by religion and birth, but converted by St. Paul, who calls him his son. St. Jerome says that he was St. Paul's interpreter; and that probably because he might write what St. Paul dictated, or explained in Latin what this apostle said in Greek; or rendered into Greek what St. Paul said in Hebrew or Syriac. St. Paul took him with him to Jerusalem, when he went thither in the year 51 of the vulgar era, about deciding the question which was then started, whether the converted Gentiles ought to be made subject to the ceremonies of the law. Some would then have obliged him to circumcise Titus, but neither he nor Titus would consent to it. Titus was sent by the same apostle to Corinth, upon occasion of some disputes which then divided the church. He was well received by the Corinthians, and very much satisfied with their ready compliance, but would receive nothing from them, intimating thereby the disinterestedness of his master.

From thence he went to St. Paul in Macedonia, and gave him an account of the state of the church at Corinth. A little while after the apostle desired him to return again to Corinth, to set things in order preparatory to his coming. Titus readily undertook this journey, and departed immediately, carrying with him St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. Titus was made bishop of the isle of Crete, about the 63d year of Christ, when St. Paul was obliged to quit this island, in order to take care of the other churches. The following year he

wrote to him to desire that, as soon as he should have sent Tychycus of Artemas to him for supplying his place in Crete, Titus would come to him to Nicopolis in Macedonia, or to Nicopolis in Epirus upon the gulf of Ambracia, where the apostle intended to pass his winter.

The subject of this Epistle is to represent to Titus what are the qualities that a bishop should be endued with. As the principal jurisdiction which Titus was to exercise in the isle of Crete, was to ordain elders, it was highly incumbent on him to make a discreet choice.

The Epistle to Titus has always been acknowledged by the church. The Marcionites did not receive it, nor did the Basilidians, and some other heretics; but Titian, the head of the Encratites, received it, and preferred it before all the rest. It is not certainly known from what place it was written, nor by whom it was sent.

Titus was deputed to preach the gospel in Dalmatia; and he was still there in the year 65, when the apostle wrote his second Epistle to Timothy. He afterwards returned into Crete; from which it is said he propagated the gospel into the neighboring islands. He died at the age of 94, and was buried in Crete. We are assured that the Cathedral of the city of Candia is dedicated to his name, and that his head is preserved there entire. The Greeks keep his festival on the 25th of August, and the Latins on the 4th of January.



## THE VIRGIN MARY.

As we are taught by the predictions of the Prophets, that a **Virgin** was to be the mother of the promised Messiah, so we are assured, by the unanimous concurrence of the Evangelists, that this Virgin's name was Mary, the daughter of Joachim and Anna, of the tribe of Judah; and married to Joseph of the same tribe. The scripture, indeed, tells us no more of the blessed Virgin's parents, than that she was of the family of David.

What is said concerning the birth of Mary and her parents, is to be found only in some apocryphal writings, but which, however, are very ancient. St. John says, that Mary the wife of Cleophas, was the Virgin's sister Mary, that she was of the royal race of David. She was allied likewise to the family of Aaron, since Elizabeth the wife of Zacharias, and mother of John the Baptist, was her cousin.

It is generally believed by the church that the Virgin, in the mid-summer of the year 5, B. C., was living at the house of her parents in Nazareth, not having yet been taken by Joseph to his home. Being at this time betrothed to Joseph, she was by the Jewish law and custom regarded as his wife, and is so spoken of in the New Testament, although he had not as yet acquired a husband's rights over her, it being the design of God that she should remain a pure Virgin, until her Holy Child should be born. Isaiah had long before prophesied that "a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son," and St. Matthew, in writing of this wonderful occurrence, says, "The Virgin was espoused to Joseph; and that before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost."

While betrothed or married to Joseph, the Virgin was visited by the angel Gabriel, who had already informed Zacharias of the approaching birth of John the Baptist, and who now informed her that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of the long-promised Messiah. Mary asked him "how that could be, since she knew no man?" To which the angel replied, "That the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her; so that she should conceive without the concurrence of any man."

To confirm what he had said to her, and show that nothing is impossible to God, he informed her that her cousin Elizabeth, then old and reputed barren, was already in the sixth month of her pregnancy. Mary answered him, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, she presently conceived the Son of God; the true Emanuel, that is to say, "God with us."

Soon after this she set out for Hebron, in order to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and congratulate her upon her pregnancy; and no sooner had she entered the house, and began to speak, than upon Elizabeth's hearing the voice of Mary's salutation, her child, young John the Baptist, transported with supernatural emotions of joy, leaped in her womb. Immediately Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, which enabled her to comprehend the mystery of the incarnation, and returned Mary's salutation in the beautiful outburst recorded by St. Luke, "Blessed art thou amongst women," etc. Whereupon Mary broke forth into praises of God, saying, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," etc.

Mary continued with her cousin for three months, until the birth of Elizabeth's son, after which she returned to her own house.

About the time that her own delivery approached, Mary went up from Nazareth, with Joseph her husband, to Bethlehem, the city of David, from whom both of them were descended, in order to be registered by the Roman authorities for the purpose of being taxed with the rest of the Jews, in accordance with the decree of Cæsar Augustus. This was in the year of the world 4,000, and in the first year of the Christian era. Upon reaching Bethlehem, they found every place in the city occupied by visitors, and were compelled to take up their lodging in a stable, which some writers have asserted was a cave in the rocks. Here, in this humble place, the Lord of life and King of glory, the holy infant Jesus, was born, and was wrapped by his mother in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.

It was commonly believed that Christ was born at midnight, or a few minutes after, on the night succeeding the arrival of the Virgin at Bethlehem. In consequence of this ancient tradition, the Roman Catholic Church celebrates a solemn mass at midnight of Christmas eve, and in Europe the church bells greet the anniversary of the glad event with their merriest peals.

The Virgin remained for some time at Bethlehem, and while there the Holy Child was visited by the Wise Men of the East, who had seen His star, and had come to worship Him and bring Him gifts. But before this, forty days after the birth of her Son, the time of the Virgin's purification having come, she went to Jerusalem with her husband in order to present her Child in the Temple, and there to offer the sacrifice appointed by the law for the purification of women after child-birth.

While still in the Temple, there came to her an old man named Simeon, to whom the Holy Ghost had revealed the Divine character of the Babe. Taking the little Jesus in his arms, Simeon blessed God that he had been permitted to see the salvation of Israel; and then, turning to Mary, said—"This Child is sent for the rising and falling of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against you; even so far as that thine own soul shall be pierced as with a sword, that the secret thoughts in the hearts of many may be discovered."

Soon after this, Joseph and Mary prepared to return to their own country of Nazareth; but the former being warned of God in a dream of Herod's cruel designs against the infant Jesus, they fled into Egypt with the child, where they remained until the death of Herod, when they returned to their own country, and made their abode in

Nazareth, not daring to go to Bethlehem, which was in the territory of Archelaus, the son and successor of Herod the Great.

Joseph and Mary were regular in their attendance upon the Feast of the Passover, and when Jesus was twelve years old, took him up to Jerusalem with them. When they set out for home, Jesus remained behind in the city, and his mother and her husband failing to find him in the company with which they journeyed, returned to Jerusalem, and after three days' seeking, found him in the temple, in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions, and astonishing all with the wisdom of his questions and replies. His mother tenderly reproached him for causing her so much anxiety: "Behold your father and myself, who have sought you in great affliction!" Jesus answered them, "Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be employed about my Father's business?" Afterwards he returned to Nazareth with them, and lived in filial submission to them. Mary did not forget his words to her in the temple, but kept them fresh in her memory.

In the thirty-third year of Jesus Christ, and thirtieth of the vulgar *era*, our Saviour resolved to manifest himself to the world, and therefore went to the baptism of St. John—from thence into the wilderness—and thence to the wedding at Cana, in Galilee, to which he with his mother and disciples had been invited.

At this entertainment, the provision of wine being somewhat scanty, Christ's mother told her Son they had no wine, not doubting of his power to supply them. To which Jesus answered, in terms which had some appearance of a rebuke—"Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

Mary, in thus appealing to her Son, invoked His Divine power, with which she had no connection, and over which she as a mortal could exercise no control or influence. Christ never failed to accord her the tenderest reverence as a son; but when he was acting as God, he never failed to remind her that she, like all others, must wait patiently His own good time for doing His works, which were not to be wrought out of any private, partial, or civil views, but in pursuance of that great end which he had in charge, the conversion and salvation of mankind. And so his mother understood him upon this occasion, receiving the answer with meekness, and charging the servants to attend him, and do whatever he commanded them. Shortly after, knowing that a display of his power would do great good towards preparing the hearts of men to receive his doctrines, our

blessed Lord performed the miracle of changing a large quantity of water into excellent wine; and this was the first miracle which he wrought at the beginning of his public ministry.

From Cana our Lord went to Capernaum, with his mother and brethren, where it seems certain that he provided a permanent home for the Virgin Mary, at which she continued during his public ministry. There is much dispute on this point between the early Fathers, but the statement we have made seems to rest upon the best proofs.

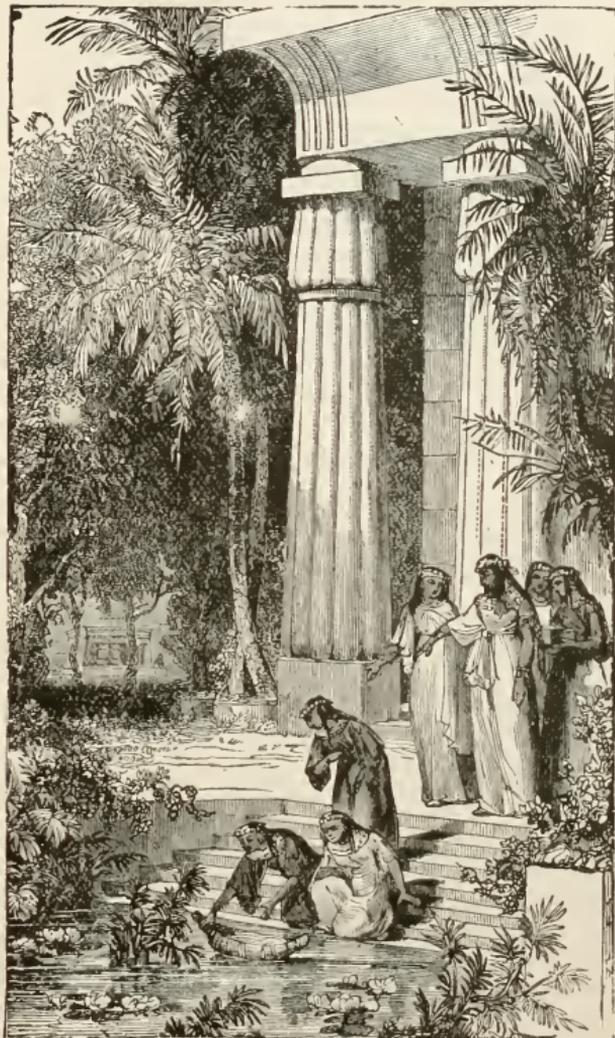
Some time after this, while our Lord was teaching in a house at Capernaum, his mother and brethren, having heard a report maliciously circulated by the Pharisees, that he had lost his mind, hurried to the place to learn the cause of the rumor. Being unable to enter the house because of the crowd, they caused intelligence of their presence to be conveyed to him. The message was communicated to the Saviour at the instant that he was engaged in the work of his ministry, preaching the word of God. He at once replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" and looking upon those that were round about him, he said, "these are my mother and brethren;" declaring, that "Whosoever did the will of his heavenly Father, the same was his mother, and sister, and brother." This was what Christ had taught in another place, that we must prefer God to all human relations, and give the preference to his service. But this saying could not reflect upon his mother, who was among the principal of those who did the will of his heavenly Father. Immediately upon her approach, a woman of the company said with a loud voice, directing her words to Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." To which he replied, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Not intimating hereby that she who had the honor to bear him, did not deserve to be called blessed throughout all generations; but that even her happiness consisted more in doing the will of Christ than in giving him a human body.

From this time we hear no more of the Holy Virgin until we find her at Jerusalem, at the last passover our Saviour celebrated there. She was an eye-witness to all the trials and sufferings of our blessed Lord, and when all his disciples deserted him, remained with him. She followed him to Calvary, and there bore the great sorrow which thirty-six years before old Simeon had predicted for her; the sword, indeed, pierced her soul. She had, however, the consolation of enjoying the last care which the dying Saviour bestowed upon any

human being. As he was about to yield up his soul, he saw his own mother weeping at the foot of the cross, ready to die with him, if it were his will, and his beloved disciple St. John, close by. Conquering his agony for a moment, he bequeathed her to the care of the disciple, saying to her, "Woman, behold thy son;" and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother;" and from that hour the disciple took her home to his own house.

It is not to be doubted, that our Saviour appeared to his holy mother immediately after his resurrection; and that she was the first, or, at least, one of the first, to whom he vouchsafed this great consolation.

St. Luke acquaints us in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that the Virgin Mary was with the apostles and others at his ascension, and continued with them when assembled at Jerusalem after his ascension waiting for



FINDING OF MOSES.

the descent of the Holy Ghost; and it is probable that from her they learned the whole history of our Lord's private life before his baptism; though St. Chrysostom will have them to be taught it by revelation. After this she dwelt in the house of St. John the Evangelist, who took care of her as of his own mother. It is thought that he took her

along with him to Ephesus, where she died in an extreme old age; and there is a letter of the œcumenical council of Ephesus, importing, that in the fifth century it was believed she was buried there.

Yet this opinion was not so universally received but that some authors of the same age think the Virgin Mary died and was buried at Jerusalem; or, rather, in the sepulchre at Gethsemane, near that city, where, to this day, it is shown as a magnificent church dedicated to her name.

The sentiments of the Romish Church are that she is dead. A portion of the members of this creed hold that she has risen again, others assert that she remains like the rest of mortality awaiting the general resurrection at the last day.

With regard to the age at which she died, and the precise year of her death, it is needless to trouble ourselves about this inquiry; since nothing can be said on these matters but what is very doubtful; and they cannot be fixed but at random.

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## JOSEPH, THE HUSBAND OF MARY.

HOLY Scripture has vouchsafed to us very little information concerning Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, and the reputed father of Jesus Christ; and what we do know has been already set forth in the chapters of this work relating to the Saviour and the Virgin, so that we can merely repeat here what has been already written.

Joseph was the son of Heli, and of the house and lineage of David. He was a just man, and feared God, and, according to the tradition of the church, was a widower at the time of his betrothal to the Virgin. He lived at Nazareth, in Galilee, and it is believed that his family had resided in that place for many generations back, as had also the family of the Virgin, since Matthat, the common grandfather of both Joseph and Mary, had been a resident of Nazareth.

He espoused Mary, his cousin, the daughter and heir of his uncle Jacob, but, according to the custom of the country, allowed her to remain with her parents for some time after this. While she remained there he made the discovery that she was already with child, a discovery which caused him to abandon all thoughts of consummating

his marriage with her, and set him to devising means for putting her away. He had not a doubt that she had deceived him, and had been a partner to some shameful intrigue. He loved her very tenderly, in spite of what he deemed her fault, and was not willing to put her away publicly upon the ground of unchastity, for the Jewish law punished that crime with death. He resolved, therefore, to put her away privately, which, according to the custom of his nation, he had a right to do; and while revolving these things in his mind, he was overcome by a gentle slumber, in which he received a revelation from God, acquainting him with the miraculous manner in which his betrothed wife had conceived her child; telling him of the divine character of her offspring, and convincing him of the perfect purity of his most favored bride. He awoke joyfully, fully convinced by the heavenly vision, and, hastening to Mary, told her of his trust in her, and his perfect belief in her goodness and purity. He then took her to his home, as his wife, but had no carnal knowledge of her until after the birth of her first-born Son, the holy Jesus.

Some time after this he went, with his wife, up to Bethlehem, the city of their forefathers, that they might there be enrolled on the Roman register, for the purpose of being taxed; and, while there, Joseph was a witness to the birth of the Saviour and the visit of the shepherds. He also went with Mary and the Child to present the latter in the Temple, and heard the words of the venerable Simeon, when that aged man recognized the infant Messiah. He was present when the wise men of the East brought their gifts and paid their homage to the Child, and received the heavenly warning which caused the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, to avoid Herod's barbarous cruelty. To him also was the summons addressed which called them back to the land of Israel. It was his intention to make his residence at Bethlehem, in Judea; but hearing that Herod the Great had been succeeded by his son, Archelaus, he feared that the new ruler might seek to carry out the barbarous purpose of his father, and seek to destroy the Messiah, and accordingly went to his old home, at Nazareth, where he fixed his abode, and pursued his trade as a carpenter. When our Saviour was twelve years old, Joseph took him, with Mary and himself, to attend the passover at Jerusalem, and there the child Jesus tarried after the departure of Joseph and the Virgin. Being recovered by them, Jesus went with them to Nazareth, where he remained with them until he grew to manhood. Joseph continued to act the part of a father to him, and was commonly regarded as his parent.

Here our knowledge of Joseph ends. From this time the evangelists are silent concerning him, and all that is asserted regarding him, is based upon very unreliable traditions. It seems certain that he died before the crucifixion: for it is hardly probable that our Lord would have left his mother to the care of St. John, had her husband been living.

Joseph is held in high honor in the Roman Catholic Church, and his festival is celebrated on the 19th of March.

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## MARY, THE SISTER OF LAZARUS.

THIS holy woman has been preposterously confounded with the sinful person who sat at the feet of the blessed Jesus weeping, while he was at meat in the house of Simon the leper. Luke vii. 37. Who this sinner was is unknown; some will have her to be Mary Magdalene, but this opinion has nothing more than conjecture for its basis.

But whoever this sinner was, she was a very different person from Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who, with her sister Martha, lived with their brother at Bethany, a village near Jerusalem. The blessed Jesus had a particular affection for this family, and often retired to their house with his disciples.

One day, and perhaps the first time that Jesus went thither, Martha received him with remarkable affection, and took the greatest pains in providing a proper entertainment for him; but Mary, her sister, continued sitting at our Saviour's feet, listening to his words with peculiar attention.

This Martha considered as an instance of disrespect, and, therefore, said to Jesus, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her, therefore, that she help me." But the blessed Jesus justified Mary, by telling her sister, "that she had chosen the better part, which should not be taken from her."

Some time after, their brother Lazarus was taken sick, and his sisters sent to acquaint Jesus of the misfortune; but he did not arrive at Bethany till after Lazarus was dead. Martha hearing that Jesus was come into the neighborhood, went and told him, that if he had not been absent, her brother had been still alive.



MARY HATH CHOSEN THAT GOOD PART.

Jesus promised her that her brother should rise again. To which Martha answered, "I know that he shall rise again, at the last day." Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Martha answered, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Having said this she departed and gave her sister notice privately, that Jesus was come. Mary, as soon as she heard the welcome tidings, arose and went to Jesus; and as Martha had done before her, said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." The blessed Jesus was greatly moved at the pathetic complaints of these two worthy sisters, and on asking where they had buried him, they conducted him to the sepulchre.

On his arrival at the place where the body of Lazarus was deposited, the great Redeemer of mankind groaned deeply in his spirit; he wept, he prayed to his Father, and then cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The dead obeyed the voice of the Son of God. Lazarus immediately revived, and Jesus restored him to his sisters.

After performing this stupendous miracle, Jesus departed from the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and did not return thither till some days before the passover.

Six days before that festival Jesus again came to Bethany, with his disciples, and was invited to a supper at the house of Simon the leper—Martha attended, and Lazarus was one of the guests.

During the supper, Mary, to express her gratitude, took a pound of spikenard, a very precious perfume, and poured it on the head and feet of Jesus, wiping his feet with the hair of her head: and the whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

Judas Iscariot was highly offended at this generous action; but his Master vindicated Mary, and told him, that by this she had prevented his embalment, thereby signifying, that his death and burial was near at hand.

After this, we have no account of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, in the sacred writings. Several authors, indeed, by not distinguishing properly between Mary the sister of Martha, and Mary Magdalene, say, that she was present at the crucifixion of the great Redeemer of mankind, and also that both she and her sister accompanied the women who went to embalm the body. This is not, indeed, improbable; but it is certain, neither of them are particularly mentioned by the evangelists.

The ancient Latins believed, and the Greeks are still of the same opinion, that both Martha and Mary continued at Jerusalem, and died there; and several ancient martyrologists place their feast on the 19th of January.

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## JOSEPH.

JOSEPH, or *Joses*, was the son of Mary Cleophas, brother to St. James the less, and a near relation to the blessed Jesus, according to the flesh; being the son of Mary, the Holy Virgin's sister, and Cleophas, who was Joseph's brother, or son to Joseph himself, as several of the ancients suppose; who have asserted that Joseph was married to Mary Cleophas, or Eschat, before he was married to the Holy Virgin.

Some believe Joseph, the son of Mary Cleophas, to be the same with Joseph Barsabas, surnamed the *Just*, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and was proposed to St. Matthias to fill up the traitor Judas's place; but in this there is no certainty at all.

We learn nothing particular in scripture concerning Joseph, the brother of our Lord. If he was one of those among his near kinsmen who did not believe in him, when they would have persuaded him to go to the feast of tabernacles, some months before our Saviour's death, it is probable that he was afterwards converted, for it is intimated in scripture, that at last all our Saviour's brethren believed in him

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## JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

JOSEPH of Arimathea, or of Ranatha, Rama, or Ramula, a city between Joppa and Jerusalem, was a Jewish senator, and privately a disciple of Jesus Christ. He was not consenting to the designs of the rest of the Jews, particularly the members of the sanhedrim, who condemned and put Jesus to death: and when our Saviour was dead, he went boldly to Pilate, and desired the body of Jesus in order to bury it.

This he obtained: and accordingly buried it after an honorable manner, in a sepulchre newly made in a garden, which was upon the

same Mount Calvary where Jesus had been crucified—After he had placed it there, he closed the entrance of it with a stone cut particularly for this purpose, and which exactly filled the open part of it.

The Greek church keeps the festival of Joseph of Arimathea, on the 31st of July.

We do not meet with his name in the Old Latin Martyrologists ; nor was it inserted in the Roman till after the year 1585. The body of Joseph of Arimathea was, it is said, brought to the Abbey of Moyencmontier, by Fortunatus, Archbishop of Grada, to whom Charlemagne had given this monastery under the denomination of a benefice.

Here his remains were honored till the tenth age, but then the monastery being given to canons, who continued seventy years there, the relics were carried away by some foreign monks, and so lost with many others.



## NICODEMUS.

NICODEMUS, one of the disciples of our blessed Saviour, was a Jew of the nation, and by sect a Pharisee. The gospel calls him a ruler of the Jews ; and Christ gives him the name of a master of Israel.

When our Saviour began to manifest himself by his miracles at Jerusalem, at the first passover which he celebrated there after his baptism, Nicodemus made no doubt but that he was the Messiah, and came to him by night, that he might learn of him the way to salvation.

Jesus told him, that no one could see the kingdom of heaven, except he should be born again. Nicodemus, taking this in the literal sense, made answer, “How can a man be born again? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb?” To which Jesus replied, “If a man be not born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.”

Nicodemus asked him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered, “Art thou a master of Israel, and ignorant of these things? We tell you what we know, and you receive not our testimony. If you believe not common things, and which may be called earthly, how will ye believe me if I speak to you of heavenly things? And as

CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS



Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up on high; for God has so loved the world that he has given his only Son, so that no man who believes in him shall perish, but shall have eternal life; for God sent his Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved."

After this conversation, Nicodemus became a disciple of Jesus Christ; and there is no doubt to be made but he came to hear him as often as our Saviour came to Jerusalem.

It happened, on a time, that the priests and Pharisees had sent officers to seize Jesus, who returned to them and made this report, that never man spake as he did. To which the Pharisees replied, "Are ye also of his disciples? Is there any one of the elders or Pharisees that have believed in him?" Then Nicodemus thought himself obliged to make answer, saying, "Does the law permit us to condemn any one before he is heard?" To which they replied, "Are you also a Galilean? Read the scriptures, and you will find that never any prophet came out of Galilee." After this the council was dismissed.

At last Nicodemus declared himself openly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when he came with Joseph of Arimathea to pay the last duties to the body of Christ crucified, which they took down from the cross, embalmed, and laid in the sepulchre.

Nicodemus received baptism from the disciples of Christ; but it is uncertain whether before or after his passion.

The Jews being informed of this, deposed him from his dignity of senator, excommunicated, and drove him from Jerusalem. It is said also, that they would have put him to death, but that in consideration of Gamaliel, who was his uncle, or cousin-german, they contented themselves with beating him almost to death, and plundering his goods.

Gamaliel conveyed him to his country house, and provided him with what was necessary for his support; and when he died, Gamaliel buried him honorably near St. Stephen.

His body was discovered in 415, together with those of St. Stephen and Gamaliel, and the Latin church pays honor to all three, on the 3d of August.

## JOHN MARK.

**JOHN MARK**, cousin to St. Barnabas, and a disciple of his, was the son of a Christian woman named Mary, who had a house in Jerusalem, where the apostles and the faithful generally used to meet. Here they were at prayers in the night, when St. Peter, who was delivered out of prison by the angel, came and knocked at the door; and in this house the celebrated church of Zion was said to have been afterwards established.

John Mark, whom some very improperly confound with the Evangelist St. Mark, adhered to St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and followed them in their return to Antioch. He continued in their company and service till they came to Perga in Pamphylia, but then seeing that they were undertaking a longer journey, he left them, and returned to Jerusalem. This happened in the year 45 of the common era.

Some years afterwards, that is to say, in the year 51, Paul and Barnabas, preparing to return into Asia, in order to visit the churches which they had formed there, Barnabas was of opinion that John Mark should accompany them in this journey, but Paul would not consent to it. Upon which occasion these two apostles separated.

Paul went to Asia, and Barnabas, with John Mark, to the isle of Cyprus. What John Mark did after this journey we do not know, till we find him at Rome, in the year 63, performing signal service for St. Paul during his imprisonment.

The apostle speaks advantageously of him in his Epistle to the Colossians: "Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, saluteth you. If he cometh unto you, receive him." He makes mention of him again in his Epistle to Philemon, written in the year 62, at which time he was with St. Paul at Rome: but in the year 65 he was with Timothy in Asia. And St. Paul, writing to Timothy, desires him to bring Marcus to Rome; adding, that he was useful to him for the ministry of the gospel.

In the Greek and Latin churches, the festival of John Mark is kept on the 27th of September. Some say that he was bishop of Bibles in Phoenicia. The Greeks give him the title of apostle, and say that the sick were cured by his shadow only.

It is very probable that he died at Ephesus, where his tomb was very much celebrated and resorted to. He is sometimes called simply

John, or Mark. The year of his death we are strangers to; and shall not collect all that is said of him in apocryphal and uncertain authors.

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## CLEMENT.

CLEMENT is mentioned by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, where the apostle says that Clement's name is written in the book of life. The generality of the fathers, and other interpreters, make no question but that this is the same Clement who succeeded St. Paul, after Linus and Cletus, in the government of the church of Rome; and this seems to be intimated, when in the office of St. Clement's day, that church appoints this part of the Epistle to the Philippians to be read.

During his pontificate, the Church of Corinth having been disturbed by a spirit of division, St. Clement wrote a large letter to the Corinthians, which is still extant, and was so much esteemed by the ancients, that they read it publicly in many churches, and some have been inclined to range it among the canonical writings. The Emperor Domitian intended to declare war against the church of Christ. His design was made known to Hermas, and he ordered to give a copy of it to Clement, that he might communicate it to other churches, and exhort them to provide against a storm.

We have no certain account of what happened to St. Clement during this persecution; but we are very well assured that he lived to the third year of Trajan.

His festival is set down by Bede, and all the Latin Martyrologies, on the 23d of November. The Greeks honor him on the 24th and 25th of the same month. Rufinus, and Pope Zozimas, give him the title of Martyr; and the Roman church, in its canon, places him among the saints who have sacrificed their lives for Jesus Christ.

We read in ancient history, to the authenticity of which, however, there are some exceptions, that St. Clement was banished by Trajan to the Chersonesus, beyond the Euxine sea; besides other particulars in the history, which we shall not mention, as not being well-authenticated.

## MARY MAGDALENE.

MARY MAGDALENE was a native either of Magdala, a town in Galilee, on the other side Jordan, or Magdalos, a town situated at the foot of Mount Carmel, and had her surname from the place of her birth.

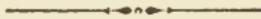
Some will have it, that she was the sinner mentioned by St. Luke, chap. vii. 37, etc.; but this opinion is built only on conjecture. The evangelists, Luke and Mark, tell us that Jesus had cast out of her seven devils: which some understand in a literal, and others in a figurative sense.

But, however this be, she became a constant attendant on the blessed Jesus, after he had removed her plague. She was amongst the most devoted of all his followers, and went with him to Mount Calvary, and stood with the holy Virgin in the midst of his persecutors and murderers, at the foot of his cross. She saw his body laid in the tomb, and then went back to Jerusalem to purchase spices to embalm him as soon as the Sabbath was over. At the earliest dawn, on the first day of the week, she, with Salome and Mary, the mother of James, went to the sepulchre to perform their loving work, but the body was gone. This seemed to fill her cup of bitterness to the brim, and it was her voice that broke out into the sharp wail of anguish, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." Her Lord had lain there, in that now tenantless grave, and she could not go away, even when the other disciples had departed to their own house, satisfied that the body had been carried away, but stood by the sepulchre weeping. At last, she summoned self-control enough to look into the sepulchre, perhaps in the fond hope that the body of her Lord might be there after all. Then, for the first time, she beheld the angels, and had scarcely repeated her question to them, when, rising from her stooping posture, she saw the Lord standing by her. But grief had blinded her eyes, and she did not know him. It needed but one word—"Mary"—to proclaim her risen Lord; and crying, "Rabboni," the strongest word a Hebrew woman could use, she cast herself at his feet in a transport of joy. Her happiness would have been complete, could she have remained there always, clinging to him. Her love, however, was too dependent on the visible presence of her Master. "She had the same lesson to learn as the other disciples. Though

they had 'known Christ after the flesh,' they were 'henceforth to know him so no more.' She was to hear that truth in its highest and sharpest form. 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.'"

She was charged to tell the apostles of the resurrection of the Lord, and at once communicated the glad tidings to Peter and John, who, however, did not believe her report till it was confirmed by others, and they themselves had seen the Saviour of the world.

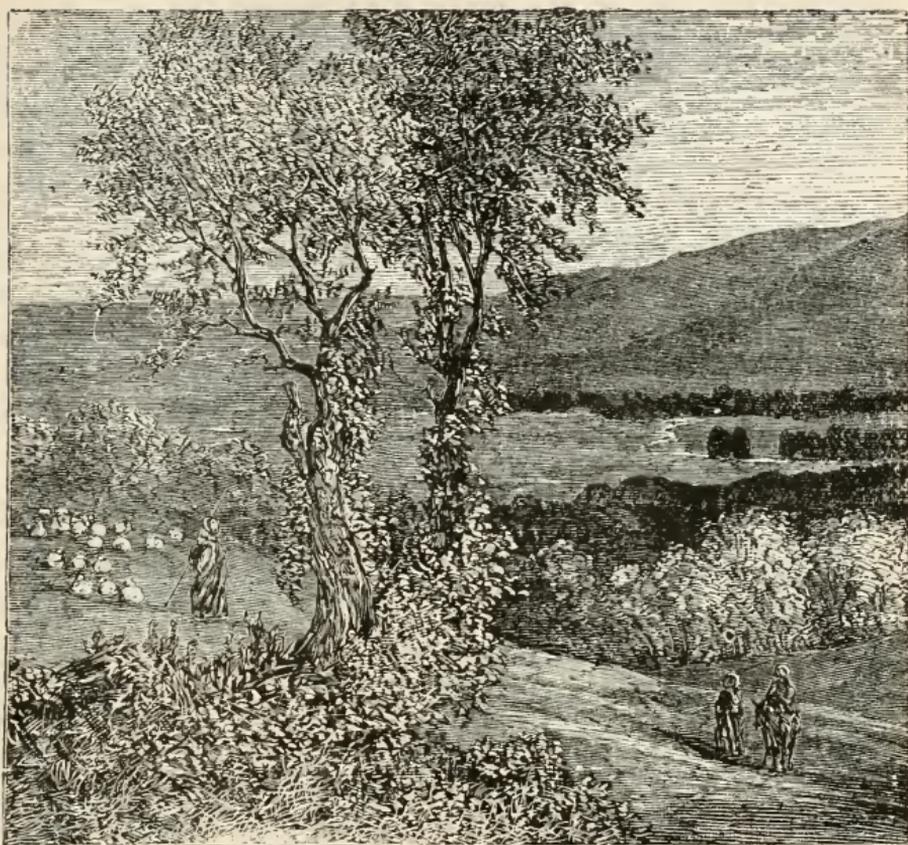
We have no further account of Mary Magdalene in the sacred writings. But Modestus, the Archbishop of Constantinople, in the seventh century, tells us, that she continued at Jerusalem till the death of the holy Virgin, after which she retired to Ephesus, and resided with St. John, till she sealed the faith she had so long professed with her blood. She was buried by the Christians at Ephesus, where the tomb was shown in the seventh century. The Emperor, Leo the Wise, caused her body to be removed from Ephesus to Constantinople, about the latter end of the ninth century, in order to its being interred in the church erected to the honor of the apostles.



## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

JOHN THE BAPTIST was of the priestly race by both parents; for his father Zacharias was himself a priest of the course of Abia or Abigail, and his mother Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron. Elizabeth was cousin to Mary, the mother of our Lord, so that the forerunner was the near kinsman of the Messiah.

It was the office of Zacharias to burn incense before the Lord in the temple, and to pray for the public welfare of Israel, and it was while he was engaged in the discharge of these duties that the angel appeared to him, and told him that he was soon to become a father, and explained to him the divine mission which should fall to the lot of his son; a mission which was the subject of prophecy many centuries before the announcement of the angel. These marvellous revelations as to the birth of his son, which was not according to the laws of nature, and as to his character and career, were too much for the faith of Zacharias, and he openly expressed his doubts of the declaration of the heavenly messenger. For these doubts he was punished by the loss of his speech until his child's birth.



And now the Lord's goodness tarried not. Elizabeth, for greater privacy, retired into the hill country, whither she was soon after followed by her kinswoman Mary. Three months after this, and while Mary still remained with her, she was delivered of a son. The birth of John preceded, by six months, that of our Lord.

On the eighth day the child of promise was, in conformity with the law of Moses, brought to the priest for circumcision, and as the performance of this rite was the accustomed time for naming a child, the friends of the family proposed to call him Zacharias, after the name of his father. The mother, however, required that he should be called John; a decision which Zacharias, still speechless, confirmed by writing on a tablet, "his name is John." The judgment on his want of faith was then at once withdrawn.

A single verse contains all we know with certainty of John's history, for a space of thirty years, the whole period which elapsed be-

tween his birth and the beginning of his public ministry. "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." Luke i. 80. There is a tradition, that when Herod sent forth to kill the children around Bethlehem, Elizabeth fled to the desert with the infant John, and died there soon after, and that the child was nurtured in a miraculous manner from Heaven, until he grew to be old enough to provide for himself.

John was ordained to be a Nazarite from his birth. Luke i. 15. Dwelling by himself in the wild and thinly-peopled region westward of the Dead Sea, he prepared himself by self-discipline, and by constant communion with God,



THE HIGH PRIEST.

for the wonderful office to which he had been divinely called. The very appearance of the holy Baptist was, of itself, a lesson to his countrymen; his dress was that of the old prophets—a garment woven of camel's hair, attached to the body by a leathern girdle. His food was such as the desert afforded—locusts and wild honey.

At length, being fully prepared for his mission, this great preacher of the approaching salvation came up out of the wilderness into the more thickly populated portions of Judæa.

It was a time at which all the nations of the eastern world, the Jews in particular, were looking for the coming of some great person, who should bring great good to mankind. Suddenly, while Judæa was waiting in this vague expectancy, there was heard "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," the wild, impassionate eloquence of John, calling on the people of the land to "repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." His wonderful eloquence and his strange appearance drew large crowds to hear him, and he taught them a doctrine which was new to them—that of repentance. This was the



THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

burden of all his exhortations—repentance, not mere legal ablution or expiation, but a change of heart and life. His preaching was crowned with a great success. Many of every class pressed forward to confess their sins and to be baptized. The preparatory baptism of John was a visible sign to the people, and a distinct acknowledgment by them, that a hearty renunciation of sin and a real amendment of life were necessary for admission into the Kingdom of Heaven, which the Baptist proclaimed to be at hand. There was, however, a fundamental distinction between John's baptism unto repentance, and that baptism accompanied with the gift of the Holy Spirit which our Lord afterwards ordained, and which John himself clearly pointed out to his converts: "I, indeed, baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matt. iii. 11.

The mission of the Baptist—an extraordinary one for an extraordinary purpose—was not limited to those who had openly forsaken the covenant of God, and so forfeited its principles. It was to the whole people alike. Jesus himself came from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of John. It appears that John immediately, as it were by a prophetic revelation, knew the Saviour of the world, for we

find from the evangelist, that he acknowledged his superiority, and declined the office: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Our Saviour's answer, though short, is very full and expressive: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." As if he had said, Regard not the precedence at this time, but perform thy office; for it is necessary that we should, in the minutest point, conform to the Divine Will, by which this institution is enjoined. This remonstrance removed the objections of John, and he baptized the immaculate Jesus in the River Jordan, in the presence of numerous spectators.

Jesus received at once a seal from heaven to his obedience by the voice that proclaimed him to be the Beloved Son, and by the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. Above the sacred scene at the Jordan the heavens opened, as if all the celestial inhabitants were gazing intently, and it was shown that the Nazarene was greater than John, although, in order to fulfil all righteousness, he permitted the Baptist to perform the act which signified his spotless purity and his complete consecration. Thenceforth he was fully endowed for his public ministry.

With the baptism of Jesus, John's more especial office ceased. He still continued, however, to present himself to his countrymen in the capacity of a *witness* to Jesus. From incidental notices in scripture, we learn that John and his disciples continued to baptize some time after our Lord had entered upon his public ministry. We gather, also, that John instructed his disciples in certain moral and religious duties, as fasting and prayer. But shortly after he had given his testimony to the Messiah, John's public ministry was brought to a close. In daring disregard of the divine laws, Herod Antipas had taken to himself the wife of his brother Philip; and when John reprov'd him for this, as well as for other sins, Herod cast him into prison. He was confined in the Castle of Machaerus—a gloomy fortress lying on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. While he languished here he heard reports of the many wonderful miracles which our Lord was working in Judea. With a view to overcome the scruples of his disciples, and convince them that this was indeed the very Christ, John sent two of them to Jesus himself, to ask the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" They were answered, not by words, but by a series of miracles wrought before their eyes; and, while Jesus bade the two messengers carry back to John, as his only answer, the report of what they had seen and heard, he took occasion to guard the multitude that sur-

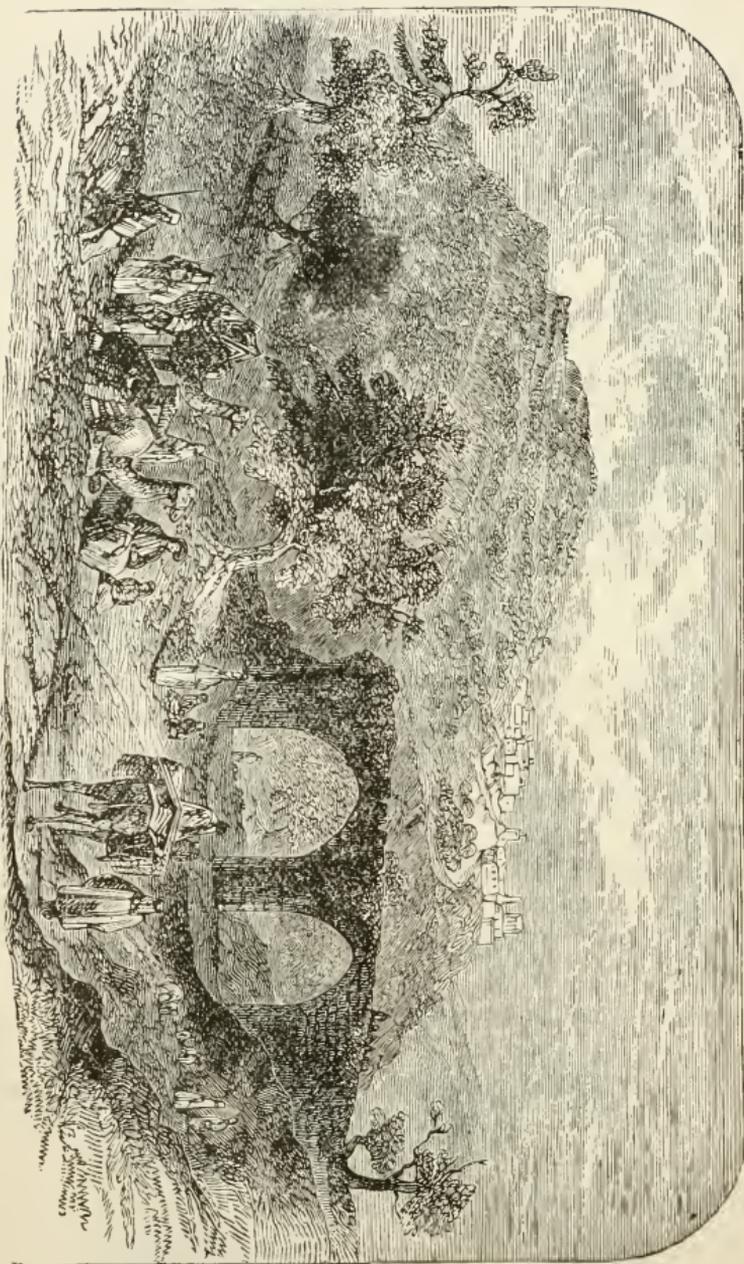
rounded him against supposing that the Baptist himself was shaken in mind, by a direct appeal to their own knowledge of his life and character. "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Matt. xi. 11. Jesus proceeds further to declare that John was, according to the true meaning of the prophecy, the Elijah of the new covenant, foretold by Malachi.

Herod kept John a prisoner for some time, being anxious to put him to death, but being deterred from such a crime by his fear of the people, who regarded John as a prophet. His guilty wife, Herodias, was not so timid. John's stern denunciation of her criminal intercourse with Herod had aroused her fiercest resentment, and she was resolved that the holy man should pay for his boldness with his life. While John lay in prison a great festival was held at the Castle of Machaerus, in honor of the king's birthday. After supper, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, came in and danced before the company, and so captivated the monarch with her grace, that he promised, with an oath, to give her whatever she should ask, even to the half of his kingdom. The damsel, prompted by her infamous mother, promptly demanded the head of John the Baptist. Herod still feared to put John to death, but nevertheless, for his oath's sake, gave orders for his instant execution. An officer of the guard went at once to the prison, and, with his sword, struck off the head of the holy man, and brought it to the young girl, who carried it to her mother. The death of John is supposed to have occurred just before the third pass-over, in the course of the Lord's ministry.



CITY OF REFUGE.

SAMARIA.



# OLD TESTAMENT CHARACTERS.

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## ADAM.

HOLY Scripture assigns no date for the epoch of the creation. The books of Moses were designed for a people who believed implicitly in God, and they open with the simple statement that God created the earth in the beginning. It is stated that, previous to this, the condition of the earth and heavens was chaotic; and, in relating the manner in which the creation was accomplished, the divine narrative divides the great work into six successive stages, called days, and shows us that the Creator carried on this work in a progressive manner, beginning with the lowest and closing with the highest forms of being. Though these stages are called days by Moses, it is not quite certain that the word thus employed actually means a period of twenty-four hours.

“On the *First Day* went forth the word of God—‘Let there be LIGHT, and *Light Was.*’ Light broke over the face of the chaos: we are not told from what source, but probably through the floating vapors being now rare enough to be penetrated by the sun’s light. It shone upon each part of the earth’s surface that was exposed to it in turn, and so God *divided* the light from the darkness; and God called the light *Day*, and the darkness he called *Night*. And the evening and the morning were the *First Day.*’

“As yet the watery vapors, raised by intense heat, formed an envelop of mist around the earth. They were now parted into two divisions, those which lie upon and hang about the surface of the earth, and those which float high above it. The blue heavens became visible, like a crystal vault, called the *firmament* (literally, *expanse*), because its appearance is that of an outspread covering, elsewhere likened to a *tent*. But the word chosen no more implies that the sky is really a solid vault, than that it is a canvas tent. It forms,

to the eye, the partition between the upper and lower heavens, between 'the waters under the firmament and the waters above the firmament.' Such was the work of the *Second Day*.

"Next began the tremendous upheavings and sinkings of the earth's crust, by the forces at work within it, which formed it into mountains and valleys, and provided channels and basins for the waters on its surface. These were now gathered into collections, which were called *Seas*, while the name of *Earth* was applied, in a narrower sense than before, to the portions exposed above the waters. On these portions the germs of vegetation began at once to burst into life, forming grass and fruit trees. These had their seed in themselves, after their kind. Here is the great law of reproduction according to species, on which depends the order of the vegetable and animal kingdoms. This was the work of the *Third Day*.

"On the *Fourth Day* the Sun and Moon were seen in the firmament of heaven. The fact of their previous creation is involved in the stability of the earth as a member of the Solar System, as well as in the appearance of light on the first day. It is not said that they were first created on the fourth day; and of the stars, many of which must have existed myriads of years before their light reached the earth, it is simply said, 'He made the stars also,' not *when* he made them. In fact, the 'fourth day' seems to mark the period during which the air was cleared of its thick vapors, by the action of the plants and other causes, so that the heavenly bodies became visible. Stress is laid on their *ruling* as well as *lighting* the day and night. God said, 'Let them be for *signs*, and for seasons, and for *days* and *years*.' They were designed, as they have ever since been used, to mark out the periods of human life; to inculcate the great lesson, that 'to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.'

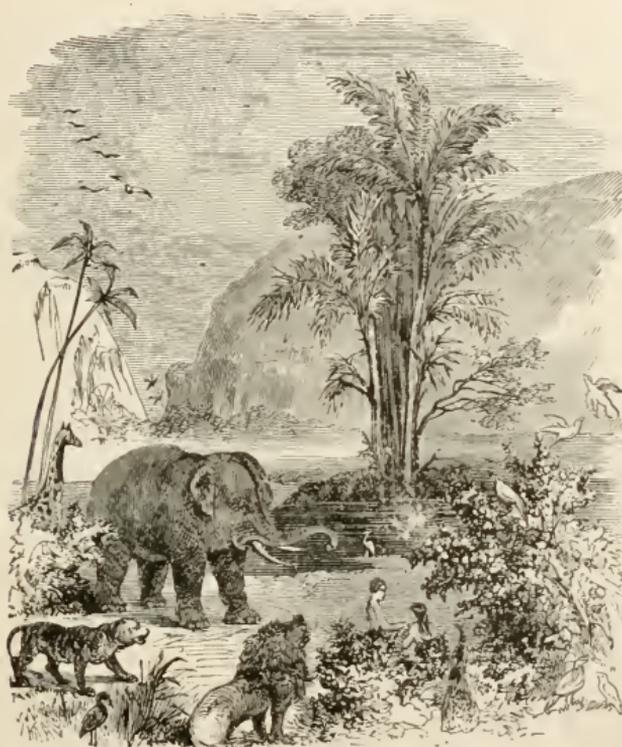
"Vegetables could live and flourish in a thick, moist atmosphere; and the lower animal organizations could already be associated with them, though they had not been mentioned as yet, because not outwardly visible. But now the larger animals appeared. First, the waters teemed with the 'creeping things,' and the 'great sea monsters,' with fishes and reptiles. Birds were produced at the same time, and might have been seen flying over the waters and in the open firmament of heaven. This was the work of the *Fifth Day*.

"The *Sixth Day* witnessed the creation of the *higher animals* and **MAN**. These were formed out of the earth, the chemical constituents of which are, in the main, the same as those of animal bodies. The

latter, in fact, derive their materials from the vegetables, which have first derived theirs from the earth and water; and all render back their gaseous and fluid components to air and water, and their solids to the earth.

“MAN, the last created, for whom all the previous works was but a preparation, differed from all other creatures in being made *like* God. The depth and meaning contained in this statement, though partly revealed in the Son of God, the true head of our race, remains to be developed hereafter. But, at least, it includes *intellectual* and *spirit-*

*ual* likeness, intelligence, moral power, and holiness. To man was given dominion over all other animals; and both to him and them the plants were given for food. All were appointed to continue their species according to their own likeness, and all were blessed with fertility; but on the human race was pronounced the special blessing:—  
“Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,



GARDEN OF EDEN.

and *subdue* it:’—so that Man’s lordship of the creation is a part of his original constitution.

“On each of the works of the last four days God pronounced the blessing that it was very good—perfect in its kind—useful in its purpose—and entirely subject to his holy laws.

“On the *Seventh Day*, God ceased from his finished works, rested, and blessed the day by the perpetual institution of the Sabbath. His rest, however, was not an entire cessation from activity. He had done creating, but he continued to sustain and bless his creatures.”

Having made man, God called his name Adam, and placed him in a garden which "the Lord God had planted eastward in Eden," for the purpose of dressing it and keeping it. Adam was permitted to eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden but one, which was called the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." What this was, it is impossible to say. Its name would seem to indicate that it had the power of bestowing the consciousness of the difference between good and evil; in the ignorance of which man's innocence and happiness consisted. The prohibition to taste the fruit of this tree was enforced by the menace of death. There was also another tree, which was called the "tree of life." Some suppose it to have acted as a kind of medicine, and that by the continual use of it, our first parents, not created immortal, were preserved from death.

While Adam was in the Garden of Eden, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air were brought to him to be named, and whatsoever he called every living creature, that was the name thereof. Thus the power of fitly designating objects of sense was possessed by the first man, a faculty which is generally considered as indicating mature and extensive intellectual resources. Upon the failure of a companion, suitable for Adam, among the creatures thus brought to him to be named, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and took one of his ribs from him, which he fashioned into a woman, and brought her to the man. "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." Gen. ii. 23-25.

Man was placed in Paradise upon the condition that he should restrain his appetite and self-will. God gave him every means of gratifying every lawful taste, and simply forbade him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The vast freedom which was granted him sufficiently proved the goodness of the Creator, and the restriction taught him that he was to live under a law; and that law was enforced by a practical penalty, of which he was mercifully warned. We must not regard the prohibition merely as a test of obedience, nor the penalty as arbitrary. The knowledge forbidden to him was of a kind which would corrupt his nature—so corrupt it, as to make him unfit, as well as unworthy to live forever.

Satan, the chief of the fallen spirits, seeking to destroy the work of God, now endeavored to drag man down to his own level. He entered the garden in the form of a serpent and addressing himself to Eve, urged her to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree, telling her that death would not follow the commission of the act, "for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The woman listened to the voice of the deceiver, ate of the fruit of the tree, and fell into the three-fold sin of sensuality, pleasure, and ambition. Having eaten she gave of the fruit to her husband, and he fell with her.

In one point the devil had truly described the effect of eating the forbidden fruit. "Their eyes were opened." They had "become as gods" in respect of that knowledge of evil, as well as of good, which God had reserved to himself and mercifully denied to them. They became conscious of the working of lawless pleasure in place of purity, in the very constitution given them by God to perpetuate their race; and they were ashamed because they were naked. Toward God they felt fear in place of love, and they fled to hide themselves from his presence among the trees of the garden.

Thus they were already self-condemned before God called them forth to judgment. Then the man cast the blame upon the woman, and the woman upon the serpent; and God proceeded to award a righteous sentence to each.

The judgment passed upon the serpent is symbolical of the condemnation of the devil. The creature, as Satan's instrument and type, is doomed to an accursed and degraded life; and that enmity that has ever since existed between him and man is the symbol of the conflict between the powers of hell and all that is good in the human race.

The woman is condemned to subjection to her husband, and sorrow and suffering in giving birth to her children; but she had the consolation of hearing that *her seed* was to conquer in the battle with the serpent, crushing its head, after the reptile's had inflicted a deadly wound upon his heel.

The man is shut up to a life of toil, and the earth is cursed for his sake, to bring forth, like himself, evil weeds, that require all his exertions to keep them down. But, as before, a promise is added; his labor shall not be without its reward—"in the sweat of thy brow, thou shalt eat bread."

Reminded of the doom they had incurred, though its execution was postponed—"dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"—and

clothed by God's goodness with the skins of beasts, they were driven out of Paradise. An angelic guard, with a flaming sword, debarred them from returning to taste of the tree of life; for it would have perpetuated their suffering.

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." Gen. iv. 1, 2.

The two brothers at one time brought the "first fruits" of their labors to offer them to God. Abel had led a life of purity, while



SACRIFICE OF CAIN AND ABEL.

Cain had passed his days in wickedness. Therefore, God preferred Abel's offering to that of Cain, and Cain, being rendered jealous of his brother, slew him. When God demanded his brother's blood at his hands, the murderer was overcome with the enormity of his crime, and was driven out into perpetual banishment from his family. He became, however, the father of a remarkable race.

After the death of Abel, another son was born to Adam, and he called his name Seth. It must not be supposed, however, that Cain, Abel, and Seth were the only children of Adam. The inference is, that he had a numerous family; for the mention of Cain's wife (Gen. iv. 17), as

well as his fear that men would slay him, are indications that the "replenishing of the earth" had made considerable progress before the death of Abel.

"And all the days of Adam were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died."

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## NOAH.

THE name of NOAH is very significant. It means *rest* or *comfort*, and it was given him by Lamech, his father, who said, through prophetic inspiration, "This shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." Gen. v. 29. These words seem to express a deeper weariness than that arising from the primal curse, from which, indeed, the age of Noah brought no deliverance. But it did bring the comfort of rest from the wickedness which had now reached its greatest height.

The brief history of the world before the flood may fairly be filled up, to some extent, from our knowledge of human nature. The scripture narrative shows us that the race of Cain invented the implements of industry and art; and we can have no doubt that their inventions were adopted by the progeny of Seth. During the 1,656 years before the flood, and when the experience of individuals embraced nearly 1,000 years, vast strides must have been made in knowledge and civilization. Arts and sciences may have reached a ripeness, of which the record, from its scantiness, conveys no adequate conception. The destruction caused by the flood must have obliterated a thousand discoveries, and left men to recover again by slow and patient steps the ground they had lost. But the race of Seth also became infected with the vices of the Cainites. This seems to be the only reasonable sense of the intercourse between "the sons of God," (*sons of the Elohim*), and "the daughters of men," (*daughters of Adam*.) We may put aside all fancies borrowed from heathen mythology respecting the union of superhuman beings with mortal women, and assume that both parties were of the human race. The family of Seth, who preserved their faith in God, and the family of Cain, who lived only for this world, had hitherto kept distinct; but now a mingling of the two races took place, which resulted in the thorough corruption of the former, who, falling away, plunged into the deepest abyss of wickedness. We are

also told that this union produced a stock conspicuous for physical strength and courage; and this is a well-known result of the intermixture of different races.

On the whole, it seems that the antediluvian world had reached a desperate pitch of wickedness, the climax of which was attained by the fusion of the two races. The marked features of this wickedness were lust and brutal outrage. An interval of divine forbearance only brought this wickedness to its height. Jehovah said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with (or remain or rule in) man; (the *Adam*) for that they are but flesh, and their days shall be an hundred and twenty years." In the somewhat obscure brevity of this speech, it is difficult to determine the force of each word; but the general sense seems to be: "I will take away from man the life I at first gave him, since he has corrupted himself to mere flesh; and I will limit his time on earth to one hundred and twenty years." That the period thus defined was a space for repentance seems clear from the context. The opinion that it marks out the future length of human life, does not at all agree with the duration of the lives of the post-diluvian patriarchs.

So great, indeed, had the wickedness of man become, that we are told that "*it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*" He resolved to destroy the existing race of living creatures, as if putting an end to an experiment which had failed. Measures of amelioration would not meet the case. It was necessary (to use an expressive phrase) "to make a clean sweep" of the existing race, if there were to be any hope of better things among another. For the destruction contemplated was neither total nor final.

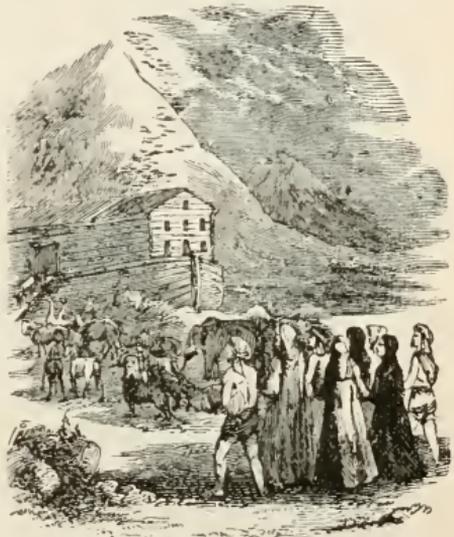
It pleased God to set aside from the general doom one family, for the purpose of re-peopling the earth, after the flood should have passed by, and the family chosen for this experiment was that of Noah. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," and is described as "a just man and perfect (upright or sincere) in his generations," that is, among his contemporaries. Like Enoch, he "walked with God," and was earnest in his protests against the prevailing wickedness of the day. He was a "preacher of righteousness." He had three sons—Shem, Ham and Japheth, as they are named in order of precedence; but Japheth seems to have been the eldest, and Shem the youngest. Noah was five hundred years old when the eldest was born. The other two followed within the next two years.

About this time, perhaps at the beginning of the one hundred and twenty years of delay, God revealed his design to Noah, bidding him to prepare an "ark," to save his family from the coming flood, with the races of animals needful for them, and promising to establish a new covenant with them. Noah at once believed the word of God, and set about preparing the ark, following strictly the directions of the Almighty as to its size and shape. Meanwhile, he continued to preach, and warn the people of their impending doom; but they paid no heed to him. They mocked him, and denounced his ark as the work of a lunatic; but still he persevered, and urged them to come with him into his ark and be saved. They saw his work going up slowly and steadily, according to the divine plan, but the nearer it approached completion, the more merciless became their scoffing. They went on, "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came and took them all away."

At the beginning of the six hundredth year of Noah's life, the ark was completed; and on the tenth day of the second month of that year, he entered into it by God's command, with his wife,

his three sons and their wives—eight persons in all. They took with them the food they would require, which was as yet of a vegetable nature. They took also two (a pair) of every animal; but of clean animals (for the use of sacrifice had already established this distinction) they took seven; by which is generally understood, three pairs to continue the race, and one male for sacrifice. They took seven days to enter the ark, and then "Jehovah shut Noah in."

On the same day, namely, the seventeenth day of the second month of the six-hundredth year of Noah's life, the flood began. "The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." The sacred narrative is vivid and forcible, though entirely wanting in that sort of description which, in a modern historian or poet, would have occupied the largest space. We



NOAH ENTERING THE ARK.

see nothing of the death-struggle; we hear not the cry of despair; we are not called upon to witness the frantic agony of husband and wife, of parent and child, as they fled in terror before the rising waters. Nor is a word said of the sadness of the one righteous man, who, safe himself, looked upon the destruction which he could not avert. But one impression is left upon the mind, with peculiar vividness, from the very simplicity of the narrative, and it is that of utter desolation. "All flesh died that moveth upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. \* \* \* \* They were destroyed from the earth, and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

For five months, or one hundred and fifty days, the lonely ark floated upon the vast expanse of waters. At the end of this time, "God remembered Noah" and those that were with him in the earth, and caused a strong wind to pass over the earth, which caused the rising waters to subside; and from this time they began steadily to fall. On the seventeenth day of the seventh month of Noah's life, the ark was left aground on Mount Ararat. More than two months were still required to uncover the tops of the mountains, which appeared on the first day of the tenth month. Noah waited still forty days (to the eleventh day of the eleventh month). Before he opened the window of the ark, he sent out a raven, which flew to and fro, probably on the mountain tops, but did not return into the ark. After seven days more, (the eighteenth day) he sent forth a dove, which found no resting place, and returned to the ark. In another seven days (the twenty-fifth day) she was sent forth again, and returned with an olive leaf in her bill, the sign that even the low trees were uncovered, and the type for ages after of peace and rest. After seven days more, (the second of the twelfth month) the dove was sent out again, and proved by not returning, that the waters had finally subsided. These periods of seven days clearly point to the division of time into weeks.

Noah at length removed the covering of the ark, and beheld the newly uncovered earth on the first day of the 601st year of his age. On the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was dry, and Noah went out of the ark, by the command of God, with all the creatures. His first act was to build an altar, and offer a sacrifice of every clean beast and bird. This act of piety called forth the promise from God that he would not again curse the earth on account of man, nor destroy it as he had done; but that he would forbear with man's in-

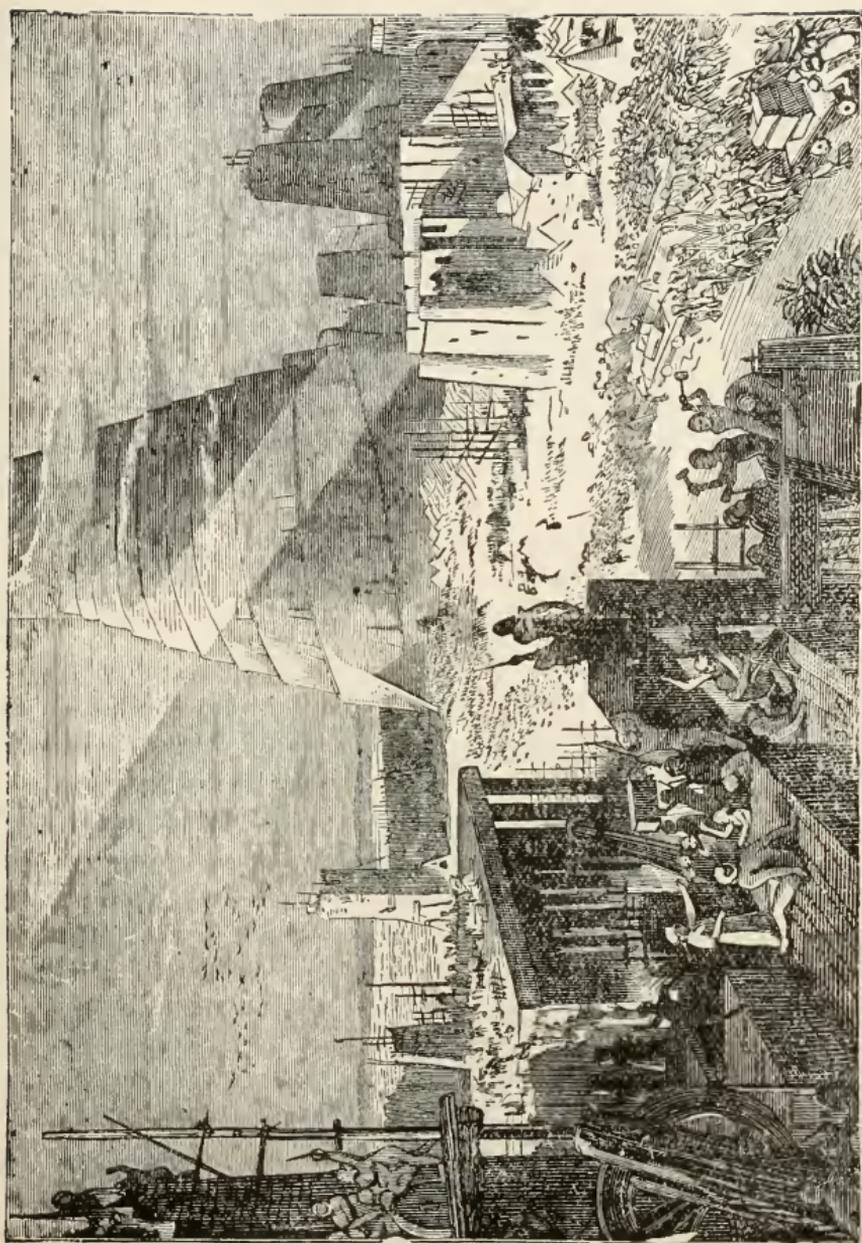


THE WILDERNESS OF JUDÆA.

nate tendency to evil, and continue the existing course of nature until the appointed end of the world. He repeated to Noah and his sons the blessing pronounced on Adam and Eve, that they should "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth;" and that the inferior creatures should be subject to them. To this he added the use of animals for food. But the eating of their blood was forbidden, because the blood is the life; and, lest the needful shedding of their blood should lead to deeds of blood, a new law was enacted against murder. The horror of the crime was clearly stated on the two grounds of the common brotherhood of man, which makes every murderer a fratricide, and of the creation of man in the image of God. The first murderer had been driven out as a fugitive and a vagabond; but his life was sacred. Now, however, the penalty was changed, and the law laid down, "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." This law amounts to giving the civil magistrates "the power of the sword;" and hence we may consider *three new precepts* to have been given to Noah, in addition to the laws of the Sabbath and of marriage, which were revealed to Adam, namely, the abstinence from blood, the prohibition of murder, and the recognition of the civil authority.

In addition to these promises and precepts, God made with Noah a COVENANT—that is, one of those *agreements* by which he has condescended again and again to bind himself toward man; not more sacred with him than a simple promise, but more satisfying to the weakness of our faith. Of these covenants, that made with Noah, on behalf of his descendants, is the first; and it may be called the *Covenant of God's forbearance*, under which man lives to the end of time. It repeated the promise, that the world should not be again destroyed by a flood; and it was ratified by the beautiful sign of the rainbow in the cloud, a *natural* phenomenon suited to the natural laws of whose permanence it was the token. It is important for us not to suffer our relations to Adam, as our first father, or to Abraham, as father of the faithful, to overshadow our part in God's covenant with Noah as the ancestor of the existing human race.

Noah soon gave proof that his new race was still a fallen one, by yielding to a degrading vice. Intoxication was doubtless practised by the profligate race who "ate and drank" before the flood; but it would seem to have been a new thing with Noah. He began his new life as a husbandman; and, living in a land (Armenia) which is still most favorable for the vine, he planted a vineyard, made himself



drunk in his tent, and suffered the degrading consequences which always, in some shape or other, attend the quenching of reason in wine, by a shameful exposure of himself in the presence of his sons. And now they began to show those differences of character which have severed even the families chosen by God in every age. Ham told his father's shame to Shem and Japheth, who hastened to conceal it even from their own eyes. On coming to himself, Noah vented his feelings in words which are unquestionably prophetic of the destinies of the three races that descended from his sons. For, in the primitive state of society, the government was strictly *patriarchal*. The patriarch—that is, the head of the race for the time being—had, over his children and theirs, the full power of the *later* king; he was their *priest*; and thus we have seen Noah offering sacrifices; and, among those who preserved the true religion, he was a *prophet* also. With such authority, then, did Noah pronounce on his undutiful son the curse that, in the person of one of his own children, he should be a slave to his brother.

“Cursed be Canaan (the youngest son of Ham). A slave of slaves shall he be to his brethren.” While to Shem and Japheth he gave their respective blessings, already symbolized by their names. *Shem* (the *name* chosen above all others), and *Japheth* (*enlargement*)—to the former, that Jehovah should be his God in some special sense; to the latter, that he should be “enlarged” with worldly power, and should ultimately share the blessings of the family of Shem:

“Blessed be Jehovah, God of Shem,  
And let Canaan be their slave !  
May God enlarge Japheth,  
And let him dwell in the tents of Shem,  
And let Canaan be their slave !”

Thus, early in the world's history was a lesson taught, practically, which the law afterward expressly enunciated, that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. The subsequent history of Canaan shows, in the plainest manner possible, the fulfilment of the curse. When Israel took possession of his land, he became the servant of Shem; when Tyre fell before the arms of Alexander, and Carthage succumbed to her Roman conquerors, he became the slave of Japheth; and we also hear the echo of Noah's curse in Hannibal's *Agnosco fortunam Carthaginiis*, when the head of Hasdrubal, his brother, was thrown contemptuously into the Punic lines.

The blessing on Shem was fulfilled in that history of the chosen race which forms the especial subject of the Old Testament. The blessing on Japheth, the ancestor of the great European nations, is illustrated by every age of their annals, and especially by religious history.

Noah lived for 350 years after the flood, and died at the age of 950. He survived the fifth and eighth of his descendants, *Peleg* and *Reu*; he was for 128 years contemporary with *Terah*, the father of *Abraham*, and died only two years before the birth of Abraham himself (A. M. 2006, B. C. 1998). Looking backward we find that he was born only 128 years after the death of Adam, and fourteen years after that of Seth. He was contemporary with Enos for 84 years, and with the remaining six antediluvian patriarchs (except Enoch) for centuries. Thus the reader will see how easy it was to hand down the events of sacred history from the days of Adam to Abraham, and even to Moses.

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## ABRAHAM.

GOD having promised that the seed of the woman should conquer the serpent, it now pleased him to select a particular family from which that seed should spring, and which should meanwhile preserve the worship of the true God. This step was rendered necessary because of the condition of the world, which, long before the death of Noah, had relapsed into idolatry and profaneness. The Almighty chose as the head of this family a man named Abram. He was the son of Terah, who was the nineteenth in descent from Adam, and was born two years after the death of Noah, or 1996 years Before Christ. Terah was the father of three sons—Haran, Nahor and Abram, this being the order of their ages. Haran died some time before his father, and his son Lot became his heir. The name Abram was prophetic of the destiny of the patriarch so highly favored by God, as it signifies *Exalted Father*. Abram married Sarai, the daughter of his brother Haran, and at the time of God's call to him, was living with his family in the ancient city of "Ur of the Chaldees," which has been identified by the most ancient traditions with the city of Orfah, in the highlands of Mesopotamia (Aram), which unite the table land of Armenia to the Valley of the Euphrates (Padan Aram). In later ages it was called

Edessa, and was celebrated as the capital of Abgarus or Acbarus, who was said to have received the letter and portrait of our Saviour. God appeared to Abram while he still dwelt in Ur, and told him to depart out of his country into a land which he would show him.\* In obedience to this call, Abram, accompanied by all his kindred, left Ur, and moving southward, they took up their residence at Haran, more properly called in the New Testament Charran, east of the Euphrates, "the flood" which divided the old home of the family from the new land of promise. Here they remained for some years, and here Terah died at the age of two hundred and five years. Nahor, charmed with the fertility of the country, claimed the right of a first choice, and settled here.

Abram was now seventy-five years old, and his wife, Sarai, was childless. God said unto Abram, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xii. 1-3.

In obedience to this divine call, Abram departed from Haran, taking with him Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all that belonged to them. He passed over the great River Euphrates into the land of Canaan, and received from the Canaanites the name of *the Hebrew*, or the man who crossed the river. Journeying through the Syrian Desert, he passed through Damascus, crossed the Jordan, and entered the Promised Land, passing into the Valley of Shechem, or Sichem, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. He was now in the land which God had promised him, having been led by faith along his journey. God appeared to him again, and promised, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Abram was an old man, and as yet his wife was barren; but he believed God's words, and was sure that his seed would possess the land, and his faith in the promises made to him was "counted to him for righteousness."

Abram did not long live at Shechem, but removed to a mountain in the neighborhood of Bethel. The Canaanite was already in the

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\* St. Stephen declared, "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran; and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into **this** land, wherein ye now dwell."—Acts vii. 3, 4.



HAGAR AND ISHMAEL DRIVEN OUT.

land, and viewed with no friendly eye the presence of Abram and Lot with their immense herds in the fertile valley. The position of the patriarch on the mountain secured him from the Canaanites, who occupied the plains below; but it afforded only scanty pasture for his cattle. He, therefore, went on continually southward, till the pressure of famine drove him out of the promised land into Egypt. The mighty kingdom of the Pharaohs had already been long established in Lower Egypt. In this crisis the faith of Abram failed. To protect his wife from the license of a despot, he stooped to that mean form of deceit, which is true in word, but false in fact. He caused Sarai to pass as his sister, a term used in Hebrew, as in many other languages, for a niece, which she really was. The trick defeated itself. Sarai's wonderful beauty was reported to the king, who at once caused her to be removed to his harem, believing her to be an unmarried woman, and heaped wealth and honors upon Abram. Warned of his mistake by plagues sent upon him and his household, the king restored Sarai to her husband, with a rebuke for his deceit, and sent him out of Egypt with all the wealth he had acquired, for he was now "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." Abram travelled back through the south of Palestine to his old encampment near Bethel, where he again established the worship of Jehovah.

He now began to feel the evils of prosperity. The land could not support his own cattle and Lot's. Their herdsmen quarreled, and Lot probably put forth his rights as the head of the family. Abraham's faith now came to his aid. Remembering that the promises had been made to *him* and *his* seed, he was content to give Lot any present advantage, feeling sure that God would yet give him a better heritage. He proposed to Lot that they should separate their possessions, and told Lot to select his own land, and that he would take what was left. Their encampment looked westward on the rugged hills of Judea, and eastward on the fertile plain of the Jordan about Sodom, "well watered everywhere, as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt." Even from that distance, through the clear air of Palestine, can be distinctly discovered the long and thick masses of vegetation which fringe the numerous streams that descend from the hills on either side to meet the central stream in its tropical depths. It was exactly the prospect to tempt a man who had no fixed purpose of his own, who had not, like Abram, obeyed a stern, inward call of duty. So Lot left his uncle on the barren hills of Bethel, and chose all the

precinct of the Jordan, and journeyed east, and pitched his tent in the plain in which stood the five cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela, (afterwards called Zoar). The wickedness of these cities was great beyond expression, and one feature of it was the practise of the revolting crime to which Sodom has given its name, of which "it is a shame even to speak;" but which was practised openly.

Abraham continued to dwell in the Holy Land, and the Lord, pleased with the evidence of his faith which he had given in the arrangement with Lot, said to him, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord." Gen. xiii. 14-18.

Mamre became the usual dwelling place of Abram, and it was while he was living here that the five cities of the plain rebelled against Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and chief of a mighty empire in Western Asia, to whom they had been in subjection for twelve years. The king of Elam marched against the five cities, with three allied kings, and defeated their forces in a great battle in the vale of Siddim. The victors despoiled the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and carried off Lot and all his goods. As soon as Abram was informed of the fate of his nephew, he collected 318 men of his own household, and a force of his Amorite allies, and pursued the victors. He overtook them at the sources of the Jordan, and by a bold night attack, defeated them, rescued Lot, and recovered all the spoil. On his return he was met by the new king of Gomorrah, who offered him half the spoil, which he refused to accept. In this episode, Abram, "the Hebrew," a foreign chief, appears as a powerful Emir, with a numerous retinue of followers, living on terms of equality with others like himself, who were anxious to court the friendship of so formidable an ally, and combining with the peaceful habits of a pastoral life, the same capability for warfare which is characteristic of the Arab race. With great dignity he refuses to enrich himself with the fruits of his victory, and claims only a share of the booty for his Amorite

allies, to whom, apparently, he extends his protection in return for permission to reside in their territory.

Among those who met him, on his return, was Melchizedek, the king of Salem, "a priest of the Most High God," and to him Abram gave tithes of all the spoil. There is something surprising and mysterious in the first appearance of Melchizedek, and in the subsequent references to him. Bearing a title which Jews, in after ages, would recognize as designating their own sovereign, bearing gifts which recall to Christians the Last Supper, this Canaanite crosses, for a moment, the path of Abram, and is unhesitatingly recognized as a person of higher spiritual rank than the friend of God. Disappearing as suddenly as he came in, he is lost to the sacred writings for a thousand years; and then a few emphatic words, for another moment, bring him into sight as a type of the coming Lord of David. The extraordinary reverence paid to him by Abram, and apparently by the king of Sodom, completes all our positive knowledge respecting his person and office.

After this Abram continued to dwell at Mamre, and seems to have been in constant fear that the powerful king of Elam would attack him, in revenge for the defeat he had inflicted upon him. While he was in this state of mind, God appeared to him again, and bade him fear not, that he was his protector. He repeated his promise of an heir to the patriarch, and told him that this heir should not be his steward, whom he had adopted, but his own son, that should be born of his wife. And he took Abram forth, and bade him look on the stars that were gemming the eastern heavens in all their beauty, and told him that his seed should be as the stars in numbers. And Abram "believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." God then reminded him that it was he who had brought him up out of Ur of the Chaldees, and that he should, indeed, inherit this land. Abram's faith seems to have staggered at this, and, in order to confirm his promise, God made a covenant with him.

"In those days, when men would make a most solemn covenant with each other, they proceeded thus: they took one of every kind of beast, or bird, used in sacrifice, being a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. The beasts they divided, and laid the pieces opposite each other, at such a distance that a man could pass between them; but the birds, being small and of the same kind, were not divided, but placed entire opposite each other. Then the party making the agreement, or covenant, passed between the pieces,

declaring the terms by which he bound himself to abide. As this was the strongest and most solemn method Abram knew of contracting a binding obligation, God thought it proper to make use of it on this occasion."

Abram was directed to make the necessary arrangements for such a ceremony; and when he had made them, he remained by the carcasses until the evening, to protect them from damage by the fowls.

"And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

"And God said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

"And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward they shall come out with great substance.

"And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

"But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

"And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." Gen. xv. 12-17. Thus did God establish his covenant with the patriarch.

At the suggestion of Sarai, who despaired of having children of her own, Abraham took as his concubine, Hagar, her Egyptian maid, who bore him a son. But before the child was born, Hagar's insolence to her mistress provoked the jealousy of the latter, and she treated the concubine so badly that she fled into the wilderness. Here she encountered an angel of God, who told her to return to her mistress, and encouraged her with the promise of a numerous issue. In memory of God's hearing her cry of distress, he bade her name the coming child *Ishmael*—that is, *God shall hear*—and he foretold his character and destiny in words which to this day describe the Bedouin Arabs, who are descended from him: "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the face of all his brethren," that is, to the *east* of the kindred tribes sprung from Abraham.

Abraham was 86 years old when Ishmael was born, and for thirteen years more he continued to dwell in Hebron. God now appeared to him again, and renewed his promises to him, telling him that he should



ABRAHAM AND THE SONS OF HETH.

transmit the blessings promised him not through Ishmael, but through a son which Sarah should bear to him within a specified time. God also changed the patriarch's name to *Abraham* (father of a multitude) and his wife's name to *Sarah* (princess), in consequence of her exalted dignity as the mother of the promised seed. At the same time, the command was given to establish the rite of circumcision, with which Abraham complied in the person of himself, of Ishmael, and of every male in his household.

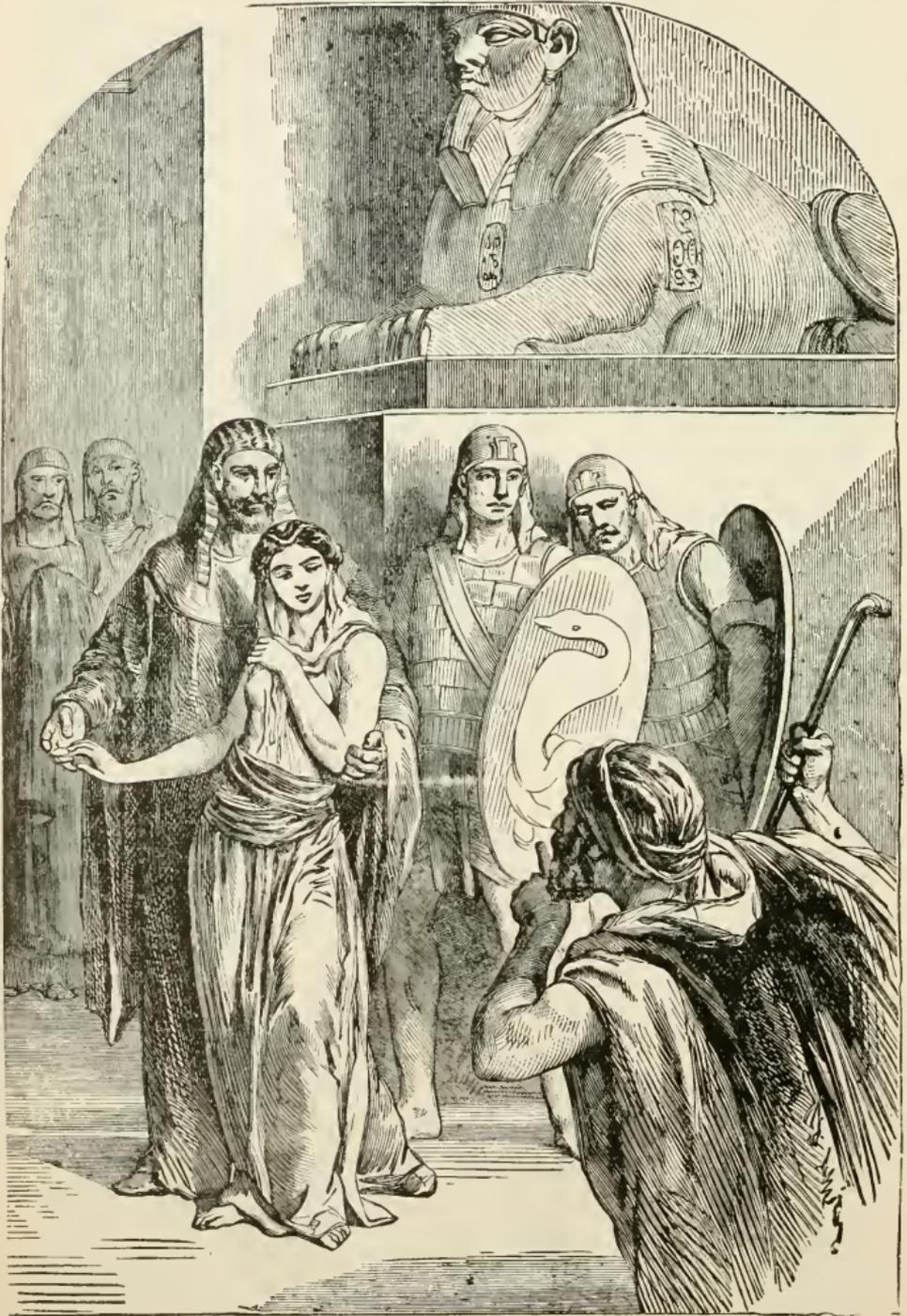
Soon after this, the promise that Sarah should bear a son was repeated. Three men stood before Abraham as he sat before his tent in the heat of the day. The patriarch, with true Eastern hospitality, welcomed the strangers and bade them rest and refresh themselves; the meal ended they foretold the birth of Isaac. Sarah overheard this prediction and laughed incredulously at it. The principal stranger rebuked her sternly for her unbelief, reminding her that every-

thing was possible with God. The guests then went on their way to Sodom. Abraham accompanied them a part of the way, and was told by God of his purpose to destroy the wicked cities of the plain. Full of sorrow, the patriarch besought the Almighty to spare these cities if as many as fifty righteous men could be found in them, and encouraged by a favorable answer, continued to plead until God promised to spare the cities if as many as ten righteous men could be found in them. Thus do we see the effect of fervent and constant prayer on the part of the righteous. God is always more ready to hear than we to pray, and more ready to grant than we to ask.

Meanwhile, the two angels went on their way to Sodom, whose people gave them a reception which filled up the measure of their sins. Even the sons-in-law of Lot despised their warning; and Lot himself was reluctantly dragged, with his wife and two daughters, from the devoted city. Lot pleaded hard that one of the cities might be spared as a place of abode for him, and God granted his prayer and gave him Bela, which was afterward called Zoar. God's command was that the fugitives should not look back behind them, but Lot's wife disobeyed the injunction, and looking back was turned into a pillar of salt. No sooner had Lot entered Zoar than God rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, and utterly destroyed them and their inhabitants, and the fertile plain in which they had stood became a scene of the most perfect desolation. Lot himself, though saved from Sodom, fell, like Noah after the deluge, into vile intoxication, of which his own daughters took advantage to indulge the incestuous passion, from which sprang the races of Moab and Ammon.

After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham journeyed southward, and dwelt in Gerar, among the Philistines. Sarah's beauty won the admiration of Abimelech, the king of the country, and here again Abraham declared she was his sister. The king took her to his harem, but was warned of God in a dream to restore her to her husband. This he did, reproving Abraham for his deceit.

At length Isaac was born. This was the child so long promised, the seed through whom the promise was to descend to posterity. His birth was welcomed with the greatest rejoicings. At a banquet which Abraham made to celebrate the weaning of Isaac, Sarah's jealousy was aroused by the mockery of Ishmael, and she demanded that, with his mother Hagar, he should be driven out. Abraham reluctantly consented, and sent them away from his home, consoled by the promise of God, that he would make Ishmael a great nation.



THE EGYPTIAN KING TAKING THE WIFE OF ABRAHAM.

A long period of time passed away, Abraham still remaining in the land of the Philistines, and being treated by them as a powerful prince, whose friendship was worth conciliating. At length God put him to the severest trial of his faith ever demanded of him. He told him to take Isaac, his only son, in whom he had told him all nations should be blessed, and offer him for a burnt sacrifice at an appointed place. Such a bidding, in direct opposition to the promptings of nature, and the divine mandate against the shedding of human blood, Abraham hesitated not to obey. His faith, which had always sustained him, supported him in this final trial. He went forth, determined to slay Isaac, as he had been commanded, "accounting that God was able to raise up his son, even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure." The most complete trial was made in this case. God's purpose was announced to the patriarch in the first place, after which he was required to make a three day's journey in the constant and tender companionship of the child he loved with his whole heart. Painful as was the ordeal, he never shrank from it, and when God had fully tested him, he commanded him to release Isaac unharmed, and renewed the promise of blessings to him and his seed. Then Abraham and the lad returned to Beersheba, where he dwelt for a long time.

From Beersheba, Abraham went back to his old home at Hebron, and there Sarah, his wife, died, at the age of 127 years. Up to this time, God had "given him none inheritance in the land; no, not so much as to set his foot on." He had used it to pitch his tent, and feed his flocks on, but not a foot of it was actually his property. But now the sanctity of the sepulchre demanded that his burying-place should be his own: and he makes a bargain with Ephron, the Hittite, in the presence of all the people of the city, in the course of which he behaves, and is treated by them, like a mighty and generous prince. Courteously refusing both the use of their sepulchres and the offer of a place for his own as a gift, he buys for its full value, four hundred shekels' weight of silver, "current money with the merchant," the Cave of Machpelah, (Double Cave) close to the oak of Mamre, with the field in which it stood. Here he buried Sarah, and the place ultimately became the sepulchre of his immediate descendants.

He now returned to Beersheba, and his next care was to send his servant to choose a wife for his son Isaac, amongst his own kindred. His oldest servant undertook the journey, and pledged himself to his master not to select a wife for the heir amongst any of the daughters



ABB' CHAM AND ISAAC ASCENDING THE MOUNTAIN.

of Canaan. The servant then set out, and guided by God, went to Haran, in Mesopotamia, where Nahor, the brother of Abraham, had settled, and a sign from God indicated the maiden he sought in Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor. He concluded the negotiations with the parents of the damsel, and returned with her to his master's house, where she became the wife of Isaac.

After the marriage of Isaac, Abraham formed a new union with Keturah, by whom he became the father of the Keturaites. Keturah seems to have been only a concubine, and her sons were sent away eastward, enriched with presents, as Ishmael had been during Abraham's life, lest the inheritance of Isaac should be disputed. To him Abraham gave all his great wealth, and died apparently at Beersheba, "in a good old age, an old man, and full of years," his age being 175 years. His sons Isaac and Ishmael met at his funeral, and buried him in the cave of Machpelah. Ishmael survived him just 50 years, and died at the age of 137.

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## ISAAC.

WHEN Abraham and his wife were old, and well stricken in years, and when the latter had passed the age at which child-bearing is natural to woman, it pleased God to fulfil the promise he had so long held out to the patriarch; and he caused his wife to conceive and bear a son, whose name was called Isaac. Sarah nourished the child at her own breast for fully three years, and, when the time of its weaning came, Abraham made a grand feast to celebrate the occasion.

It seems that before Isaac, the son of her old age, was given to her, Sarah had lavished considerable affection upon Ishmael, through whom she expected the promise of God to descend; but when her own child was born, she naturally bestowed her whole heart upon him, and gradually came to dislike Ishmael, who was by no means pleased with the neglect with which he was treated. Abraham seems to have been steadfast in his attachment to Ishmael, and to have been willing to retain him about him as his son.

On the occasion of the banquet referred to, Ishmael roused the wrath of Sarah, by his derision of the infant heir, and Sarah at once

demanded of her husband that the bondwoman and her son should be cast out, declaring that "the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." Abraham was sorely grieved by this demand, but God said to him that the wish of his wife was proper, and bade him fear not, because of Ishmael; for, while the blessings shall descend to Isaac, he will also make Ishmael a great nation, "because he is thy seed."

We are struck with the fact, that the obedience of Abraham to the will of God was always rendered promptly; and now we find him rising early in the morning to send Hagar and Ishmael away. He gave them a "bottle of water," and such provisions as travellers in the desert usually carried; and they departed, and wandered in the desert of Beersheba, where Ishmael was miraculously saved from death by thirst, and preserved until he grew to manhood.

When Isaac had reached the age of twenty-five years, Abraham was commanded to take Isaac, his only son, to a place which should be pointed out to him, and there offer him for a burnt sacrifice. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then, on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham, his father, and said: My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering; so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind

him, a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Gen. xxii. 1-14. For this faithful act, God renewed his promises to Abraham of the blessings which should descend upon his seed through Isaac.

After his mother's death, Isaac went with his father to purchase the Cave of Machpelah for a sepulchre, and was present upon that occasion. After the burial of Sarah, he returned with Abraham to Beer-sheba. The grief which he manifested for his mother, to whom he was tenderly attached, now caused Abraham to determine to choose a wife for his son. Isaac was forty years old, and was of a meditative, quiet disposition, and his father rightly judged that the constant and tender companionship of a wife would be the best solace for his grief. He had heard that the family of his brother Nahor were still in Mesopotamia, and were doing well, and he determined to take for Isaac a wife from amongst his own kindred, as this would be the most certain way of ensuring the purity of the race of which he was to be the father. He called his old steward, Eliezer of Damascus, and bade him set forth upon the journey to the house of his kindred, and there select a fitting bride for his son. He also made the servant swear a solemn oath, that he would under no circumstances bring back a Canaanitish woman.

Eliezer departed with a train suited to the importance of his mission, and took with him presents for the damsel and her friends. Then, as now, it was the custom in the East, for the bridegroom to purchase his bride from her parents at a considerable price, and to make handsome presents to her.

Nahor's family had relinquished their nomadic character to such an extent as to have become dwellers in the town of Haran or Charran. Their flocks, however, were still sent out to graze, under the care of shepherds and of the younger members of the family. Then, as now, it was a custom for the women of the family to draw water from the wells, and the highest as well as the lowest, engaged in this duty.

Eliezer, after a long journey, reached the well of Haran about the time of the evening that the damsels came to draw water. He knew that he should behold his young master's future bride among the throng, and he prayed that God would bless him in his choice. Feeling very deeply the responsibility of the matter, he prayed the Al-



ELIEZER AND REBEKAH AT THE WELL.

mighty to give him a sign by which he should know whom to select—namely, that she who, to his request to give him and his camels to drink of the water, should say, “Drink; and I will give thy camels drink also,” should be the maid he should choose.

While he was yet speaking, the women came forth from the city, and began their accustomed task. Eliezer singled out the fairest, and asked leave to drink from her pitcher. She granted the request, and when he had drank, proceeded to give his camels water also. He was greatly encouraged by this, but was not yet sure that she was the maid he sought. Giving her several handsome presents of jewelry, he asked her, “Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee; is there room in thy father’s house for us to lodge in?” She replied that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, and to his astonishment, Eliezer found that she was the very person of whom his master had heard, and whom he desired for his son’s wife. In his joy he lifted up his voice, and blessed God for having graciously guided him aright to the house of the brother of his master, Abraham.

Upon hearing this, Rebekah the damsel, at once ran to her father’s house, and informed her family of what had transpired. Bethuel was doubtless too infirm for active life now, and the management of his

affairs seems to have fallen into the hands of his son Laban, who at once went out and welcomed Eliezer and his companions, and brought them to the house where he entertained them with true Eastern hospitality. Eliezer stated his mission briefly, and demanded the hand of Rebekah for his young master. Her relatives agreed to the match and received the customary presents, and Rebekah professing her willingness to go, Eliezer departed with the damsel the next morning.

Isaac had gone out at eventide to meditate in the fields, under the quiet heavens, when he saw the camels of Eliezer returning home. He at once went forth to meet them, and Rebekah, who was accompanied by her nurse and several female attendants, asked Eliezer who the stranger was. Upon being told that it was his "master," she alighted from her camel, and enveloped herself in the veil of a bride, by which Isaac might know her from her companions. Having learned from the steward all the events of his mission, Isaac took Rebekah to his mother's tent, which was now to belong to her, as the chief woman of the tribe, and he loved her, and she became his wife "and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

For twenty years Rebekah was barren. "Of all the patriarchs," says Bishop Hall, "none made so little noise in the world as Isaac; none lived either so privately or innocently; neither know I whether he approved himself a better son or a husband; for the one he gave himself over to the knife of his father, and mourned three years for his mother; for the other, he sought not to any handmaid's bed, but in a chaste forbearance reserved himself for twenty years' space and prayed. Rebekah was so long barren." At length God granted his prayers, and Rebekah conceived, and brought forth twins, whose destinies were predicted before their birth. They struggled violently, as if for the mastery of one over the other, in her womb, and she entreated God to show her what this meant. She was told that two nations, two manners of people, were in her womb; and that of these, the one people should be stronger than the other, and that the elder should serve the younger. When they were born, the elder had a very hairy appearance, and received the name of Esau, (the hairy) from that circumstance. The younger had hold of his brother's heel in the birth, and received the name of Jacob, (the supplanter).

After this a sore famine caused Isaac to remove to Gerar, in the country of the Philistines. He seems to have meditated going down into Egypt; but God commanded him not to do so, assuring him that he would care for and protect him.

He continued to reside in the land, and lived to see his children's children, and died at the age of one hundred and eighty years. He was buried with his parents in the Cave of Machpelah, where also his wife was buried.

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## JACOB.

As we have stated in our sketch of Isaac, Esau and Jacob were not born until their parents had been married more than twenty years. They were fifteen years old when their grandfather Abraham died. As they grew up to manhood, they developed characters entirely dissimilar. Esau became a famous hunter, and excelled in manly and athletic sports, while Jacob devoted himself to the quieter and more domestic pursuits of a purely pastoral life, thus becoming eminently qualified to be the ancestor of a race which should one day be one of the most cultivated and polished in the world. Esau became his father's favorite, but the mother lavished her love upon the gentle Jacob, remembering, doubtless, the prediction which God had made to her concerning him before his birth. This prediction she repeated to Jacob, who was thenceforth constantly on the watch to obtain from Esau the formal transfer of the higher natural claims which he might be supposed to derive from the accident of a few minutes' earlier birth. The opportunity for which he watched, soon came.

One day, while Jacob was preparing a savory mess of lentiles, after a new method which had but lately been introduced into that country from Egypt, Esau came in from a protracted hunting expedition, almost famished with hunger. The uncivilized, or semi-civilized man, is a child in his appetites at all times; and the hunger of such a man is madness. Jacob was shrewd enough to know this, and when Esau eagerly demanded a portion of the savory dish with which to stay his hunger, Jacob refused to give it until his brother agreed to relinquish his birthright to him, and thus played with his hunger until Esau agreed to the compact, and sealed it with an oath. Then Jacob fed him, and he departed. "Thus Esau despised his birthright." When Esau was forty years old, he took to himself two wives from amongst the daughters of Canaan, "which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."

A greater family trial was now in store for Isaac. The approach



ESAU GOING FOR VENISON

of his hundredth year, and the infirmity of his sight, warned him to perform the solemn act by which, as prophet as well as father, he was to hand down the blessing of Abraham to another generation. Of course, he designed for Esau the blessing which, once given, was the authoritative and irrevocable act of the patriarchal power; and he desired him to prepare a feast of venison for the occasion. Esau was not likely to confess the sale of his birthright, nor could Jacob venture openly to claim the benefit of his trick. Whether Rebekah knew of that transaction, or whether moved by partiality only, she came to the aid of her favorite son, and devised the stratagem by which Jacob obtained his father's blessing.

She directed Jacob to kill and bring to her two kids of the goats, out of which she prepared a savory dish, such as Isaac loved. In order to deceive the patriarch, whose vision was too feeble to enable him to detect the cheat, Jacob put on a dress of Esau, and covered the exposed portion of his neck, and his hands, with the skins of the kids, for his brother was a hairy man. Thus prepared, he took the dish in to his father, and demanded his blessing, assuring him that he was Esau. Isaac detected the voice of Jacob, but was re-assured by the hairy skins which the impostor had donned. So Isaac ate of his son's venison, and drank the wine which he gave him, after which he called Jacob to him, and blessed him. Again his doubts were lulled to rest by the smell of his son's raiment, and he said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

Having received the blessing, Jacob went out from his father's presence; but he had scarcely gone when Esau came in from his hunting, and, having prepared his mess of venison, took it in to his father. Surprised at his coming, and his entreaty to eat, Isaac demanded his name, and was told that he was his son, Esau. "And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it to me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed." The whole imposture was now clear to Esau, who wept like a child for the loss of his blessing, and he cried out in anguish to his horror-stricken parent, "Bless me, even me also, O my father."

Like Ishmael, he received a temporal blessing, the fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven, the warrior's sword, qualified by subjection to his brother, whose yoke, however, he was at some time to break. The prophecy was fulfilled in the prosperity of the Idumæans, their martial prowess, and their constant conflicts with the Israelites, by whom they were subdued under David, over whom they triumphed at the Babylonian captivity, and to whom they at last gave a king in the person of Herod the Great. But all this was no compensation for the loss of the higher and spiritual blessing, which fell to the lot of Jacob, and which involved, in addition to all temporal prosperity, a dominion so universal that it could only be fulfilled by the kingdom of the Messiah.

Esau, full of bitterness, resolved to kill his brother, immediately after his father's death, which he believed to be near at hand. His resolution being reported to Rebekah, she urged Jacob to fly to her relatives at Haran, and obtained Isaac's consent to the arrangement, on the pretext that it would not do for Jacob to marry one of the daughters of Canaan, as Esau had done. The patriarch repeated the blessing of Abraham to his son, and sent him away.

And so the heir of the promises retraced, as a solitary wanderer, with nothing but the staff he carried, the path by which Abraham had traversed Canaan. Proceeding northward, he lighted on a place, the site, doubtless, of Abraham's encampment, near Bethel, where he found some stones, which probably belonged to the altar set up by Abraham, one of which he made his pillow. Thus forlorn, amid the memorials of the covenant, he was visited by God in a dream, which showed him a flight of stairs leading up from earth to the gates of heaven, and trodden by angels, some descending on their errands as "ministering spirits" upon earth, and others ascending to carry their reports to Him, whose "face they ever watch" in dutiful service. This symbol of God's providence was crowned by a vision of Jehovah, and his voice added to the renewal of the covenant a special promise of protection. Jacob awoke to acknowledge the awful presence of Jehovah, of which he had lain down unconscious, and to dedicate to Him himself and all God should give him. As a memorial of his vow, he set up his pillow for a monument, consecrating it with oil, and called the place BETH-EL—the *House of God*. The date of this, the turning point in Jacob's religious life, is fixed by subsequent computations to his seventy-seventh year.

Jacob succeeded in reaching his relatives at Padan-Aram, and upon

JACOB'S VISION.





HEBRON.

his arrival there was met by his cousin Rachel, the daughter of Laban, the brother of Rebekah. Jacob loved her, and agreed to serve Laban as a shepherd for his seven years for the hand of Rachel. The bargain was made, and the service rendered. Laban's flocks prospered wonderfully under Jacob's management; but when Jacob claimed his reward at the end of the seven years, he found himself met with deceit. Laban had two daughters. Leah, the elder, was afflicted with some weakness or dullness of the eyes; but Rachel, the younger, was a beauty. Feeling sure that Leah's defect would render it difficult to find a husband for her, Laban resolved to put her off on Jacob by a trick, rendered easy by the forms of an Eastern wedding, where the bride is closely veiled. Jacob discovered the trick after it was too late, and upon reproaching Laban for it, was met with the excuse, that it was not the custom of the country to marry the younger sister before the elder; but he gave Jacob Rachel also, on the condition of another seven years' service. During these seven years Jacob had eleven sons and one daughter. Six sons and the daughter were the children of Leah, and one son (Joseph) was the son of Rachel, and four were born of the two handmaids of the two wives. The reader will find their names, and the incidents of their birth, recorded in the 29th and 30th chapters of Genesis.

After the birth of Joseph, Jacob wished to become his own master; but Laban prevailed on him to serve him still, for a part of the pro-

duce of his flocks, to be distinguished by certain marks. Jacob's artifice to make the most of his bargain may be regarded as another example of the defective morality of those times; but, as far as Laban was concerned, it was a fair retribution for his attempt to secure a contrary result. Jacob was now commanded in a vision, by "the God of Bethel," to return to the land of his birth; and he fled secretly from Laban, who had not concealed his envy, to go back to his father Isaac, after twenty years spent in Laban's service—fourteen for his wives, and six for his cattle. Jacob, having passed the Euphrates, struck across the desert by the great fountain of Palmyra; then traversed the eastern part of the plain of Damascus, and the plateau of Bashan, and entered Gilead, which is the range of mountains east of the Jordan, forming the frontier between Palestine and the Assyrian Desert.

Rachel had carried away the household gods of her father, and Laban pursued his son-in-law, with a troop of his friends, to recover them. Rachel adroitly concealed the stolen property, and Laban, failing to find his images, concluded a covenant with Jacob, in which they mutually adjusted the territory over which they should range, and agreed not to molest one another. Jacob now continued his journey, and received a Divine encouragement to meet the new dangers of the land he was entering. His eyes were opened to see a troop of angels, "the host of God," sent for his protection, and forming a second camp beside his own; and he called the name of the place Mahanaim, (*the two camps or hosts*).

His first danger was from the revenge of Esau, who had now become powerful in Mount Seir, the land of Edom. In reply to his conciliatory message, Esau came out to meet him with four hundred armed men. Jacob was greatly distressed by the news of his brother's approach, not knowing whether he came in friendship or anger. Jacob had now reached the Valley of the Jabbok, and he divided his people and herds into two bands, that if the first were smitten, the second might escape. Then he turned to God in prayer. To prayer he adds prudence, and sends forward present after present, that their reiteration might win his brother's heart. This done, he rested for the night; but, rising up before the day, he sent forward his wives and children across the ford of the Jabbok, remaining for a while in solitude, to prepare his mind for the trial of the day. It was then that "a man" appeared, and wrestled with him till the morning rose. This "man" was the "Angel Jehovah," and the conflict was a repetition in *act* of the prayer which we have already seen Jacob offering.



MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU.

in words. Though taught his own weakness by the dislocation of his thigh at the angel's touch, he gained the victory over him by his importunity—"I will not let thee go except thou bless me"—and he received the new name of ISRAEL, (*a prince of God*) as a sign that "he had prevailed with God, and should, therefore, prevail with man." Well knowing with whom he had to do, he called the place PENIEL, (*the face of God*) "for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." The memory of his lameness, which he seems to have carried with him to the grave, was preserved by the custom of the Israelites not to eat of the sinew in the hollow of the thigh.

At sunrise Jacob descended into the valley of the Jabbok, and saw Esau and his warriors approaching. He divided his last and most precious band, placing first the handmaids and their children, then Leah and her children, and Rachel and Joseph last. Advancing before them all, he made his obeisance to Esau, who "ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." After a cordial interview, Jacob prudently declined his brother's offer to march with him as a guard; and Esau returned to Mount Seir, and we hear no more of him except the genealogy of his descendants, the Edomites.

Jacob pursued his journey westward and halted at *Succoth*, so called from his having there put up "booths" (*Succoth*) for his cattle as well as a house for himself. He then crossed the Jordan, and arrived at Shechem, which had grown since the time of Abraham into a powerful city, and was named after Shechem, the son of Haman, prince of the Amorites. From them, he bought a piece of land, the first possession of the family in Canaan, on which he pitched his tent, and built an altar to God, as the giver of his new name, and the God of the race who were ever to bear it.—"God, the God of Israel." Here he dug the well by which the Saviour of the world taught the woman of Samaria a better worship than that of sacred places.

He was soon involved in a conflict with the Shechemites, through their violence to Dinah, his daughter, and the treacherous revenge of Simeon and Levi, which afterward brought on them their father's curse; the city of Shechem was taken, but Jacob thought it prudent to avoid the revenge of the Canaanites by retiring from the neighborhood. It seems probable that he afterward returned, and rescued "from the Amorites with his sword and bow" the piece of land he had before purchased, and which he left, as a special inheritance, to Joseph.

Meanwhile Jacob returned, by the command of God, to Bethel,

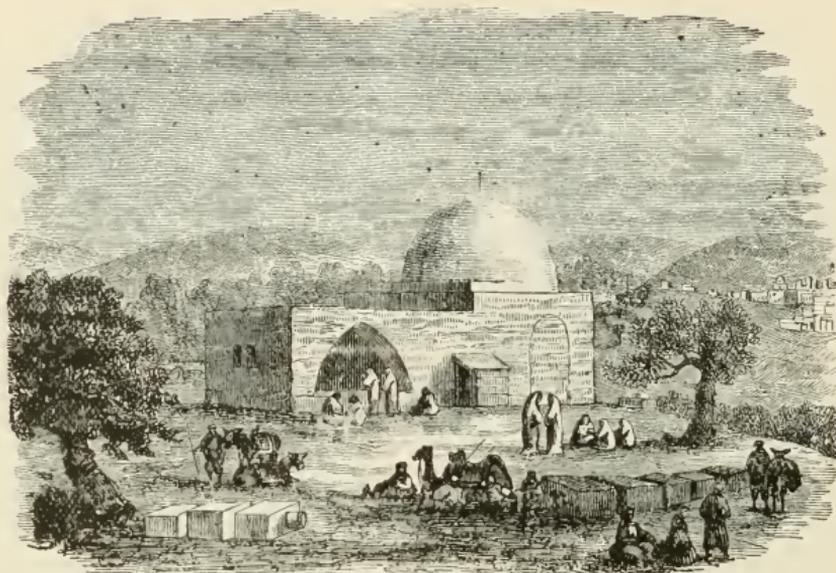


EGYPTIAN WAR CHARIOTS.

and performed the vows which he had there made when he fled from home, and received from God a renewal of the covenant. There Rachel's nurse, Deborah died, and was buried beneath the "oak of weeping." As he journeyed southward, and was near Ephrath or Ephratah, the ancient name of Bethlehem, Rachel died in giving birth to Jacob's youngest son. The dying mother called him *Ben-oni* (*Son of my sorrow*); but the fond father changed his name to BEN-JAMIN (*Son of the right hand*).

The grave of Rachel was long marked by the pillar which Jacob erected over it, and her memory was associated with the town of Bethlehem. Jacob's next resting place, near the tower of Edar, was marked by the incest of Reuben, which forfeited his birthright. At length he reached the encampment of his father Isaac, at the old station of Mamre, beside Hebron. Here Isaac died at the age of 180, "old and full of days, and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

Jacob was now an old man; but his age was afflicted with the loss of his son, Joseph, as we shall see in the next chapter. Joseph was carried away thirteen years before the death of Isaac. After many years Jacob learned providentially that Joseph was not only alive, but a great man in Egypt, and accepting the invitation of his son, went



RACHEL'S TOMB.

down into Egypt, and died there at the age of 147. His body was carried into Canaan by Joseph, with great pomp, and buried in the Cave of Machpelah.

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## JOSEPH.

ALTHOUGH Rachel was the most tenderly loved wife of Jacob, she was for many years childless, while her sister Leah became the mother of several children. At length, however, it pleased God to give her a son, and his name was called Joseph. For many years she bore no more children, and at length died in giving birth to Benjamin. Joseph was the best loved of all Jacob's children, and received proofs innumerable of his father's affection. This rendered him odious to his brethren, and appears to have made him so far forget himself as to become an informer upon them to their father. This filled up the measure of their dislike, which was by no means diminished by Joseph receiving from his father a "coat of many colors," as a token of his great love. To increase their hatred, Joseph dreamed two dreams, which even his father, who seems to have discerned their prophetic character, censured his imprudence in repeating. In the first dream, his brothers' sheaves of corn bowed down to his, which stood upright



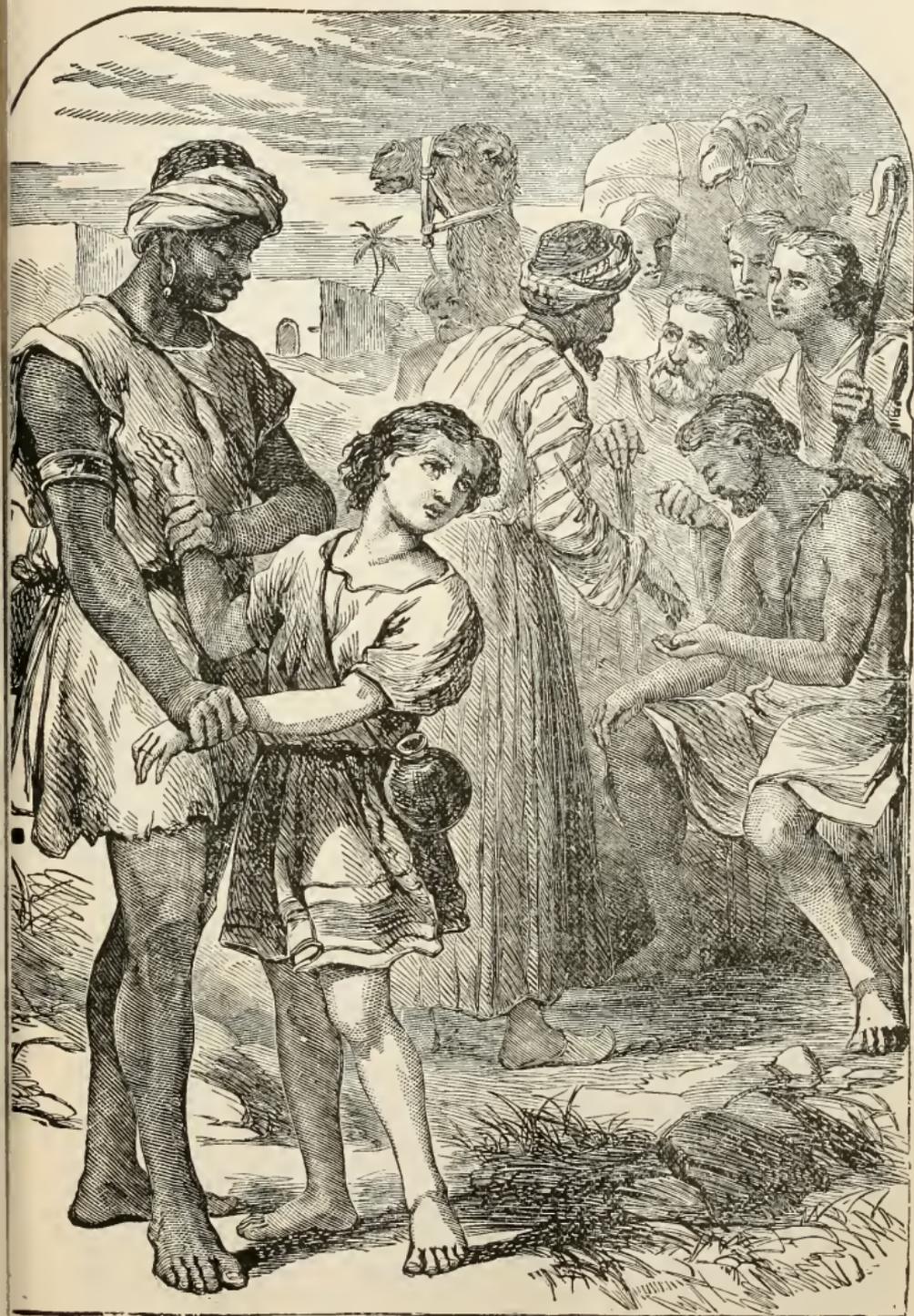
JOSEPH'S DREAM.

in their midst; a most fit type, not only of their submission to him, but of their suing to him for corn in Egypt. The second dream was of a wider and higher import. It included his father and his mother, as well as his brethren, (now defined as eleven) in the reverence done to him; and the emblems chosen leave little doubt that the dream prefigured the homage of all nature to Him, whose sign was the *star* of Bethlehem, and of whom Joseph was one of the clearest types. Joseph's brethren resolved to avert the humiliation by his death, re-enacting the part of Cain and Abel.

Jacob was now living at Hebron with Isaac, and his sons fed the flocks wherever they could find pasture. Sometimes Joseph accompanied his brethren, and sometimes he acted as a messenger between them and Jacob. Upon one occasion, his brethren being at Dothan, he was sent to them with a message from Jacob. They discerned his approach afar off, and determined to kill him. Reuben, however, persuaded them to avoid the actual shedding of their brother's blood, by casting him into an empty pit close at hand, from which he meant to rescue the lad, and restore him to his father. They seized the "dreamer" on his approach, and cast him into the pit, and during Reuben's absence, sold him to some Midianite merchants who passed by the place on their way to Egypt. Then they took his coat, and dipped it in the blood of a goat, and by showing it to Jacob, induced their sorrow-stricken father to believe that a wild beast had devoured Joseph.

Meanwhile, the lad was carried by the Midianite merchants into Egypt, and there sold to Potiphar, "an officer of Pharaoh, and Captain of the Guard." Potiphar's wife, tempted by Joseph's youthful beauty, proposed to him to become her paramour in a shameful intrigue. Rejecting her advances, he was falsely accused by her to his master, by whom he was thrown into prison. His service in Potiphar's house, and his prison life, make up a period of thirteen years, though it is uncertain how much time was embraced in either. He found favor with the "keeper of the prison," who seems to have been Potiphar's successor, and was given the general management of the prison and its inmates.

Among the prisoners were two of the king's great officers, the chief of the cup-bearers, and the chief of the cooks. They were committed to Joseph's care, and having dreamed each a dream which impressed them very greatly, they asked Joseph to interpret their visions for them. This he did; and, as he predicted, the one was hanged, and the other restored to his office within three days.



JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

The liberated officer had been requested, by Joseph, to endeavor to procure his liberty for him, and had promised to do so, but utterly forgot him for a space of two years. Then Pharaoh having been visited by two singular dreams, which none of his wise men could interpret, the chief of the cup-bearers remembered the Hebrew captive, who had so truthfully interpreted his own dream, and proposed to the king to send for him.

Upon hearing this, Pharaoh had the captive at once summoned into his presence, and, upon relating his dream, received the interpretation of it from Joseph, who informed him that he spake to him by the power of God, and not of his own learning. The dream had been two-fold, to mark its certain and speedy fulfilment. Seven years of an abundance, extraordinary even for fruitful Egypt, were to be followed by seven other years of the most terrible famine. In the first dream, the seven years of plenty were denoted by seven heifers, the sacred symbols of Isis, the goddess of production, which came up out of the river. These were beautiful and fat, and fed on the luxuriant marsh grass by the river's brink; but there came up after them seven lean and ugly cattle, which devoured the fat kine, but remained as lean as before. These typified the seven bad years. The second dream was still plainer: there sprang up a stalk of Egyptian wheat with seven full ears, denoting the seven years of plenty; then there sprang up another stalk, bearing seven thin and blasted ears, which destroyed the good ears, thus typifying the seven years of famine. Joseph went farther, and counselled Pharaoh to give some discreet person authority over all the land, that he might store up the surplus corn of the seven years of plenty against the seven years of famine. Pharaoh saw that none could be so fit for this office as Joseph himself, "in whom was the Spirit of God." He made him his Vicegerent over Egypt, and gave him his own signet, the indisputable mark of royal power. He received the Coptic name of ZAPHNATH-PAANEAH (*a revealer of secrets*); and married Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest or prince of On (Heliopolis), who bore him two sons. As a token of the oblivion of his former life, he named his elder son *Manasseh* (*forgetting*); and he called the other, *Ephraim* (*double fruitfulness*), in grateful commemoration of his blessings. When Joseph afterwards became his father's heir, the double share of the inheritance, which fell to him, was indicated by each of his sons ranking with the sons of Jacob as the head of a distinct tribe.

Joseph spent the seven years of plenty in gathering up provisions

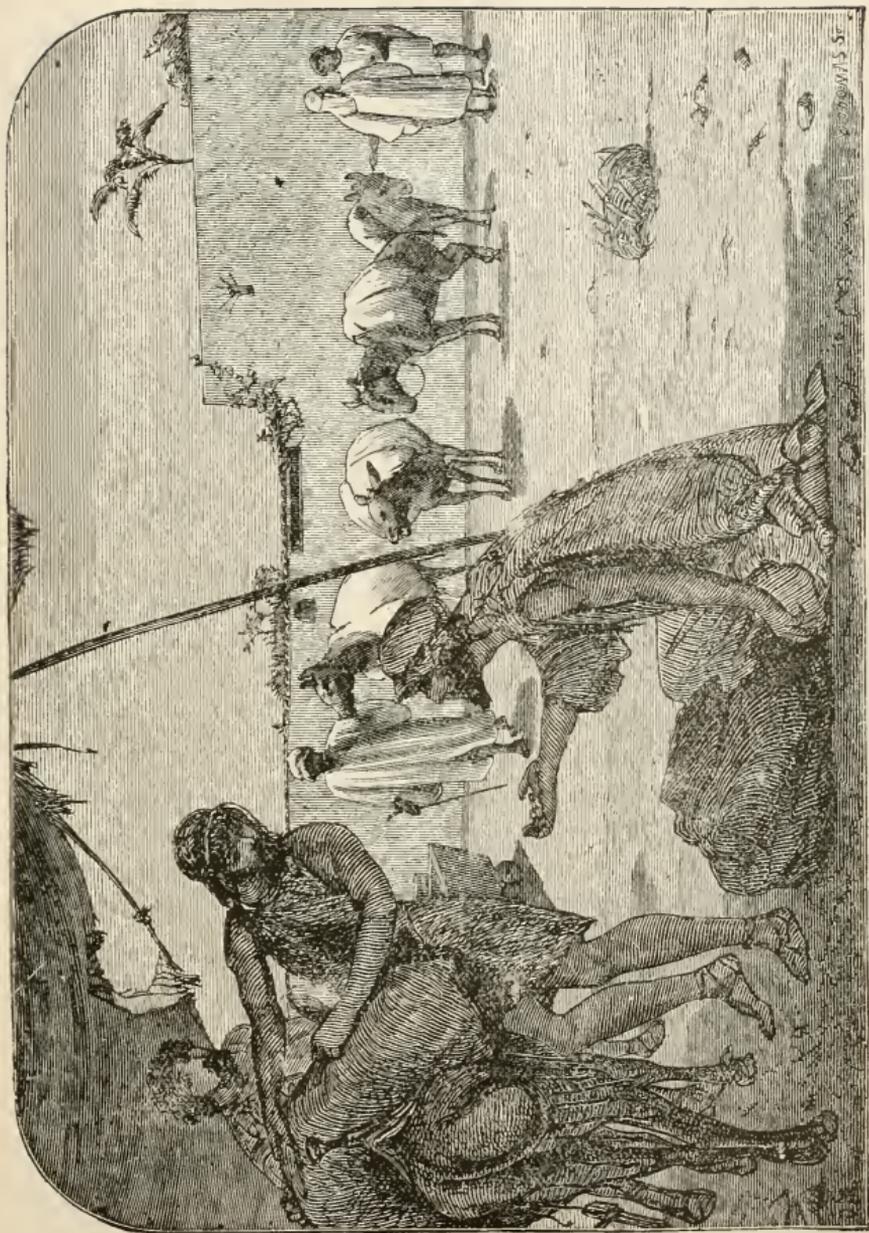


JOSEPH'S BRETHREN DIPPING HIS COAT IN BLOOD.

against the famine. These he acquired by doubling the ordinary import of one-tenth, and "he took up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years." The corn was stored in cities conveniently located, and wisely and firmly guarded by the royal officers. Then the famine set in, and "waxed sore in Egypt," and not only the Egyptians, but the neighboring countries, Canaan, and probably parts of Syria, Arabia, and Africa, sent in to Pharaoh to buy corn, "because the famine was so sore in all lands."

At the end of two years all the money of the Egyptians and Canaanites had been paid into Pharaoh's treasury. Then, at Joseph's suggestion, the king sold them corn for their cattle, first, and then for their lands. The people were removed from the country to the cities. They were permitted, however, to cultivate their lands, as tenants under the crown, paying a rent of one-fifth of the produce, and this became the permanent law of the tenure of land in Egypt; but the land of the priests was left in their own possession.

The pressure of the famine in Canaan forced Jacob to send his sons down to Egypt to buy corn; but he kept back Benjamin, "lest mischief should befall him." Joseph knew his brethren at once, but they failed to recognize him, and did humble reverence to him in his capacity of Vicegerent, thus fulfilling one of his dreams. He spoke to them harshly, and charged them with being spies come down to see the nakedness of the land. They protested their innocence, and related their history to him, thus giving him the news of his father and brother, which he most longed to hear. Probably to punish them for their cruel treatment of himself, he put them all in prison, and kept them there three days. Then his anger cooled, and he dismissed them all but Simeon, whom he kept as a hostage for the appearance of Benjamin, whom they promised to bring down to him. This they did, Jacob reluctantly giving his consent to the journey of Benjamin into Egypt. Joseph had them all taken to his own house, where they dined with him. He was much affected by the sight of Benjamin, his own mother's son, and could scarcely refrain from making himself known to them. Yet, wishing to satisfy himself that they were true brothers to Benjamin, he caused his own cup to be put in the lad's sack, and, when they had gotten fairly started, sent his guard in pursuit of them. The pursuers found the cup in Benjamin's sack, and conducted him back to the city. His brethren voluntarily accompanied him to share his doom. Joseph, when they were brought before him, told them that all might return home but the one in



THE MONEY FOUND IN THE SACKS OF JOSEPH'S BRETHERN.

whose sack the cup had been found. Judah, who had been the first to propose that Joseph should be sold as a slave, now ventured to address the Vicegerent in a speech of touching eloquence, urging him to send the lad back to his father, and take him (Judah) as a slave in his place.

His noble appeal broke down the self-control of the great prince, and in a broken voice he declared to them that he was their long lost brother, and to quiet their fears, said, "Be not grieved or angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither. It was not you that sent me hither, but God." Then followed that tender reconciliation which is so beautifully described in the sacred narrative.

When the king heard that the strangers were Joseph's brethren, he was delighted, and sent them a cordial invitation to bring their father and their families, and all their possessions, and come and dwell in the land of Egypt. He also provided them with wagons and provisions.

The removal of the chosen family to Egypt, was an essential part of the great plan which God had traced out to their father, Abraham.

Jacob was greatly astonished by the message of Joseph and Pharaoh, but was encouraged by God, who appeared to him in a vision, and told him to go down into Egypt, promising to bring him up again in the person of his descendants. Thus encouraged, he set out at once with all his house, including himself and excluding Joseph and his two sons, seventy-seven in all. He was warmly welcomed by Joseph, who presented his father and his brethren to Pharaoh. The king gave them the land of Goshen or Rameses, the best pasture ground in Egypt, for a dwelling-place, and assigned them the care of his own flocks, and Joseph fed them during the remaining five years of the famine.

Jacob died seventeen years after his removal to Egypt, and his body was carried by Joseph to Canaan, with great pomp, and buried in the tomb of his fathers.

On their return to Egypt, Joseph's brethren, fearing the effect of their father's removal, sought his forgiveness and made submission to him. He generously assured them that he harbored no ill against them, "and comforted them and spoke kindly unto them."

Joseph survived his father for fifty-four years, still enjoying as we may assume, his honors at the court under the same dynasty, though possibly under a succession of kings. He saw Ephraim's children of the third generation, and had Manasseh's grand-children on his knees. At length he died at the age of 110. He was embalmed and placed



EMBALMING THE BODY OF JOSEPH

in a sarcophagus, but not buried. For before his death he had predicted to his brethren their return from Egypt to the promised land; and had bound them by an oath to carry his remains with them.

Through all their afflictions, the children of Israel kept the sacred deposit of Joseph's bones, and when God led the people out of Egypt, Moses did not forget the trust. When they were settled in Canaan, they buried Joseph at Shechem, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought from the Amorites, and which he gave as a special inheritance to Joseph.

## MOSES.

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." So begins the story of the affliction of the Israelites in Egypt, and of that marvellous deliverance, which has given to the second book in the Bible its Greek title of Exodus. The date of this event may be placed about or after the beginning of the sixteenth century, B. C., according to the common chronology; and it probably signifies a change of dynasty. But whether that change consisted in the expulsion of the Shepherds, and the rise of the great Eighteenth Dynasty of native kings is unfortunately most uncertain. At all events, we see the new monarch dreading some war, in which the enemy might be aided by the people of Israel, who were "more numerous and mightier than his own subjects," and dreading also their escape out of the land. He, therefore, adopted the policy of reducing them to slavery; which was made more rigorous the more the people increased. Their labor consisted in field work, and especially in making bricks and building the "treasure cities," (probably for storing corn) Pithom and Raamses. Still they multiplied and grew; and Pharaoh adopted a more cruel and atrocious course. He commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill the male children at their birth; but to preserve the females. The midwives, however, "feared God," and disobeyed the king; and they were rewarded by the distinction given to their families in Israel. Their names were Shiphrah and Puah. The king then commanded the Egyptians to drown the new-born sons of the Israelites in the river, but to save the daughters.

Pharaoh's edict of infanticide led, by the providence of God, to the rearing up at his own court of the future deliverer of Israel. *Amram*, the son of Kohath, son of Levi, had espoused Jochebed, who was also of the



PORT OF ACRE.

tribe of Levi, and they already had two children, a daughter called Miriam, (the same name as the Mary of the New Testament) and a son named Aaron. Another son was born soon after the king's edict, and the beauty of the new-born babe induced the mother to make extraordinary efforts for its preservation from the general destruction of the male children of Israel. For three months the child was concealed in the house. Then his mother placed him in a small boat or basket of papyrus, closed against the water by bitumen. This was placed in the bulrushes, by the side of one of the canals of the Nile. Then the mother departed, as if unable to bear the sight; but the sister remained to watch her brother's fate. Soon after the daughter of the king came down to bathe in the sacred stream, and seeing the basket in the flags, sent one of her attendants to bring it to her. Upon opening the basket, she at once recognized the infant as a Hebrew child; but "its cry touched her heart, and she determined to rear it as her own. Overjoyed at this the babe's sister ventured to recommend to the princess a Hebrew nurse, and upon the acceptance of her offer, brought the child's own mother, to whom the princess confided it. The child was brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and the memory of the incident was cherished in the name given to the foundling of the water-side, whether according to its Hebrew or Egyptian form. Its Hebrew form is *Mōsheh*, from *Mâshâh*, "to draw out"—"because I have drawn him out of the water."



MOSES IN HIS LITTLE LIFE-BOAT.

From this time, for many years, Moses must be considered as an Egyptian. In the Pentateuch this period is a blank; but in the New Testament he is represented as "educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and as "mighty in words and deeds." But the time at last arrived, when he was resolved to reclaim his nationality. He was now forty years old, and the sufferings of his countrymen began to move him as they had never done before. Seeing an Israelite suffering the bastinado from an Egyptian, and thinking they were alone, he slew the Egyptian, and buried the corpse in the sand. The fire of patriotism, which thus turns him into a deliverer from the oppressors, turns him into the peace-maker of the oppressed. The malignity of his countrymen brought the story of the death of the Egyptian to the ears of Pharaoh, and the life of Moses was threatened; not for the first time, if we may believe the tradition. He fled into Midian. Beyond the fact that it was in or near the Peninsula of Sinai, its precise situation is unknown. There was a famous well surrounded by tanks for the watering of the flocks of the Bedouin herdsmen. By this well the fugitive seated himself, and watched the gathering of the sheep. There were the Arabian shepherds, and there were also seven maidens, whom the shepherds rudely drove away from the water. Moses, indignant at such an outrage, came to the assistance of the maidens, and drove off the shepherds "and watered their flock." They returned unusually soon to their father, and told him of their adventure, and, in gratitude for the service thus rendered, the man invited Moses to his house. The matter ended in Moses' marrying Zipporah, the daughter of his host, who was Jethro, the priest or prince of Midian. He also became his shepherd and slave, and for forty years we must regard him as an Arabian.

The chief effect of this stay in Arabia is on Moses himself. It was in the seclusion and simplicity of his shepherd life that he received his call as a prophet. The king from whose anger he had fled had died, but the oppression of the Israelites under his successor was even more severe. "They cried, and their cry came up to God by reason of their bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God knew them."

The scene chosen for the revelation to Moses of his divine mission was the same amid which the Israelites, led out by him from Egypt, were to see God's presence again revealed, and to receive the law from his own voice. Unchanged in its awful solitary grandeur from

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH.



that day to this, it is one of the most remarkable spots on the surface of the earth. The Peninsula of Sinai is the promontory enclosed between the two arms of the Red Sea, and culminating at its southern part in the terrific mass of granite rocks known as Sinai. This desert bordered on the country of Jethro.

While Moses kept his flocks on this mountain he beheld one of the well known acacia trees (or thorn tree of the desert) burning and crackling with a fierce fire, "and the bush was not consumed." As he came near, to discover the cause of this strange sight, he was saluted by an awful voice, which informed him that he stood in the presence of God, and commanded him to put off his shoes, for the place was holy ground. Moses did as he was commanded, and "hid his face," for he could not bear to look upon the awful sight. The Almighty then informed him that he had heard the cry of the Israelites, and was come down to deliver them, and to lead them into the promised land; and called Moses to be his messenger to Pharaoh, and the leader of his people. Moses pleaded his unworthiness, but was assured of God's presence till his mission should be fulfilled by bringing God's people to worship in that mountain. Then another difficulty arose. So corrupted were the people by the idolatry of Egypt, that they would not know what deity was meant by "the God of their fathers." They would ask, "What is his name?" Besides the common name expressive of their divinity, the gods of the heathen had proper names, Amun, Baal, and the like; and that He might be distinguished from all these, God revealed to Moses the name by which the God of the Hebrews has ever since been known, JEHOVAH, the self-existent and eternally the same;—He that *is*, and *was*, and *ever will be what he is*—"I AM THAT I AM!—*What that is*, I have written on the consciousness of man; I have revealed it by word and act to your fathers; and I ever will be to my people what I was to them;" for He repeats this character once more, and adds, "This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

God then unfolded his plan of deliverance. He bade Moses repeat to the elders of Israel the revelation he had now received. He assured him that they would believe, and bade him go with them and demand of Pharaoh, in the name of God, leave to go three days' journey into the wilderness, to sacrifice to Jehovah. He warned him of Pharaoh's refusal, and announced the signs and wonders he would work to make him yield, and ended by commanding the people to spoil the Egyptians of their jewels.



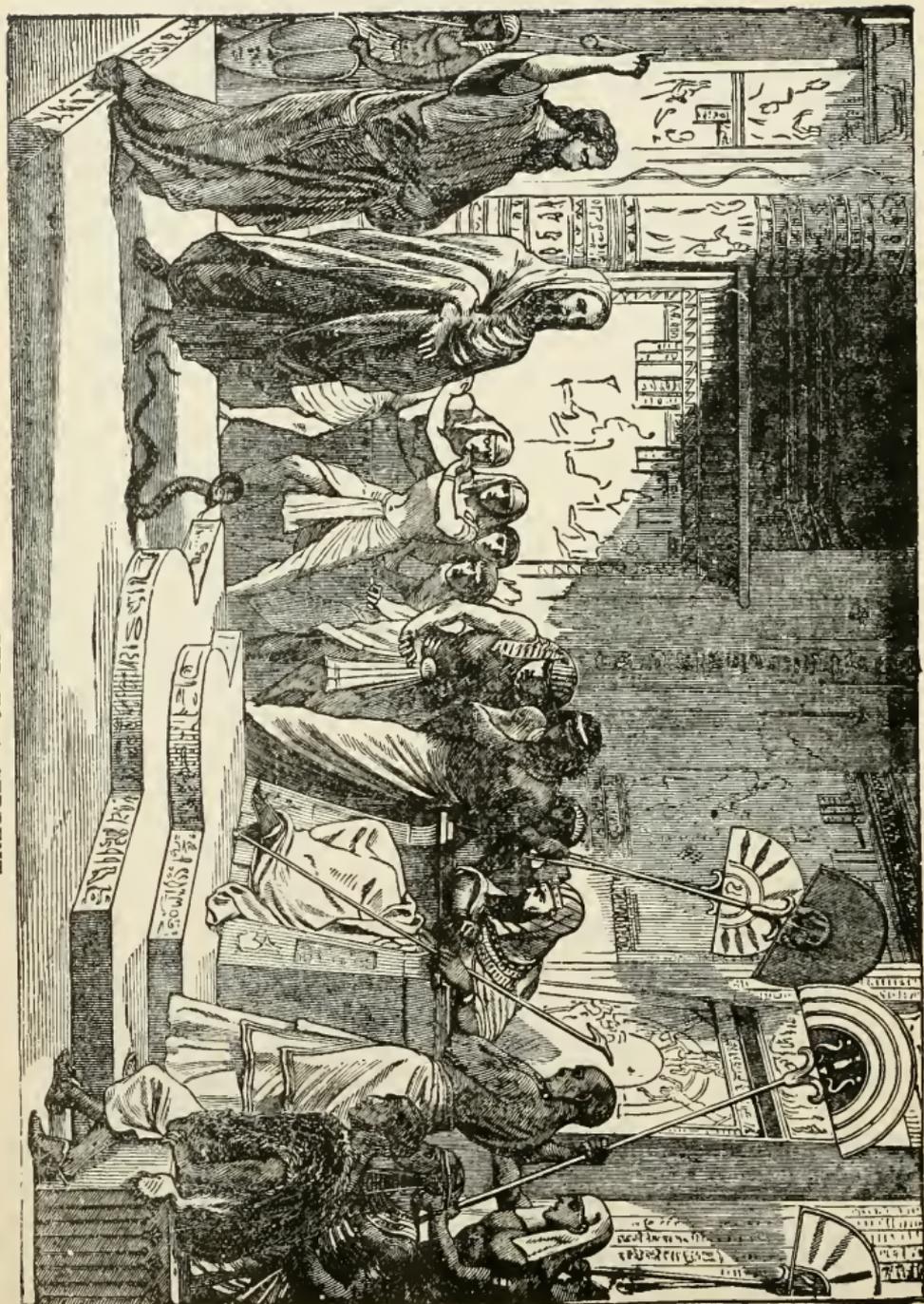
To these assurances God added two signs, to relieve the doubts of Moses about his reception by the people. Each of them had its significance. The hand made leprous and again cured, indicated the power by which he should deliver the people whom the Egyptians regarded as lepers. The shepherd's staff, first transformed into a serpent, the Egyptian symbol for the Evil Spirit (Typhon), and then restored to its former shape, became the "rod of Moses" and "of God," the sceptre of his rule as the shepherd of his people, and the instrument of the miracles which helped and guided them, and which confounded and destroyed their enemies. To these signs, which were exhibited on the spot, was added a third, the power to turn the water of the Nile to blood.

But the more his mission is made clear to him, the more is Moses staggered by its greatness. He pleads his want of eloquence, which seems to have amounted to an impediment in his speech, a sorry qualification for an ambassador to a hostile king. Notwithstanding the promise, that He who made man's mouth, and has command of all the senses, would be with him, and teach him what he should say, he desires to devolve the whole mission on some other. Then did God, in anger, punish his reluctance, though in mercy he met his objections, by giving a share of the honor, which might have been his alone, to his brother Aaron, a man who could speak well. But yet the word was not to be Aaron's own. He was to be the mouth of Moses; and Moses was to be to him as God, the direct channel of the divine revelation. The God of power became "Aaron's rod," though the power itself was put forth by the word of Moses. The two great functions conferred by the divine mission were divided: Moses became the *prophet*, and Aaron the *priest*; and the whole arrangement exhibits the great principle of *mediation*.

Moses obtained his father-in-law's permission to return to his brethren in Egypt; and he received the signal of God for his departure, in the assurance that "the men were dead that sought his life." He set out, accompanied by his wife, and at an inn at which he tarried for the night was met by God, and compelled to circumcise his son, which rite had hitherto been neglected. He then sent his wife and son back to his father-in-law, where they remained until Moses rejoined them at Rephidim.

The mission of Moses to Pharaoh was summed up in the statements:—that God claimed the liberty of Israel as his first-born son; and if Pharaoh refused to let him go, He would slay his first-born.

AARON'S ROD CHANGED TO A SERPENT.



To this last infliction, all the plagues of Egypt were but preludes. After parting with his family, Moses continued his journey, and was met by Aaron, as God had foretold to him, and together they went down into Egypt, and assembled the elders of the Israelites. "And Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of all the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

Moses and Aaron next sought the presence of Pharaoh, and in the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, demanded leave for His people to hold a feast in the wilderness. Pharaoh not only refused to let the people go, but also ignored Jehovah as a God, and increased the burdens of the Israelites. Then began that great series of plagues by which the Israelites and Egyptians received such incontestable proofs of the power of God. First the water of the Nile was turned to blood; then the land was cursed with frogs, then with lice, which swarmed on both man and beast; then the air was filled with such dense swarms of flies, or beetles, that they "devoured the land." This caused Pharaoh to consent to the proposed journey of the Israelites; but as soon as the plague was removed, he refused to let them go. Then God smote all the beasts of Egypt with a disease. These cattle were not only property, but Egyptian deities; but they died with the plague. The king, however, still refused to let the people go. Then the Egyptians were smitten in their own persons with the plague of boils and blains, a terrible species of black leprosy; but still Pharaoh's heart was hardened. Then the land was visited with a terrific storm of hail, mingled with fire, which destroyed all the growing crops, and every man and beast exposed to it. Pharaoh entreated Moses to intercede and procure the cessation of the plague, but, when this was done, still refused to let the people go. Then God covered the land with locusts, which ate up all the fire and hail had spared, and caused the Egyptians such sore trouble that the king again consented to let the people go; but, when the plague was removed, he again withdrew his consent. Then God sent a thick darkness over the land, which lasted three days. This darkness was frightful, and induced the king once more to consent to let the people go, if they would leave their flocks and herds behind. This concession made, he forbade Moses and Aaron from coming to him again.

The land of Goshen, in which the Israelites dwelt, had been ex-



empted from all these plagues; and now that the last, and most fearful of all was at hand, God commanded his people to institute a ceremony called the Passover, which should always be to them a memorial of their great deliverance from the terrible judgments with which he visited Egypt.

The day, reckoned from sunset to sunset, in the night of which the first born of Egypt were slain, and the Israelites departed, was the fourteenth of the Jewish month Nisan, or Abib (March to April), which began about the time of the vernal equinox, and which was now made the first month of the ecclesiastical year. This was the great day of the feast, when the paschal supper was eaten. But the preparations had already been made by the command of God. On the tenth day of the month each household had chosen a yearling lamb (or kid, for either might be used), without blemish. This "Paschal Lamb" was set apart till the evening which began the fourteenth day, and was killed as a sacrifice at that moment in every family of Israel. But before it was eaten, its blood was sprinkled, with a bunch of hyssop, on the lintel and door posts of the house; the divinely appointed sign, that Jehovah might *pass over* that house, when He passed through the land to destroy the Egyptians. Thus guarded, and forbidden to go out of doors till the morning, the families of Israel ate the lamb, roasted and not boiled, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The bones were not suffered to be broken, but they must be consumed by fire in the morning, with any of the flesh that was left uneaten. The people were to eat in haste, and equipped for their coming journey. For seven days after the feast, from the fourteenth to the twenty-first, they were to eat only unleavened bread, and to have no leaven in their houses, under penalty of death. The fourteenth and twenty-first were to be kept with a holy convocation and Sabbatic rest. The Passover was to be kept to Jehovah throughout their generations, "a feast by an ordinance forever." No stranger might share the feast, unless he were first circumcised; but strangers were bound to observe the days of unleavened bread. To mark more solemnly the perpetual nature and vast importance of the feast, fathers were specially enjoined to instruct their children in its meaning through all future time.

As the Passover was killed at sunset, we may suppose that the Israelites had finished the paschal supper, and were awaiting in awful suspense, the next great event, when the midnight cry of anguish arose through all the land of Egypt. At that moment, Jehovah slew



MIRIAM'S SONG OF TRIUMPH.

the first born in every house, from the king to the captive; and, by smiting also all the first born of cattle, he "executed judgment on all the gods of Egypt."

The hardened heart of Pharaoh was broken by the stroke; and all his people joined with him to hurry the Israelites away. The Egyptians willingly gave them the jewels of silver and gold and the raiment, which they asked for by the command of Moses; and so "they spoiled the Egyptians." They had not even time to prepare food, but took the dough before it was leavened, in their kneading-troughs, bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders, and baked unleavened cakes at their first halt. But amid all this haste, some military order of march was observed, and Moses forgot not to carry away the bones of Joseph. The host numbered 600,000 men on foot, besides children, from which the total of souls is estimated at not less than 2,500,000. But they were accompanied by a "mixed multitude," or great rabble, composed probably of Egyptians of the lowest caste, who proved a source of disorder. Their march was guided by Jehovah himself, who, from its commencement to their entrance into Canaan, displayed his banner, the *Shekinah*, in their van. "Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night."

This Exodus, or departure of the Israelites from Egypt, closed the 430 years of their pilgrimage, which began from the call of Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees. They set out from Rameses, in the land of Goshen, and marched directly to the head of the Red Sea, which they reached at the close of the third day. Here they were overtaken by the army of Pharaoh, which the king in his madness had led out against them. They were unprepared for battle, and were greatly alarmed by the appearance of the Egyptians; but God made them a passage through the waters of the Red Sea, and brought them in safety to the opposite shore. The Egyptians, attempting to pursue them, were drowned in the sea. The arms of the pursuers were washed ashore, and furnished Israel with the implements of warfare.

For a short distance, the march lay along the Red Sea, after which the host entered the *Wilderness of Sin*. Here the people murmured because their provisions were exhausted, and God sent them manna, which was rained down from heaven, and continued this supply until they reached the promised land. Soon after the appearance of the manna, they were treacherously attacked by the Amalekites, whom they defeated in a great battle. Then they pressed on towards Sinai



GATHERING MANNA.

and encamped at the foot of the mountain on the first day of the third month after their leaving Egypt.

Here they remained eleven months and twenty days, and during this time the Law was given to Moses, with such wonderful and magnificent displays of the power and glory of God, that the people were sore afraid. But in spite of this, they made a golden calf and worshipped it as a god, and thus called down upon themselves the anger of the Lord. They were severely punished, and the Law was a second time given to Moses, as he had broken the first tables in his just anger at the idolatry of the people.

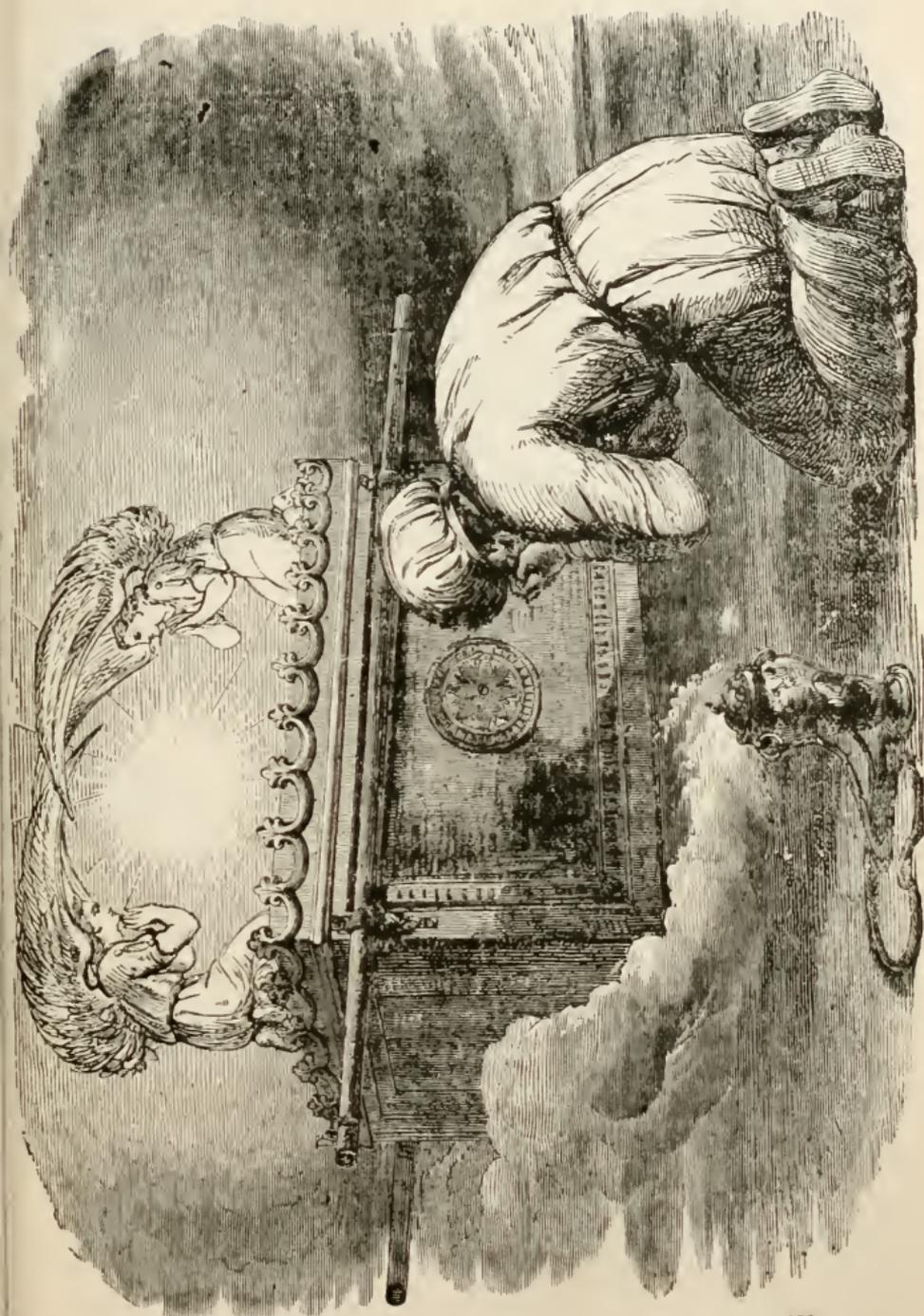
It is the distinguishing attribute of genius that it is equal to emergencies; the greater and more unexpected the emergency, the brighter shines the genius that copes with it and gains the mastery. Moses was not an ordinary man. He had been schooled at the Court of Egypt, and in the wide pastures where he tended the flocks of Jethro. He had learned to be self-reliant; he was born to be a leader; difficulties only aroused his heroic spirit; strong material was put into him, and although meek he was firm and majestic, a man whose face could be made to shine, and whose hands were strong enough to carry tables of stone.

For forty years Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness, commanding their armies in battle, directing their movements in the long march which was imposed upon them for their sin in refusing to enter the land when first led to it, and pleading with Jehovah for them when their sins called down upon them the terrors of the divine wrath. The people tried him sorely, but he never failed in his duty, but, as far as man could do so, kept them true to the worship of Jehovah, and was to them a prophet, a law-giver, a great leader, a judge, a general, and a most loving father. We have not space to present here even an outline of the great events of his life, but must refer the reader to the sacred narrative for them.

After thirty-eight years of wandering in the Arabian desert, the chosen people again approached the borders of Palestine, this time to enter in and possess the promised land. Moses therefore knew that the day of his death could not be distant, for he had been warned that it was not his privilege to lead the people who had so long engaged his care to their inheritance, but only to behold it afar off. Indeed, his years had already been protracted to the utmost span to which man's life then reached; but although not less than 120 years old, his eye was not yet dim nor his natural strength abated. "His last care,"

THE BRAZEN SERPENT



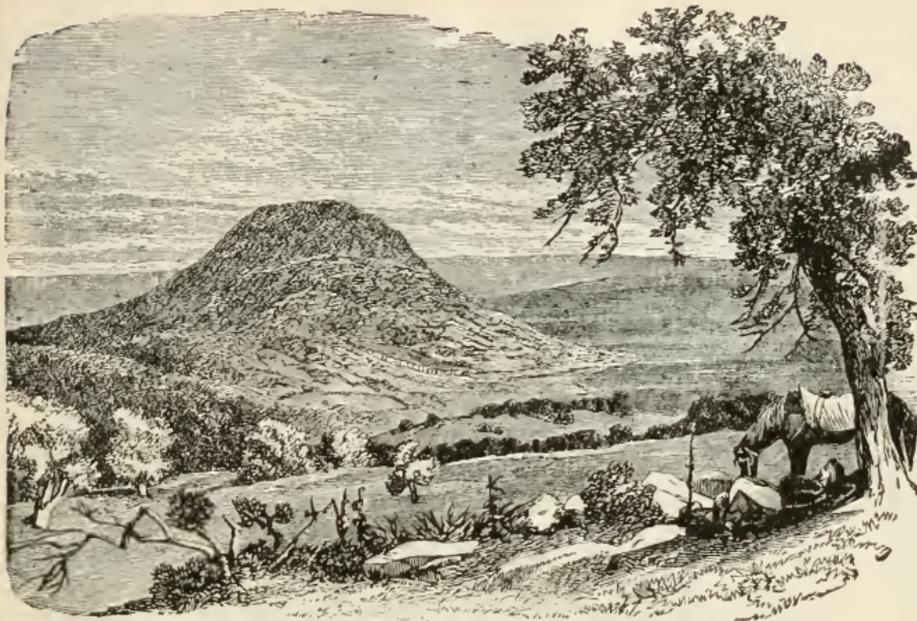


says Professor Jahn, "was to write for the people an earnest exhortation to obedience, in which he alluded to the instances of the kindness, severity, and providence of God, which the Hebrews had already experienced; he exhibited in a strong light the sanctions of the law; he repeated the most important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

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

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

This done, he commissioned Joshua to lead Israel into the land of promise, after which he uttered his prophetic blessing of the tribes, and went up the mountain-side to render himself into the hands of his Maker. "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the Mountain of Nebo, the summit of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, even to the uttermost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the



MOUNT NEBO.

word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.”

The children of Israel mourned for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; and they rendered obedience unto Joshua, the son of Nun, on whom Moses had laid his hands, and who was full of the spirit of wisdom.

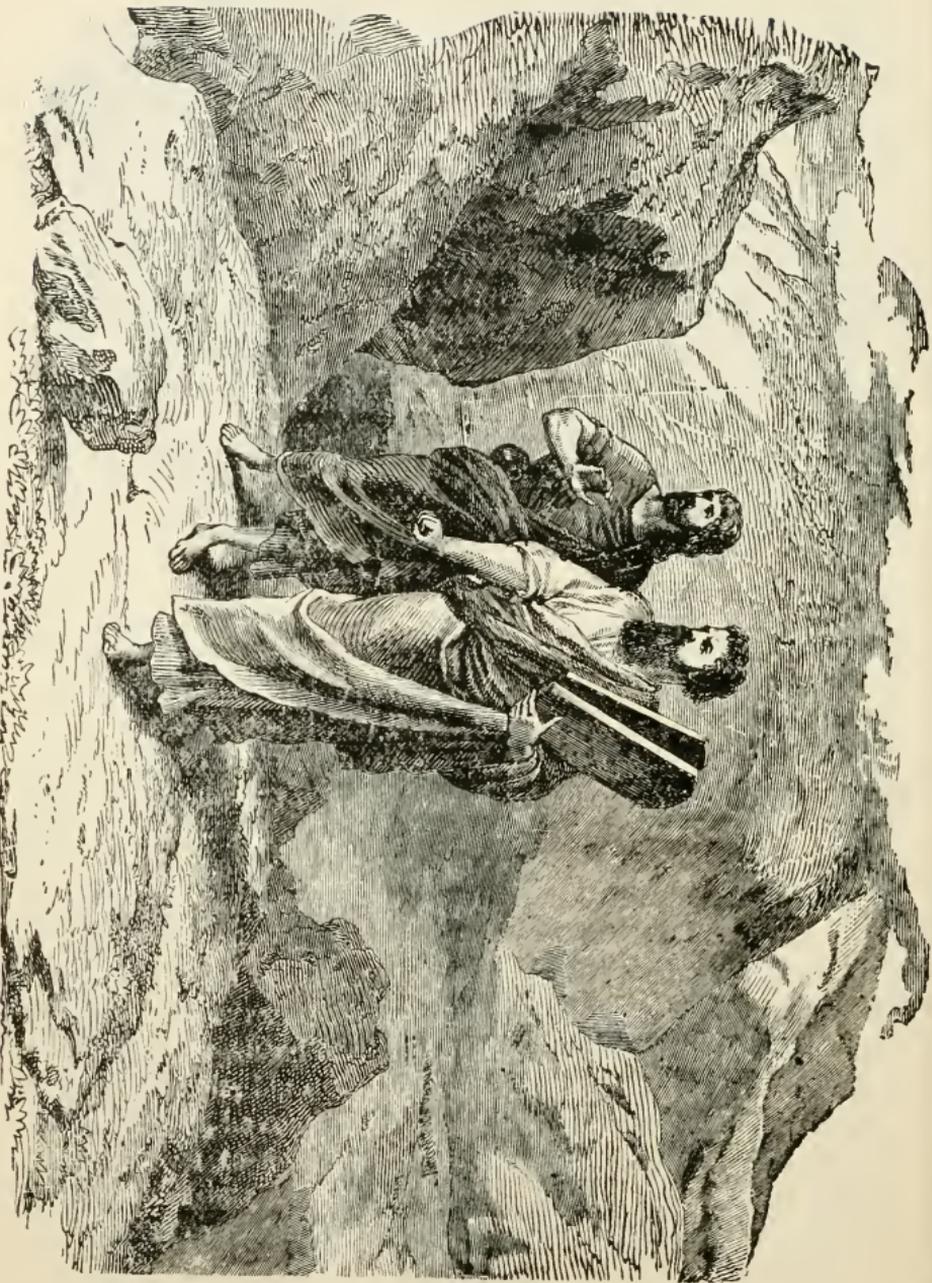
Centuries afterwards we behold the great lawgiver, standing in glory on the Mount of the Transfiguration, with Elias, the great vindicator of the law which had been given through him, and conversing with the great Messiah of the great act which was at once to fulfil the whole law, and to inaugurate the new and better era of grace. No greater honor could have been paid him than to be permitted thus to bear witness of the Messiah of whom “he wrote.”

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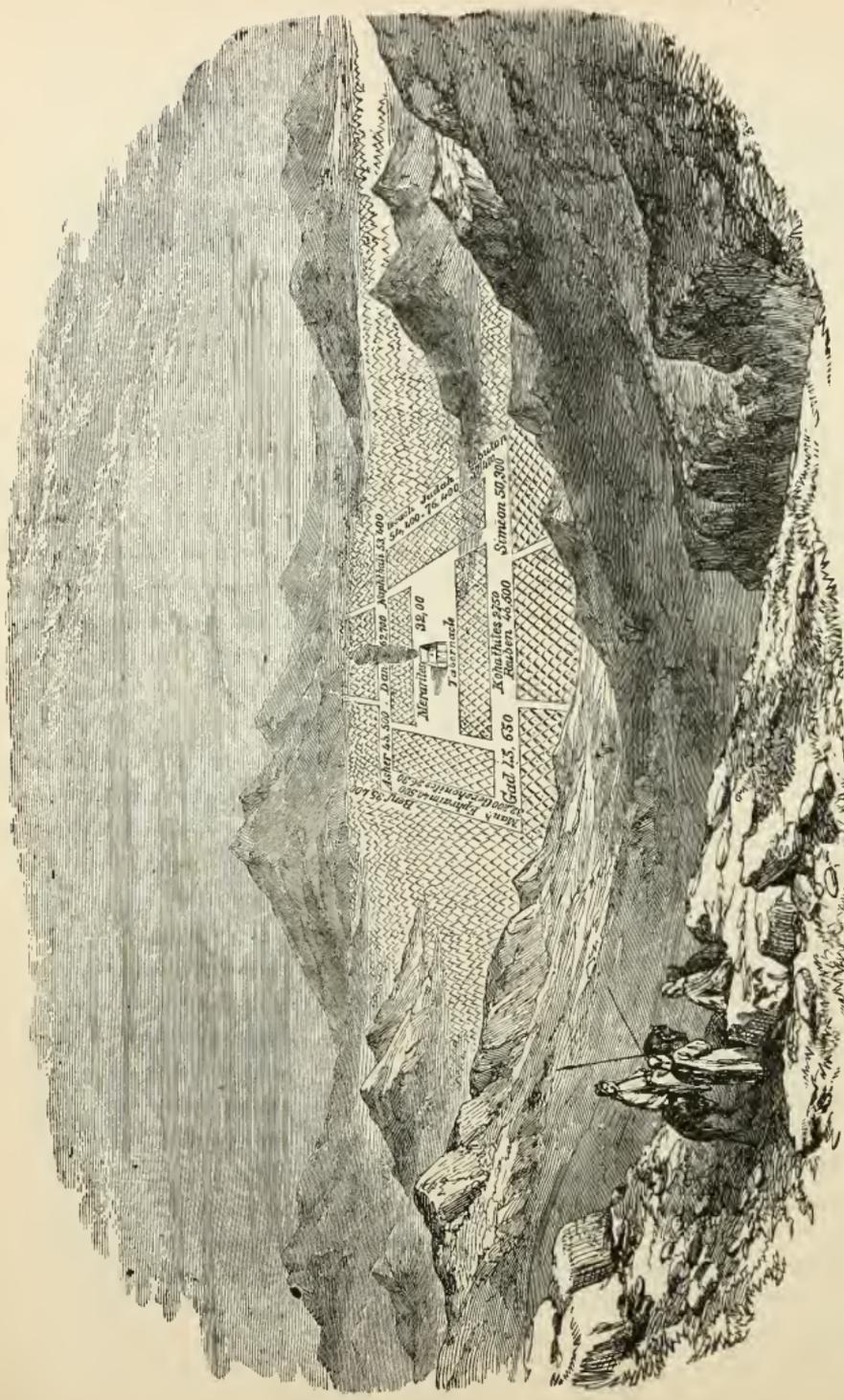
## JOSHUA.

THE successor of Moses was a man worthy of the great honor to which Jehovah called him. He was the son of Nun, of the tribe of

MOSES AND JOSHUA BEARING THE LAW.



Ephraim, and grew up a slave in the brick-fields of Egypt. Born about the time when Moses fled into Midian, he was a man of nearly forty years when he saw the ten plagues, and shared in the hurried triumph of the Exodus. He is mentioned first in connection with the fight against Amalek, at Rephidim, when he was chosen by Moses to lead the Israelites. When Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive for the first time the two Tables, Joshua, who is called his minister or servant, accompanied him part of the way, and was the first to accost him in his descent. Soon afterwards he was one of the twelve chiefs who were sent to explore the land of Canaan, and one of the two who gave an encouraging report of their journey. The 40 years of wandering were almost passed, and Joshua was one of the few survivors, when Moses, shortly before his death, was directed to invest Joshua solemnly and publicly with definite authority in connection with Eleazar the priest, over the people. And after this was done, God himself gave Joshua a charge by the mouth of the dying Lawgiver. Under the direction of God, again renewed, Joshua, now in his 85th year, assumed the command of the people at Shittim, sent spies into Jericho, crossed the Jordan, fortified a camp at Gilgal, circumcised the people, kept the passover, and was visited by the Captain of the Lord's Host. A miracle made the fall of Jericho more terrible to the Canaanites. In the first attack upon Ai the Israelites were repulsed: it fell at the second assault, and the invaders marched to the relief of Gibeon. In the great battle of Beth-horon the Amorites were signally routed, and the south country was open to the Israelites. Joshua returned to the camp at Gilgal, master of half of Palestine. In the north, at the waters of Merom, he defeated the Canaanites under Jabin king of Hazor; and pursued his success to the gates of Zidon, and into the Valley of Lebanon under Hermon. In six years, six tribes with thirty-one petty chiefs were conquered; amongst others the Anakim—the old terror of Israel—are especially recorded as destroyed everywhere except in Philistia. Joshua, now stricken in years, proceeded, in conjunction with Eleazar and the heads of the tribes, to complete the division of the conquered land; and when all was allotted, Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim was assigned by the people as Joshua's peculiar inheritance. The Tabernacle of the congregation was established at Shiloh, six cities of refuge were appointed, forty-eight cities assigned to the Levites, and the warriors of the trans-Jordanic tribes dismissed in peace to their homes. After an interval of rest, Joshua convoked an assembly from all Israel. He delivered



THE CAMP OF ISRAEL.

Dan 52,900  
 Mercurius 32,00  
 Aphubites 229  
 Stanton 50,500  
 7,000 Priests  
 4,000 500  
 50,000  
 44,000  
 630  
 50,000  
 70,000  
 50,000

two solemn addresses, reminding them of the marvellous fulfilment of God's promises to their fathers, and warning them of the conditions on which their prosperity depended; and lastly, he caused them to renew their covenant with God, at Shechem, a place already famous in connection with Jacob and Joseph. He died at the age of 110 years, and was buried in his own city, Timnath-serah.

## RUTH.

A MAN named Elimelech, an Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah, had been driven by a famine into the country of Moab, with his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. The sons married women of Moab, named Orpah and Ruth; and the family resided in that country for ten years. The father died and both his sons; and Naomi rose up to return to her own land. She gave her daughters-in-law leave to go back to their families; but both declared they would return with her. On her urging the point for their own sakes, Orpah bade her an affectionate farewell, and went back "to her people and her gods;" but Ruth cast her lot wholly with Naomi, saying to her, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death do part me and thee." And when Naomi "saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her," and they set out on their journey back to the land of Israel.

They reached Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest, and Ruth sought subsistence as a gleaner. What followed turns entirely upon the provisions of the Mosaic law for the "Levirate" marriage of a widow and the redemption of her husband's inheritance by the "Goël," or nearest kinsman. A wealthy and powerful man of Bethlehem, named Boaz, whose grandfather, Nashon, was prince of the tribe of Judah, was a very near kinsman (though not the nearest) to Naomi's deceased husband, Elimelech, and consequently to Ruth, as the widow of his son. It chanced that Ruth went to glean in this man's field; and the mind, distressed with the fatal story of other inhabitants of the same city, finds exquisite relief in the picture of Boaz visiting the gleaners, not like a grudging farmer, but in the spirit of kindness prescribed by Moses: blessed them and blessed by them in the name of Jehovah.



RUTH.

It is pleasant to find one who had been so unfortunate as Ruth coming into a happier estate. She was a true woman, and in warmth of love and devotedness to her newly-found mother, she shines forth as one of the most attractive characters in the Old Testament. It is not pleasant to be suddenly plunged into misfortune as she was, but it may be profitable. Hers was a hard lot, but hers was a fortunate ending, as was that of Job after he was rent and bruised by unparalleled afflictions.

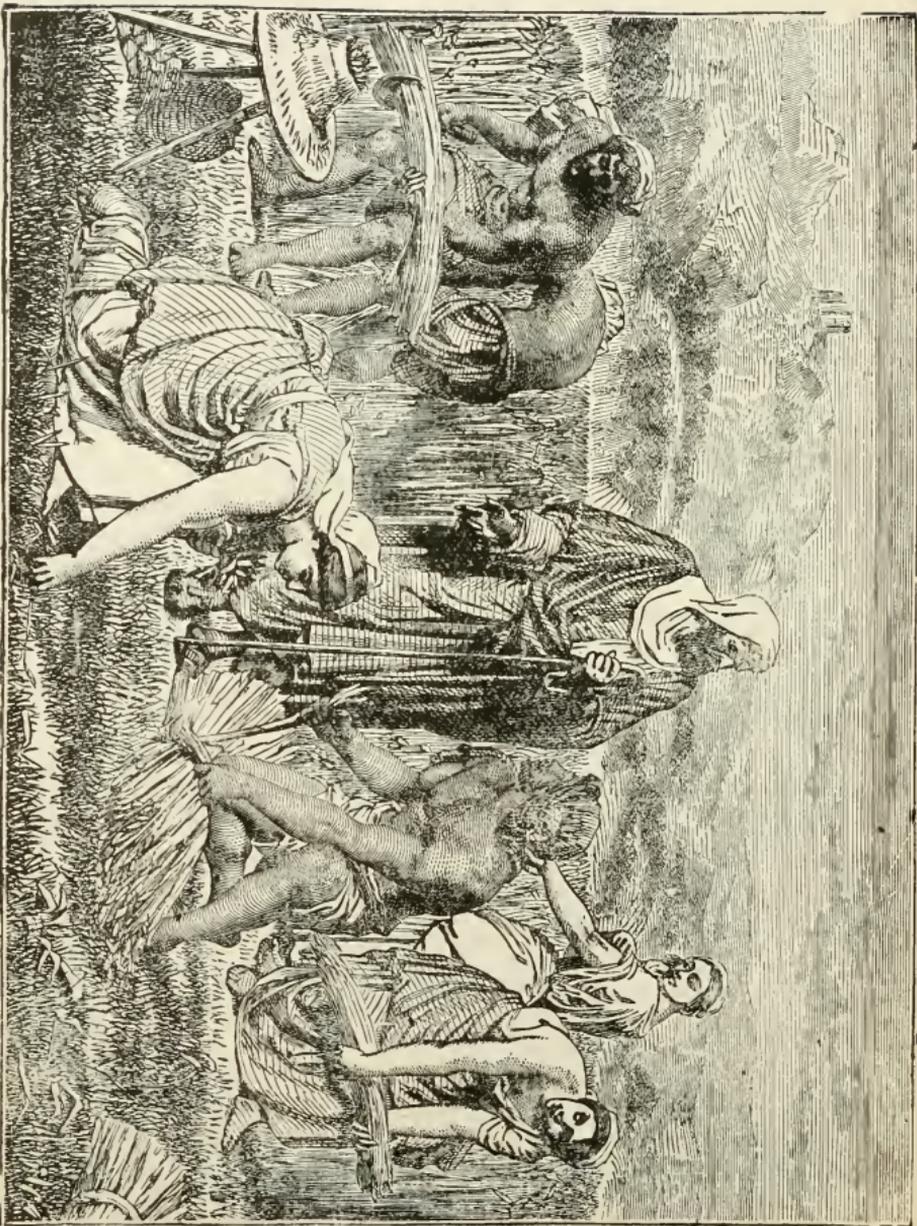
One very marked trait, that of courage, and another, that of industry, both exhibited finely in Ruth, account largely for her good fortune. She was not ashamed to work. Her soft hands deemed it no dishonor to grow hard and tough. She believed a sun-browned face, gained in the field of honest industry, was no detraction from a woman's beauty. One of the most pithy writers of Scotland, an essayist who combines singular good sense with a singularly pungent way of stating it, has eulogized the individual who can "come down," but who "cannot give up." The Phoenix rises from its ashes, bright in plumage and strong of wing, and soars toward the sky. If one must "come down" he need not "give up," but can rise triumphant from the dust. It is this hope, this courage, this acceptance of the situation and making the best of it, that gives such a charm to this woman whose simple story is read by all the world.

There was a willingness to do what she had the ability to do. If she could not seize a sickle and clip and cut as a man would, gathering heavy sheaves, she could at least stoop down and pick up the scattered stalks, and could glean where she could not do more. It was well, too, for her to be employed, and have her mind occupied. The tendency of human nature is to nurse its sorrows, to pet its griefs, and this is the most ineffectual method to cure the trouble. Better forget it by finding something else to think about. Ruth had less time and disposition to complain and mourn than she would have had if poverty had not pushed her into the harvest-field.

And it is not difficult to trace here a plain providence of God. The fair maid of Moab was to take her place in an illustrious lineage; she was to carry in her veins the blood of a miraculous humanity; she was to be an ancestress of the Nazarene; so, too, was Boaz, and therefore she is found in his field. His generous heart became the home of the daughter of Moab.

Ruth attracted his attention; and when he learned who she was, he bade her glean only in his field, and enjoined the reapers to show her

RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ.



kindness. In reply to her thanks, he praised her devotion to her mother-in-law, and her coming to place her trust under the wings of Jehovah, God of Israel. Thus passed the whole harvest, Ruth following the reapers, who were instructed by Boaz to throw handfuls of corn in her way, and sharing their daily meal. Meanwhile Naomi, full of gratitude to God, who had thus guided her to her husband's nearest kinsman, instructed Ruth to claim her rights under the Levirate law. There was, as we have said, a still nearer kinsman; but we may safely assert, that Naomi knew enough of him to be aware that the appeal to him would be fruitless. Hence she sent her daughter-in-law to Boaz. Ruth followed Naomi's instructions. Boaz blessed her in the name of Jehovah; praised her virtue and her fidelity to him whom the law had made her rightful husband; guarded the most scrupulous delicacy towards her; and promised to do the part of a kinsman by her.

In the morning he kept his word. We have a truly patriarchal picture of this wealthy and powerful man of Bethlehem sitting like Job in the gate of the city; and, as all the inhabitants came forth, calling first the "Goël," or nearest kinsman of Elimelech, to sit beside him, and then asking ten of the elders to take their seats to witness and ratify the transaction. In their presence, he informed the "Goël" that Naomi had a field to sell, which must be redeemed either by him or by Boaz himself; and the "Goël" consented to redeem it, thus admitting the claim of kindred. But when Boaz went on to say, that if the "Goël" took the field, he must also take Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance," the kinsman found an excuse, and transferred the right of redemption to Boaz.

The ceremony prescribed by the law was then performed. The sandal of the kinsman was taken off in the presence of the elders and the people; and Boaz called them to witness that he had bought of Naomi all that had belonged to Elimelech, and to his sons Chilion and Mahlon, and had purchased Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, to be his wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. The elders ratified the deed, invoking upon Ruth the blessing of Rachel and Leah, who had built the house of Israel, and that the house of Boaz might be made like that of his ancestor Pharez, the son of Judah. The blessing was fulfilled more highly than they thought. Ruth bore to Boaz a son, named Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David; and so Christ, "the Son of David," derived his lineage

from a Moabitish woman, who had shown a faith rarely found in Israel, and whose husband was the son of the harlot Rahab.\*

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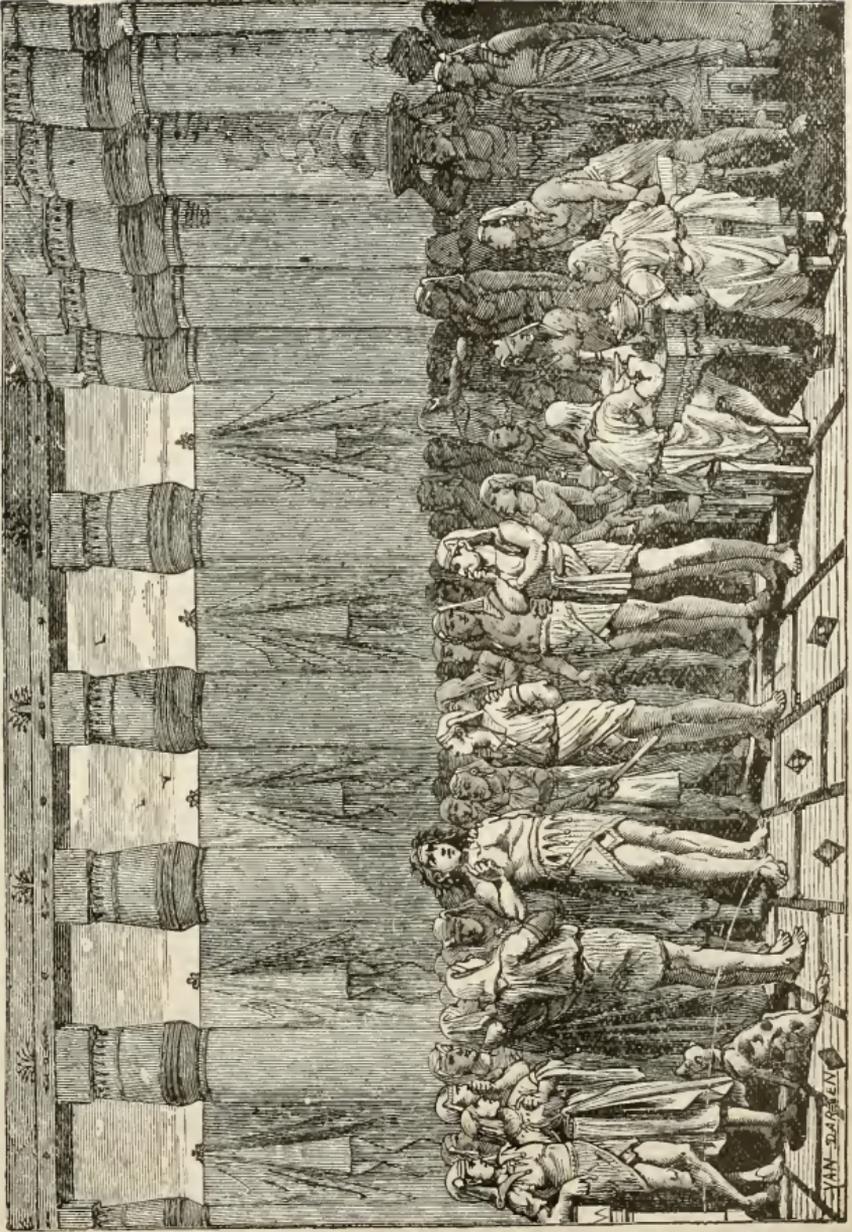
## SAMSON.

AN angel appeared to Manoah's wife, and promised she should have a son. Manoah made the promise the subject of special prayer, and inquired earnestly how the promised child should be educated. "And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. And Manoah said"—with great boldness; the boldness of Christian faith, not of human presumption—"Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?" He was most anxious that so remarkable a child should have a rare and remarkable education. Being a divine gift, he desired that his instruction should be inspired by the divine presence. The angel repeated all he had already said to the woman, and indicated her duty strictly to observe all he commanded. Manoah said, "Let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee." This Being appeared in human nature, and was recognized and visible as a man. "But he answered, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread;" as much as to say, I am a spiritual being; I subsist not by earthly bread; and, therefore, to ask me to partake of thy hospitality is to mistake my nature, my mission, and my office. "And if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord." I have no doubt these words imply that it was to be offered unto himself, for it is added, "Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord;" literally translated, "The angel Jehovah."

Samson was born, grew up, and proved himself a man of extra-

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\* "As regards Rahab herself, we learn from Matt. i. 5, that she became the wife of Salmon, the son of Nason, and the mother of Boaz, Jessie's grandfather. The suspicion naturally arises that Salmon may have been one of the spies whose life she saved; and that gratitude for so great a benefit led, in his case, to a more tender passion, and obliterated the memory of any past disgrace attaching to her name. But however this may be, it is certain, on the authority of St. Matthew, that Rahab became the mother of the line from which sprung David, and eventually Christ."—*Dr. Smith.*



SAMSON'S RIDDLE.

ordinary physical strength—a judge, a soldier, and a hero. He married a woman of the Philistines against his duty, against the will of the nation, the Church, and the people whose avenger he had become; and he therefore began to taste the bitter fruits of a marriage, not, as the apostle requires it always to be, “in the Lord,” but dictated by his own passion and preference. Accordingly, as he had mingled in family connection with people that hated the living and the true God, the almost universal result came to ensue. He was contaminated by their principles, and his married life became a thorn in the flesh, that lasted till the very day of his death. It is a lesson that one ought never to omit to inculcate—all marriages should be, as the apostle says, in the Lord. The father of his wife wanted to take her from him, and to give her to another—that is, to the friend of the bridegroom. Wishing to see her in the harem, the place in which the women in Eastern countries still and in ancient times then were accustomed to meet, he found that her father would not suffer him even to see her, while, with true Philistine morality, he offered Samson the sister instead of the wife, whom he had disposed of after his own taste. A moral retribution runs through all this. Samson’s wrath was kindled against all the Philistines, not from a divine spark, but from passion and in revenge. He seized three hundred foxes, and fastening them together, tail to tail, he tied to each couple a resinous ignited brand, let them loose in the corn fields, and thus destroyed the crops of the Philistines.

Instruments God does not approve are often compelled, in providence, to fulfil his purposes. The Philistines were a doomed, because a guilty race, and the very means that punished annoyed by their apparent insignificance.

As soon as the Philistines heard this, they resolved to punish Samson by destroying his wife and her father also. The moral retribution speedily came. Samson was punished, as recorded; and his wife, who had acted so unfaithfully, and her father, who had acted so criminally, were both involved in the same dreadful retribution.

Samson determined to be avenged; and therefore he smote them hip and thigh—as it were, completely, leaving not one behind—with a great slaughter, and went to the top of Mount Etam.

The men of Judah—and this shows how debased they had become—instead of maintaining a bold front of opposition to the Philistines, and prosecuting the mission entrusted to them, namely, to extirpate

that race, came to terms with them, and submitted to the yoke of that very people whom they, out of false compassion, spared. These Hebrews resolved to bind Samson, in order to propitiate their masters. They had lost all patriotism, and all sense of duty and morality, all heroism of mind, all purity of heart; and were prepared, at any price, to have peace with their masters, so as no longer to give them occasion to insult over them. They therefore seized, or rather sought the submission of, their greatest benefactor, bound him with cords, intending to hand him over to the Philistines, to do with him as they pleased. But, on their binding him, he burst the cords as if they had been flax exposed to the flame, and thereby showed the prodigious physical strength with which he was endued. As if to evince, at the same time, the greater degradation of the Philistines, and to make the instrument with which he destroyed them a memorial of their shame, he took a new jaw-bone—that is, not decayed, and therefore retaining great strength in it—of an ass, and with that mean instrument, so mean as to make the memory of the slain ignoble and degraded, he slew a thousand men. And he called the place where he threw it down Ramath-lehi.

Being thirsty, and expecting to die of thirst, and to fall into the hands of the uncircumcised, God heard his prayer, and clave a hollow place—not, as in our translation, in the “jaw-bone.” The Hebrew word *lehi* means a jaw-bone, and the place where he threw down the jaw-bone was called Ramath-lehi. God clave a fountain, not in the jaw-bone, but in the place in which he threw down the jaw-bone, namely, on the ground. The fountain was hollowed out by the hand of God, and thence came water. And he called the name of the place, most beautifully, En-hakkor; namely, “The place provided for him that called upon his God;” “and it is in Lehi unto this day.”

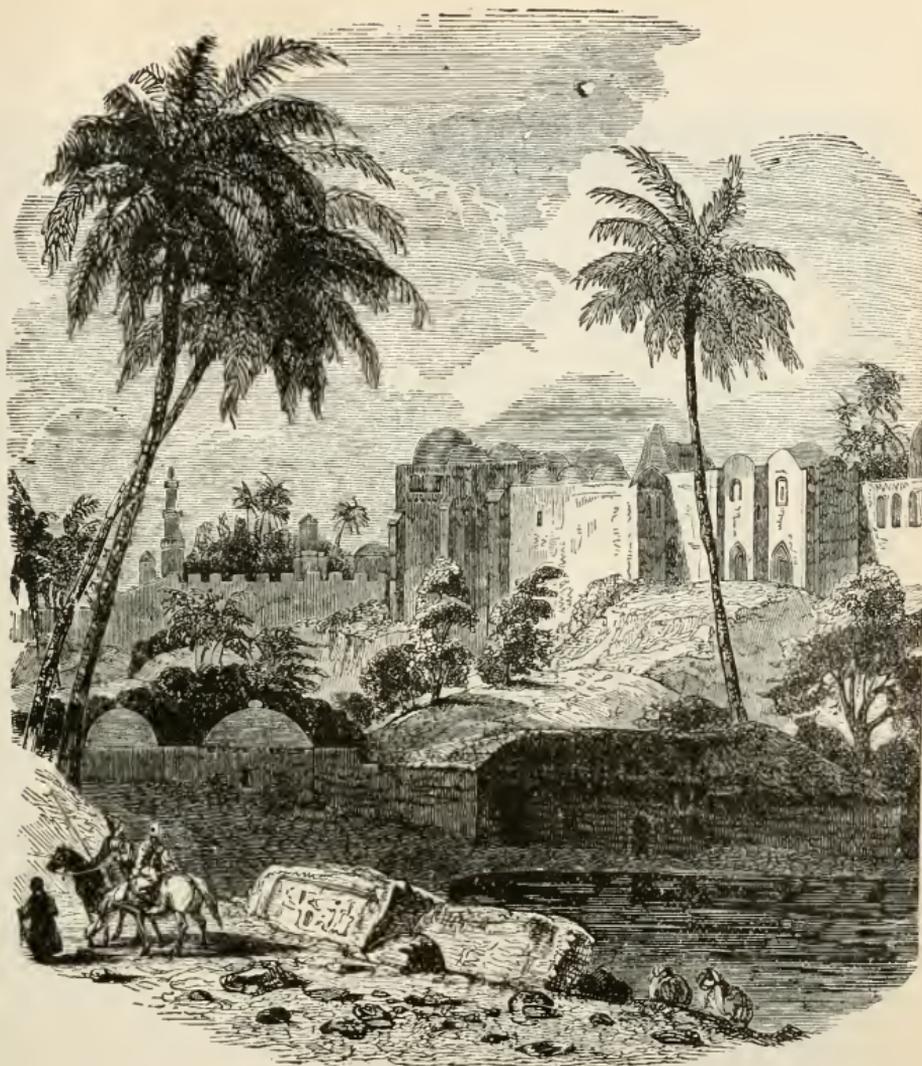
Samson was the representation of the greatest physical strength; Solomon was the type of the richest intellectual wisdom. Each had his gift by special grant, and both were employed for special ends.

His wife, really his enemy, pressed him till his soul was vexed unto death by her persistent entreaties, her eloquent and touching appeals. At last, worn out, weary, able to stand it no more, he let out his secret. The secret of his strength was not in his hair, but in his vow as a Nazarite; the condition of which was, that as long as he allowed his hair to grow, which a Nazarite was bound to do, and not

taste wine, so long his great strength would be in him; but the moment he did what was incompatible with the vow, shave off his hair, he would become as other men.

He fell asleep after he had told her, resting his head upon her knee. In India one may often see a young man of eighteen or twenty—the mother seated on the carpet, not in a chair, as is the case in European latitudes—lean his head upon his mother's knee, and fall sweetly asleep. Samson, according to Eastern customs, did so; and then they brought a razor, and shaved his hair from his head. How could this be done without his waking? Easily. The sensation is rather soothing and agreeable than the reverse. What was done here was neither impossible nor improbable. Having thus taken off his hair, she roused him by crying, "The Philistines be upon thee! And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself"—little knowing what a change had taken place—"and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."

The lords of the Philistines gave their god Dagon all the credit of their success, and resolved to glorify that god by the destruction of Samson, the enemy of their country. He must be made a show first. There were assembled all the aristocracy, and all the soldiers, and men, and great ladies of the Philistines, on the roof, and probably on scaffoldings, erected for the grand exhibition which was to take place, of this vanquished, strong man. It has been matter of great dispute how it was possible that his pulling down the two pillars could upset the whole house. Sir Christopher Wren, the eminent architect, the builder of St. Paul's, was consulted upon this subject; and the explanation he gave was, that in all probability it was a roof of cedar, that there might have been one hundred, or one hundred and twenty, enormous beams, of great strength, all meeting at the centre. But as it would be impossible, or very improbable, that any pillar could be found on which all the ends of these beams could rest, as each approached a radius from the circumference—that there were two pillars, and an architrave connected with them, and that all the beams met together upon this short architrave, sustained by two pillars, each beam coming from the circumference of the vast building—that Samson stood between the pillars on which the architrave was; his strength was restored by his repentance, and he put forth his whole strength, and brought down the vast edifice, involving in its ruin the lords of the Philistines, and perishing himself in the catastrophe.



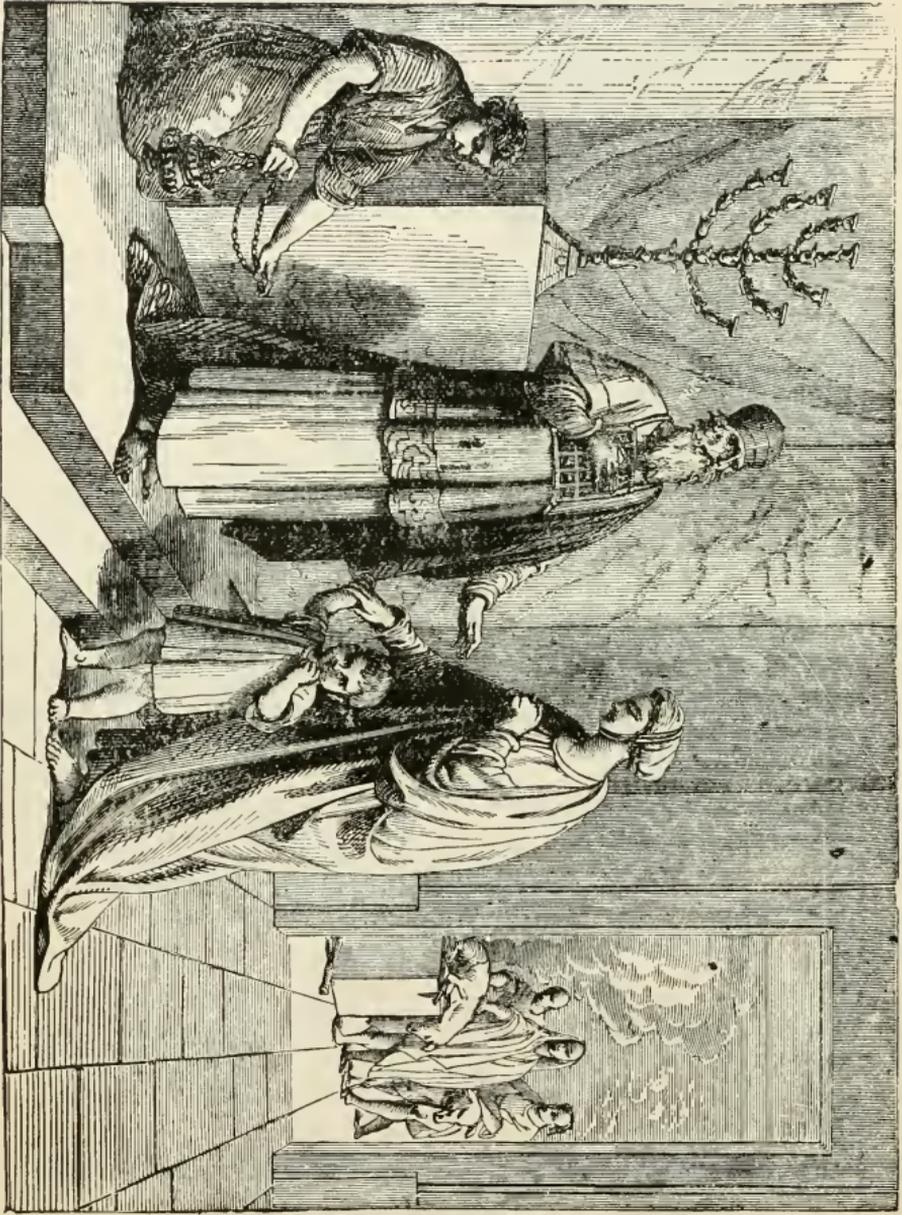
PHILISTIA.

So great gifts may exist, and great sins and imperfections. Grace is infinitely more precious than gifts. One first false step conducts to many evils. This giant suicide, "being dead, speaks" to us.

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### SAMUEL.

THE last judge, the first of the regular succession of prophets, and the founder of the monarchy. He was the son of Elkanah, an Eph-



DEDICATION OF SAMUEL.

rathite or Ephraimite, and Hannah or Anna. The descent of Elkanah is involved in great obscurity. In 1 Sam. i. 1, he is described as an Ephraimite. In 1 Chr. vi. 22, 23, he is made a descendant of Korah, the Levite. His birth-place is one of the vexed questions of sacred geography, as his descent is of sacred genealogy. The combined family must have been large. Pehinnah had several children; and Hannah had, besides Samuel, three sons and two daughters. It is on the mother of Samuel that our chief attention is fixed in the account of his birth. She is described as a woman of a high religious mission. Almost a Nazarite by practice, and a prophetess in her gifts, she sought from God the gift of the child, for which she longed with a passionate devotion of silent prayer of which there is no other example in the Old Testament; and, when the son was granted, the name which he bore, and thus first introduced into the world, expressed her sense of the urgency of her entreaty—*Samuel*, “the Asked or Heard of God.” Living in the great age of vows, she had before his birth dedicated him to the office of a Nazarite. As soon as he was weaned, she herself, with her husband, brought him to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, where she had received the first intimation of his birth, and there solemnly consecrated him. The hymn which followed on this consecration is the first of the kind in the sacred volume. From this time, the child is shut up in the tabernacle. He seems to have slept within the Holiest Place, and his special duty was to put in order the sacred candlestick, and to open the doors at sunrise. In this way his childhood was passed. It was whilst thus sleeping in the tabernacle, that he received his first prophetic call. From this moment the prophetic character of Samuel was established. His words were treasured up, and Shiloh became the resort of those who came to hear him. In the overthrow of the sanctuary, which followed shortly on this vision, we hear not what became of Samuel. He next appears, probably twenty years afterwards, suddenly amongst the people, warning them against their idolatrous practices. He convened an assembly at Mizpeh. It was at the moment that he was offering up a sacrifice, that the Philistine host suddenly burst upon them. A violent thunder-storm came to the timely assistance of Israel. The Philistines fled, and, exactly at the spot where twenty years before they had obtained their great victory, they were totally routed. A stone was set up, which long remained as a memorial of Israel’s triumph, and gave to the place its name of Eben-ezer, “the Stone of Help.” This was Samuel’s first, and, as far as we know, his

only military achievement. But it was apparently this which raised him to the office of "Judge." He visited, in discharge of his duties as ruler, the three chief sanctuaries on the west of Jordan—Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh. His own residence was still his native city, Ramah or Ramathaim, which he further consecrated by an altar. Here he married, and two sons grew up to repeat under his eyes, the same perversion of high office that he had himself witnessed in his childhood in the case of the two sons of Eli. In his old age, he shared his power with them.

Down to this point in Samuel's life, there is but little to distinguish his career from that of his predecessors. But his peculiar position in the sacred narrative turns on the events which follow. He is the inaugurator of the transition from what is commonly called the theocracy to the monarchy. The misdemeanor of his own sons precipitated the catastrophe which had been long preparing. The people demanded a king. For the whole night, he lay fasting and sleepless, in the perplexity of doubt and difficulty. In the vision of that night, as recorded by the sacred historian, is given the dark side of the new institution, on which Samuel dwells on the following day. This presents his reluctance to receive the new order of things. The whole narrative of the reception and consecration of Saul gives his acquiescence in it. The final conflict of feeling and surrender of his office is given in the last assembly over which he presided, and in his subsequent relations with Saul. The assembly was held at Gilgal, immediately after the victory over the Ammonites. The monarchy was a second time solemnly inaugurated, and "Samuel and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." Then takes place his farewell address. It is the most signal example afforded in the Old Testament of a great character reconciling himself to a changed order of things, and of the divine sanction resting on his acquiescence.

His subsequent relations with Saul are of the same mixed kind. The two institutions which they respectively represented ran on side by side. Samuel was still judge. He judged Israel "*all the days of his life,*" and from time to time came across the king's path. But these interventions are chiefly in another capacity, which this is the place to unfold. Samuel is called emphatically "the prophet" (Acts iii. 24, xiii. 20). He was especially known in his old age as "Samuel the Seer" (1 Sam. ix. 11, 18, 19; 1 Chr. ix. 22, xxvi. 28, xxix. 29). He was consulted far and near on the small affairs of life. From this faculty, combined with his office of ruler, an awful rever-

ence grew up around him. No sacrificial feast was thought complete without his blessing. A peculiar virtue was believed to reside in his intercession. There was something peculiar in the long-sustained cry or shout of supplication, which seemed to draw down as by force the divine answer. But there are two other points which more especially placed him at the head of the prophetic order as it afterwards appeared. The first is brought out in his relation with Saul, the second in his relation with David.

He represents the independence of the moral law, of the Divine will, as distinct from regal or sacerdotal enactments, which is so remarkable a characteristic of all the later prophets. He was, if a Levite, yet certainly not a priest; and all the attempts to identify his opposition to Saul with a hierarchical interest are founded on a complete misconception of the facts of the case. From the time of the overthrow of Shiloh, he never appears in the remotest connection with the priestly order. When he counsels Saul, it is not as the priest, but as the prophet. Saul's sin, in both cases where he came into collision with Samuel, was not of intruding into sacerdotal functions, but of disobedience to the prophetic voice. The first was that of not waiting for Samuel's arrival, according to the sign given by Samuel at his original meeting at Rama; the second was that of not carrying out the stern prophetic injunction for the destruction of the Amalekites. The parting was not one of rivals, but of dear, though divided, friends. The king throws himself on the prophet with all his force; not without a vehement effort, the prophet tears himself away.

He is the first of the regular succession of prophets. Moses, Miriam, and Deborah, perhaps Ehud, had been prophets. But it was only from Samuel that the continuous succession was unbroken. His mother, though not expressly so called, was in fact a prophetess. But the connection of the continuity of the office with Samuel appears to be still more direct. It is in his lifetime, long after he had been "established as a prophet," that we hear of the companies of disciples, called in the Old Testament "the sons of the prophets," by modern writers, "the schools of the prophets." In those schools, and learning to cultivate the prophetic gifts, were some whom we know for certain, others whom we may almost certainly conjecture to have been so trained or influenced. One was Saul. Twice, at least, he is described as having been in the company of Samuel's disciples. Another was DAVID. The first acquaintance of Saul with David was when he privately

appointed him at the house of Jesse. But the connection thus begun with the shepherd-boy must have been continued afterwards. David at first fled to "Naioth in Ramah," as to his second home. It is needless to enlarge on the importance with which these incidents invest the appearance of Samuel. He there becomes the spiritual father of the Psalmist king. He is also the founder of the first regular institutions of religious instruction, and communities for the purposes of education. The death of Samuel is described as taking place in the year of the close of David's wanderings. It is said with peculiar emphasis, as if to mark the loss, that "all the Israelites were gathered together" from all parts of this hitherto divided country, and "lamented him," and "buried him," not in any consecrated place, nor outside the walls of his city, but within his own house, thus in a manner consecrated by being turned into his tomb. The place long pointed out as his tomb is the height, most conspicuous of all in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, immediately above the town of Gibeon, known to the Crusaders as "Montjoye," as the spot from whence they first saw Jerusalem, now called *Neby Samuil*, "the Prophet Samuel." Heman, his grandson, was one of the chief singers in the Levitical choir.

On the eve of the great battle of Gilboa, Saul in the midst of his despair, resorted to a woman known as a witch, living at Endor, and demanded of her that she should summon up the spirit of Samuel; and God permitted the shade of the departed prophet to appear before the doomed king, to give him warning of the fate which should befall him on the morrow.

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## DAVID.

OF all the characters of the Old Testament, there are few of which we know so much with certainty, or which appeal so warmly to our admiration, as David, the great King of Israel. He was the son of Jesse, who was the grandson of Ruth, and was the youngest son, probably the youngest child, of a family of ten. His mother's name is unknown. His father was of a great age when David was still young, but both his parents lived till after his final rupture with Saul. His birth-place was Bethlehem, but he kept up his connections with his Moabitish relatives.



• GIDEON'S FLEECE.

The first time David appears in history, was after Samuel's final rupture with Saul, and when the prophet had been commanded by Jehovah to set apart a successor to the kingdom. There was a practice once a year at Bethlehem, probably the first New Moon of the year, of holding a sacrificial feast, at which Jesse, as the chief proprietor of the place, would preside, with the elders of the town. At this, or such like feast, suddenly appeared the great prophet, Samuel, driving a heifer before him, and having in his hand a horn of the consecrated oil of the Tabernacle. His arrival caused much alarm, but he assured the elders that he came in peace, and bade them and



DAVID ANOINTED BY SAMUEL.

the house of Jesse to sanctify themselves for the sacrifice. There the family of Jesse made a goodly show, and he was surrounded by all his eight sons, except the youngest, who seems to have been of small consideration in the family, and accordingly was sent abroad to tend the sheep. Struck with the noble figure of the eldest son, Eliab, the very counterpart of Saul, Samuel said to himself, "Surely, the anointed of Jehovah is before me!" But he was warned not to judge a second time by so false a standard. Jehovah said to him,

'Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for it is not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.' In like manner the prophet rejected all the rest of the seven. Samuel then asked Jesse, "Are all thy children here?" No; there still remained the youngest, who was with the sheep. "Send and fetch him," said the prophet; "for we will not sit down till he come." Soon



DAVID SLAYING THE LION.

there entered a fair youth, with reddish or auburn hair and keen bright eyes, his beautiful countenance flushed with his healthy occupation, and his whole aspect pleasant to behold. Then Jehovah said to Samuel, "Up, and anoint him: for this is he!" In the presence of his brethren, Samuel poured the sacred oil upon his head, and then returned to his house at Ramah, having performed his last public act. "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

This is all that we are distinctly told concerning David's early life in the Scriptures, save the adventure with the lion and the bear, which he slew in defence of his father's flocks, and which incident he

himself relates to Saul. Saul's companions, in recommending him to the king as a minstrel, speak of him also as "a mighty, valiant man, and a man of war;" from which it may be inferred, that his youth was not entirely given up to the peaceful pursuits of a shepherd, but that he early gained an enviable reputation in conflicts with Bedouin robbers or Philistine marauders.

Some time after this, Saul was in spirit oppressed by the war against the Philistines, and by the foresight of the fate denounced against him by Samuel, and because almost insane in his fits of gloom and violence; for "the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." His servants, who began to experience the terrible caprices of a despot's incipient madness, advised him to try the charms of music, always powerful against melancholy, and believed in the East to possess a magical influence over wild and venomous beasts, as well as savage men. Saul consented, and sent to Bethlehem for David, who was recommended to him as a minstrel of extraordinary talent. Jesse sent his son with a present to the king; and that harp, which has since cheered many a perturbed spirit, refreshed the soul of Saul, and dispelled his evil fancies. The narrator of this incident very naturally connects the favor gained by David's success with his ultimate advancement at the court of Saul, who obtained Jesse's consent to David's remaining with him, and made him his armor-bearer. But it does not follow that this took place at once; and such a view is quite inconsistent with the plain statement that David returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. His departure from the court explains Saul's forgetfulness, and Abner's ignorance of his person and family. The commander of the forces was not likely to trouble himself about the young shepherd-minstrel; and, to say nothing of the proverbially short memory of kings for their benefactors, Saul had chiefly seen him in his hours of madness.

The army of Israel was encamped at Ephes-Dammim, in the frontier hills of Judah. On the opposite side of the valley or ravine lay the hosts of the Philistines. The water-course of Elah, or "the Terebinth" flowed between them. The two armies fronted each other in battle array morning after morning, but a strange cause delayed their conflict. A Philistine of gigantic stature, clothed in complete armor, Goliath of Gath, stalked down into the valley every day, to defy the champion of the Israelites to single combat, and proposed that the nation whose champion was defeated should serve the other. His appearance struck dismay into Saul and all his people; they stood

motionless throughout the day; and at length, the defiance having been repeated in the evening, both armies retired to their camp.

This scene had been repeated for forty days, when David returned to the camp, on a visit to his brethren. He reached the circle of the baggage outside the camp at the moment when both armies were drawn up, and the battle-cry was already raised. The martial spirit of the boy was stirred at the sound; he left his provisions with the baggage-master, and darted to join his brothers, like one of the royal messengers, into the midst of the lines. There he heard the challenge, now made for the fortieth time—saw the dismay of his countrymen, and demanded indignantly, “Who is this Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” The bystanders told him that Saul would give his daughter to the man who should kill the Philistine, and enrich him greatly, and make his house free in Israel. Heedless of the taunts of Eliab, who rebuked his presumption with the authority of an elder brother, David repeated his inquiries till his words came to the ears of Saul, who sent for him. When brought before the king, he bade Israel dismiss their fear, for he would go and fight with the Philistine. Not with proud contempt, but with generous anxiety, Saul reminded him that he was but a youth, and the Philistine a warrior from his youth. But David had a shepherd’s exploits against wild beasts, not to boast of, but to plead in support of his faith that “Jehovah who delivered him out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine.” “Go! and Jehovah be with thee,” said Saul, his own early trust in God revived by the contagion of example. He armed David for the combat in his own armor, which was one of the few perfect suits in the camp of Israel, and girded him with his own sword; but David, after the first few steps, cast them off as an untried encumbrance, and betook himself to those shepherd’s weapons, for their skill in which his countrymen were famous. The only arms of David were his shepherd’s staff and sling, with five pebbles which he took from the water-course, and placed in his pouch. The Philistine’s scorn for the ruddy youth swelled into rage at the mode of his attack: “Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?” He seems to have overlooked the sling, “and he cursed him by his gods.” David answered his threats with the calm certainty of victory, which befitted a champion who avowed that the battle was Jehovah’s. Both advanced, David with the swiftness of foot for which he was famous; but before his foe came close, he took a stone from his bag, and slung it into the



DAVID SLAYING GOLIATH.

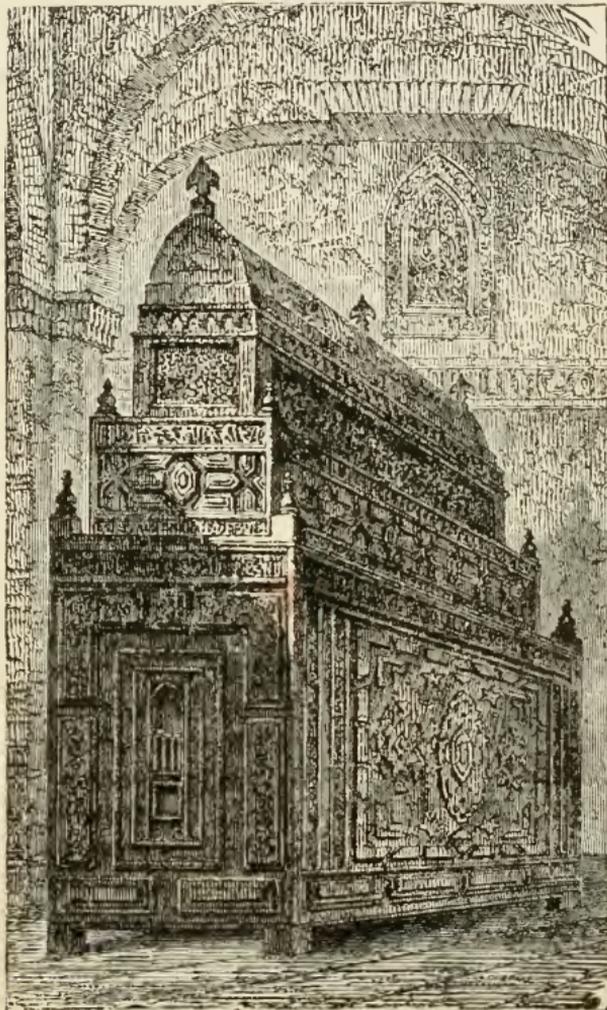
forehead of the Philistine, who fell to the ground upon his face. David rushed in and stood upon him, and drawing the Philistine's own sword from its sheath, he cut off his head. At this sight the Philistine army fled, pursued by Israel with great slaughter as far as Gath, and even to the gates of Ekron, whence the victors returned to spoil their camp. David's own trophies were the head, the sword, and the armor of the fallen champion. The first he exposed at Jerusalem; the second he put in his own tent; and the last he laid up in the tabernacle at Nob, till he took it for his own weapon in his time of need.

The victory over Goliath was the turning point in David's career. Saul inquired his parentage, and took him finally to his court. Jonathan was inspired by the romantic friendship which bound the two youths together to the end of their lives. The triumphant songs of the Israelitish women announced that they felt that in him Israel had now found a deliverer mightier even than Saul; and in these songs, and in the fame which David thus acquired, was laid the foundation of that unhappy jealousy of Saul towards him, which, mingling with the king's constitutional malady, poisoned his whole future relations to David. Three new qualities now began to develop themselves in David's character. The first was his prudence. It was that peculiar Jewish caution which has been compared to the sagacity of a hunted animal, such as is remarked in Jacob, and afterwards in the persecuted Israelites of the middle ages. Secondly, we now see his magnanimous forbearance called forth, in the first instance, towards Saul, but displaying itself (with a few painful exceptions) in the rest of his life. He is the first example of the virtue of chivalry. Thirdly, his hair-breadth escapes, continued through so many years, impressed upon him a sense of dependence on the Divine help, clearly derived from this epoch.

This course of life subdivides itself into four portions :

1. His life at the court of Saul till his final escape. His office is not exactly defined. But it would seem, that, having been first armor-bearer, then made captain over a thousand—the subdivision of a tribe—he finally, on his marriage with Michal, the king's second daughter, was raised to the high office of captain of the king's body-guard, second only, if not equal, to Abner, the captain of the host, and Jonathan, the heir apparent. These three formed the usual companions of the king at his meals. David was now chiefly known for his successful exploits against the Philistines, by one of which he won his wife, and drove back the Philistine power with a blow from

which it only rallied at the disastrous close of Saul's reign. He also still performed from time to time the office of minstrel. But the successive snares laid by Saul to entrap him, and the open violence into which the king's madness twice broke out, at last convinced him that his life was no longer safe. He had two faithful allies, however, in



TOMB OF ESTHER AND MORDECAI.

the court—the son of Saul, his friend Jonathan—the daughter of Saul, his wife Michal. Warned by the one, and assisted by the other, he escaped by night, and was from thenceforward a fugitive. Jonathan he never saw again, except by stealth. Michal was given in marriage to another (Phaltiel), and he saw her no more till long after her father's death.

2. His escape. He first fled to Naioth (or the pastures) of Ramah to Samuel. This is the first recorded occasion of his meeting with Samuel since the original interview during his boyhood at Bethle-

hem. Up to this time both the king and himself had thought that a re-union was possible. But the madness of Saul now became more settled and ferocious in character, and David's danger proportionably greater. The secret interview with Jonathan confirmed the alarm already excited by Saul's endeavor to seize him at Ramah and he



THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO SOLOMON.



now determined to leave his country, and take refuge, like Coriolanus or Themistocles in like circumstances, in the court of his enemy. Before this last resolve, he visited NOB, the seat of the tabernacle, partly to obtain a final interview with the high priest, partly to obtain food and weapons. On the pretext of a secret mission from Saul, he gained an answer from the oracle, some of the consecrated loaves, and the consecrated sword of Goliath. His stay at the court of ACHISH was short. Discovered possibly by "the sword of Goliath," his presence revived the national enmity of the Philistines against their former conqueror, and he only escaped by feigning madness.

3. His life as an independent outlaw. His first retreat was the cave of *Adullam*, probably the large cavern, not far from Bethlehem, now called *Khureitûn*. From its vicinity to Bethlehem, he was joined there by his whole family, now feeling themselves insecure from Saul's fury. This was probably the foundation of his intimate connection with his nephews, the sons of Zeruah. Besides these, were outlaws and debtors from every part. His next move was to a stronghold, either the mountain, afterwards called Herodium, close to Adullam, or the fastness called by Josepus *Masada*, the Grecized form of the Hebrew word *Matzed*, in the neighborhood of En-gedi. While there, he had deposited his aged parents, for the sake of greater security, beyond the Jordan, with their ancestral kinsman of Moab. The neighboring king, Nahash of Ammon, also treated him kindly. Here occurred the chivalrous exploit of the three heroes to procure water from the well of Bethlehem, and David's chivalrous answer, like that of Alexander in the desert of Gedrosia. He was joined here by two separate bands. One a little body of eleven fierce Gadite mountaineers, who swam the Jordan in flood-time to reach him. Another was a detachment of men from Judah and Benjamin, under his nephew Amasa, who henceforth attached himself to David's fortunes. At the warning of Gad, he fled next to the forest of *Hareth*, and then again fell in with the Philistines, and again, apparently advised by Gad, made a descent on their foraging parties, and relieved *Keilah*, in which he took up his abode. Whilst there, now for the first time in a fortified town of his own, he was joined by a new and most important ally—Abiathar, the last survivor of the house of Ithamar. By this time the four hundred who had joined him at Adullam had swelled to six hundred. The situation of David was now changed by the appearance of Saul himself on the scene. Apparently the danger was too great for the little army to keep together.

They escaped from Keilah, and dispersed, "whithersoever they could go," amongst the fastnesses of Judah. Henceforth it becomes difficult to follow his movements with exactness. But thus much we discern. He is in the wilderness of *Ziph*. Once (or twice) the Ziphites betray his movements to Saul. From thence Saul literally hunts him like a partridge, the treacherous Ziphites beating the bushes before him, and three thousand men stationed to catch even the print of his footsteps on the hills. David finds himself driven to the extreme south of Judah, in the wilderness of Maon. On two, if not three occasions, the pursuer and pursued catch sight of each other. Whilst he was in the wilderness of Maon occurred David's adventure with NABAL, instructive as showing his mode of carrying on the freebooter's life, and his marriage with Abigail. His marriage with Ahinoam, from Jezreel, also in the same neighborhood, seems to have taken place a short time before.

4. His service under Achish. Wearied with his wandering life, he at last crosses the Philistine frontier, not, as before, in the capacity of a fugitive, but the chief of a powerful band—his 600 men now grown into an organized force, with their wives and families around them. After the manner of Eastern potentates, Achish gave him for his support, a city—Ziklag on the frontier of Philistia. There we meet with the first note of time in David's life. He *was settled* there *for a year and four months*, and a body of Benjamite archers and slingers, twenty-two of whom are specially named, joined him from the very tribe of his rival. He deceived Achish into confidence by attacking the old Nomadic inhabitants of the desert frontier, and representing the plunder to be of portions of the southern tribes or the Nomadic allied tribes of Israel. But this confidence was not shared by the Philistine nobles, and accordingly David was sent back by Achish from the last victorious campaign against Saul. During his absence, the Bedouin Amalekites, whom he had plundered during the previous year, had made a descent upon Ziklag, burnt it to the ground, and carried off the wives and children of the new settlement. A wild scene of frantic grief and recrimination ensued between David and his followers. It was calmed by an oracle of assurance from Abiathar. Assisted by the Manassites who had joined him on the march to Gilboa, he overtook the invaders in the desert, and recovered the spoil. Two days after this victory, a Bedouin arrived from the north with the fatal news of the defeat of Gilboa. The reception of the tidings of the death of his rival and of his friend, the solemn mourning, the



DAVID AND JONATHAN.

vent of his indignation against the bearer of the message, the pathetic lamentation that followed, well close the second period of David's life.

David's reign as king of Judah began at Hebron, where he reigned seven and a half years. Hebron was selected, doubtless, as the ancient sacred city of the tribe of Judah, the burial-place of the patriarchs and the inheritance of Caleb. Here David was first formally anointed king. To Judah his dominion was nominally confined. Gradually his power increased, and during the two years which followed the elevation of Ishbosheth, a series of skirmishes took place between the two kingdoms. Then rapidly followed, though without David's consent, the successive murders of ABNER and of ISHBOSHETH. The throne, so long waiting for him, was now vacant, and the united voice of the whole people at once called him to occupy it. A solemn league was made between him and his people. For the third time, David was anointed king, and a festival of three days celebrated the joyful event. His little band had now swelled into "a great host, like the host of God." The command of it, which had formerly rested on David alone, he now devolved on his nephew, Joab. Reign over all Israel thirty-three years. Now occurred the foundation of Jerusalem. One fastness alone in the centre of the land had hitherto defied the arms of Israel. On this, with a singular prescience, David fixed as his future capital. By one sudden assault Jebus was taken. The reward bestowed on the successful scaler of the precipice, was the highest place in the army. Joab henceforward became captain of the host. The royal residence was instantly fixed there—fortifications were added by the king and by Joab—and it was known by the special name of the "city of David." The Philistines made two ineffectual attacks on the new king, and a retribution on their former victories took place by the capture and conflagration of their own idols. Tyre, now for the first time appearing in the sacred history, allied herself with Israel; and Hiram sent cedar-wood for the buildings of the new capital, especially for the palace of David himself. Unhallowed and profane as the city had been before, it was at once elevated to a sanctity which it has never lost, above any of the ancient sanctuaries of the land. The ark was now removed from its obscurity at Kirjath-jearim with marked solemnity. A temporary halt (owing to the death of Uzza) detained it at Obed-edom's house, after which it again moved forward with great state to Jerusalem. It was the greatest day of David's life. One incident only tarnished its splendour

—the reproach of Michal, his wife, as he was finally entering his own palace, to carry to his own household the benediction which he had already pronounced on his people. His act of severity towards her was an additional mark of the stress which he himself laid on the solemnity.

The erection of the new capital at Jerusalem introduces us to a new era in David's life, and in the history of the monarchy. He became a king on the scale of the great Oriental sovereigns of Egypt and Persia, with a regular administration and organization of court and camp; and he also founded an imperial dominion, which for the first time realized the prophetic description of the bounds of the chosen people. The internal organization now established lasted till the final overthrow of the monarchy. The empire was of much shorter duration, continuing only through the reigns of David and his successor, Solomon. But, for the period of its existence, it lent a peculiar character to the sacred history. In the internal organization of the kingdom, the first new element that has to be considered is the royal family, the dynasty of which David was the founder, a position which entitled him to the name of "Patriarch," and (ultimately) of the ancestor of the Messiah. Of these, Absalom and Adonijah both inherited their father's beauty, but Solomon alone possessed any of his higher qualities. It was from a union of the children of Solomon and Absalom that the royal line was carried on. David's strong parental affection for all of them is remarkable.

The military organization, which was in fact inherited from Saul, but greatly developed by David, was as follows: 1. "The Host," that is, the whole available military force of Israel, consisting of all males capable of bearing arms. It comprised twelve divisions, each 24,000 strong; one of these was on duty each month, and each was commanded by an officer of tried experience and valor. Over all was the "Captain of the Host," or, Commander-in-Chief. There were no horsemen in this army, and but a limited number of chariots. 2. The "Body-Guard," which had also existed in Saul's Court. Under David its character was greatly changed. The men were foreigners, at least in name, but the Captain was an Israelite of high position and a tried soldier. 3. The most peculiar military institution in David's army was that which arose out of the peculiar circumstances of his early life. The nucleus of what afterwards became the only standing army in David's forces was the band of six hundred men who had gathered round him in his wanderings. The

number of six hundred was still preserved. It became yet further subdivided into three large bands of two hundred each, and small bands of twenty each. The small bands were commanded by thirty officers, one for each band, who together formed "the thirty," and the three large bands by three officers, who together formed "the three," and the whole by one Chief, "the Captain of the mighty men."

Side by side with this military organization were established social and moral institutions. Some were entirely for agricultural, pastoral, and financial purposes; others for judicial. But the more peculiar of David's institutions were those directly bearing on religion. They will all be found described in the sacred narrative.

Within ten years from the capture of Jerusalem, David had reduced to a state of perfect subjection the Philistines on the west; the Moabites on the east; the Syrians on the northeast as far as the Euphrates; the Edomites on the south; and finally the Ammonites, who had broken their ancient alliance and made one grand resistance to the advance of his empire.

Three great calamities may be selected as marking the beginning, middle, and close of David's otherwise prosperous reign. Of these, the first introduces us to the last notices of David's relations with the house of Saul. This is the three years' famine. There has often arisen a painful suspicion in later times, as there seems to have been at the time, that the oracle, which gave as the cause of the famine Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites, may have been connected with the desire to extinguish the last remains of the fallen dynasty. But such an explanation is not needed. The massacre was probably the most recent national crime that had left any deep impression; and the whole tenor of David's conduct towards Saul's family is of an opposite kind. The second group of incidents contains the tragedy of David's life, which grew, in all its parts, out of the polygamy, with its evil consequences, into which he had plunged on becoming king. Underneath the splendor of his last glorious campaign against the Ammonites was a dark story, known probably at that time only to a very few; the double crime of adultery with Bathsheba, and of the virtual murder of Uriah. The crimes are undoubtedly those of a common Oriental despot. But the rebuke of Nathan; the sudden revival of the king's conscience; his grief for the sickness of the child; the gathering of his uncles and elder brothers around him; his return of hope and peace; are characteristic of David, and of David



DAVID'S RETURN TO HIS KINGDOM

only. But the clouds from this time gathered over David's fortunes, and henceforward "the sword never departed from his house." The outrage on his daughter Tamar; the murder of his eldest son Amnon; and then the revolt of his best-beloved Absalom, brought on the crisis which once more sent him forth a wanderer, as in the days when he fled from Saul; and this, the heaviest trial of his life, was aggravated by the impetuosity of Joab, now perhaps, from his complicity in David's crime, more unmanageable than ever. The rebellion was fostered apparently by the growing jealousy of the tribe of Judah at seeing their king absorbed into the whole nation; and if, as appears from 2 Sam. xi. 3, xxiii. 34, Ahithopel was the grandfather of Bathsheba, its main supporter was one whom David had provoked by his own crimes. For its general course the reader is referred to the names just mentioned. Mahanaim was the capital of David's exile, as it had been of the exiled house of Saul. His forces were arranged under the three great military officers who remained faithful to his fortunes—Joab, captain of the host; Abishai, captain of "the mighty men;" and Ittai, who seems to have taken the place of Benaiah, as captain of the guard. On Absalom's side was David's nephew Amasa. The final battle was fought in the "forest of Ephraim," which terminated in the accident leading to the death of Absalom. At this point the narrative resumes its minute detail. The return was marked at every stage by rejoicing and amnesty. Judah was first reconciled. The embers of the insurrection, still smouldering in David's hereditary enemies of the tribe of Benjamin, were trampled out by the mixture of boldness and sagacity in Joab, now, after the murder of Amasa, once more in his old position. And David again reigned in undisturbed peace at Jerusalem.

The closing period of David's life, with the exception of one great calamity, may be considered as a gradual preparation for the reign of his successor. This calamity was the three days' pestilence which visited Jerusalem at the warning of the prophet Gad. The occasion which led to this warning was the census of the people taken by Joab at the king's orders. Joab's repugnance to the measure was such that he refused altogether to number Levi and Benjamin. The plague and its cessation were commemorated down to the latest times of the Jewish nation. Outside the walls of Jerusalem, Araunah, or Ornan, a wealthy Jebusite—perhaps even the ancient king of Jebus—possessed a threshing-floor; there he and his sons were engaged in threshing the corn gathered in from the harvest. At this spot an awful vision ap-

peared, such as is described in the later days of Jerusalem, of the Angel of the Lord stretching out a drawn sword between earth and sky over the devoted city. The scene of such an apparition at such a moment was at once marked out for a sanctuary. David demanded, *u.* 1 Araunah willingly granted, the site; the altar was erected on the rock of the threshing-floor; the place was called by the name of "*Moriah*," and for the first time a holy place, sanctified by a vision of the Divine presence, was recognized in Jerusalem. It was this spot which afterwards became the altar of the Temple, and therefore the centre of the national worship, with but slight interruption, for more than 1,000 years, and it is even contended that the same spot is the rock, still regarded with almost idolatrous veneration, in the centre of the Mussulman "*Dome of the Rock*."

A formidable conspiracy to interrupt the succession broke out in the last days of David's reign, which detached from his person two of his court, who, from personal offence or adherence to the ancient family, had been alienated from him—Joab and Abiathar. But Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, Shimei, and Rei remaining firm, the plot was stifled, and Solomon's inauguration took place under his father's auspices. By this time David's infirmities had grown upon him. The warmth of his exhausted frame was attempted to be restored by the introduction of a young Shunamite, of the name of Abishag, mentioned apparently for the sake of an incident which grew up in connection with her out of the later events. His last song is preserved—a striking union of the ideal of a just ruler which he had placed before him, and of the difficulties which he had felt in realizing it. His last words, as recorded, to his successor, are general exhortations to his duty, combined with warnings against Joab and Shimei, and charges to remember the children of Barzillai. He died, according to Josephus, at the age of 70, and "was buried in the city of David." After the return from the captivity, "the sepulchres of David" were still pointed out "between Siloah and the house of the mighty men," or "the guard-house." His tomb, which became the general sepulchre of the kings of Judah, was pointed out in the latest times of the Jewish people. The edifice shown as such from the Crusades to the present day, is on the southern hill of modern Jerusalem, commonly called Mount Zion, and under the so-called "*Cœnaculum*;" but it cannot be identified with the tomb of David, which was emphatically *within* the walls.

## SOLOMON.

SOLOMON was the child of David's old age, the latest born of all his sons, and the offspring of the beautiful Bathsheba. The feelings of the king and of his prophet-guide expressed themselves in the name with which they welcomed his birth. The yearnings of the man of war now led him to give to the new-born infant the name of Solomon (*the peaceful one*). He was placed under the care of Nathan from his earliest infancy. At first, apparently, there was no distinct purpose to make him heir. Absalom was still the king's favorite son, and was looked on by the people as his destined successor. The death of Absalom, when Solomon was about ten years old, left the place vacant, and David pledged his word in secret to Bathsheba that he, and no other, should be the heir.

The feebleness of David's old age led to an attempt which might have deprived Solomon of the throne his father destined for him. Adonijah, next in order of birth to Solomon, like Absalom, "was a goodly man," in full maturity of years, backed by the oldest of the king's friends and counsellors. Following in the steps of Absalom, he assumed the kingly state of a chariot and a body-guard. At last a time was chosen for openly proclaiming him as king. A solemn feast at EN-ROGEL was to inaugurate the new reign. It was necessary for those whose interests were endangered, to take prompt measures. Bathsheba and Nathan took counsel together. The king was reminded of his oath. Solomon went down to Gihon, and was proclaimed and anointed king. The shouts of his followers fell on the startled ears of the guests at Adonijah's banquet. One by one they rose and departed. The plot had failed. A few months more, and Solomon found himself, by his father's death, the sole occupant of the throne. The position to which he succeeded was unique. Never before, and never after, did the kingdom of Israel take its place among the great monarchies of the East. Large treasures, accumulated through many years, were at his disposal. Of Solomon's personal appearance we have no direct description, as we have of the earlier kings. There are, however, materials for filling up the gap. Whatever higher mystic meaning may be latent in Psalm xlv., or the Song of Songs, we are all but compelled to think of them as having had, at least, an historical starting-point. They tell us of one who was, in the eyes of the men of his own time, "fairer than the children



THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

of men"—the face "bright and ruddy" as his father's—bushy locks, dark as the raven's wing, yet not without a golden glow—the eyes soft as "the eyes of doves"—the "countenance as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars"—the chiefest among ten thousand—"the altogether lovely." Add to this, all gifts of a noble, far-reaching intellect—large and ready sympathies—a playful and genial humor—the lips "full of grace"—the soul "anointed," as "with the oil of gladness."

The narrative of the earliest facts in the history of the new reign, as told in 1 Kings ii., is not a little perplexing. Bathsheba, who had before stirred up David against Adonijah, now appears as interceding for him, begging that Abishag the Shunamite, the virgin concubine of David, might be given him as a wife. Solomon, who till then had professed the profoundest reverence for his mother, suddenly flashes into fiercest wrath at this. The petition is treated as part of a conspiracy in which Joab and Abiathar are sharers. Adonijah is put to death at once. Joab is slain even within the precincts of the tabernacle, to which he had fled as an asylum. Abiathar is deposed and exiled, sent to a life of poverty and shame, and the high-priesthood transferred to another family.

Solomon was king over Israel for forty years. The first act of the foreign policy of the new reign must have been to most Israelites a very startling one. He made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt,



SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY.

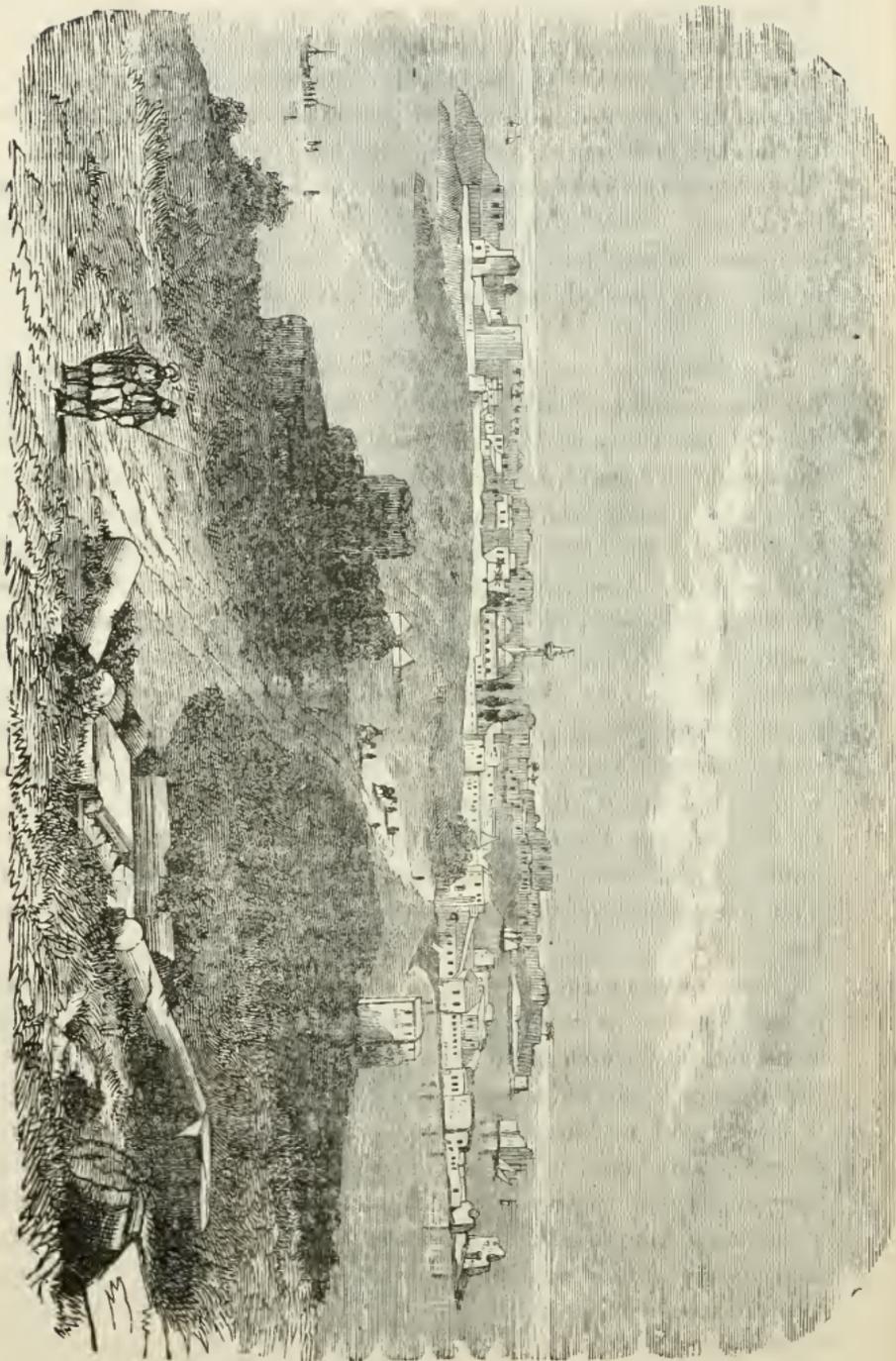
by marrying his daughter. The immediate results were probably favorable enough. The new queen brought with her as a dowry the frontier city of Gezer, against which, as threatening the tranquillity of Israel, and as still possessed by a remnant of the old Canaanites, Pharaoh had led his armies. She was received with all honor. A separate and stately palace was built for her, before long, outside the city of David. The ultimate issue of the alliance showed that it was hollow and impolitic. There may have been a revolution in Egypt. There was, at any rate a change of policy. There was planned the scheme which first led to the rebellion of the ten tribes, and then to the attack of Shishak on the weakened and dismantled kingdom of the son of Solomon.

The alliance with the Phœnician king rested on a somewhat different footing. It had been part of David's policy from the beginning of his reign. Hiram had been "ever a lover of David." As soon as he heard of Solomon's accession, he sent ambassadors to salute him. A correspondence passed between the two kings, which ended in a treaty of commerce. The opening of Joppa as a port created a new coasting trade, and the materials from Tyre were conveyed to it on floats, and thence to Jerusalem. In return for these exports, the Phœnicians were only too glad to receive the corn and oil of Solomon's territory. The results of the alliance did not end here. Now, for the first time in the history of Israel, they entered on a career as a commercial people. They joined the Phœnicians in their Mediterranean voyages to the coast of Spain. Solomon's possession of the Edomite coast enabled him to open to his ally a new world of commerce. The ports of Elath and Ezion-geber were filled with ships of Tarshish, merchant ships, manned chiefly by Phœnicians, but built at Solomon's expense, which sailed down the Ælanitic Gulf of the Red Sea, on to the Indian Ocean, to lands which had before been hardly known even by name.

These were the two most important alliances. The absence of any reference to Babylon and Assyria, and the fact that the Euphrates was recognized as the boundary of Solomon's kingdom, suggest the inference that the Mesopotamian monarchies were at this time comparatively feeble. Other neighboring nations were content to pay annual tribute in the form of gifts.

The survey of the influence exercised by Solomon on surrounding nations would be incomplete if we were to pass over that which was more directly personal—the fame of his glory and his wisdom.

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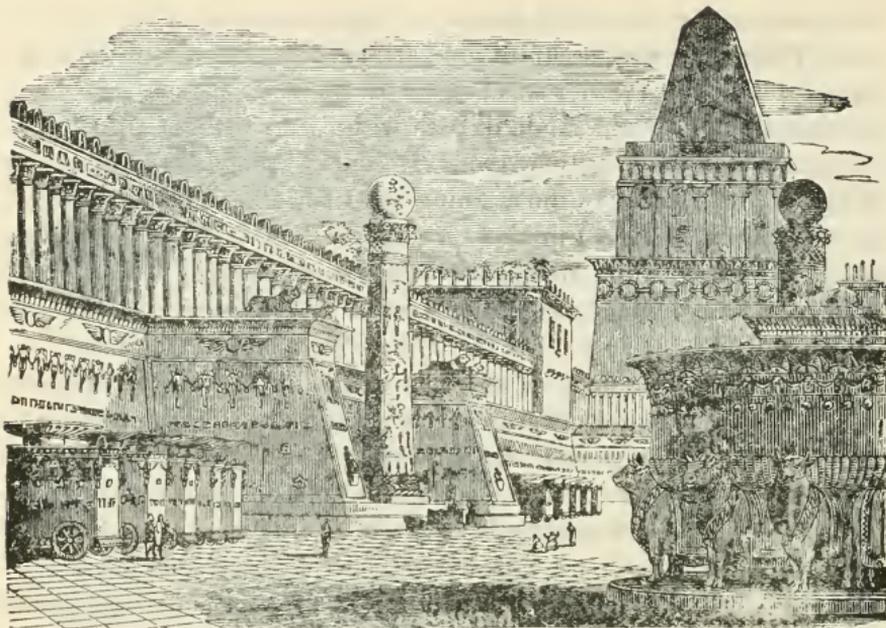


Wherever the ships of Tarshish went, they carried with them the report, losing nothing in its passage, of what their crews had seen and heard. The journey of the Queen of Sheba, though from its circumstances the most conspicuous, did not stand alone. She had heard of the wisdom of Solomon, and connected with it "the name of Jehovah." She came with hard questions to test that wisdom, and the words just quoted may throw light upon their nature. The historians of Israel delighted to dwell on her confession, that the reality surpassed the fame; "the one-half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me."

The first prominent scene in Solomon's reign is one which presents his character in its noblest aspect. There were two holy places which divided the reverence of the people—the Ark and its provisional tabernacle at Jerusalem, and the original Tabernacle of the congregation, which, after many wanderings, was now pitched at Gibeon. It was thought right that the new king should offer solemn sacrifices at both. After those at Gibeon, there came that vision of the night, in which Solomon prayed, not for riches, or long life, or victory over enemies, but for a "wise and understanding heart," that he might judge the people. The "speech pleased the Lord." The wisdom asked for was given in large measure, and took a varied range. The wide world of nature, animate and inanimate, the lives and characters of men, lay before him, and he took cognizance of all. But the highest wisdom was that wanted for the highest work—for governing and guiding; and the historian hastens to give an illustration of it. The pattern-instance is, in all its circumstances, thoroughly Oriental.

In reference to the king's finances, the first impression of the facts given us is that of abounding plenty. Large quantities of the precious metals were imported from Ophir and Tarshish. All the kings and princes of the subject-provinces paid tribute in the form of gifts, in money and in kind, "at a fixed rate, year by year." Monopolies of trade contributed to the king's treasury. The king's domain-lands were apparently let out, at a fixed annual rental. All the provinces of his own kingdom were bound each in turn to supply the king's enormous household with provisions. The total amount thus brought into the treasury in gold, exclusive of all payments in kind, amounted to 666 talents.

It was hardly possible, however, that any financial system could bear the strain of the king's passion for magnificence. The cost of the



SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

Temple was, it is true, provided for by David's savings and the offerings of the people; but even while that was building, yet more when it was finished, one structure followed on another with ruinous rapidity. All the equipment of his court, the "apparel" of his servants, was on the same scale. A body guard attended him, "three score valiant men," tallest and handsomest of the sons of Israel. Forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen made up the measure of his magnificence. As the treasury became empty, taxes multiplied, and monopolies became more irksome. The people complained, not of the king's idolatry, but of their burdens of his "grievous yoke." Their hatred fell heaviest on Adoniram, who was over the tribute.

The *Temple* was the grandest and most memorable monument of Solomon's reign. As in the Tabernacle, the Temple consisted of three parts, the Porch, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. The *Porch* of the Temple was ten cubits deep, the width in both instances being the width of the house. The front of the porch was supported after the manner of some Egyptian temples, by the two great brazen pillars, Jachin and Boaz, eighteen cubits high, with capitals of five cubits more, adorned with lily work and pomegranates. The *Holy Place*, or outer hall, was forty cubits long, by twenty wide. The *Holy of*

*Holies* was a cube of twenty cubits. The places of the two "veils" of the Tabernacle were occupied by partitions, in which were folding doors. The whole interior was lined with wood work, richly carved, and overlaid with gold. Indeed, both within and without, the building was conspicuous chiefly by the lavish use of the gold of Ophir and Parvaim. It glittered in the morning sun, (it has been well said) like the sanctuary of an El Dorado. Above the sacred ark, which was placed, as of old, in the Most Holy Place, were made new cherubim, one pair of whose wings met above the ark, and another pair reached to the walls behind them. In the Holy Place, besides the Altar of Incense, which was made of cedar, overlaid with gold, there were seven golden candlesticks instead of one, and the table of show-bread was replaced by ten golden tables, bearing, besides the show-bread, the innumerable golden vessels for the service of the sanctuary. The *Outer Court* was, no doubt, double the size of that of the Tabernacle. It contained an inner court, called the "court of the priests."

In the outer court there was a new altar of burnt-offering, much larger than the old one. Like the latter, it was square; but the length and breadth were now twenty cubits, and the height ten. It differed, too, in the material of which it was made, being entirely of brass. It had no grating; and instead of a single gradual slope, the ascent to it was probably made by three successive platforms, to each of which it has been supposed that brazen steps led. Instead of the brazen laver, there was a "molten sea" of brass, a master-piece of Hiram's skill, for the ablution of the priests. It stood on twelve oxen three toward each quarter of the heavens, and all looking outward. The brim itself, or lip, was carved outward like a lily or lotus flower. There were, besides, ten smaller lavers for the ablution of the burnt-offerings. The chambers for the priests were arranged in successive stories against the sides of the sanctuary; not, however, reaching to the top, so as to leave space for the windows to light the Holy and Most Holy Places. We are told by Josephus and the Talmud, that there was a superstructure on the Temple, equal in height to the lower part; and this is confirmed by the statement in the Books of Chronicles, that Solomon "overlaid the *upper chambers* with gold."

After seven years and a half of constant work, this magnificent edifice was completed, and the day came to which all Israelites looked back as the culminating glory of their nation. The Ark from Zion, the Tabernacle from Gibeon, were both removed and brought to the

new Temple. In the solemn dedication of the building, the person of the king is the one central object, compared with whom even priests and prophets are, for the time, subordinate. From him came the lofty prayer, the noblest utterance of the creed of Israel, setting forth the distance and nearness of the Eternal God, One, incomprehensible, dwelling not in temples made with hands, yet ruling men, hearing their prayers, giving them all good things—wisdom, peace, righteousness.

But the king soon fell from the loftiest heights of his religious life to his lowest depth. Before long, the priests and prophets had to grieve over rival temples to Moloch, Chemosh, Ashtaroth, forms of ritual not only idolatrous, but cruel, dark, impure. This evil came as the penalty of another. He gave himself to "strange women." He found himself involved in a fascination which led to the worship of strange gods. Disasters followed before long, as the natural consequence of what was politically a blunder, as well as religiously a sin. The strength of the nation rested on its unity, and its unity depended on its faith. Whatever attractions the sensuous ritual which he introduced may have had for the great body of the people, the priests and Levites looked on the rival worship with entire disfavor. The zeal of the prophetic order was now kindled into active opposition. The king in vain tried to check the current that was setting strong against him. The old tribal jealousies gave signs of renewed vitality. Ephraim was prepared once more to dispute the supremacy of Judah, needing special control. With this weakness there came attacks from without. The king, prematurely old, must have seen the rapid breaking up of the great monarchy to which he had succeeded.

Of the inner changes, of mind and heart, which ran parallel with this history, Scripture is comparatively silent. Something may be learned from the books that bear his name. They represent the three stages of his life. The *Song of Songs* brings before us the brightness of his youth. Then comes in the *Book of Proverbs*, the stage of practical, prudential thought. The poet has become the philosopher, the mystic has passed into the moralist. But the man passed through both stages without being permanently the better for either. They were to him but phases of his life which he had known and exhausted. And therefore came, as in the *Confessions of the Preacher*, the great retribution.

Solomon died at Jerusalem in the fortieth year of his reign, and was buried in the royal sepulchre in the city of David. Notwith-

standing his immense harem, we only read of his having one son, his successor, Rehoboam, the son of Naamah, a princess of Ammon.

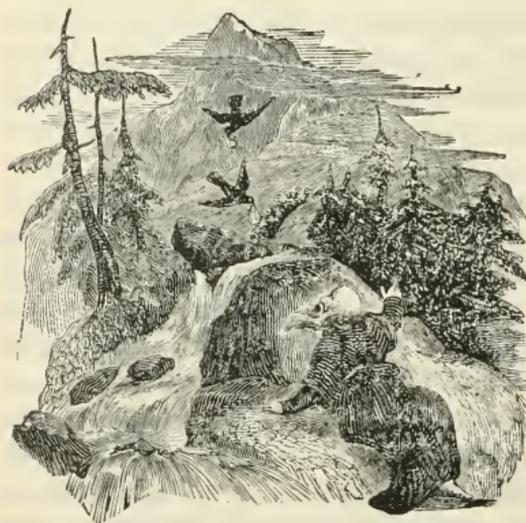
Around the history of Solomon there gathers a whole world of fantastic fables—Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan. According to these, he left behind him spells and charms, to cure diseases and cast out evil spirits. His wisdom enabled him to interpret the speech of beasts and birds. He knew the secret virtues of gems and herbs. Arabic imagination took a yet wilder flight. After a strong struggle with the rebellious Afreets and Jinns, Solomon conquered them, and cast them into the sea. To him belonged the magic ring, which revealed to him the past, the present, and the future.

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## ELIJAH.

ELIJAH the Tishbite has been well entitled “the grandest and most romantic character that Israel ever produced.” Certainly there is no personage in the Old Testament whose career is more vividly portrayed, or who exercises on us a more remarkable fascination. His rare, sudden, and brief appearances—his undaunted courage and fiery zeal—the brilliancy of his triumphs—the pathos of his despondency—the glory of his departure, and the calm beauty of his reappearance on the Mount of Transfiguration—throw such a halo of brightness around him as is equalled by none of his compeers in the sacred story. The ignorance in which we are left of the circumstances and antecedents of the man who did and who suffered so much, doubtless contributes to enhance our interest in the story and the character. “Elijah the Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead,” is literally all that is given us to know of his parentage and locality. To an Israelite of the tribes west of Jordan the title “Gileadite” must have conveyed a similar impression, though in a far stronger degree, to that which the title “Celt” does to us. What the Highlands were a century ago to the towns in the Lowlands of Scotland, that, and more than that, must Gilead have been to Samaria or Jerusalem. One of the most famous heroes in the early annals of Israel was “Jephthah the Gileadite,” in whom all these characteristics were prominent; and Professor Stanley has well remarked how impossible it is rightly to estimate his character without recollecting this fact.

With Elijah, of whom so much is told, and whose part in the history was so much more important, this is still more necessary. It is seen at every turn. Of his appearance, as he "stood before" Ahab, with the suddenness of motion to this day characteristic of the Bedouins from his native hills, we can, perhaps, realize something from the touches, few, but strong, of the narrative. Of his height little is to be inferred; that little is in favor of its being beyond the ordinary size. His chief characteristic was his hair, long and thick, and hanging down his back; which, if not betokening the immense strength of Samson, yet accompanied powers of endurance no less remarkable. His ordinary clothing consisted of a girdle of skin round his loins,



ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS.

which he tightened when about to move quickly. But, in addition to this, he occasionally wore the "mantle," or cape of sheep-skin, which has supplied us with one of our most familiar figures of speech. In this mantle in moments of emotion, he would hide his face, or, when excited, would roll it up as into a kind of staff. On one occasion we find him bending himself down upon the ground

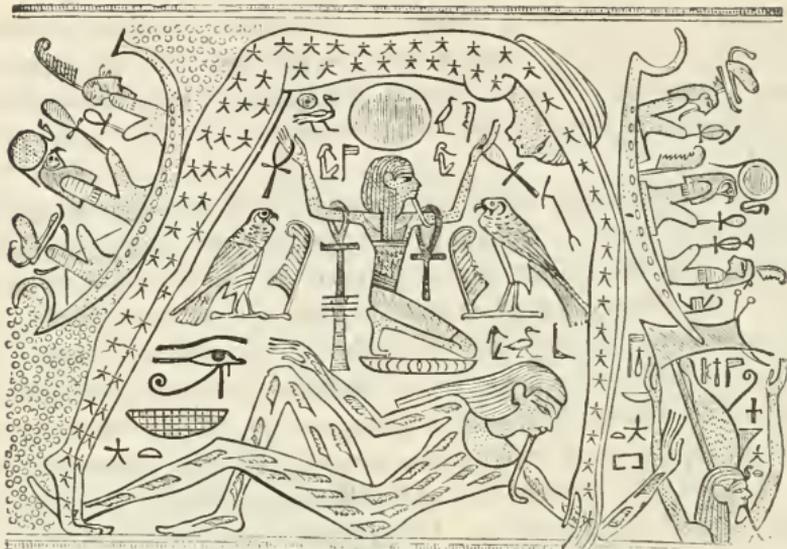
with his face between his knees. The solitary life in which these external peculiarities had been assumed had also nurtured that fierceness of zeal and that directness of address which so distinguished him. It was in the wild loneliness of the hills and ravines of Gilead that the knowledge of Jehovah, the living God of Israel, had been impressed on his mind, which was to form the subject of his mission to the idolatrous court and country of Israel.

The northern kingdom had at this time forsaken almost entirely the faith in Jehovah. The worship of the calves had been a departure from Him; it was a violation of His command against material resemblances; but still it would appear that even in the presence of the calves Jehovah was acknowledged, and they were at any rate a national institution, not one imported from the idolatries of any of the

surrounding countries. But the case was quite different when Ahab introduced the foreign religion of his wife's family, the worship of the Phœnician Baal. It is as a witness against these two evils that Elijah comes forward.

What we may call the first Act in his life embraces between three and four years—three years and six months for the duration of the drought, according to the statements of the New Testament, and three or four months more for the journey to Horeb, and the return to Gilead. His introduction is of the most startling description: he suddenly appears before Ahab, as, with the unrestrained freedom of Eastern manners, he would have no difficulty in doing, and proclaims the vengeance of Jehovah for the apostasy of the king. What immediate action followed on this we are not told; but it is plain that Elijah had to fly before some threatened vengeance either of the king, or more probably of the queen. Perhaps it was at this juncture that Jezebel "cut off the prophets of Jehovah." He was directed to the brook Cherith. There, in the hollow of the torrent-bed, he remained, supported in the miraculous manner with which we are all familiar, till the failing of the brook obliged him to forsake it. His next refuge was at Zarephath, a Phœnician town lying between Tyre and Sidon, certainly the last place at which the enemy of Baal would be looked for. The widow woman in whose house he lived seems, however, to have been an Israelite, and no Baal worshipper, if we may take her adjuration by "Jehovah thy God" as an indication. Here Elijah performed the miracles of increasing the oil and the meal, and restored the son of the widow to life after his apparent death. In this, or some other retreat, an interval of more than two years must have elapsed.

The drought continued, and at last the full horrors of famine, caused by the failure of the crops, descended on Samaria. The king and his chief domestic officer divided between them the mournful duty of ascertaining that neither round the springs, which are so frequent a feature in Central Palestine, nor in the nooks and crannies of the most shaded torrent-beds, was there any of the herbage left, which in those countries is so certain an indication of the presence of moisture. It is the moment for the re-appearance of the prophet. He shows himself first to the minister. There, suddenly planted in his path, is the man whom he and his master have been seeking for more than three years. Before the sudden apparition of that wild figure, and that stern, unbroken countenance, Obadiah could not but



EGYPTIAN SYMBOLS OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

fall on his face. Elijah however, soon calms his agitation—"As Jehovah of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to Ahab;" and thus relieved of his fear, that, as on a former occasion, Elijah would disappear before he could return with the king, Obadiah departs to inform Ahab that the man they seek is there. Ahab arrived, Elijah makes his charge—"Thou hast forsaken Jehovah and followed the Baals." He then commands that all Israel be collected to Mount Carmel with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred of Asherah (Ashtaroath), the latter being under the especial protection of the queen. There are few more sublime stories in history than this. On the one hand, the solitary servant of Jehovah, accompanied by his one attendant, with his wild, shaggy hair, his scanty garb and sheep-skin cloak, but with calm dignity of demeanor and the minutest regularity of procedure, repairing the ruined altar of Jehovah with twelve stones—on the other hand, the eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and Ashtaroath, doubtless in all the splendor of their vestments, with the wild din of their vain repetitions and the maddened fury of their disappointed hopes, and the silent people surrounding all. The conclusion of the long day need only be glanced at. The fire of Jehovah consuming both sacrifice and altar—the prophets of Baal killed, it would seem by Elijah's own hand—the king, with an apathy almost unintelligible, eating and drinking in the very midst of the carnage of his

own adherents—the rising storm—the ride across the plain to Jezreel, a distance of at least sixteen miles; the prophet, with true Arab endurance, running before the chariot, but also with true Arab instinct, stopping short of the city, and going no further than the “entrance of Jezreel.”

So far the triumph had been complete; but the spirit of Jezebel was not to be so easily overcome, and her first act is a vow of vengeance against the author of this destruction. Elijah takes refuge in flight. The danger was great and the refuge must be distant. The first stage on the journey was Beersheba. Here Elijah halted. His servant he left in the town; while he himself set out alone into the wilderness. His spirit is quite broken, and he wanders forth over the dreary sweeps of those rocky hills, wishing for death. But God, who had brought His servant into this difficulty, provided him with the means of escaping from it. The prophet was awakened from his dream of despondency beneath the solitary bush of the wilderness, was fed with the bread and the water which to this day are all a Bedouin's requirements, and went forward, in the strength of that food, a journey of forty days to the mount of God, even to Horeb. Here, in the cave, one of the numerous caverns in those awful mountains, he remained for certainly one night. In the morning came the “word of Jehovah”—the question, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” In answer to this invitation the prophet opens his griefs. The reply comes in that ambiguous and indirect form in which it seems necessary that the deepest communications with the human mind should be couched, to be effectual. He is directed to leave the cavern and stand on the mountain in the open air, face to face with Jehovah. Then, as before with Moses, “the Lord passed by”—passed in all the terror of His most appalling manifestations; and penetrating the dead silence which followed these, came the mysterious symbol—the “still small voice;” and, still as it was, it spoke in louder accents to the wounded heart of Elijah than the roar and blaze which had preceded it. To him no less unmistakably than to Moses, centuries before it was proclaimed that Jehovah was “merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” Elijah knew the call, and at once stepping forward, and hiding his face in his mantle, stood waiting for the Divine communication. Three commands were laid on him—three changes were to be made. Of these three commands, the first two were reserved for Elisha to accomplish; the last **only** was executed by Elijah himself. His first search was for Elisha,

Apparently he soon found him ; we must conclude at his native place, Abel-meholah. Elisha was ploughing at the time, and Elijah "passed over to him"—possibly crossed the river—and cast his mantle, the well-known sheep-skin cloak, upon him, as if, by that familiar action, claiming him for his son. A moment of hesitation, and then commenced that long period of service and intercourse which continued till Elijah's removal, and which after that time procured for Elisha one of the best titles to esteem and reverence—"Elisha the son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah."

Ahab and Jezebel now probably believed that their threats had been effectual, and that they had seen the last of their tormentor. After the murder of Naboth, Ahab loses no time in entering on his new acquisition. But his triumph was a short one. Elijah had received an intimation from Jehovah of what was taking place, and rapidly as the accusation and death of Naboth had been hurried over, he was there to meet his ancient enemy on the very scene of his crime. And then follows the curse, in terms fearful to any Oriental—peculiarly terrible to a Jew—and most of all significant to a successor of the apostate princes of the northern kingdom.

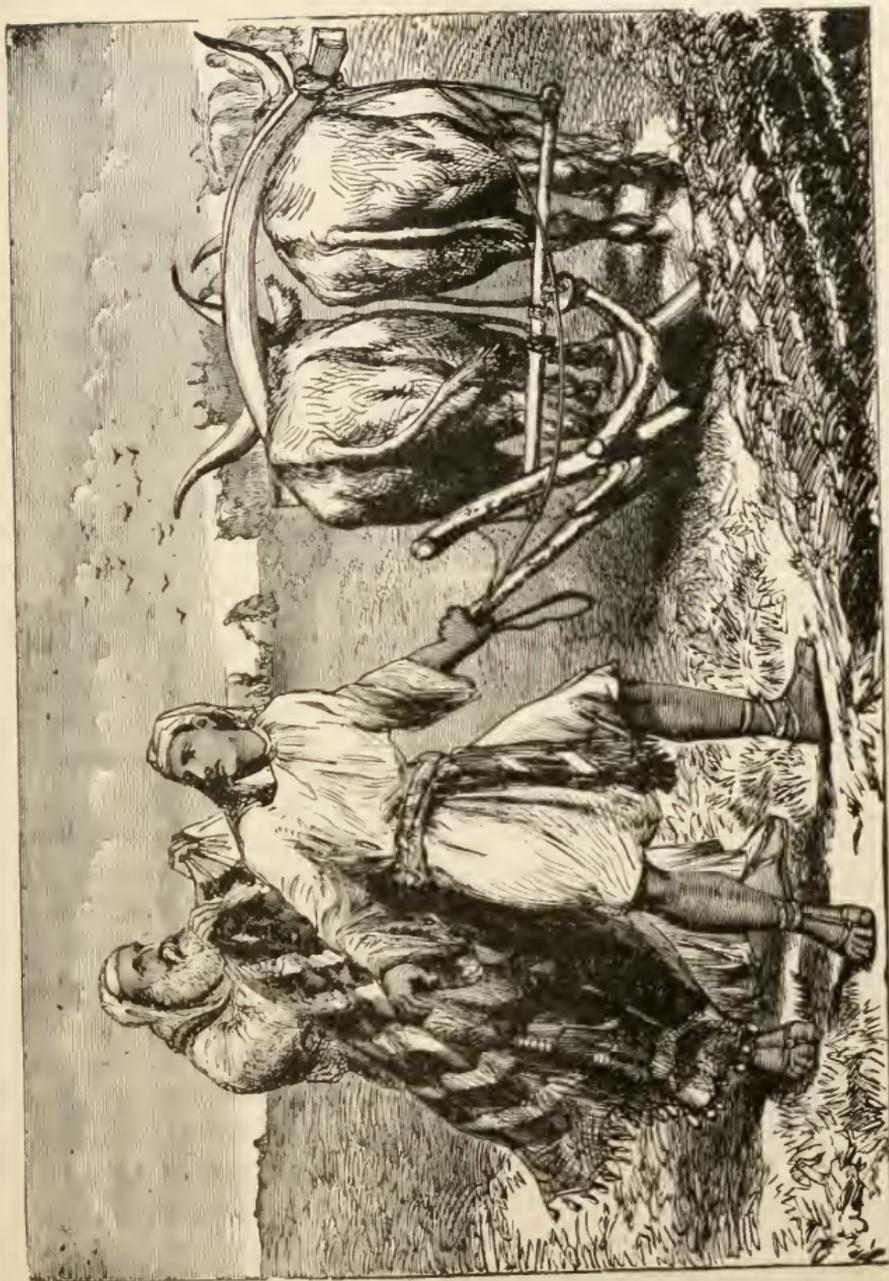
A space of three or four years now elapses before we again catch a glimpse of Elijah. Ahaziah has met with a fatal accident, and is on his death-bed. In his extremity he sends to an oracle, or shrine of Baal, at the Philistine town of Ekron, to ascertain the issue of his illness. But the oracle is nearer at hand than the distant Ekron. An intimation is conveyed to the prophet, probably at that time inhabiting one of the recesses of Carmel ; and, as on the former occasions, he suddenly appears on the path of the messengers, without preface or inquiry utters his message of death, and as rapidly disappears. But this check only roused the wrath of Ahaziah. A captain was dispatched, with a party of fifty, to take Elijah prisoner. "And there came down fire from heaven and consumed him and his fifty." A second party was sent, only to meet the same fate. The altered tone of the leader of a third party, brought Elijah down. But the king gained nothing. The message was delivered to his face, in the same words as it had been to the messengers, and Elijah was allowed to go harmless.

It must have been shortly after the death of Ahaziah, that Elijah made a communication with the southern kingdom. When Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to "walk in the ways of the kings of Israel," Elijah sent him a letter denouncing his evil doings, and pre-



ELIJAH'S SACRIFICE.





ELIJAH CASTING HIS MANTLE ON ELISHA.

dicting his death. In its contents the letter bears a strong resemblance to the speeches of Elijah, while in the details of its style it is very peculiar, and quite different from the narrative in which it is imbedded.

The closing transaction of Elijah's life introduces us to a locality heretofore unconnected with him. It was at Gilgal, probably on the western edge of the hills of Ephraim, that the prophet received the divine intimation that his departure was at hand. He was at the time with Elisha, who seems now to have become his constant companion, and whom he endeavors to persuade to remain behind while he goes on an errand of Jehovah. But Elisha will not so easily give up his master. They went together to Bethel. Again Elijah attempts to escape to Jericho, and again Elisha protests that he will not be separated from him. At Jericho he makes a final effort to avoid what they both so much dread. But Elisha is not to be conquered, and the two set off across the undulating plain of burning sand to the distant river—Elijah in his mantle or cape of sheep-skin, Elisha in ordinary clothes. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets ascend the abrupt heights behind the town to watch what happens in the distance. Talking as they go, the two reach the river, and stand on the shelving bank beside its swift brown current. But they are not to stop even here. It is as if the aged Gileadite cannot rest till he again sets foot on his own side of the river. He rolls up his mantle as into a staff, and with his old energy strikes the waters—strikes then as if they were an enemy; and they are divided hither and thither and they two go over on dry ground. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

Here ends all the direct information which is vouchsafed to us of the life and work of this great Prophet. How deep was the impression which he made on the mind of the nation, may be judged of from the fixed belief which many centuries after prevailed, that Elijah would again appear for the relief and restoration of his country.

## DANIEL.

IN the year 605, B. C., in the third year of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took the city of Jerusalem, after a fierce siege; but left a king on the throne, as his vassal. He commissioned Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to select the most comely Hebrew youths of royal and noble birth, possessed of natural grace and acquired learning, to be educated in the language and wisdom of the Chaldæans. They were to receive their food and wine from the king's table, and after three years' training they were to be brought before him. Among them were four belonging to the tribe of Judah, whose names were Daniel, Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah; which, according to Oriental custom, were changed by the prince of the eunuchs into Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshac, and Abednego. In sacred history, however, Daniel has retained his own name, while the other three are mentioned by their Babylonish appellations. Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food and wine, things that had been offered to idols; and, through the tender regard with which he had inspired the prince of the eunuchs, he obtained the favor of an experiment on himself and his three friends. After being fed with pulse and water for ten days, they were found in better condition than their comrades who had been nourished on the king's dainties; so this diet was continued to the end. Meanwhile, God endowed them with all knowledge and wisdom, and to Daniel in particular, he granted the same insight into dreams and visions which had distinguished Joseph. When the time came for them to appear before the king, he found them the fairest of all their fellow captives, and ten times better in wisdom and discernment than all the magicians and astrologers of Chaldæa. So they stood before him among the courtiers.

The great opportunity for the use of Daniel's power as an interpreter of dreams for the glory of God, occurred in a manner very similar to the case of Joseph. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream which troubled him so much that he awoke from his sleep. All recollection of the vision instantly vanished, and the king, anxious to recall it, summoned all the Magi or soothsayers, and commanded them to tell him what he had dreamed and to explain the vision. This being a simple impossibility, the wise men answered that they were unable to comply with his demand, whereupon the king gave orders for the execution

of all the soothsayers and their families. In this sweeping decree Daniel and the Hebrew men of learning were involved, and Daniel obtained from the king a respite, which he and his companions spent in prayer; and he received the revelation with one of those grand utterances of praise and prayer that form the great charm of his book. The vision, which he was inspired to expound to Nebuchadnezzar, is one of the several by which, at this epoch, when the great monarchies of Asia were about to come into collision with the powers of the West, God revealed the steps by which the successive empires were to give way before His kingdom.



DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN.

Nebuchadnezzar was overwhelmed with astonishment at the accuracy of Daniel's interpretation, but the confession which it drew from him is scarcely the language of a convert to the true religion. According to his promise, he loaded Daniel with rewards, made him ruler over the province of Babylon, and master of the Chaldean sages or Magi.

Daniel and his friends had their fidelity to Jehovah subjected to a terrible test, when Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image, and commanded all persons to worship it on pain of being cast into a fiery furnace. No attempt was made upon Daniel, who seems to have been too firmly established in the royal favor for his enemies to venture to attack him till they had first made an example of his companions.

Accordingly, they informed the king that Shadrach, Meshac and Abednego, had refused to bow down to the golden image. The king summoned the three Hebrews, and gave them an opportunity of complying with his demand, but upon their firm refusal to acknowledge any God but Jehovah, or to bow down and worship the image, he commanded them to be cast into the furnace, which was done. The flames were so fierce that they slew the men charged with the execution of the king's decree, but the Hebrews were unscathed in the midst of the flames. There Nebuchadnezzar beheld them, and also a fourth figure with them, "and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God." Overwhelmed with amazement, the king called to the three Hebrews to come forth from the furnace, and they came out and stood before him without having even "the smell of fire" about them. This miraculous deliverance extorted from the monarch a still warmer acknowledgment of the God of the Hebrews. Their enemies were silenced by a terrible decree, and they themselves were promoted to higher stations in the province of Babylon.

Another dream, which Daniel again interpreted when the Chaldean soothsayers had failed, warned the king that his reason should depart, and he should be driven from among men, to herd with the beasts of the field, till "seven times" had passed over his head. The judgment came upon him at the expiration of a year. His enemies had been subdued on every side; his great works of art and power had been completed; and, as he surveyed them from the roof of his palace, he forgot God, of whose might he had had such proofs, and exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" The words had scarcely mounted toward the vault of heaven, when a voice replied, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; *The kingdom is departed from thee;*" adding the details of his exile from among men, all of which were fulfilled for a space of seven years.

After the close of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel was deposed from his high offices. His next appearance is at the great banquet given by Belshazzar at the close of his reign. The city was besieged by Cyrus, the king of Media and Persia, but as it was believed to be too strong to be taken, the Babylonians gave themselves little or no concern about their enemies.

Cyrus wasted no efforts on the impregnable defences, but resolved to divert the stream of the Euphrates, and to enter the city by its

bed. When the work was complete, Belshazzar gave him the opportunity for a surprise by that great feast, of which we have so graphic an account in the book of Daniel. A thousand of his lords were assembled at the banquet; and the prince, inflamed with wine and flattery, ordered the gold and silver vessels of the Temple of the Jews to be brought, that he, and his wives, and concubines, and courtiers, might drink in them to the praise of their gods. At that moment a hand was seen writing upon the wall, in the full light of the candelabra. Belshazzar, his joints unnerved by fear, cried out for the Chaldaean astrologers and soothsayers to be brought before him, and proclaimed that the man who could read the writing should be invested with the insignia of royalty, and made the third ruler in the kingdom. While the hand moved slowly on, from letter to letter, they confessed their inability to read the unknown characters. The king was beside himself with terror when a new person appeared on the scene. The "queen," who addresses Belshazzar in a tone of authority, was probably his mother, or his grandmother, and may, perhaps, be the Nitocris of Herodotus. She alone of all the court remembered the wonders that had been revealed to Nebuchadnezzar by Daniel, who seems to have been deposed from his post of master of the soothsayers. By her advice the king sent for him, and repeated his offers of reward. Rejecting them with disdain, Daniel reproached Belshazzar for not learning from the example of Nebuchadnezzar, and for the crowning insult of that night against God. Then he explained to the trembling monarch the awful message of Jehovah, which informed him that

"The days of thy kingdom are numbered and finished,

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting:

"Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

Belshazzar's last act of sovereignty was to confer the promised reward on Daniel. That night Cyrus took the city by surprise. Belshazzar was slain, and his kingdom passed into the hands of the conqueror.

Daniel found favor with the conqueror, and shortly after the capture of Babylon we find him employed by the king in some commission to Susa (Shushan), one of the Median capitals. He appears to have attained the fullest confidence of "Darius, the Mede." "When this monarch was making new appointments of the governors of provinces, the prophet was set over them all: and the king contemplated a still further elevation for him. This excited the dislike and

jealousy of the native princes and presidents, who determined to work his ruin. In his administration, his hands were so pure, that no ground of accusation could be found against him. They therefore devised a plan by which Daniel's known and tried fidelity to his religion should work his destruction. They procured from the careless and vain king a decree, that no one should for thirty days offer any prayer or petition to any god or man save the king himself, under pain of being cast into the lion's den. The king at once became painfully conscious of his weak and criminal conduct, when his most trusted servant, Daniel, was accused before him as an open transgressor of this decree, and his punishment demanded. Among the Medes and Persians there was a singular restraint upon despotism—which, while at the first view it seemed to give intensity to the exercise of despotic power, really tended to deter the kings from hasty and ill-considered decisions, by compelling them to feel the evil consequences with which they were attended. The king's word was irrevocable law. He could not himself dispense with the consequences of his own acts. Of this Darius was reminded; and he saw at once that he was precluded from interfering in behalf of his friend. It is a beautiful illustration of the great truth, which appears as the main argument of this chapter, namely, that the glory of God was promoted among the heathen by the captivity of his people—that the king himself was already so well acquainted with the character and power of Jehovah, that he spontaneously rested himself upon the hope, that, although unable himself to deliver him from this well-laid snare, the God whom Daniel served would certainly not suffer him to perish. The prophet was cast into the lion's den, and the mouth thereof was closed with a sealed stone. The king spent the night sleepless and in sorrow. Impelled by his vague hopes, he hastened early in the morning to the cavern, and cried in a doleful voice, 'O Daniel, servant of THE LIVING GOD, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?' To the unutterable joy and astonishment of the king, the quiet voice of Daniel returned an affirmative answer, assuring the king of his perfect safety. Instantly the cavern was opened, the servant of God drawn forth, and his accusers were cast in, and immediately destroyed by the savage inmates of the den. This striking interposition induced the king to issue a proclamation, to the same ultimate effect as that which Nebuchadnezzar had issued in a former time. He wrote unto 'all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwelt in all the earth,' charging them to

'tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is THE LIVING GOD, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be, even unto the end.' It would not be easy to overrate the importance of the diffusion of such truths as these through the length and breadth of the Median empire.

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

# LIVES OF THE EARLY FATHERS, AND OTHER EMINENT CHRISTIANS.

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## IGNATIUS.

ONE of the most eminent of the early Christians was Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch in Syria. He was set apart to that high office in A. D., 75, and presided over the church for about 32 years, and finally suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Trajan in A. D., 107. When the reader remembers that the church at Antioch was the parent of all the Gentile churches, he will appreciate the importance of the position held by this good man, who was surnamed Theophorus, for his great piety. His "Acts" and "Epistles," which were published in 1647 by Arch-bishop Usher, afford us an opportunity of learning much of his history, as well as the spirit which actuated him. His "Acts" were written by those who had been his companions, and who were eye-witnesses of his martyrdom. These declare him to have been "a man in all things like to the apostles: as a good governor, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and spiritual labor, he opposed himself to the floods of the adversary: he was like a Divine lamp, illuminating the hearts of the faithful by his exposition of the Holy Scriptures; and lastly, to preserve his church, he scrupled not to expose himself to a bitter death." Like St. John, his chief care was to teach the churches to love one another, and to be united in all things. While urging them to strive ardently to preserve their faith pure, and to reject heresies, he says to the Christians:

"Yet pray earnestly for other men without ceasing: for there is hope of conversion in them, that they also may be brought to God.

Give them an opportunity to be instructed, at least by your works. Without Christ thinking nothing:—in him I carry about my bonds—spiritual jewels; in whom may I be found in the resurrection. Remember me, as Jesus Christ also does you.”

The Emperor Trajan treated the Christians with a strange mixture of leniency and cruelty. He commanded that all private accusations and anonymous letters against them should be rejected, and no notice taken of them; but that all persons publicly accused and convicted of being Christians, should be put to death, unless they should consent to deny their faith in public.

In the year 115, this Emperor passed through Antioch, on his way to conduct the operations of his army against the Parthians. It had always been the desire of Ignatius to suffer martyrdom for the sake of his Redeemer, and now, fearing that the cruelty of the Emperor would be directed against the church at Antioch, he resolved to avert it by voluntarily offering himself as a victim. He, therefore, went boldly into the Emperor's presence. His conference with Trajan is thus recorded in the “Acts:”

Being come into the emperor's presence, he was thus addressed: “What an impious wretch art thou, both to transgress our commands and to inveigle other souls into the same folly, to their ruin?”

Ignatius answered, “Theophorous ought not to be called so; for wicked spirits are departed from the servants of God. But if you call me impious because of my hostility, I own the charge in that respect. For I dissolve all their snares, sustained inwardly by Christ, the Heavenly King.”

“Pray, who is Theophorus?” said Trajan. “He who has Christ in his breast,” was the reply. “And thinkest thou not that gods reside in us also, who fight for us against our enemies?” “You mistake in calling the demons of the nations by the name of gods. For there is only one God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; and one Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, whose kingdom be my portion.”

“His kingdom, do you say, who was crucified under Pilate?” “His who crucified my sin with its author, and has put all the fraud and malice of Satan under their feet, who carry him in their heart.” “Dost thou then carry him who was crucified within thee?” “I do; for it is written, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them.’” Then Trajan pronounced this sentence against him: “Since Ignatius confesses that he carries within himself that was crucified, we commenda-

that he be carried bound by soldiers to great Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts for the entertainment of the people."

From Antioch the good bishop was taken to Smyrna, and thence to Rome. On his way, he wrote two of the three genuine Epistles which bear his name, and at Smyrna he had an interview with Polycarp, the young bishop of the church at that place. He reached Rome in time for the great public spectacles in the amphitheatre, and was thrown to the wild beasts in the arena, and devoured by them. Only a few of his bones were left, and these were collected by the companions who had accompanied him, and were carried back to Antioch, where they were buried.

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### POLYCARP.

THIS holy man was the Bishop of the church at Smyrna for more than seventy years. He is believed to have been a disciple of St. John, and the person mentioned in the Revelation as the "Angel" of the church at Smyrna. He was the friend of Ignatius, who addressed one of his three Epistles to him, and one of his own Epistles to the Philippians is still extant. He is said to have been eminent for his piety and zeal, as well as for his personal amiability, to which estimate of his character even the pagans bore witness.

He paid a visit to Rome about the year 150, to Anicetas, Bishop of Rome, to settle a troublesome controversy about the proper observance of Easter. The point in dispute was purely traditional, and no agreement was affected. While here he did not hesitate to denounce those who had departed from the true Apostolic doctrine.

At length, in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the Smyrniote church was subjected to great persecutions. Polycarp was willing to remain in the city, and share the fate of his friends; but the latter at length persuaded him to retire into the country, whither his persecutors followed and arrested him. He had been forewarned of this fate in a dream, and received the officers of the law with great kindness and dignity. He set before them a bountiful supply of refreshments, and while they were eating, devoted himself to fervent prayer.

The soldiers took him before the Pro-consul, who, having persuaded one Quintus to save his life by denying his Saviour, thought he could

work upon the fears of Polycarp in a similar manner. But the good man was now about one hundred years old, and ready to depart, and steadfastly resisted the importunities of the magistrate.

"Swear by the fortune of Cæsar," said the Pro-consul, "swear, and I will release thee ; reproach Christ."

"Eighty and six years have I served him," said Polycarp, "and he never wronged me ; and how can I blaspheme my King, who hath saved me ? I am a Christian, and if you desire to learn the Christian doctrine, assign me a day, and hear."

"I have wild beasts," said the Pro-consul, "and I will expose you to them unless you repent."

"Call them," was the calm reply. "Our minds are not to be changed from the better to the worse ; but it is a good thing to be changed from evil to good."

"I will tame your spirit by fire unless you repent," said the Pro-consul.

"You threaten me with fire, which burns for a moment," said the martyr ; "but you are ignorant of the future judgment, and of the fire of the eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly. But why do you delay ? Do what you please."

The Pro-consul was sorely perplexed. It was the wish of the populace that Polycarp should be given to the lions ; but as the lawful time for opening the amphitheatre had gone by, this could not be done, and he was sentenced to die at the stake. When they sought to bind him to the stake, he said, "Let me remain as I am ; for he who gives me strength to sustain the fire, will enable me to remain unmoved." Then placing his hands behind him, he lifted up his voice in prayer, and thanked God for having given him the privilege of sealing the faith with his life. Then the faggots were lighted ; but the wind blew the flames away so steadily, that in spite of the efforts of his tormentors, he remained uninjured. Upon this the executioner slew him with his sword. His friends begged his body ; but the Jews opposed the request, falsely asserting that the Christians would worship him instead of Christ. There being danger of a tumult, the centurion in charge of the execution burned the body, after which the charred bones were gathered up by the disciples of the martyr and buried.

## ORIGEN.

ORIGEN, who was surnamed Adamantius, on account of the strength of his constitution and, the magnitude of his labors, was born in Alexandria, in Egypt, in the year 185. His father was a man of wealth and education, and, finding that his son was a youth of unusual talent, had him thoroughly educated in the best schools of the city. Leonides, the father, was also a devoted Christian, and exerted himself to instruct his son in the knowledge of Christ. "He made him commit daily a portion of Sacred Scripture to memory. The boy took great delight in his task, and already gave indications of his profoundly inquisitive mind. Not satisfied with the explanation of the literal sense, which his father gave him, he required the thoughts embodied in the passages he had committed to be fully opened out, so that Leonides frequently found himself embarrassed. The father chided, indeed, his inconsiderate curiosity, and exhorted him to be satisfied as became his years, with the literal sense; but he secretly rejoiced in the promising talents of the youth, and with a full heart thanked God he had given him such a son. Often, it is said, when the boy was asleep, he would uncover his breast, kissing it as a temple where the Holy Spirit designed to prepare his dwelling, and congratulated himself that he possessed such a treasure."

Besides the instruction he received from his father, he was a pupil of Clement, the Catechist.

The Christians of Egypt were severely persecuted during the reign of Severus, A. D., 202. Leonides was thrown into prison with others. Origen, young as he was, was ready to become a martyr, and boldly hazarded his life by visiting his father in prison. His mother, however, anxious for his safety, at length kept him at home by hiding his clothes. Unable to see his father, he wrote to him, exhorting him not to let the thought of his family make him recreant to the cause of Christ. The father kept the faith, and suffered death, leaving his widow and six children helpless. Origen was now seventeen, and was enabled to prosecute his studies still farther through the kindness of a rich Christian lady, who received him into her house.

Encouraged by Demetrius, the bishop and others, Origen upon reaching the age of nineteen, revived the Catechetical School of Clement, which had been broken up by the persecution, and was appointed Catechist. He sold his classical library for a mere pittance, on which he managed to live with great privation; but this in his

eyes was better than dependence. He was very successful in his school. Pupils, both Christians and Pagans, came in from all quarters. Many of the latter were converted by him, and several became martyrs. He tried to lead a blameless life, and to avoid temptation, even went so far as to emasculate himself. Although he tried to conceal this, his secret was discovered, and it is said that Demetrius on this account refused to ordain him.

His zeal and activity in behalf of his religion made him many enemies, and his life was in constant danger. At one time he was seized and clothed in the dress of a priest of Serapis, and placed upon the steps of the temple, where he was ordered to distribute branches of palm in the usual way, to those who entered. He did as he was bidden, but said to those to whom he presented the branches, "Receive not the idol's palm, but the palm of Christ."

"He now gave himself up to the study of the Bible and its literal interpretation, and there began the great change in the theological bent of his mind. It became his endeavor to trace the vestiges of truth in all human systems; to examine all things, that he might everywhere separate the true from the false.

"His residence in Alexandria, where sects so widely different were brought together; his journey to Rome (in the year 211); his journeys to and within Palestine, to Achaia, to Cappadocia, gave him opportunity, as he tells us himself, of visiting those who pretended to any extraordinary knowledge, and of becoming acquainted with and examining their doctrines. He made it his principle not to suffer himself to be governed by the traditional opinion of the multitude, but to hold fast that only as truth which he found after unbiased examination.

"By this liberality of mind, it was the happiness of Origen to bring back many heretics, with whom he fell in contact at Alexandria, particularly Gnostics, to the simple doctrine of the gospel. One remarkable example of this sort was Ambrosius, a wealthy man, who, not satisfied with the manner in which Christianity had been exhibited to him, in the common representations of the church teachers, had sought, and supposed he had found, a more spiritual conception of it among the Gnostics; until, through the influence of Origen, he was undeceived of his error, and rejoiced at now finding, through his means, the right Gnosis at the same time with the true faith. He became Origen's warmest friend, and endeavored especially to promote his literary labors for the good of the Church.

“That he might avail himself of every help, Origen studied Hebrew, after he had arrived at the age of manhood—a task of some difficulty to a Greek. He undertook an emendation of the biblical manuscripts, by comparing them with one another. He is the creator of sacred literature among the Christians, although his arbitrary principles of interpretation prevented, in his own case, the full realization of all those results which might otherwise have been expected from it.

“As the number of those who resorted to him for religious instruction continued to increase, and at the same time his literary labors on the Scriptures, which extended over a widening field, claimed more of his attention; in order to gain time, he shared the task of catechist with his friend Heraclas, giving over to the latter the preparatory religious instruction, and reserving for himself the exacter instruction of the more advanced.

“The division of his official labors in this department made it possible for him to enlarge the sphere of his activity as a teacher of the church, in giving a course of lectures, in which he expounded to his pupils all the ancient philosophers in whom a moral and religious element was to be found, and sought to train them to that mental freedom which would enable them everywhere to separate truth from the mixture of falsehood. Thus he entitled himself to the great merit of diffusing a more liberal system of Christian and scientific education, of which the schools that resulted from his labors are the evidence. It was also his lot to conduct many, who had been drawn to him solely through the love of science, by gradual steps, to faith in the gospel.

“Some opposed him in his work, but the efforts of his enemies only contributed to extend the sphere of his activity. He removed to Palestine, a circumstance important in its consequences, an opportunity being thus given him of laboring also from that point, for the diffusion of a liberal scientific spirit in the church; and long were the traces of his activity to be discerned in these districts. Here, too, a circle of young men gathered around him, who were trained under his influence to fill the posts of theologians and church teachers. Here he composed, among other works, his treatise on the utility of prayer, and on the exposition of the Lord’s prayer, which he addressed to his friend Ambrosius.

“He maintained an active correspondence with the most distinguished church teachers in Cappadocia, Palestine, and Arabia; and he was often invited to assist at deliberations on the concerns of foreign churches.

“During the persecution of Maximim, the Thracian, in which two of his friends had much to suffer, he addressed to them his treatise on martyrdom, in which he exhorts them to steadfastness, and at the same time shows the energy of his unwavering trust and zeal in the gospel faith.

“At length he was induced to flee to a place of safety, and accordingly repaired to Cæsarea in Cappadocia; but, on the breaking out of the persecution there, he retired to the house of Juliana, a Christian virgin, who concealed and entertained him in her dwelling during the space of two years. Here he made an important discovery, in an ancient translation, not before known to exist, of some books of the Old Testament, which enabled him to bring to a completion the great work of collecting the ancient versions extant, and comparing them with the Hebrew—a work in which he had long been engaged. After the assassination of Maximim, and under the reign of the Emperor Gordian, in the year 238, he was enabled to return once more to Cæsarea, and resume there his earlier labors.

“To the end of his life he was occupied with theological labors. When he was sixty years of age, he, for the first time, permitted his discourses to be taken down by short-hand writers. In what high consideration he stood with the churches of these countries, is evident from the fact, that on important ecclesiastical questions, where it was difficult to come to a decision, his opinion was consulted by synods of bishops.

“As an instance of this kind, a controversy had been excited by a party among the Arabian Christians, who asserted that the human soul died with the body, and that it was to be revived only with the body at the resurrection—an ancient Jewish notion. The convention of a *great synod* came to be thought necessary for the purpose of settling these disputes. As they could not come to an agreement, Origen was sent for; and it was brought about by his influence that the opponents of the soul’s natural immortality confessed and renounced their error.

“Origen, who, on account of some particular opinions, was, by a great part of the church, stigmatized as a heretic and enemy to the evangelical scheme of faith, is said, in the last days of a life consecrated to labor and conflict in behalf of that which he considered to be the cause of Christ, to have refuted by his conduct the accusations of his adversaries, and shown how he was ready to sacrifice all for the faith—how he belonged to that number who are willing to hate even their own life for the Lord’s sake.

“As the fury of the enemies of Christianity, in the Decian persecution, was directed particularly against *those* men who were distinguished among the Christians for their station, wealth, or their knowledge, and their activity in promulgating the faith, it was natural that such a man as Origen should become a shining mark for fanatical cruelty. After a steadfast confession, he was thrown into prison; and here it was attempted, in conformity with the plan of the Decian persecution, to overcome the infirmity of age, by exquisite and gradually increasing tortures. But the faith which he bore at heart sustained the weakness of old age, and gave him power to withstand every trial. After having suffered so much, he wrote from his prison a letter full of consolation and encouragement for others.

“The circumstances which contributed first to *moderate*, and then to bring wholly to an end, this persecution, procured for Origen freedom and repose. Yet the sufferings which he had undergone served, perhaps, to hasten his death, which took place about the year 254, in the seventieth year of his age.”

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## CYPRIAN.

CYPRIAN of Carthage was one of the brightest lights of the early Christian Church. He was a professor of oratory in the city of Carthage, and a man of wealth and position. He was converted to Christ under the ministry of a presbyter named Cccilius, about the year 246, and at once embracing Christianity openly, assumed and held a prominent place in the church. Speaking of his conversion, he has said :

“While I lay in darkness and the night of paganism, and when I fluctuated, uncertain and dubious with wandering steps in the sea of a tempestuous age, ignorant of my own life, alienated from light and truth, it appeared to me a harsh and difficult thing, as my manners then were, to obtain what Divine grace had promised, that a man should be born again; and that, being animated with the love of regeneration by a new life, he should strip himself of what he was before, and though the body remained the same, he should in his mind become altogether a new creature. How can so great a change be possible, said I, that a man should suddenly and at once put off what nature and habit have confirmed in him ?

“But after the new birth had made me a new creature indeed, immediately and in an amazing manner dubious things began to be cleared up, things once shut up to be opened, dark things to shine forth; what before seemed difficult, now appeared feasible, and that was now evidently practicable, which had been deemed impossible.”

He was unusually kind to the poor and needy, and literally stripped himself of his wealth for their benefit. His wife opposed his Christian spirit of liberality in vain. He gave all he had, and in this way, and many others, so endeared himself to the Christians of Carthage that he was made their bishop, in spite of his desire to avoid the honor. This was in the year 248. Five of the presbyters of the church voted against him, but they were overborne by the popular voice.

In 249 the emperor Decius came to the throne, and began his terrible persecution of the Christians. Cyprian unwillingly retired from the fury of the Carthaginian pagans, to a place of safety, in which he remained for two and a half years. His brethren suffered greatly, but were much comforted by the letters of warning, counsel, and sympathy which he constantly sent them.

A schism now broke out in the church of Carthage, headed by one Felicissimus, one of the presbyters who had voted against Cyprian. This division caused Cyprian much sorrow; and, as the persecution had almost ceased, he returned to Carthage, and after a time succeeded in healing the division. This schism gave rise to his celebrated tract on “The Unity of the Church,” which contains the first acknowledgment of the supremacy of Rome as the chair of Saint Peter.

Decius was succeeded by Gallus, who renewed the persecution of the Christians; but his death, in 253, gave them a rest of several years. Cyprian was firmly convinced, from these persecutions, that the end of the world was close at hand.

In 258 the persecutions were renewed by Valerian. Cyprian was arrested during this persecution, and brought before Paternus, the Pro-consul, who, after vainly endeavoring to make him reveal the hiding place of his brethren, banished him to Curubes, a town fifty miles from Carthage.

In 260 he received permission to return to Carthage and reside on one of his estates, which was restored to him. Here he regulated the affairs of the church, and distributed what he had left; but, while thus employed, he was seized and conveyed before the Pro-consul,

who was indisposed at a town by the sea-side, called Sextus, six miles from Carthage. Here he was brought into the judgment hall, where the Pro-consul sat, and the following colloquy took place:

“Are you Thascius Cyprian?”

“I am.”

“Are you he whom the Christians call their bishop?”

“I am.”

“Our princes have ordered you to worship the gods.”

“That I shall not do.”

“You will do better to consult your safety, and not despise the gods.”

“My safety and virtue is Christ the Lord, whom I desire to serve forever.”

“I pity your case, and would wish to consult for you.”

“I do not wish that things should be otherwise with me, than that, adoring my God, I may hasten to him with all the ardor of my soul: for the afflictions of this persecution are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”

“You have lived sacrilegiously a long time, and have formed into a society men of an impious conspiracy, and have shown yourselves an enemy to the gods and to the counsels of our princes. You have ever been a father and a ringleader to the impious sect; you shall therefore be an example for the rest, and they shall learn their duty by your blood. Let Thascius Cyprian be put to death by the sword.”

“God be praised,” said the martyr; and while they were leading him away, a multitude of the people followed and cried, “Let us die with our holy bishop.”

He was led into a plain surrounded by trees, and fell upon his knees and offered up a prayer. He ordered a sum of money to be given to the executioner, and then himself bound the napkin over his eyes; his hands were bound by a deacon and a presbyter, and the Christians laid before him napkins and handkerchiefs to receive his blood. Then his head was cut off by the executioner.

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## EUSEBIUS.

WITH the exception of Origen, the most learned of all the early Fathers, was Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Cæsarea. Nothing is

known of his parentage, education, or early life, but it is probable that Cæsarea itself was the place of his birth, and that that event took place sometime before the year 270. He first appears in connection with his friend Pamphilus, in the joint production of works of great learning, the object of which was to spread the knowledge of and confirm the faith of the Christians in their doctrine.

Pamphilus had collected a library at Cæsarea, which is said to have contained thirty thousand manuscript volumes. "It seems to have been collected chiefly for the good of the church, and to lend out to all religiously-disposed people." Pamphilus suffered martyrdom in the persecution under Diocletian, and Eusebius wrote an apology for him, in six books, and added his name to his own. How Eusebius escaped the fate of his friend during this fierce persecution is unknown.

The succession of Constantine to the throne, enabled him to prosecute his labors in public, and he at once became famous as the most learned man of his day. In 314 he was ordained Bishop of the church in Cæsarea; and in 324 he took a prominent part in the Council of Nice. He died about 340, at Cæsarea, and was buried there. His Ecclesiastical History, Cleoraicon, Evangelical Preparation, and Evangelical Demonstration, are all brought down to that period, though he survived Constantine, and wrote the life of this first Christian Emperor. Most of his other numerous works are lost, but these remain to attest his arduous labors and universal learning, consecrated, if not always wisely, yet honestly, to Christ and the highest good of mankind.

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## AUGUSTINE.

AUGUSTINE was born in Tagasta, a town of Numidia, in Northern Africa, in the year 354. His parents were poor, but of respectable position, and his mother was a true specimen of a Christian matron. She paid particular attention to his religious training, and at an early age put him among the catechumens to prepare him more thoroughly.

He lost his father when he was sixteen years old, and his boyhood was spent in study and in dissipations. He conceived a thorough distaste for the study of the Greek literature, which he retained

through life. He read the Heathen authors as well as the Sacred Scriptures. He became tainted with immorality also, and when only nineteen had a son by a mistress.

He perplexed his intellect with vain studies, by which he hoped to find out the truth; "but turning from the fountain of truth, he became associated with the Manichæans, who, among many other absurd theories, maintained that man had two souls, with opposite tendencies, and that particles of God were imprisoned in the fruits of the earth.

"Meanwhile, a pious mother was earnestly seeking his conversion to the true faith. Meeting with a bishop, she entreated him to use his influence to turn Augustine from such absurd doctrines. But he replied to her solicitations by saying, 'Let him alone, only pray to the Lord for him; he will at length, by reading, discover the error, and see how great his impiety.' At the same time, he told her how, when he was a child, he had been deceived in the same manner, and had not only read the books of the Manichæan sect, but copied almost all of them, and had himself found out, without any one's disputing with him, or convincing him, how much that faith was to be detested, and had therefore forsaken it. Not satisfied with this, she still importuned him, with tears, to attempt a reformation; till, wearied with her continued entreaties, he impatiently answered, 'Go your way, God bless you, for it cannot be that a child of those tears should perish.' This, she afterward said, was to her as an oracle from heaven.

"For the space of nine years, however, he continued his blind devotion to the absurd system, following the emptiness of popular glory, and seeking in his false religion to perform meritorious works that should entitle him to particular eminence, and satisfy the desires of his restless spirit."

At length, the death of a friend whom he tenderly loved, filled him with so much grief that he went to Carthage, where, becoming disgusted with the ignorance of one of the principal teachers of the Manichæans, and being offended with the ways of the scholars of Carthage, he removed to Rome, where he was sick of a dangerous fever, the recovery from which he attributed to his mother's prayers.

He attempted to support himself in Rome by teaching eloquence, but failing in this, he went to Milan, where he was kindly received by Ambrose, the bishop of the Catholic church at that place, and was advised by him to study the Epistles of St. Paul. Through the diligent reading of these, and the preaching of Ambrose, he was led to

the truth at last, and became an avowed member of Christ's church, and one of its brightest ornaments.

After this he set out on his return to his native city in Numidia, but his mother died on the journey, at Ostia, happy that her constant prayers to God had been heard at last. Upon reaching his old home, he retired to an estate which he possessed, where, with a few friends, he lived in the practice of works of faith and love until 391. Here he composed several of his theological works.

In 391 he went to the city of Hippo on business. While there the aged bishop Valerius induced him to become his assistant, and had him ordained. On the death of Valerius, he became bishop of Hippo, and resided there during the remainder of his life. He built a monastery there for men, and a convent for women. His sister became the Superior of the latter institution.

In the year 429, the Vandals laid siege to Hippo. In the midst of these sufferings, and in the new prospect of dangers impending, it was Augustine's common prayer that God would deliver the town from the enemy; or that he would grant his servants power to endure everything which his will should impose upon them; or that God would take him out of the world. God mercifully granted a part of this prayer, and in the the third month of the siege, which lasted fourteen months, Augustine died, in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

The last thirty-five years of his age were crowded thick with literary labors. He wrote numerous treatises, and presented various theories and opinions, of which we cannot speak here. He set apart the last years of his long and active life for completing his theological works, which were in part connected with controversies which he regarded as important.

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## JEROME.

JEROME ranks first amongst the Latin Fathers in learning and genius. He was born in Stridon, an obscure town in Dalmatia, about the year 321. His parents were Christians, and were wealthy and of good position. He was liberally educated, and was at length sent to Rome, where he completed his studies. At first he plunged into the follies and dissipations of the great city, but at length he was mercifully rescued from these by the grace of God, and received the Christian rite of baptism.

After his baptism he travelled into France, in company with Bonosus, a fellow student. He carefully examined the libraries he met with, and acquired a vast amount of information. Returning to Rome, he determined to adopt the profession of a monk—a term which, in those days, meant simply a private recluse Christian, bound by no vows, but free to act according to his own judgment. He collected a large library at Rome. Here he became intimate with several families of rank, and aided in developing a fondness for the monastic life, which had long been popular in the Eastern Church.

He became involved in some troublesome quarrels, however, and finally concluded to leave Rome. Taking with him his friends, Evagrius, Heliodorus, and others, and his books, he went to Syria, and became an inmate of the Monastery of Theodorus, near Antioch. Here he made himself master of the Hebrew language, and was ordained presbyter by Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch, on condition of his remaining a recluse. He took this step by the advice of the Bishop of Rome.

He remained four years in Syria, and then went to Constantinople to study theology with Gregory Nazianzan. In 382 Damas summoned him to Rome, and made him his secretary. He left Rome, on the death of Damas, in 385, in consequence of the annoyance given him by his enemies there, and went back to Syria, taking with him his younger brother Paulinianus, and two Roman ladies of rank and wealth, Paula, and her daughter, the Virgin Eustochisem. He visited Antioch and Jerusalem, and finally went into Egypt, where he visited Didymus of Alexandria, and afterwards the monks of Itria. He became disgusted with the monks of this celebrated establishment, and went back to Palestine, and fixed his residence at Bethlehem. Here Paula erected four monasteries, three for women, and one for men. In the latter Jerome passed the rest of his life. He instructed the women in theology, and gathered around him many of his learned friends. Here he composed the most of his writings, and made his famous translation of the Bible into the Latin language, which version the Roman Catholic Church adopted as its standard. He wrote commentaries on various books of the Old and New Testament, lives of the Fathers who had preceded him, controversial tracts, and several epistles. He died at Bethlehem, in 420, in the ninetyeth year of his age.

## PATRICK.

PATRICK, generally called "The Apostle to the Irish," was born in Scotland, A. D., 379, at the village of Bonaven, between the towns of Dunbarton and Glasgow. His original name was Sukkoth. He was the son of a poor deacon of the village church, and was religiously educated, though he led a wild and careless life until his seventeenth year. At this time some pirates from the Irish coast made a descent upon his native place, and carried him away. They took him to Ireland and sold him as a slave to one of the Celtic chiefs of that island. He was used very harshly by his master, and in his trouble he turned to God for comfort. In his "Confessions," he says :

"I was about sixteen years old, and knew nothing of the true God, when I and many thousand persons were carried away into captivity, according to our deserts, since we had departed from God, and had not observed His commands. There God opened my unbelieving mind, so that, although late, I thought of my sins, and turned with my whole heart to the Lord my God, to Him who looked down on my low condition, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and before I knew Him, before I could distinguish between good and evil, guarded, protected and cherished me, as a father his son. This I certainly know, that before God humbled me, I was like a stone sunk in the mire; but when He came who had power to do it, He raised me in His mercy, and put me on a very high place. Wherefore I must testify aloud, in order to make some return to the Lord for such great blessings in time and eternity, which no human reason is able to estimate. When I came to Ireland, and had daily charge of the cattle, I prayed many times a day; the fear of God and love to Him was increasingly kindled in me; faith grew in me, so that in one day I offered a hundred prayers, and at night almost as many; and when I passed the night in the woods or on the mountains, I rose up to pray in the snow, ice, and rain, before day-break. Yet I felt no pain; there was no sluggishness in me, such as I now find in myself, for then the spirit glowed within me." After spending six years in the service of this chief, he believed that he heard a voice in his sleep which promised him a speedy return to his native land, and soon announced to him that a vessel was ready for him. Firmly believing in his vision, he set out for the sea-coast, and succeeded in obtaining passage on a ship about to sail for Scotland, and eventually reached

his home. Several years later, he was again captured by pirates, but succeeded in escaping and reaching home.

It now became the wish of his life to carry the Gospel to the wild people among whom he had spent the six years of his captivity, and in whose midst he had given his own heart to God.

“As the Apostle Paul was called by the Lord, in a night-vision, to carry the first news of salvation to the people of Macedonia, so a man appeared to Patrick in a night-vision, with many letters. He gave him one, and he read the words, ‘words of the Irish,’ and as he was reading, he thought he heard the united voices of many Irish, who dwell near the sea, exclaiming, ‘we beseech thee, child of God, come and again walk among us!’ His feelings would not allow him to read any further, and he awoke. Another night, he believed that he heard a voice from heaven, in a dream, the last words of which were intelligible to him. ‘He who gave His life for thee, He speaks in thee.’ He awoke full of joy. One night it was as if there was something in him, and yet above him, that was not himself, praying with deep sighs, and at the close of the prayer, it spake as if it was no other than the spirit of God. He awoke and recollected the transcendent expressions of Paul, respecting the intimate intercourse of God’s children with his own Spirit.”

In order to qualify himself for his mission, he went to Gaul, where he studied for three years in the monastery of Marmontier, after which he spent many years in Italy, still engaged in his studies.

In 432 he returned to Scotland, preparatory to entering Ireland. His friends and relatives strove to keep him back, assuring him that the undertaking was far beyond his powers. “Many opposed my going,” says he, “and said behind my back, ‘Why does this man rush into danger among the heathen, who do not know the Lord?’ It was not badly intended on their part; but they could not comprehend the matter on account of my uncouth disposition.”

He passed over to Ireland and began his work. By the sound of a kettle drum, he collected large assemblies in the open air, and told them of the sufferings of the Saviour for sinful man, and by his preaching made many converts. His work was not easy, however, for the people were wild and superstitious, and the priests and national bards opposed him with a bitter hostility, and subjected him to many trying persecutions. His firm courage and faith, and his sweet and amiable disposition, by the grace of God, overcame all these, and the number of his converts continued to increase.

He was at one time in a family of rank, the members of which he baptized. The son of the house, a youth, entertained such love for Patrick, that he resolved, however much his friends tried to dissuade him, to forsake all, and to accompany the preacher of the gospel amidst all his dangers and toils. On account of his friendly, gentle disposition, Patrick gave him the name of Benignus. He availed himself of the agreeable voice of the youth, in order to influence the people by means of singing.

Benignus was zealously engaged with him in publishing the gospel to the time of his death, and he succeeded him in the pastoral office. Many of the national bards were converted by him, and sang, in their own hymns, of the worthlessness of idolatry, and to the praise of God and Christ.

By the grace of God, Patrick was permitted to perform some miracles which materially aided in the work of converting the people. "Yet I conjure all persons," says he, in referring to them, "let no one, on account of these or similar things, believe that I place myself on a level with any of the apostles or perfected saints; for I am a poor, sinful, despicable man."

Patrick devoted himself chiefly to the heads or chieftains of the people, knowing that their conversion would exercise a powerful influence upon their followers; but he did not neglect the masses. He travelled through the country, frequently attended by his pupils and assistants, and preached to the inhabitants with the greatest success.

He was careful to avoid even the appearance of seeking his own profit or honor, and when his grateful converts endeavored to induce him to accept presents from them, he firmly refused them. At first the givers were offended by this course; but they finally came to respect him the more for it.

Patrick was emphatically the benefactor of Ireland. He not only introduced Christianity into a country where paganism had prevailed before, but laid the foundations for the institutions of civilization, learning and the arts, which followed in the wake of the true faith. For more than thirty years, he labored in this great field. He gave up his home and friends for his work, and conquered the yearning of his heart to see them again. "Gladly," he says, "would I travel to my parents in my native land, and also visit the brethren in Gaul, to see once more the faces of the saints of my Lord. God knows that I wish it very much. But I am bound by the Spirit, who testifies that

he will pronounce me guilty, if I do this, and I dread lest the work I have begun, should fall to the ground."

Patrick lived until about 465; but the date of his death, and the incidents of his last hours, are not known.

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## PETER WALDO.

IN the twelfth century, there existed many men who sought to bring back the Catholic Church, which, in her external appearance, seemed to them utterly corrupt, to primitive and apostolical purity. Among these was Petrus Waldus, a rich merchant of the city of Lyons, in the south of France. He had been a person of great piety from his youth, and was a diligent student of the Bible, and the writings of the early Fathers. These convinced him that there were abuses in the church, which needed reformation, and imbued him with a strong desire to see the Bible translated into the language of the country, so that it might be placed in the hands of every Christian. At that time the only version of the Scriptures in use in Europe (besides the original Hebrew and Greek versions) was the Vulgate, or Latin Bible of St. Jerome; but as a knowledge of the Latin was confined to a very few persons, the Holy Book was accessible to hardly more than one in many thousands. Peter Waldo, who was a man of learning, resolved that this should no longer be the case, but that the word of God should be scattered abroad amongst the masses. So, with the assistance of several friends, he translated the Bible into the French language, and began to circulate it amongst the people. This was the first version in a modern tongue ever seen in Europe, and the effect of it was electrical. The demand for it grew greater every day, and the result was that, in the south of France especially, the hold which the Romish priesthood had upon the masses was weakened.

In 1160, Peter Waldo sold his possessions, and distributed the proceeds in charity, and began preaching to a body of associates, who were commonly called "The Poor of Lyons." He and his followers had no design of seceding from the Church of Rome at first, but were ultimately driven to that step. The clergy bitterly opposed the preaching of Waldo and the circulation of the Bible; but the work went on in

spite of them. Then they summoned persecution to their aid, but in vain. The Arch-bishop of Lyons commanded Waldo and his companions to be silent, whereupon they appealed to Pope Alexander III., in 1179, who likewise decided against them, and forbade their meetings for religious worship. Waldo continued to preach, however, teaching that he and his followers must obey God rather than man, and, in 1184, they were formally excommunicated by Pope Lucius III.

The seed of religious liberty and reform, thus planted by Waldo, continued to grow, and his views spread in France, Italy, and Bohemia, and his adherents became especially numerous in Provence and in the Valleys of Piedmont. Persecutions came thickly upon the little band of Christians. Waldo was driven about from place to place throughout Europe, to avoid the wrath of the Pope and his clergy. His followers were burned at the stake, cut down with the sword, hurled from precipices, and tortured in almost every conceivable way, in the vain effort to destroy their religion. They remained faithful in the midst of all this, however, willing and even anxious to attest their faith in their Saviour by martyrdom. Peter Waldo went to his rest in a good old age, but the great religious body known as the Waldenses has perpetuated his memory, and borne constant witness to the good he wrought upon earth. He led the way out from the corruptions of the Romish Church, and became the father of one of the most heroic religious bodies known to history. But, apart from this, his memory deserves to be cherished by all Christian people for the service he rendered the Church of Christ, in being the first to give the Bible to the masses in a language understood by them.

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## JOHN WYCLIFFE.

JOHN WYCLIFFE, or De Wycliffe, the father of the English Reformers, was born in the village which bears his name, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, in 1324. He belonged to the gentry, and his family dated back to the time of the Conquest as lords of the manor. He entered Queen's College, Oxford, about 1340, but soon removed to Merton College, where he became noted for his extraordinary talents, piety, and scholarship. "He is said to have attained proficiency

in the civil, canon, and common law, but devoted himself with the greatest zeal and success to the scholastic philosophy and divinity. The chroniclers most averse to him admit his preëminence in theological knowledge."

He made his first appearance as a writer in 1356, in a tract called "The Last Age of the Church," (printed in Dublin in 1840,) the object of which was to prove that the end of the world was approaching. The occasion of this work was the prevalence of a terrible plague called "The Black Death," which had swept away nearly one-fourth of the population of Europe. In 1360 he maintained a controversy with the mendicant orders, in which he upheld the authority of the beneficed clergy against the friars. In the same year he was made Master of Baliol College, and was given the parish of Tillingham, in the Diocese of Lincoln. In 1365 he exchanged the Mastership of Baliol for the Wardenship of Canterbury; but, in consequence of the hostility of the monks, his appointment was declared void by the Arch-bishop of Canterbury, and he commenced a litigation for the recovery of his place, which lasted seven years and was finally decided against him. He was now made one of the king's chaplains, and when Pope Urban V. demanded tribute of King John, Wycliffe strongly opposed the demand, declaring the Pope's claim of feudal superiority "to be baseless on the ground of both reason and Scripture."

In 1368 he exchanged the living of Tillingham for that of Ludgershall, which lay nearer to Oxford; and in 1372 the degree of doctor of theology was conferred upon him by the University. This honor entitled him to deliver lectures in the University as professor of theology. He at once began his lectures, "with very great applause," says Lewis, "having such an authority in the schools, that whatever he said was received as an oracle. In these lectures he frequently took notice of the corruptions of the begging friars, which, at first, he did in a soft and gentle manner, till finding that his detecting their abuses was what was acceptable to his hearers, he proceeded to deal more plainly and openly with them."

In 1375 Edward III. made him a member of the Embassy sent to "negotiate at Bruges with the delegates of Gregory XI., chiefly concerning the papal reservation of benefices in England which were held by foreigners, and the revenues of which were transmitted to Rome or Avignon, a matter which had been frequently complained of in the English Parliament." He was abroad on this errand for two years,

and during his absence was presented by the king to the prebend of Aust, in the collegiate church of Westbury, and to the rectory of Lutterworth. His manful defence of the rights of the English Crown against the pretensions of Rome, rendered him very obnoxious to the Pontiff and his partisans in England. In 1377 the Pope ordered the English prelates to arrest and confine him, and to investigate the doctrines promulgated by him. Before this bull arrived an attempt was made to try him before a Convocation assembled at Saint Paul's. He appeared in the court accompanied by John of Gaunt, the great Duke of Lancaster, and Lord Percy, Earl Marshal of England. In consequence of the powerful protection of these great lords, his enemies were unable to accomplish anything against him, and when the Pope's bull arrived, it met with a cold reception. Soon after this, Wycliffe, at the request of the Parliament, prepared a paper sustaining the right of the Kingdom to refuse to pay tribute to the Pope.

In 1378, he was summoned before a synod of the clergy in Lambeth. It was the intention of the clergy to condemn him for heresy, but the populace and the queen-mother sided with him, and his enemies were overawed. Upon this occasion "he maintained that the ultimate authority concerning the persons and property of churchmen belonged to the laity, and he denied that censures pronounced by ecclesiastics were valid, unless they accorded with the will of God." The schism in the church, caused by the election of two Popes, now occurred, and greatly weakened the power of the papacy, and beyond a doubt saved Wycliffe from a serious persecution.

He now resumed his lectures and writings, but the most important work of his life was the translation of the Bible into the English language, the first attempt of the kind ever made. He made, says Lingard, "a new translation, multiplied the copies with the aid of transcribers, and by his poor priests recommended it to the perusal of their hearers. In their hands it became an engine of wonderful power. Men were flattered with the appeal to their private judgment; the new doctrines insensibly acquired partizans and protectors in the higher classes, who alone were acquainted with the use of letters; a spirit of inquiry was generated; and the seeds were sown of that religious revolution which, in little more than a century, astonished and convulsed the nations of Europe." In this translation he was no doubt assisted by pupils, or learned friends. He was the head of an organization called "Poor Priests," who travelled about

through the country and disseminated his opinions by preaching in the church-yards, and at the market and fairs. So great was the effect of this system of preaching, and of his writings, that it is said that Wycliffe's doctrines were held by about one-half of the English people.

In consequence of his public denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation, his enemies induced the king to banish him from the University of Oxford in 1382. He retired to the rectory of Lutterworth, where he passed the remainder of his life in completing his translation of the Bible, and in literary labors of various kinds.

In December, 1384, he was cited to appear before the Pope to answer to the charge of heresy, but declared his physical inability to obey the summons. On the 31st of that month he was stricken with a fit of the palsy while hearing mass in his church, and never spoke again. The papal vengeance, however, pursued him even into his grave. In 1415, the Council of Constance ordered his books to be burned, and his body to be torn from the grave and burned, which infamous decree was executed to the letter.

The doctrines which Wycliffe taught were directly hostile to the supremacy of Rome, though he never withdrew himself from the communion of that church, but died a priest in it. According to him, "the authority of the Crown was supreme over all persons and property in England, to the exclusion not only of the secular, but the spiritual jurisdiction of the papal court. He was opposed to the whole framework of the hierarchy, as a device of clerical ambition, to episcopacy, and endowments, and held that the clergy should be supported by alms, and should require only livelihood and clothing. He retained the ordinance of baptism, but without regarding it as essential to salvation; and the sacrament of the mass, but without the doctrine of transubstantiation. He denied any intrinsic beneficial influence from confirmation, penance, holy orders, or extreme unction, and declared them all fraught with delusion. He believed in the existence of an intermediate state, but held masses for the dead to be a piece of clerical machinery, adjusted with a view to gain. He taught that men are neither the better nor worse for church censures, but that the destiny of each is determined according to his own spiritual condition as a responsible creature."

## JOHN HUSS.

JOHN HUSS was born on the 6th of July, 1373, at Hussinetz, a small town in Bohemia, near the border of Bavaria. Although of an humble family, he managed to obtain the means to pursue his studies, first in his own town, then at Prascalitz, and finally at the University of Prague, where he graduated in 1393. The University was at this time at the height of its glory, having more than twenty thousand students in attendance upon it. In 1398, Huss began to give lectures in Philosophy and Theology, and in 1401 became president of the university faculty of Theology. In 1402 he was appointed preacher in the Bethlehem Chapel, which had been established in 1392 for the purpose of enabling the people to hear the gospel in the Bohemian tongue. He also became the confessor and friend of Queen Sophia; and while holding this position became acquainted with the writings of Wycliffe, the English reformer, and was not long in adopting his views. His own profound studies convinced him of the truth of Wycliffe's leading ideas, and the example of the English writer inspired him in his turn to become the reformer of the church in Bohemia. He preached boldly against the doctrines of indulgences, of masses for the dead, image worship, set fasts, confession to priests, and demanded the despoiling of the churches of their useless ornaments, that the poor might be fed and clothed; and called upon the secular officers to take cognizance of and punish the crimes and offences of the ecclesiastics. He also introduced sweeping reforms into the University, of which he shortly after became rector.

His bold course produced a terrible commotion in the church and in the University. About five thousand students from Germany and Poland withdrew from the University, but the Bohemians rallied to the support of Huss, whom they regarded as their champion. In short, the contest assumed the character of a war between the University and the Church. Pope Alexander V. cited Huss to appear at Rome, but he refused to go. The Arch-bishop of Prague took active measures against him, and, amongst other things, burned 200 of Wycliffe's books. Huss boldly defended Wycliffe as far as he believed him to be right, and declared his willingness to go to the stake in defence of what he believed to be the truth. The disturbance continued to increase, and an outbreak occurred in the city, which resulted in the flight of the Arch-bishop, and the return of Huss to his chapel.

Political questions now became involved with the Theological disputes between the University and the Pope, and the conduct of Huss, for political reasons, became obnoxious to the king, who, however, sought earnestly to moderate the zeal of the reformer. Huss was not willing to cease his warfare against papal corruption for reasons of state policy, but yielded to the request of the king to withdraw from Prague for a time. He retired to his native town, from which he continued to denounce the errors and abuses against which he had fought so boldly at the University.

When the Council of Constance was convened by Pope John XXIII., in 1414, Huss was summoned to appear before it, to answer to the charge of heresy. The Emperor Sigismund gave him a safe conduct, and, in opposition to the wishes of his friends, he set out for Constance escorted by four knights, and receiving everywhere along his route assurances of sympathy and esteem from all classes. When he reached Constance, the Pope received him with a fraternal greeting. "If John Huss had killed my own brother," said the Pontiff, "I would hinder with all my power the least injustice to him during his stay in Constance." He even went so far as to promise to suspend the former interdict which had been pronounced against Huss.

The enemies of Huss (for the fiery zeal of the reformer had made many of these), now exerted themselves to stir up the popular fury against him; and, by spreading the report that he intended to escape, they caused his arrest while he was engaged in preparing for his defence before the Council, and imprisoned him first in the Cathedral, and then in the Dominican Convent on an island in the lake. He was treated with kindness by the keepers of his prison, but his letters were opened, and his appeals to the Emperor, who had promised to protect him during his stay in Constance, were disregarded by that monarch.

When brought before the Council, he was charged with "denying transubstantiation; with treating St. Gregory as a buffoon; with teaching in Bohemia the doctrines of Wycliffe; with encouraging his friends to resist the mandates of the Arch-bishop; with exciting a schism of the state from the church; with appealing from the Pope to Christ; with counselling the people to violent and aggressive measures; and with boasting that he could not have been forced either by pope or emperor to come to Constance, unless he had chosen to come." Some of these charges he frankly admitted; some he denied. Though

received at first with an outburst of hisses and insults by the members of the Council, Huss was at length allowed to make his defence; but it was of no avail. His enemies required that he should either recant all his doctrines, or suffer death. He chose the latter alternative, and silenced the appeals and threats of the emperor, who urged him to recant, by reminding him of his promise to hold him unscathed during the session of the Council.

On the 24th of June, 1415, his books were burned as heretical. "On the 6th of July, he was brought before the Council to receive sentence. The place of assembly was densely crowded. After a discourse from the Bishop of Lodi, from the text, 'that the body of sin be destroyed,' the 39 articles were read, together with the sentence of condemnation of the books of Huss, and finally the sentence of himself to be degraded from the priesthood as an incorrigible heretic, and given over to the secular arm. He was then conducted out of the city, to an open field, in which a stake and a pile of wood had been erected. Here he was again summoned to abjure his heresies; but at the summons he only knelt and prayed, using the words of the Psalms of David. As the fire was kindled, he began to sing with a loud voice the *Christe eleison*, ('Jesus, have mercy') and only ceased when he was suffocated by the rising flame. When the fire had ceased, the ashes of the pile were gathered and thrown into the Rhine; all traces of the event were carefully obliterated, and to this day the exact spot remains uncertain."

The followers of Huss in Bohemia took up arms to avenge his death, and a terrible civil war of fifteen years' duration followed.

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## MARTIN LUTHER.

MARTIN LUTHER was born on the 10th of November, 1483, at Eisleben, in Saxony, and was of respectable parentage. He obtained a good education, and at first set out to study law; but his attention being strongly drawn towards religion by the perusal of a Latin Bible, he determined to adopt theology as his profession, and entered the monastery of the Augustine monks, and became a mendicant friar. He was now a member of an order entirely devoted to the support of the papacy and all its abuses, and it seemed that his immense talents

were to be devoted to the same object. While a member of this order, he made a pilgrimage to Rome.

In the year 1517, however, an event occurred which changed the whole current of Luther's life. Doubtless his eyes had been opened to many of the errors of the system to which he belonged; but now, the cup was filled to overflowing, and Luther felt called upon to take his place as the champion of the truth. John Tetzel, a Dominican monk, passed through Germany, selling the indulgences of Pope Leo X., "that is, he was publicly *selling* to all purchasers remissions of all sins, past, present, or future, however great their number, however enormous their nature." Tetzel, it seems, offered these indulgences for sale in the most outrageous and indecent manner.

Luther, filled with indignation at the whole affair, drew up a protest in ninety-five articles, which he nailed to the door of the church in Wittenberg, where he was then residing, in which he severely censured not only the extortions of the indulgence mongers, but the cooperation of the clergy in seducing the people from the true faith, and calling them away from the only road to salvation. He enclosed a copy of his protest to the Arch-bishop of Magdeburg, and entreated that prelate to put a stop to Tetzel's scandalous practices.

Luther's action gave rise to a sharp controversy between himself and the partizans of the Pope. Unlike the other reformers, he had a gigantic power to aid him in his warfare. The printing press scattered his pamphlets all over Germany, and by diffusing his arguments won him thousands of supporters.

"Leo X., a luxurious, indolent, and secular, though literary, pontiff, would have disregarded the broil, and left it, like so many others, to subside of itself, had not the Emperor Maximilian assured him of the dangerous impression it had already made on the German people. Accordingly, he commanded Luther to appear at the approaching diet of Augsburg, and justify himself before the papal legate. At the same time he appointed Cardinal Caieton, a Dominican, and a professed enemy of Luther, to be arbiter of the dispute. They met in October, 1518; the legate was imperious; Luther was not submissive. He solicited reasons, he was answered only with authority. He left the city in haste, and appealed 'to the Pope *better informed*'—yet it was still to the Pope that he appealed—he still recognized his sovereign supremacy. But, in the following month, Leo published an edict, in which he claimed the power of delivering sinners from *all* punishments due to every sort of transgression: and

thereupon Luther, despairing of any reasonable accommodation with the pontiff, published an appeal from the Pope to a general Council.

“The Pope then saw the expediency of conciliatory measures, and accordingly dispatched a layman, named Miltitz, as his legate with commission to compose the difference by private negotiations with Luther. Miltitz united great dexterity and penetration with a temper naturally moderate and not inflamed by ecclesiastical prejudices. Luther was still in the outset of his career. His opinions had not yet made any great progress towards maturity; he had not fully ascertained the foundations on which his principles were built; he had not proved by any experience the firmness of his own character. He yielded, at least, so far as to express his perfect submission to the commands of the Pope, to exhort his followers to persist in the same obedience, and to promise silence on the subject of indulgences, provided it were also imposed upon his adversaries.

“It is far too much to say (as some have said) that had Luther’s concession been carried into effect, the Reformation would have been stifled in its birth. The principles of the Reformation were too firmly seated in reason and in truth, and too deeply ingrafted in the hearts of the German people, to remain long suppressed through the infirmity of any individual advocate. But its progress might have been somewhat retarded had not the violence of its enemies afforded it seasonable aid. A doctor named Eckius, a zealous satellite of papacy, invited Luther to a public disputation in the castle of Pleisenburg. The subject on which they argued was the supremacy of the Roman pontiff; and it was a substantial triumph for the Reformer, and no trifling insult to papal despotism, that the appointed arbiters left the question undecided.

“Eckius repaired to Rome, and appealed in person to the offended authority of the Vatican. His remonstrances were reiterated and inflamed by the furious zeal of the Dominicans, with Caietan at their head; and thus Pope Leo, whose calmer and more indifferent judgment would probably have led him to accept the submission of Luther, and thus put the question for the moment at rest, was urged into measures of at least unseasonable vigor. He published a bull on the 15th of June, 1520, in which he solemnly condemned forty-one heresies extracted from the writings of the Reformer, and condemned these to be publicly burnt. At the same time he summoned the author, on pain of excommunication, to confess and retract his pretended errors within the space of sixty days, and to throw himself upon the mercy of the Vatican.

“Open to the influence of mildness and persuasion, the breast of Luther only swelled more boldly when he was assailed by menace and insult. He refused the act of humiliation required of him; more than that, he determined to anticipate the anathema suspended over him, by at once withdrawing himself from the communion of the Church; and again, having come to that resolution, he fixed upon the manner best suited to give it efficacy and publicity. With this view he caused a pile of wood to be erected without the walls of Wittenberg, and there, in the presence of a vast multitude of all ranks and orders, he committed the bull to the flames; and with it the Decree, the Decretals, the Clementines, the Extravagants, the entire code of Romish jurisprudence. It is necessary to observe, that he had prefaced this measure by a renewal of his former appeal to a general Council, so that the extent of his resistance may be accurately defined; he continued a faithful member of the Catholic church, but he rejected the despotism of the Pope, he refused obedience to an unlimited and usurped authority. The bull of excommunication immediately followed, (January 6th, 1521,) but it fell without force, and any dangerous effect which it might otherwise have produced, was obviated by the provident boldness of Luther.

“Here was the origin of the Reformation. This was the irreparable breach, which gradually widened to absolute disruption. The Reformer was now compromised, by his conduct, by his principles, perhaps even by his passions. He had crossed the bounds which divided insubordination from rebellion, and his banners were openly unfurled, and his legions pressed forward on the march to Rome. Henceforth the champion of the Gospel entered with more than his former courage on the pursuit of truth; and having shaken off one of the greatest and earliest of the prejudices in which he had been educated, he proceeded with fearless independence to examine and dissipate the rest.

“Charles V. succeeded Maximilian in the empire in the year 1519; and since Frederic of Saxony persisted in protecting the person of the Reformer, Leo X. became the more anxious to arouse the imperial indignation in defence of the injured majesty of the Church. In 1521, a diet was assembled at Worms, and Luther was summoned to plead his cause before it. A safe-conduct was granted him by the Emperor, and on the 17th of April, he presented himself before the august aristocracy of Germany. This audience gave occasion to the most splendid scene in his history. His friends were yet few, and of no great influence; his enemies were numerous and powerful, and eager

for his destruction. The cause of truth, the hopes of religious regeneration, appeared to be placed at that moment in the discretion and constancy of one man. The faithful trembled; but Luther had then cast off the incumbrances of early fears and prepossessions, and was prepared to give a free course to his earnest and unyielding character. His manner and expression abounded with respect and humility; but in the matter of his public apology, he declined in no one particular from the fulness of his conviction. Of the numerous opinions which he had by this time adopted at variance with the injunctions of Rome, there was not one which in the hour of danger he consented to compromise. The most violent exertions were made by the papal party to effect his immediate ruin; and there were some who were not ashamed to counsel a direct violation of the imperial safe-conduct. It was designed to re-enact the crimes of Constance, after the interval of a century, on another theatre. But the infamous proposal was soon rejected; and it was on this occasion that Charles is recorded to have replied, with princely indignation, that if honor were banished from every other residence it ought to find refuge in the breasts of kings.

“Luther was permitted to retire from the diet; but he had not proceeded far on his return when he was surprised by a number of armed men and carried away into captivity. It was an act of friendly violence. A temporary concealment was thought necessary for his present security, and he was hastily conveyed to the solitary castle of Wartenburg. In the meantime the assembly issued the declaration known in history as the ‘Edict of Worms,’ in which the Reformer was denounced as an excommunicated schismatic and heretic; and all his friends and adherents, all who protected or conversed with him, were pursued by penalties and censures. The cause of papacy obtained a momentary, perhaps only a seeming triumph, for it was not followed by any substantial consequences; and while the anathematized Reformer lay in safety in his secret *Patmos*, as he used to call it, the Emperor withdrew to other parts of Europe, to prosecute schemes and interests which then seemed far more important than the religious tenets of a German monk.

“While Luther was in retirement, his disciples at Wittemberg, under the guidance of Carlozstadt, a man of learning and piety, proceeded to put into force some of the first principles of the Reformation. They would have restrained, by compulsion, the superstition of private masses, and torn away from the churches the proscribed

images. Luther disapproved of the violence of these measures; or, it may also be, as some impartial writers have insinuated, that he grudged to any other than himself the glory of achieving them. Accordingly, after an exile of ten months, he suddenly came forth from his place of refuge and appeared at Wittenberg. Had he then confined his influence to the introduction of a more moderate policy among the reformers, many plausible arguments might have been urged in his favor. But he also appears unhappily to have been animated by a personal animosity against Carlostadt, which was displayed both then and afterwards in some acts not very far removed from persecution.

“The marriage of Luther, and his marriage to a nun, was the event of his life which gave most triumph to his enemies and perplexity to his friends. It was in perfect conformity with his masculine and daring mind, that, having satisfied himself of the nullity of his monastic vows, he should take the boldest method ‘of displaying to the world how utterly he rejected them.’ Others might have acted differently, and abstained, either from conscientious scruples, or, being satisfied in their own minds, from fear to give offence to their weaker brethren, and it would be presumptuous to condemn either course of action. It is proper to mention that this marriage did not take place till the year 1525, after Luther had long formally rejected many of the observances of the Roman Catholic Church; and that the nun whom he espoused had quitted her convent and renounced her profession some time before.

“The war of the peasants, and the fanaticism of Munster and his followers, presently afterwards desolated Germany, and the papal party did not lose that occasion to vilify the principles of the reformers, and indentify the revolt from a spiritual despotism with general insurrection and massacre. It is therefore necessary here to observe that the false enthusiasm of Munster was, perhaps, first detected and denounced by Luther; and that the pen of the latter was incessantly employed in deprecating every act of civil insubordination. He was the loudest in his condemnation of some acts of spoilation by laymen who appropriated the monastic revenues, and at a subsequent period, so far did he carry his principles, so averse was he, not only from the use of offensive violence, but even from the employment of force in the defence of his cause, that on some later occasions he exhorted the Elector of Saxony by no means to oppose the imperial edicts by arms, but rather to consign the persons and principles of the reformers to

the protection of Providence. For he was inspired with a holy confidence that Christ would not desert his faithful followers, but rather find means to accomplish his work without the agitation of civil disorders or the intervention of the sword. That confidence evinced the perfect earnestness of his professions and his entire devotion to the truth of his principles. It also proved that he had given himself up to the cause in which he had engaged, and that he was elevated above the consideration of personal safety. This was no effeminate enthusiasm, no passionate aspiration after the glory of martyrdom! It was the working of the Spirit of God upon an ardent nature, impressed with the divine character of the mission with which it was entrusted and assured, against all obstacles, of final and perfect success.

“As this is not a history of the Reformation, but only a sketch of the life of an individual reformer, we shall at once proceed to an affair strongly, though not very favorably, illustrating his character. The subject of the Eucharist commanded, among the various doctrinal differences, perhaps the greatest attention; and in this matter Luther receded but a short space, and with unusual timidity, from the faith in which he had been educated. He admitted the real corporeal presence in the elements, and differed from the Church only as to the manner of that presence. He rejected the actual and perfect change of substance, but supposed the flesh to subsist in or with the bread, as fire subsists in red hot iron. Consequently he renounced the term transubstantiation, and substituted consubstantiation in its place. In the meantime, Zuinglius, the reformer of Zurich, had examined the same question with greater independence, and had reached the bolder conclusion, that the bread and wine are no more than external signs, intended to revive our recollections and animate our piety. This opinion was adopted by Carlostadt, Ocolampadius, and other fathers of the Reformation, and followed by the Swiss Protestants, and generally by the free cities of the empire. Those who held it were called Sacramentarians. The opinion of Luther prevailed in Saxony, and in the northern provinces of Germany.

“The difference was important. It was felt to be so by the reformers themselves; and the Lutheran party expressed that sentiment with too little moderation. The papists or Papalins (Papalini) were alert in perceiving the division, in exciting the dissension, and in inflaming it, if possible, into absolute schism; and in this matter it must be admitted that Luther himself was too much disposed, by his

intemperate vehemence, to further their design. These discords were becoming dangerous, and in 1529, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, the most ardent among the protectors of the Reformation, assembled the leading doctors of either party to a public disputation at Marburg. The particulars of this conference are singularly interesting to the theological reader; but it is here sufficient to mention, without entering into the doctrinal merits of the controversy, that whatever was imperious in assertion and overbearing in authority, and unyielding and unsparing in polemical altercation, proceeded from the mouth and party of Luther! that every approach to humility and self-distrust, and mutual toleration and common friendship, came from the side of Zuinglius and the Sacramentarians; and we are bound to add, that the same uncompromising spirit which precluded Luther from all co-operation or fellowship with those whom *he thought* in error, (it was the predominant spirit of the church which he had deserted,) continued on future occasions to interrupt, and even to endanger, the work of his own hands. But that very spirit was the vice of a character which endured no moderation or concession in any matter wherein Christian truth was concerned, but which too hastily assumed its own infallibility in ascertaining that truth. Luther would have excommunicated the Sacramentarians; and he did not perceive how precisely his *principle* was the same with that of the Church which had excommunicated himself.

“Luther was not present at the celebrated Diet of Augsburg, held under the superintendence of Charles V. in 1530; but he was in constant correspondence with Melancthon during that fearful period, and in the reproofs which he cast on the temporizing, though perhaps necessary, negotiations of the latter, he at least exhibited his own uprightness and impetuosity. The ‘Confessions’ of the Protestants, there published, were constructed on the basis of seventeen articles previously drawn up by Luther; and it was not without his counsels that the faith permanently adopted by the church which bears his name was finally digested and matured. From that crisis the history of the Reformation took more of a political, less of a religious character, and the name of Luther is therefore less prominent than in the earlier proceedings. But still he continued, for sixteen years longer, to exert his energies in the cause which was peculiarly his own, and to influence, by his advice and authority, the new ecclesiastical system.”

His great labors literally wore out his energies. He was seized

with his last sickness while on a journey to his native place, and died there on the 18th of February, 1546. His remains were removed in solemn procession to Witttemberg, and deposited in the Castle church, near the pulpit.

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## JOHN CALVIN.

JOHN CALVIN, or Chauvin, was born at Noyon, near Paris, on the 10th of July, 1509. His grandfather was a cooper, and his father apostolic notary and fiscal procurator in Noyon, and a man of great intelligence. His mother, Jeanne Lanfranc de Cambrai, was noted for her beauty and her fervid piety, and it was from her that her son inherited his strong religious views. His parents were both Roman Catholics, and he was educated in that faith. He was enabled to pursue his studies with success, and was at first intended for the priesthood. He showed such undoubted talent, however, that his father induced him to abandon the church and study law, and for this purpose he went to Bourges. "His natural inclination seems ever to have bent him towards the pursuits to which his earliest attention was directed; and though he never attended the schools of theology, nor had at any time any public master in that science, yet his thoughts were never far away from it; and the time which he could spare from his professional labors was employed on subjects bearing more or less directly upon religion."

It was during his legal studies that his attention was drawn to the doctrines of the reformers. He commenced to examine them for himself, and soon came to embrace them, and took a prominent part in the discussions of the day in defence of them, and soon became so well known as their champion that he found himself very obnoxious to some of the partizans of Rome. In 1535 he published his great work, "The Christian Institute," which was designed as an exposition of the religious faith of the French Reformers, and a defence of them against the charges which confounded them with the Anabaptists of Germany.

In 1536 the enmity of the Catholics compelled him to quit France, and he determined to go into Germany. His route lay through Geneva. He found that city in a state of confusion. The Reformation had driven away the Catholic bishops and clergy, and religious

affairs were in a state of anarchy. Calvin's writings had earned him a high reputation, and the leading men of Geneva besought him to remain, and help them to organize the reformed church upon a stable basis. He at first hesitated, but at length consented to remain and open a school of theology. He preached a sermon shortly after his arrival, and made such an impression upon the people that he became one of the pastors.

“In the very year following his arrival, he formed the design of introducing into his adopted country a regular system of ecclesiastical polity. He assembled the people, and not without much opposition prevailed on them at length to bind themselves by oath; *first*, that they would not again, on any consideration, ever submit to the dominion of Rome; *secondly*, that they would render obedience to a certain code of ecclesiastical laws, which he and his colleagues had drawn up for them. Some writers do not expressly mention that this second proposition was accepted by the people—if accepted, it was immediately violated; and as Calvin and his clerical coadjutors (who were only two in number) refused with firmness to administer the holy communion to such as rejected the condition, the people, not yet prepared to endure that bondage, banished the spiritual legislators from the city in April, 1538.”

From Geneva he went to Strasbourg, where he was welcomed by Bucer, and put in charge of a church of 1,500 French refugees. He attended the Conferences at Worms and Ratisbon, and by his course on those occasions greatly added to his reputation. He obtained a theological chair in Strasbourg, and founded a French reformed church in that city. In 1540 he was married to Idalette de Bures, the widow of an Anabaptist, whom he had turned from the tenets of that sect. A son was the issue of this marriage; but he died in his infancy, and in 1549, Calvin lost his wife. Their marriage had been a very happy one, and her death was a great blow to Calvin.

Meanwhile, the disorders had been increasing at Geneva, and in 1541, two years after his expulsion from the place, Calvin consented to return at the earnest entreaties of the people, and with the distinct understanding that his discipline was to be carried out. “His idea of the proper power and purity of the visible church was much higher than that of his contemporary German reformers. To have a reformed church was his ideal. That reform must embrace not only doctrine and ritual, but also the whole life. The most thorough expounder of original sin, he was also the most determined opponent of all actual

transgressions. The strictest advocate of Divine sovereignty, he insisted most strenuously upon man's rigid obedience. The church was the great institution for the regeneration of human society. 'Man cannot enter into life unless he be born of her womb, nourished at her breast, and kept under her fostering care.' The ministry is divinely appointed; synods of pastors and elders are for the preservation of truth and order. The state is to aid, and not to rule, this spiritual institution, though both church and state concur in the sphere of morals. Rules of discipline, conformed to these radical views, were adopted by the whole people, Nov. 20th, 1541. The presbyterial system was fully inaugurated, which became a model for the government of reformed churches in other countries. The consistory had twice as many elders (12) as ministers, and these elders were annually elected by the church. The system of representation was thus established, so fruitful in the subsequent political history of Europe. The consistory met every Thursday to consider cases of discipline. A congregation was assembled on each Friday for practical religious improvement. The general council elected by the people continued its functions; but it assembled only twice a year, and the real power was gradually absorbed by the lesser council and by the consistory. The latter was the real tribunal of morals, and its inquisitorial sphere extended to the whole population. It could not punish beyond excommunication; but the civil power was expected to do the rest. \* \* Severe penalties were often inflicted for slight offences; once a person was punished for laughing while John Calvin was preaching. But the effect upon the city was marvellous. It became the most moral town in Europe. It was also the home of letters, and the bulwark of orthodoxy."

Calvin was not only all-powerful in religious matters, but his influence extended to civil affairs also. The magistrates never ventured upon any act without first consulting him, and his wishes generally prevailed in ordinary matters, and always in important ones. He was universally regarded as the head of the reformed church in France and the greater part of Europe. Secure in his refuge from the persecution of the Catholics, he prepared a liturgy for the use of his church, and laws and rules of government for the congregations scattered throughout the continent. His writings were widely spread, and exercised a powerful influence upon the religious world. He procured the establishment of the University of Geneva, which was for years the principal school for the Presbyterian ministry, and was the

beginning of the marked degree of literary culture for which Geneva is now famous.

It would be impossible to state, much less to explain, the doctrines of Calvin in this brief sketch. They are familiar to the general reader, and we shall pass them by.

Early in 1564, his body began to give way under the weight of the cares which rested upon him, and before the ravages of a combination of diseases, which had been aggravated by his severe labors. He could scarcely eat his food, yet he continued to prepare his comments on the Book of Joshua, which he dictated to an amanuensis. On the fourth of February, of that year, he undertook to preach a sermon, but was obliged to stop. He was confined to his bed in April, and lingered on in great suffering until the evening of the 27th of May, 1564, when he died. "He was buried in the cemetery of Plain Palais; at his own request, no monument marked the spot, and no one in Geneva can now tell where rest the remains of the man who made that city famous."

He was very poor when he died, having cared nothing for wealth. His entire estate did not exceed three hundred crowns, and this he left to his relatives and poor foreigners.



OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL.



JEWISH CAPTIVES IN BABYLONIA.

THE  
HISTORY OF THE JEWS,  
FROM THE  
EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY.

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OF all the nations of the world, the Jews, or Hebrews, are the most remarkable. They trace their ancestry immediately back to the creation of man. "When little more numerous than a family, they had their language, customs, and peculiar observances—treated with *privileges*—and in every respect acted as a nation. Though broken as if into atoms, and scattered through all climes, among the rudest, and most civilized nations, they have preserved, through thousands of years, common features, habits, and observances—a common religion, literature, and sacred language. Without any political union, without a common head or centre, they are generally regarded, and regard themselves as a nation. They began as nomads, 'migrating from nation to nation, from State to State;' their law made them agriculturalists for fifteen centuries; their exile has transformed them into a mercantile people. They have struggled for their national existence against the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Syrians, and Romans, have been conquered, and nearly exterminated, by each of these powers, and have survived them all. They have been oppressed and persecuted by Emperors and Republics, Sultans and Popes, Moors and Inquisitors; they were proscribed in Catholic Spain, Protestant Norway, and Greek Muscovy, while their persecutors sang the hymns of their psalmists, revered their books, believed in their prophets, and even persecuted them in the name of their God. They have numbered philosophers among the Greeks of Alexandria and the Saracens of Cordova—have transplanted the wisdom of the East beyond the Pyrenees and the Rhine—and have been treated as pariahs among Pagans, Mohammedans, and Christians. They have fought for liberty

under Kosciuszko and Blücher, and popular assemblies among the Slavi and Germans still withheld from them the right of living in certain towns, villages, and streets." Surely, then, nothing can be of more interest than a history of this remarkable people, so numerous in our own country, and destined to exercise so important an influence upon its future history.

Man was the noblest and last of all God's created works. The whole earth was given to him to subdue and enjoy. In a moment of sinful presumption he fell from the high estate assigned him, brought death into the world, and the thousand ills which he has left to his children. Driven out of Eden, he began the transmission of his species. Adam called his first-born Cain, and had other sons and daughters during his life, two of the former, Abel and Seth, being mentioned by name in the sacred narrative. Through Seth were descended the people whose history we are about to relate. Seth begat a son whom he called Enos, who, in his turn, begat Cainan, who begat Mahalaleel, who begat Jared, who begat Enoch, who, after begetting Methuselah, was translated to heaven as being too good to remain on earth. Methuselah begat Lamech, and Lamech begat Noah. Noah was the ninth in direct descent from Adam, and was born but a little more than a century after the death of Adam. His own father was a young man at the time of the death of the great ancestor of the human race, and was probably acquainted with him. Noah was a just man and feared God, and it pleased God to select him and his family as the persons appointed to continue the race begun in Adam. After the subsidence of the great flood, which God sent upon the earth to destroy the human race, which had become so corrupt that he could no longer permit it to exist, Noah was sent to warn the people of their impending doom. But they refused to hear him, and the flood came, and they were destroyed. Only Noah and his family, eight persons in all, with a certain number of every living thing of the animal kingdom, were saved, and this only by taking refuge in an ark which the patriarch had built, according to the command of God. The flood destroyed everything that was upon the face of the earth.

When the waters went down, God commanded Noah to lead his family out of the ark, and he left it, followed by all the creatures who had been preserved with him. God then promised Noah that he would no more destroy the earth by water, and gave him a series of laws by which he and his descendants were to be governed. The sons of Noah were three in number—Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Shem was the most highly favored of these, in being the one through whom the seed promised to the first woman was descended. He became the father of Arphaxad, who begat Salah, who begat Eber, who begat Peleg, who begat Reu, who begat Serug, who begat Nahor, who begat Terah, who in his turn begat a son called Abram. Noah lived for three hundred and fifty years after the flood, and died only two years before the birth of Abram.

Abram was the tenth in descent from Noah, and the twentieth from Adam. He was the son of a man of importance, and was born in Ur of the Chaldees. His family were idolaters, but he remained faithful to the worship of the Creator. When Abram was seventy-five years old, God commanded him to separate himself from his relatives, who were idolaters, and go into a country which he would show him and give him for an inheritance for his children. Abram, although old and childless, did not hesitate to obey God's command, and crossing the Euphrates entered the land of Palestine, where he lived a nomadic life. He was called the Hebrew, or the *man who crossed the river* (Euphrates), by the natives, and was a powerful chief, rich in herds, flocks and retainers. He kept his house faithful to God, who at various times communicated his will to him, and at length ratified his promises by a covenant, the sign of which, on the part of Abram and his descendants, was the rite of circumcision. The patriarch's name was changed to *Abraham* (father of a nation), and that of his barren wife to *Sarah* (princess).

Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, and the heir of so many promises, was born at length. He had two sons, Esau and Jacob. The latter fraudulently obtained the blessing of his father, and became the heir of the promises.

Jacob had twelve sons, but his favorite was Joseph, the son of his beloved Rachel. On him he lavished such tenderness that the lad became the object of his brothers' hatred, and upon a convenient occasion they seized him and sold him into Egypt, as a slave. It pleased God, however, to make the young captive the instrument of accomplishing a part of the great design concerning Israel, which he had revealed to Abraham. Joseph found favor with the king of Egypt, and was exalted to the second place in the kingdom. At the height of his power, he was enabled to relieve the distress of his father and brethren, and to provide them with a home in the finest part of the Egyptian kingdom. Here Jacob died, and his children carried his body back to the promised land, with great pomp, and

buried it in the sepulchre of his fathers. As long as Joseph lived he protected and cherished his brethren and their children, but after his death, the Egyptians oppressed them very heavily, and finally degraded them to the condition of slaves. They greatly overtasked them, and compelled them to engage in building the great public works of the kingdom, while the fear of their joining a foreign enemy, led one of the Egyptian tyrants to decree what may be called their slow extermination, they having in the meanwhile increased to a prodigious number.

At length, when their bondage was at its height and their oppressions were heaviest, it pleased God to raise them up a deliverer in the person of Moses, the younger son of Amram, of the tribe of Levi. The love of his mother and the compassion of the daughter of the king of Egypt, enabled the infant Moses to escape the fate denounced by the Pharaoh against all the males of his race, and he was brought up at the royal court as the son of the princess, and educated in all the learning of the Egyptians. Upon reaching his manhood, the sufferings of his countrymen began to enlist his sympathy, and finally goaded him on to the killing of an Egyptian whom he caught in the act of flogging a Hebrew. This act made it necessary for him to quit the country. He fled to Midian, where he married Zipporah, daughter of Jethro, the prince of Midian. Here he kept the flocks of his father-in-law, in the peninsula of Sinai, which is located in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula. Here God appeared to him, and informed him of his purpose to redeem his promise to Abraham and to lead Israel back into the land of their fathers. He commanded Moses to make this known to his people, instructed him what to say, and how to demand of the Pharaoh permission for the Hebrews to leave Egypt. Moses professing his inability to speak well in the discharge of so great a commission, God gave him his brother Aaron as his spokesman.

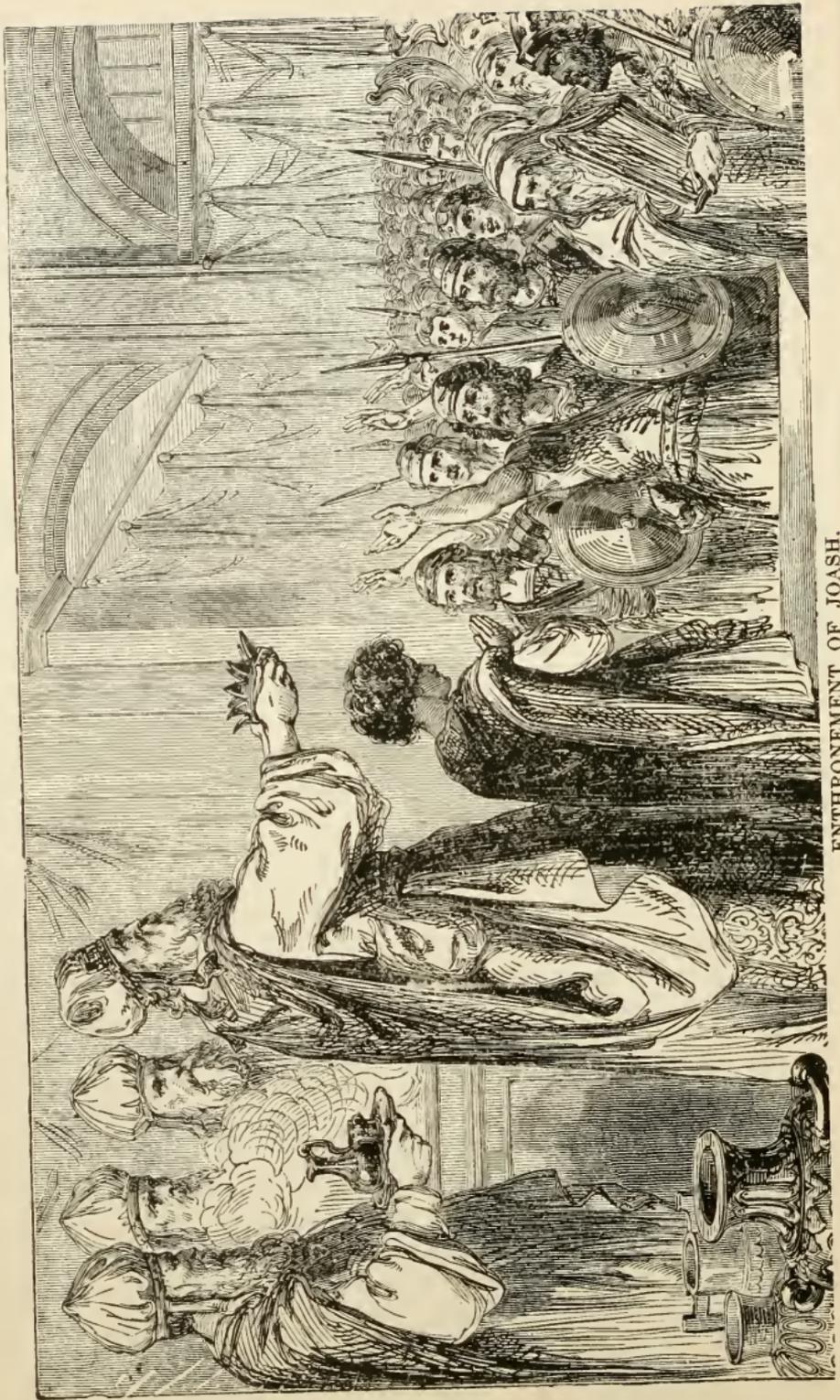
Moses repaired to Egypt, meeting Aaron on the way, communicated his mission to the people, who acknowledged the God of their fathers, and professed their willingness to obey his will as revealed by Moses and Aaron. The king, however, did not listen so willingly. He not only refused to let the Hebrews go, but increased their burdens, and a reluctant consent was only wrung from him by a series of plagues so terrible and destructive that they were manifestly the punishments sent by an all-powerful and glorious God. Before the consent of the king was given, the solemn feast of the Passover was es-



GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.

established by the Israelites, to be a perpetual memorial of the goodness and power of God in leading them out of their bondage. When the last and most terrible plague of all had wrung from the king his assent to the proposed exodus of the Israelites, the people set out in haste, 2,500,000 strong, under the guidance of Moses, their movements being directed by Jehovah himself. They marched straight to the Red Sea, and as they drew near it found they were pursued by the army of the Egyptians, led by the king in person. God again manifested his power and love by making them a way through the Red Sea, across which they passed dry shod, and by causing the waters to overwhelm and destroy the Egyptians who essayed to follow them. From the Red Sea, the march was continued to Mount Sinai, in Arabia, where God had appeared to Moses. Here a halt of eleven months and twenty days was made, and during this time God gave them, through Moses, the law by which they were to be governed, its delivery being accompanied by the most overpowering and magnificent display of his majesty and glory.

“This divine decalogue,” says an accomplished writer, “not only contained the common fundamental points of every legal code (‘Honor thy father and mother,’ ‘Thou shalt not murder,’ etc.), but also included the sublime truth of monotheism, the great social institution of the Sabbath, and the lofty moral precept, ‘Thou shalt not covet.’ These Commandments, which formed the basis of a covenant



ENTHRONEMENT OF JOASH.

between God and Israel, together with the successively promulgated statutes, precepts, etc., constitute the Mosaic law, which is contained principally in the second and third, and repeated in the fifth book of the Pentateuch, and which for about fifteen centuries remained, and with the exception of a strictly national part still is, the general code of the Hebrews. Its aims are the moral perfection of the individual, and the welfare of society. Its means are chiefly a common and central worship, under the direction of the Aaronites, whose restrictive obligations are, however, not equalled by the privileges they enjoy; three festivals for the commemoration of great national events, thanksgiving and rejoicing, as well as for the annual gathering of the whole people; a fast day for repentance; periodical readings of the law; general education through the Levites, its guardians; a weekly day of rest (Sabbath) for the people and their animals; the seventh year as a periodical time of rest for the earth, as well as for the extinction of various pecuniary claims; numerous and most frequently repeated obligations for the support of the fatherless and widow, the poor and the stranger; an organized judiciary and police; a severe penal code; strict rules for the preservation of health and cleanliness; circumcision as a bodily mark of the covenant; and numerous other rites and ceremonies designed to guard the nationality, or to lead to the preservation of truths and principles. The spirit of the whole was well defined by Rabbi Hillel in his words to a heathen who desired to be instructed in Judaism in a few minutes: "Do not to others what you would not have others do to you," is the essence; everything else is but comment.' The chief principles are: self-sanctification and righteousness, in imitation of God, who is holy and righteous; brotherly love and equality, for all people are his children; freedom, for all are bound exclusively to his service; limited right of property, for the whole land belongs to him. The principal promise of reward is the natural share of the individual in the happiness of society; the principal threat of celestial punishment, his natural share in its misfortunes; every mention of reward beyond the grave, which, in the time of Moses, had long been a chief element in the teachings of Egyptian and other priests, is avoided throughout, probably as promoting selfishness in a rude state of society by referring exclusively to the individual. The form of government is the republican (though a limited monarchy may be established if the people demand it), with the moral theocratic dictatorship of a prophet like the lawgiver, with the sovereignty of the people who judge the merits and claims of the

prophet above it, and above all the majesty of the divine law, which can be explained and developed, but not altered. The whole system is entirely practical, containing no definitions of supernatural things, except in a negative form, no articles of belief, no formulas of prayer."

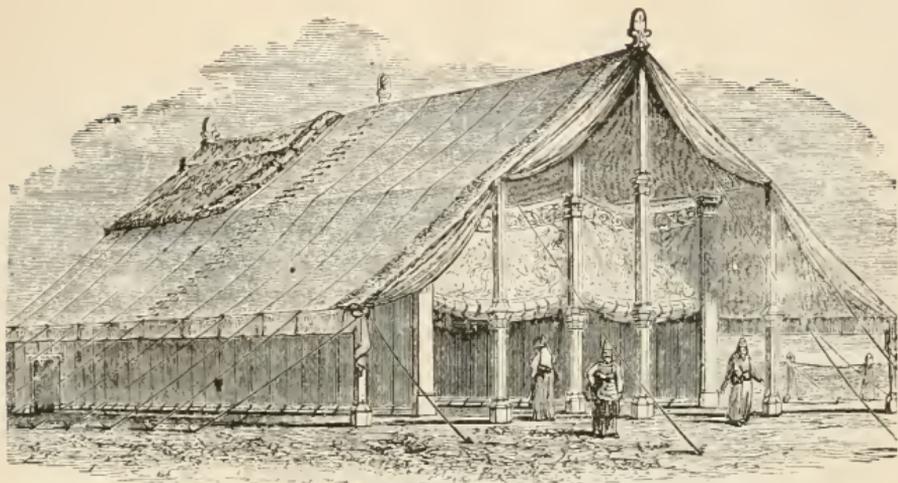
Moses remained on the mount, in communion with God, for forty days. During his absence the people became discontented. The stony wilderness was not so pleasant as the land of Egypt, provisions

were scarce, and water could scarcely be had. They began to think that Moses had been taken away from them, and would return no more; and, in spite of the wonderful manifestations of God's power and care for them, which they had enjoyed, idolatrous notions began to prevail amongst them, and finally they broke into open revolt against God, and required Aaron to make them a golden calf; that they might worship it. Moses, still on the mountain, was informed by the Al-



MOSES RECEIVING THE LAW.

mighty of the sin of the people, and of the Lord's resolve to destroy them, and make him a new nation, and at once began to plead for them. God heard his prayer, and promised to stay his hand. Moses then descended from the mount with the tables of the law, and broke them in his anger at the wickedness of the people. He restored order in the camp by putting the idolaters to death, but was overcome with despair for the success of his mission. Then he removed the Tabernacle out of the camp, and there God manifested his presence, and



SOUTHEAST VIEW OF THE TABERNACLE.

made known his will to Moses, who was commanded once more to go up into the mountain, and receive the law. This he did, remaining forty days again, and when he came down his countenance shone so with the reflected glory of heaven that the people could not look upon it, and he was obliged to cover it with a veil.

Together with the Ten Commandments, God revealed to Moses every particular of the civil code of the Hebrews, and of the gorgeous ritual by which their worship was distinguished. The Tabernacle was soon after built according to the divine command, and in it were placed the tables of the law, and the ARK, and the MERCY SEAT, and over the whole structure there rested a brilliant cloud, the visible manifestation of the glory of God.

From Sinai, the Israelites marched to the borders of Palestine. Spies were sent out by Moses to explore the land. They were twelve of the principal men of the nation, whose position would command the confidence of the people in their report. They searched the land for forty days, and found it as the Garden of Eden in beauty and fertility; but, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, they were alarmed at the strength and enormous size of the people, and the massiveness of their fortified cities. Their fears had more influence with the Israelites than their statements of the fatness of the land, and in spite of the entreaties of Moses and Aaron, and the earnest assurances of Joshua and Caleb, the people positively refused to enter the promised land. They even proposed to elect a captain and return to Egypt, and were about to stone Moses and Aaron and Joshua and

Caleb, when the glory of the Lord suddenly blazed forth from the Tabernacle, and the Almighty, calling Moses to him, declared his purpose to disinherit Israel, and make him a nation. Moses again interceded with the people, and was successful. God agreed to try them still farther; but for their sin, in refusing to enter the promised land, declared that not one of those who had refused to trust to and obey him should enter that land. The execution of the sentence was to begin on the morrow, by their turning into the Wilderness by the way of the Red Sea. There they were to wander for forty years—a year for each day that the spies had searched the land—till all the men of twenty years old and upward had left their carcasses in the desert; and then at length their children, having shared their wanderings, should enter on their inheritance. As an earnest of the judgment, the ten faithless spies were slain by a plague.

During all these long years, the people were led by God, and provided by him with such things as were necessary to their health and safety. Moses continued to lead them, and to make intercession for them in their frequent sins against their King. At the close of the forty years, he led them to the borders of the Land of Promise, and there transferred his office as leader and prophet to Joshua; and, having rehearsed all the laws of the Almighty to the people, and put them in mind of the love and goodness of which they had been the object, he ascended Mount Nebo, from which he was permitted to view the land, and there he died, and “God buried him.”

Joshua led the people over Jordan, the waters of which rolled back, as those of the Red Sea had done forty years before, and the people passed over dry shod. The land had been divided by Moses before his death, and the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were given their inheritance east of the Jordan, the inhabitants of the country having been conquered and driven out. This portion of Israel was bound, however, to assist in the conquest of the rest of the land, with which engagement they gallantly complied. The rest of the land was afterwards divided between the tribes of the remaining sons of Jacob, with the exception of that of Levi, and the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, and the half tribe of his brother Manasseh. These tribes, under the leadership of Joshua, conquered the land, after a bloody war of extermination, and entered upon their possessions. The Levites were given no particular portion of the country, but had an inheritance in each and every tribe, as being specially set apart to the service of the Lord. Before his death, Joshua



THE FALL OF JERICHO.

summoned all Israel to a solemn assembly at Shechem, in which they bound themselves and their children by a new covenant to serve the God of their fathers, who had given them the victory over their enemies. This covenant they observed until the death of Joshua and the elders who had witnessed the whole work of deliverance. Then they fell into idolatry and wickedness.

“Parts of the country remained unconquered, principally in the hands of the Phœnicians, in the N. W., of the Philistines in the S. W., and of the Jebusites in the centre. With these, and with other neighbors on the borders, frequent warfare had to be waged, while the young state, forming a confederacy of twelve, (or counting Manassah as two, of thirteen,) almost independent members had neither natural boundaries nor a capital, neither a hereditary head, nor an elective federal government, the only bond of union being the common law, and the only centre the seat of the ark of the covenant, whose guardians, probably, enjoyed the privilege of convoking a general assembly of the people in cases of urgent necessity. Such national assemblies were often held at Mizpah. But the enmity and frequent attacks of the surrounding idolatrous tribes was less pernicious than their friendly relations in times of peace, when the voluptuous rites connected with the worship of Ashtoreth and other divinities of the Phœnicians, Syrians, and Philistines, were too seductive for a people in an undeveloped state, whose own religion required a rigid observance of strict morality. To remedy these evils, heroic and inspired men arose from time to time, repulsed the enemies, restored order and the law, were acknowledged as leaders and judges, at least by a part of the people, and thus revived its unity. This period of republican federalism, under judges, is described in the book of that name—a continuation of the Book of Joshua—and forms one of the most interesting portions of Hebrew history. Othniel, a younger brother or nephew of Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, was the first of the judges. Ehud, a Benjamite, delivered Israel from the oppression of the Moabites, having killed with his own left hand Eglon, the king of the invaders. ‘After him was Shamgar, the son of Anath, who slew of the Philistines 600 men with an ox-goad,’ at a time when ‘no shield was seen, or a spear among 40,000 in Israel.’ Barak, a Naphtalite, inspired by Deborah, a female prophet and judge, gained, together with her, a signal victory near Mount Tabor and the brook Kishon, over the army of Sisera, commander of Jabin, a Canaanite king on the north of Palestine, which numbered 900 iron war-chariots. Sisera fled, but was

killed in sleep by Jael, a woman of the Nomadic and neutral Kenite tribe, in whose tent he had sought refuge. Gideon, characterized as the youngest son of one of the weakest families in Manasseh, surprised with 300 select men, the immense camp of the Midianites and Amalekites, dispersed them, called the surrounding tribes to arms, exterminated the invaders, appeased the Ephraimites, who were jealous of the glory gained by their neighbors, and refused to accept the royal dignity offered him by the gratitude of the people. Abimelech, however, his son by a concubine, gained adherents among the idolatrous friends of his mother in Shechem, destroyed the numerous family of his father, was proclaimed king in that city, was afterwards expelled, but reconquered the city, and finally perished while besieging the tower of the neighboring Thebez, by a piece of mill-stone cast from its top by a woman. Of the judges Tola, of the tribe of Issachar, and from Gilead in Manasseh beyond the Jordan, little more is preserved than their names. Jephthah, another Gileadite of illegitimate birth, having been expelled from his home, was recalled by his native district to combat against the Ammonites, who had attacked it, and carried the war into the land of the enemy, and returned after a signal victory, of which his heroic daughter, in consequence of a vow, became a victim, being doomed to die or to live unmarried in loneliness, the obscurity of the narrative rendering this point uncertain. The Ephraimites, who had not been called to participate in the combat, now threatened vengeance on the conqueror, who, unlike Gideon, terminated the quarrel with a bloody defeat of the troublesome tribe, which is the first example of civil war among the Israelites, soon to be followed by others. Ibzan, of Bethlehem-in-Judah, Elon, a Zebulunite, and Abdon, an Ephraimite, are next briefly mentioned as judges. Dan, too, gave Israel a judge in the person of Samson, who braved and humiliated the Philistines; he was a Nazarene of prodigious strength, whose adventurous exploits in life and death greatly resemble those of the legendary heroes of Greece. The greatest anarchy now prevailed. The Danites not having yet conquered their territory, 600 men among them made an independent expedition north, and conquered a peaceful town of the Phœnicians, Laish, which was by them named Dan, and is henceforth mentioned as the northernmost town of the whole country, the opposite southern point being Beersheba. The concubine of a Levite having been outraged to death on a passage through Gibeah, in Benjamin, by some inhabitants of that place, her husband cut her corpse into pieces, and

sent them to all the tribes, calling for vengeance. The people assembled at Mizpah, and demanded from Benjamin the surrender of the criminals. The Benjamites refused to obey what they probably regarded as a usurpation by the confederacy of their sovereign rights, and a bloody civil war ensued, in which they were nearly exterminated, after a heroic struggle against overwhelming forces. The people wept over their fratricidal victory, and 600 Benjamites, who alone survived, were allowed to seize wives (for the victors had sworn not to give them any) from among the girls dancing in the valley of Shiloh, on a sacred festival annually celebrated there."

The last of the judges was the prophet Samuel. He restored the worship of God in its purity, brought back the ark, established schools of the prophets, and routed the Philistines. He is one of the grandest characters in Israel, but his sons, whom he called in his old age to assist him in the government, were corrupt and wicked. The people became thoroughly dissatisfied, and demanded a king. Samuel warned them that a change from the Mosaic form of government was a virtual repudiation of the divine rule, that God had done more for them and would still do more than any human monarch could; but his words were in vain, the people persisted in their demands, and the prophet was directed to anoint Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, king over Israel.

Under Saul, Gibeah was made the capital of the kingdom. Jonathan, the son of the king, became famous as a soldier, the command of the army was given to Abner, the king's cousin, and a series of victories over the Ammonites, Moabites, Idumæans, Syrians and Philistines, had the effect of bringing peace to the consolidated kingdom. In the war with the Amalekites, Saul refused to be guided by the advice of Samuel, who spake by inspiration, and though successful, incurred the displeasure of heaven. Samuel withdrew his support from him, and the madness which darkened the rest of the king's life, began to show itself. David, a young shepherd from Bethlehem in Judah, and a sweet musician, was summoned to soothe the king's malady with his music. Some time after this, he drew upon himself the jealousy of Saul by his victory over the famous Philistine giant Goliath, which decided a campaign. Saul gave him his daughter in marriage, and Jonathan became his fast friend. Saul's madness increased, and he passed the rest of his life in pursuing David, whom he forced to become an outlaw and chief of a powerful band, he committed many crimes, and finally perished by his own sword in his

flight from the fatal field of Gilboa, where Jonathan and two of his other sons had been slain.

David, long since anointed by Samuel as the successor of Saul, bemoaned his dead foe as well as his dearly-loved Jonathan, in an outburst of matchless poetry. He went at once to Hebron, where he was anointed king by the tribe of Judah. Abner had already proclaimed Saul's surviving son, Ishbosheth, king, and all the other tribes had acknowledged him. A bloody war ensued between the rivals, David's cause gaining ground every day. At length, Abner and Ishbosheth being slain by private enemies, all opposition was removed, and all Israel acknowledged him king. He was emphatically

the greatest monarch that ever sat on the Hebrew throne. As a warrior he had no equal, as a statesman he was never surpassed, as a poet and musician he stands to-day amongst the most gifted of any age or clime, and as a man he claims and receives our warmest admiration and most earnest sympathy. He conquered the stronghold of the Jebusites, and under the name of Jerusalem made it the capital of his kingdom. He made his power felt all around him, brought his kingdom to a state of prosperity and power such as it had never known before, he organized the national worship, and won the alliance and friendship of his most powerful neighbors. His reign was several times disturbed by the rebellions of his sons, and his private life was stained with several crimes. Yet, though he often erred, his heart was never wholly astray from God, and his penitence was accepted. His very faults increase our sympathy with him, as being the errors of a noble, though defective nature. David's reign, which



MOLOCH.

lasted forty years, may be called the Golden Age of Israel, but a brief portion of the succeeding meriting that title.

He was succeeded by his son, Solomon, who also reigned forty years. No foreign wars or internal struggles disturbed this reign, but it was a period of profound peace. David had accumulated great wealth, which he left to his son, and the only use that was made of the magnificent army by Solomon was to secure tribute from his neighbors, and preserve peace in the kingdom. He used the treasures of his father and those which he himself had acquired for the improvement of the country. He built the city of Palmyra (Tadmor) in the desert, and other cities, and engaged largely in mercantile ventures with Hiram, king of the Phœnician city of Tyre. His most famous work was the Temple to Jehovah, which he built at Jerusalem, and upon which he lavished immense sums. It was one of the grandest and costliest buildings the world has ever seen, and was dedicated with the most impressive solemnities, the glory of the Lord descending upon and filling the house at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

The wisdom of Solomon, the special gift of the Almighty, distinguishes him to-day amongst men, and during his reign drew admiring visitors from all parts of the world. A number of his proverbs and two of his books of poems are still left, and form one of the most attractive portions of the Bible. "But, on the other hand, while the mighty monarch was teaching wisdom in admired works of literature, his personal example taught extravagance and folly. His court was as corrupt as it was splendid. The magnificence which he exhibited was not exclusively the product of foreign gold, tribute, and presents, but in part based on the taxes of his subjects. The army served not only to secure peace, but also as a tool of oppression. The public structures were built with the sweat of his people. Near the national temple, on Mount Moriah, altars and mounds were erected for the worship of Ashtoreth, Moloch, and other idols, introduced by some of his numberless wives from their native countries, Phœnicia, the land of Ammon, Idumæa, and Egypt. Rezon was suffered to establish a hostile dynasty in Damascus, and Hadad to make himself independent in Idumæa."

The kingdom was exhausted at the death of Solomon, and the people, with one voice, demanded, when they had assembled at Shechem to declare his son Rehoboam king, that their burdens should be lightened very considerably. The former counsellors of Solomon

advised his successor to yield to the pressure for the present; but he refused to listen to them, and, prompted by his rash young friends, declared that he would not lighten the people's burdens, but would chastise them into obedience if they resisted. The consequence of this mad act was a revolt of ten tribes, and the flight of Rehoboam from the furious people. Only Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to him, and he returned to Jerusalem to collect an army for the purpose of conquering his revolted subjects. He was turned from his intention, however, by the prophet Shemaiah, who, in the name of God, forbade the people to go to war with each other.

This separation was final. The country north of Benjamin and that east of the Jordan was known thenceforth as the kingdom of Israel. The land of Judah and Benjamin was called the kingdom of Judah, and continued in possession of the capital, Jerusalem. The capital of Israel was at first Shechem, then Tirzah, and finally Samaria.

The kingdom of Israel developed no new power. It was but a portion of David's kingdom deprived of many elements of strength. Its frontier was as open and as widely extended as before; but it wanted a capital for the seat of organized power. Its territory was as fertile and as tempting to the spoiler, but its people were less united and patriotic, and a corrupt religion poisoned the national life. It lasted 254 years.

The leader of the revolt of the Ten Tribes was Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, who had already attempted an insurrection against Solomon. He had returned from Egypt, where he had been an exile, and had headed the delegation to Rehoboam. He was made king by the revolted tribes B. C. 975, but had not sufficient force of character in himself to make a lasting impression on his people. A king, but not a founder of a dynasty, he aimed at nothing beyond securing his present elevation. The army soon learned its power to dictate to the isolated monarch and disunited people. Baasha, in the midst of the army at Gibbethon, slew the son and successor of Jeroboam; Zimri, a captain of chariots, slew the son and successor of Baasha; Omri, the captain of the host, was chosen to punish Zimri; and after a civil war of four years he prevailed over Tibni, the choice of half the people. For forty-five years Israel was governed by the house of Omri. That sagacious king pitched on the strong hill of Samaria as the site of his capital. The princes of his house cultivated an alliance with the kings of Judah, which was cemented by the marriage

of Jehoram and Athaliah. The adoption of Baal-worship led to a reaction in the nation, to the moral triumph of the prophets in the person of Elijah, and to the extinction of the house of Ahab in obedience to the bidding of Elisha. Unparalleled triumphs, but deeper humiliation, awaited the kingdom of Israel under the dynasty of Jehu. Hazael, the ablest king of Damascus, reduced Jehoahaz to the condition of a vassal, and triumphed for a time over both the disunited Hebrew kingdoms. Almost the first sign of the restoration of their strength was a war between them; and Jehoash, the grandson of Jehu, entered Jerusalem as the conqueror of Amaziah. Jehoash also turned the tide of war against the Syrians; and Jeroboam II., the most powerful of all the kings of Israel, captured Damascus, and recovered the whole ancient frontier from Hamath to the Dead Sea. This short-lived greatness expired with the last king of Jehu's line. Military violence, it would seem, broke off the hereditary succession after the obscure and probably convulsed reign of Zachariah. An unsuccessful usurper, Shallum, is followed by the cruel Menahem, who, being unable to make head against the first attack of Assyria under Pul, became the agent of that monarch for the oppressive taxation of his subjects. Yet his power at home was sufficient to insure for his son and successor, Pekahiah, a ten years' reign, cut short by a bold usurper, Pekah. Abandoning the northern and transjordanic regions to the encroaching power of Assyria under Tiglath-Pileser, he was very near subjugating Judah, with the help of Damascus, now the co-equal ally of Israel. But Assyria interposing summarily put an end to the independence of Damascus, and perhaps was the indirect cause of the assassination of the baffled Pekah. The irresolute Hoshea, the next and last usurper, became tributary to his invader, Salmanser betrayed the Assyrian to the rival monarchy of Egypt, and was punished by the loss of his liberty, and by the capture, after a three years' siege, of his strong capital, Samaria. Some gleanings of the Ten Tribes yet remained in the land after so many years of religious decline, moral debasement, national degradation, anarchy, bloodshed, and deportation; but these soon disappeared by intermingling with the neighboring people, and, with the final overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, the Ten Tribes are lost to history.

Upon the separation of the land into two kingdoms, the territories of Simeon and Dan were recognized as belonging to Judah, and in the reigns of Ahab and Asa, the southern kingdom was enlarged by some additions taken out of the territory of Ephraim.

The kingdom of Judah possessed many advantages, which secured

for it a longer continuance than that of Israel. A frontier less exposed to powerful enemies, soil less fertile, a population hardier and more united, a fixed and venerated centre of administration and religion, an hereditary aristocracy in the sacerdotal order—an army always subordinate—a succession of kings which no revolution interrupted—to these, and other secondary causes, is to be attributed the fact that Judah survived her more populous and more powerful sister kingdom by one hundred and thirty-five years, and lasted from B. C. 975, to B. C. 536. The first three kings of Judah seem to have cherished the hope of re-establishing their authority over the Ten Tribes. For sixty years there was war between them and the kings of Israel. The victory achieved by the daring Abijah brought to Judah a temporary accession of territory. Asa appears to have enlarged it still farther. Hanani's remonstrance prepares us for the reversal by Jehoshaphat of the policy which Asa pursued towards Israel and Damascus. A close alliance sprang up with strange rapidity between Judah and Israel. Jehoshaphat, active and prosperous, repelled nomad invaders from the desert, curbed the aggressive spirit of his nearer neighbors, and made his influence felt even among the Philistines and Arabians. Amaziah, flushed with the recovery of Edom, provoked a war with his more powerful contemporary, Jehoash, the conqueror of the Syrians; and Jerusalem was entered and plundered by the Israelites. Under Uzziah and Jotham, Judah long enjoyed political and religious prosperity, till Ahaz became the tributary and vassal of Tiglath-Pileser. Already in the fatal grasp of Assyria, Judah was yet spared for a checkered existence of almost another century and a half after the termination of the kingdom of Israel. This opportunity for repentance, however, was neglected. Idolatry flourished in the land, and its altars were even set up on Mount Moriah. The prophets were slain, and their prophecies publicly burned. Judah was conquered by the Egyptians, and finally passed under the dominion of Babylon by the voluntary surrender of Jehoiachin. Zedekiah revolted against Nebuchadnezzar; and B. C. 588, Jerusalem was captured after a desperate siege. The city was plundered. The sacred vessels and treasures of the temple were carried away—the temple itself, and the walls and palaces of the city were burned down—and its wealthy and prominent citizens, and their families, carried in chains to Babylon. Jehoiachin was deprived of his eyes, after having seen the slaughter of his children, and was sent in chains to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar spared Jeremiah, the prophet, who had warned the king of Judah against his rebellion, and had predicted the result, and was allowed to remain at Mizpah with Gedaliah, who was made the viceroy of the king of Babylon; and around him gathered all that was left of the nation. Gedaliah was appointed soon after, and the survivors of the Jewish nation, with Jeremiah, fled into Egypt. The prophet warned them against this step, assuring them that they would be pursued even into that country by the conquerors. His prediction was fulfilled in the invasion of Egypt by the Babylonians.

The captivity of the Jews was a grievous one, and lasted for seventy years. At the end of that time the city of Babylon was taken by Cyrus, the Persian Conqueror, who generously allowed the Jews to return to their own country. They assembled for that purpose forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty in number, and set out for Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel, a descendant of the royal line. Upon reaching Judea, they were joined by those of the common people, and cultivators of the soil, who had been allowed by Nebuchadnezzar to remain in their native land. They at once commenced the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple; and were requested by the Samaritans, who occupied a portion of the former kingdom of Israel, and claimed to be lineally descended from the Ten Tribes, to allow them to participate in the work; but as the Jews looked upon the Samaritans as alien colonists, and not pure blooded Israelites, this request was refused. The Samaritans then sought to obstruct the work by various means, and particularly by calumniating the Jews at the Persian court, so that it was not until the reign of Darius that the work was allowed to go on unmolested.

The captivity taught Judah a severe but needed lesson. The student of sacred history cannot lose sight of the fact that the monarchical form of government amongst the children of Israel, was a departure from the will of God. The attempt to consolidate the nation violated the constitution of the Church. Though, on the great principle of condescension and forbearance, God made this defection the occasion of His new covenant with David, the inherent vices of the monarchy broke out into that long course of idolatry and worldly pride, which was cut short by the captivity of both branches of the nation. After the captivity we hear no more of these forms of evil. Their severe experience in the Babylonish kingdom had the effect of attaching the Jews more firmly to their country and its institutions, and effectually cured them of idolatry. They abandoned their prac-

tice of intermarrying with foreigners, and became more clannish and exclusive in all their ways than they had ever been. They now began to look for the Messiah which had been promised them, and the great sect of the Chasadin or Pharisees, founded upon the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, now came into great prominence.

Under the Persian kings the Jews were treated with great mildness. They were merely nominal vassals in most things. The High Priest was allowed to act as their chief magistrate, and they were permitted to manage their own affairs. They devoted themselves to increasing their material prosperity, and were content with their limited territory. They increased rapidly in numbers and in wealth, and for two centuries might have been said to live retired from the world. Alexander the Great invaded Syria, after the battle of Issus, B. C. 333, but spared Jerusalem, upon its prompt submission to him. After his death, the city passed under the dominion of Egypt once more, and the Ptolemies not only showed it great favor, but established colonies of Jews in their dominions, especially at Alexandria, their capital.

While subject to the Grecian Empire, the Greek language became common in Judæa, and the Greek translation of the Pentateuch was used in the synagogues of that country. Greek manners and notions prevailed to an extent sufficient to give them considerable influence upon the nation from this time forward.

“Ptolemy II., Philadelphus (B. C. 285–46), was especially favorable to the Jews. Under his successors, however, Judæa grew impatient of the Egyptian rule, and when Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, attacked young Ptolemy V., the Jews willingly aided him in driving the Egyptians from their land (B. C. 198). They soon had reason to regret this change of dynasty. The Seleucidæ were bent on Hellenizing their empire, and were offended by the determination of the Jews to preserve their own national and religious peculiarities, the treasures, too, which had been slowly accumulating in the Temple of Jerusalem, tempted their avarice, while they also augmented the number of priestly office-seekers. Tyranny and corruption growing together, the dignity of high priest was finally converted into an office for sale. One Onias was robbed of it for the benefit of his younger brother Jason, who offered 360 talents to the Court of Syria; a third brother, Menelaus, wrested it from him by giving 300 more, and strove to maintain himself in his usurpation by scandalously promoting the arbitrary schemes of Antiochus Epiphanes.

“ Being driven from the city by Jason and his followers, and besieged in the citadel, he was rescued by Antiochus, who destroyed a part of the city, sold many of his opponents into slavery, and robbed the Temple (B. C. 170). But worse was to follow. During the second expedition of the Syrian king against Egypt, a false report of his death spread in Judæa, and Jerusalem immediately arose against his officers. But the Hellenizing Jews opened its gates to the returning king, and an unparalleled slaughter of the religious inhabitants ensued (B. C. 169). Not satisfied with this, Antiochus destroyed the walls of the city, garrisoned a new citadel with his soldiers, and decreed the general and exclusive introduction of Greek idolatry, the image of the king was placed in the Temple, swine were sacrificed on the altar, new altars were everywhere erected for the obligatory worship of the Olympian Jupiter, the Hebrew Scriptures were burned, circumcision was prohibited, and every act of opposition made a capital crime and punished with extreme cruelty. Thousands after thousands were dragged into captivity, sold as slaves, or butchered. Finally the king departed on an expedition against the Parthians, leaving the completion of his work to his general, Appollonius, the latter continued it in the spirit of his master, but soon met with a sudden check.”

There dwelt at this time in the city of Modin, an aged priest named Mattathias, with his five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan, besides other kindred. When the king's officers came to Modin for the purpose of compelling the people to submit to the pagan worship, they first called on Mattathias, as the principal man of the city, to earn honors and rewards by obeying the royal edict. But Mattathias indignantly refused, for himself, his sons, and all his kindred. Others were prepared to be more compliant; and one of them advanced to the altar, to contrast his obedience with the example of rebellion. Mattathias could forbear no longer. He rushed forward, and slew the first apostate, and next the king's commissioner, on the altar itself, which he then pulled down; just as his ancestor Phinehas had slain Zimri. He then fled with his kindred to the mountains, and having gathered a considerable band about him, made incursions into the country below, where they broke down the heathen altars, and killed many of their worshippers, circumcised children by force, and recovered many copies of the law. Mattathias soon died, being unable to bear so rough a life, and was succeeded by his heroic third son, Judas, whose great prowess gained him the surname

of *Maccabæus* (the Hammerer). He proved to Judæa what Alfred was to England, Bruce to Scotland, and Tell to Switzerland. His noble character, which the historian describes in glowing terms, commanded the cheerful submission of his brethren and friends. By the greatest exertions he got together an army of 6000 men, which he trained by a series of surprises and night attacks. With this force he defeated the army of Appollonius, who marched against him from Samaria, slew the general, and ever afterward wore his sword. Another great host led by Seron, the governor of Cœlesyria, was routed in the passes of Beth-horon, on the very spot where Joshua had defeated the Canaanites.

Antiochus was furious when the news of the rising under the Maccabees reached him. Though sorely pressed for funds, he advanced a year's pay to his army, and sent his lieutenant Lysias to exterminate the Jews. Judas, with a force of three thousand men, defeated the main body near Mizpah, inflicting upon them a loss of three thousand men, and forced a detachment of six thousand picked troops, which had been sent to surprise his camp, to retreat in disorder. The rich spoils of the Syrian camp, "much gold and silver, and blue silk, and purple of the sea, and great riches," all fell into the hands of the patriot army. Having kept the Sabbath which followed the victory with great thanksgivings, Judas crossed the Jordan, and defeated Timotheus and Bacchides, slaying above twenty thousand Syrians, and taking many of the strongholds of Gilead (B. C. 167).

In the following year, Judas, with ten thousand men, defeated the army of Lysias, sixty-five thousand strong, and killed five thousand men, forcing Lysias to retreat to Antioch. This victory gave the patriots possession of the entire city of Jerusalem except the citadel. Judas now employed his leisure time in cleansing the temple, the deserted courts of which were overgrown with tall shrubs, and the chamber of the priests thrown down. The sacred vessels were replaced from the Syrian booty, and the sanctuary was dedicated anew on the 25th of Chisleu (December), B. C. 166, exactly three years after its profanation. A festival was kept for eight days, with rejoicings similar to those of the Feast of Tabernacles. The solemnity was made a perpetual institution, and this is the "Feast of the Dedication" mentioned by St. John as being kept in the winter. During this solemnity Judas had to employ a part of his force to keep in check the Syrians, who still held the tower on Mount Zion. He afterwards secured the temple against attacks from that quarter by

the erection of a strong wall, and towers, well manned. His successes having aroused the enmity of the surrounding nations, they began treacherously to massacre the Jews within their limits. Judas promptly marched against these offenders, and punished the murderers of his countrymen with fire and sword. During his absence, his followers were defeated in a battle in which they had engaged contrary to his orders.

Antiochus Epiphanes was succeeded by his son, Antiochus V. Eupator, who, with Lycias, advanced to the relief of the Syrian garrison in the citadel of Zion. With an army twelve thousand strong, they laid siege to Bethsura, while Judas advanced to its relief. The city was compelled to surrender because of famine, and Judas retreated to Jerusalem. Peace was made with the Jews soon after, and the Syrian king was admitted into Jerusalem. The king was no sooner in possession of the city than he broke the terms just made by pulling down the new wall of Judas; after which he retired to Antioch. His triumph was brief, for Demetrius, the son of Seleucus IV., whose rightful inheritance had been usurped by his uncle, Antiochus Epiphanes, returned from Rome, where he had been a hostage, overthrew and put to death Antiochus and Lysias, and became king, by the title of *Demetrius I. Soter*. (B. C. 162.) Quarrels now broke out among the Jews concerning the succession to the office of High Priest, and of these the new king of Syria was quick to take advantage. He sent an army, under Bacchides, to compel the Jews to accept as their High Priest one Alcimus, the leader of the Hellenizing faction. The new High Priest and his supporters professed the most friendly intentions towards the Jews, but could not deceive Judas, who, while Bacchides set out for Antioch, leaving the High Priest as governor, went through the cities of Judah rallying the patriots. Alcimus again repaired to Antioch for help; and Nicanor, who was sent to restore him, was defeated by Judas at Capharsalama. He retired to the citadel of Zion, where his refusal to listen to the overtures of the priests until Judas was delivered up to him, and his ferocious cruelties, reunited the patriots in resistance, and prayer for his overthrow. A battle ensued at Adasa, near Beth-horon, where Judas gained his most glorious victory, on the 13th of Adar (end of February, B. C. 161,) a day which was kept as a national festival. Nicanor was slain, and his head and hand were exposed as trophies at Jerusalem. The independence of Judæa was won, through it was not finally secured till after several years of contest and the death of all the

Maccabæan brothers. Meanwhile, the land enjoyed a brief interval of rest.

Judas now sent envoys to Rome to secure the alliance of the great Republic. In this the envoys were successful, but before they returned their great leader's career was closed. Demetrius had sent his whole force, under Bacchides, to restore Alcimus and avenge Nicanor. Judas could only muster 3,000 men to face the enemy's force of 22,000, and his followers were so alarmed by the odds against them that 2,200 of them basely deserted their leader. Even the eight hundred veterans who remained faithful, urged Judas to retreat and await a more favorable opportunity; but the hero replied, "If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our honor!" With this handful, he boldly attacked the Syrian right wing, commanded by Bacchides in person, and defeated it, although it contained the bulk of that army. The Syrian left, however, attacked him in the rear at this juncture. The Jews were terribly defeated, and Judas himself was slain.

His surviving brothers fled with their followers to the desert on the south of the kingdom, from which they carried on a predatory warfare, in which John was killed. The civil war in Syria, caused by the disputes which now broke out concerning the succession to the crown of that kingdom, gave Jonathan, and afterwards Simon, an opportunity of reconquering a portion of Judah. Jonathan and his sons were assassinated by Tryphon, after which Simon took the citadel of Jerusalem, and held the city. He renewed the alliance with Rome, and was proclaimed an independent prince. Together with his sons, he maintained the independence of Judæa against the attacks of Antiochus Sidetes, but was assassinated, with his sons, Judas and Mattathias, by his own son-in-law. He was succeeded by his surviving son, John Hyrcanus, who defeated the invading army of Antiochus Sidetes, and compelled that monarch to make peace. He also conquered Idumæa, and added it to his dominions, and completed the conquest of Samaria, and destroyed that city and the temple on Mount Gerizim. He died a natural death, and was succeeded by his son, Aristobulus (B. C. 106). "Aristobulus, who assumed the royal title, ordered the murder of his brother, Antigonus, while their mother was starved to death in a dungeon. Alexander Jannæus (B. C. 105-79,) proved equally barbarous in a war of six years against the majority of his people, who abhorred him as a debauched tyrant and Sadducee, and stained his victory by the execution

of eight hundred of the most important rebels before the eyes of his revelling court. Thousands sought refuge in flight, and he was allowed to continue his reign until his death, when he advised his wife to pursue an opposite line of policy. She accordingly chose her councillors from among the distinguished men of the national party, and recalled the exiles. Of her two sons, she appointed Hyrcanus High Priest, keeping the political rule herself. Dissatisfied with this arrangement, the younger, Aristobulus, sought for support among the Sadducees, and, after the death of their mother (B. C. 71), a long civil war was waged by the two brothers, which was terminated only by the interference of the Romans, to whom both applied. Scaurus, the lieutenant of Pompey the Great, in Syria, decided for the younger of the brothers (B. C. 63). But Pompey soon after reversed the sentence, besieged Aristobulus in Jerusalem, took the city and the Temple, entering both amid streams of blood, and confirmed Hyrcanus as High Priest, in which capacity he became tributary ethnarch of the Romans. Aristobulus and his sons, Alexander and Antigonus, were carried captives to Rome. Judæa, with narrowed limits, was now a province of the Roman Republic, which was just advancing to its furthest boundary in the East. In the name of Hyrcanus, it was governed by Antipater, his crafty Idumæan minister, who ruled his feeble master, and was finally established himself by Cæsar, after the fall of Pompey (B. C. 48), as Roman procurator of Judæa. But Aristobulus and his two sons escaped from Rome, and made desperate efforts to recover their dignity, but all of them perished in the successive attempts. Antigonus procured aid from the Parthians, who, having vanquished Crassus (B. C. 53,) and other Roman generals, invaded Judæa, and carried Hyrcanus into captivity. But he finally succumbed to the son of Antipater, Herod, who, on his flight to Rome, had gained the favor of the new Triumvirs, and who now inaugurated under their auspices, as a powerful independent kingdom, the last dynasty in Judæa, the Idumæan."

✓ Herod I., wrongly called the Great, was a monster of cruelty and tyranny, yet, in many respects, one of the most remarkable men that ever sat on the Jewish throne. Coming of the hated race of Esau, he was by no means acceptable to the people, and his reign is marked by a series of abortive conspiracies against him. He aimed at building up a compact and independent kingdom, and, by flattering the pride of the Jews with this hope, gained considerable popular support. His aim was never accomplished, however, and he passed his whole



THE ARK.

life in courting the favor and assistance of the Romans, which, in his heart, he designed as merely the first step to his independent sovereignty. The national religion of the Jews was degraded into an instrument of unscrupulous ambition, and lost its power to quicken a united people. The High Priests were appointed and deposed by Herod I., and his successors, with such a reckless disregard for the character of their office, that the office itself was deprived of its sacred dignity.

Herod during his whole reign evinced a mortal fear of the Maccabæan or Asmonæan house, which still held the first place in the affections of the Jews, and his reign was marked by numerous cruelties towards its members. He signalized his elevation to the throne by offerings to the Capitoline Jupiter, and surrounded his person with foreign mercenaries, some of whom had been formerly in the service

of Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. His coins and those of his successors bore only Greek legends, and he introduced heathen games within the walls of Jerusalem. He resolved at once to show the disaffected people that they had a master. Massacre and confiscation were dealt out to the Asmonæan party. In order to cultivate the favor of the Jews he had put away Dolis, his wife, and had married Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyreanus by Alexandra, her mother, and of Aristobulus, by Alexander, her father. By her he had two sons. Her mother, Alexandra, sought by every means to defeat Herod's schemes against the Asmonæan house, and at length so far succeeded that Herod was compelled to appoint her son, Aristobulus, high priest. The noble youth did not enjoy his high honors long. He was drowned by Herod's order, but in such a manner as to make it appear that his death was accidental. The populace saw through the deception, and Herod was obliged to justify himself before Antony. The rest of his reign was spent in efforts to retain the favor of the Romans, and to rid himself of those members of his family whose existence he deemed dangerous to his own. He caused his beautiful and innocent wife, Mariamne, to be beheaded, and was never free from remorse for this act. Her murder was followed by that of her mother and the two sons of Herod and Mariamne. Five days before his death he ordered the execution of Antipas or Antipater, his son by another wife, and one of the chief promoters of his rage against the other members of his family. Many of the noblest and most popular of the Jewish nation fell victims to the king's cruelty, and his death was looked forward to by the whole people with the greatest eagerness.

But while so cruel and tyrannical, he did much for the material prosperity of the country. He rebuilt Jerusalem to a great extent, and greatly adorned it, erected and fortified an immense palace for himself and his successors, and rebuilt the Temple on a scale of the greatest magnificence. The new edifice was a stately pile of the Græco-Roman architecture, built in white marble with gilded *acroteria*.

In the midst of his cruelties, Herod was seized with a most painful and loathsome disease. The increasing torments of his ulcerated body, which derived no benefit from the warm baths of Callirhoë, drove him to new acts of frenzied cruelty; and it is asserted that he caused the representatives of the principal families of Judæa to be shut up in the hippodrome at Jericho, and to be put to death as soon as he expired, that his funeral might not want mourners.

His rage and terror were brought to a climax by a new and strange danger threatening the crown which had cost him so much. A caravan, headed by persons of great distinction, arrived at Jerusalem, making the ominous inquiry, "Where is he that is born *King of the Jews?*" and declaring that the star of his nativity had guided them from the distant East. These, as the reader is aware, were no other than the Eastern Magi, who had journeyed from afar to do homage to the Babe of Bethlehem, for it was while Herod lay so ill with his horrible disease, that the blessed Jesus was born in the city of David. Herod was alarmed by the inquiry of the Wise Men, for he well knew the significance of that title—*King of the Jews*. His agitation was shared by all the people of Jerusalem, though doubtless from widely different feelings. Assembling the teachers of the law, he obtained their opinion, on the authority of the prophet Micah, that Bethlehem would be the birth-place of the Messiah. Secretly calling for the strangers, and having learned from them the precise time of the star's appearance, he sent them to Bethlehem, and bade them return and inform him when they had found the babe, that he too might go and worship Him. Having in vain awaited their return, he resolved to rid himself of the hated rival by the massacre of all the babes in Bethlehem and its district, from the age of two years old and under. The consummation of this sentence, and the escape of the infant Jesus, have been already related in another part of this work. We here regard the transaction from the point of view of Herod's life. Vast as we know the issues at stake to have been, we can hardly be surprised that, amid all the horrors of Herod's last days, the murder of some ten or twelve children in a small country town, escaped the notice of the Jews at the time, and of their historian afterward.

Herod's last act was to order the execution of his son, Antipater, which was at once performed. After using his last remnant of strength to give directions about his will, he expired five days after the death of Antipater, shortly before the Passover.\*

With the death of Herod the independence of Judæa came to an end. Augustus, the Roman Emperor, divided his dominions among his three surviving sons. Archelaus received Judæa proper, Samaria,

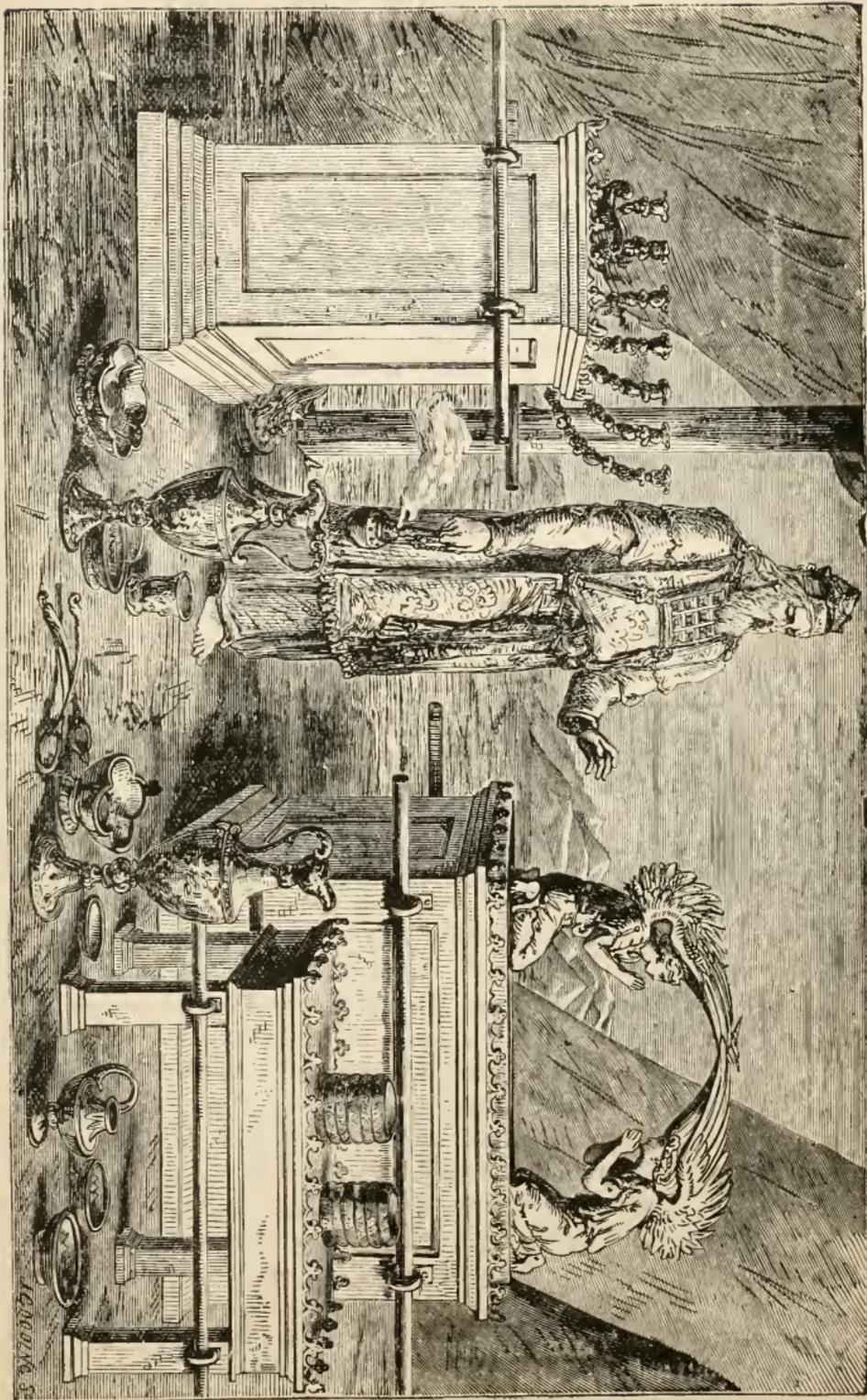
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\*Herod's death is commonly asserted to have occurred in the year 4 B. C. Says Dr. Smith, "There is now no doubt that the common era of the birth of our Saviour is wrong by four years. Christ was born shortly before the death of Herod, and we know that the latter died four years before the Christian era."

and Idumæa, with the title of Ethnarch. Philip and Herod Antipas were made Tetrarchs. The former was given Bantanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis, East of the Jordan (Peræa), and the latter Galilee and a few unimportant additions. Archelaus was summoned to Rome, after a reign of nine years, to answer to certain charges brought against him by his subjects. Augustus exiled him to Vienne in Gaul, where he died. Judæa was then made a Roman province, dependent on the prefecture of Syria. It was ruled by a Roman procurator, while Galilee continued under the sway of Herod Antipas, whose reign is made memorable by the ministry and death of our blessed Saviour, and his forerunner, St. John the Baptist. Herod was finally deposed by the Emperor Caligula, who appointed his nephew, Herod Agrippa, Ethnarch of Galilee. Claudius made him king of Judæa, and gave him all the dominions of his grandfather, Herod the Great. He did not live long to enjoy his good fortune, but died at Cæsarea, A. D. 44. As there was more than one king of this name, the reader will do well to bear in mind that this is the one mentioned in Acts xii. His son, Herod Agrippa II., being then a youth, Judæa became again a Roman province. When young Agrippa came of age Claudius gave him the provinces east of the Jordan, and at a later period Nero added to them a part of Galilee. Although Judæa continued to be ruled by Roman procurators, Agrippa was entrusted by the Emperor with the superintending of the Temple and of the national worship of the Jews, which included the right to appoint and remove the High Priest. The headquarters of the Roman Governor being at Cæsarea, Agrippa passed a large part of his time at Jerusalem, and was residing in that city at the outbreak of the fatal war against the Romans. He was the king before whom Saint Paul made his noble defence, which is recorded in Acts xxvi.

In Judæa matters had been rapidly growing worse. The Roman Governors had driven the people to the verge of despair with their tyranny and rapacity. Florus, the last governor, fearful of being called to account before Cæsar, for his crimes, endeavored to drive the Jews into a revolt, hoping that in the efforts to subdue them his own enormities would be lost sight of. Even Tacitus admits that the endurance of the oppressed Jews could last no longer.

Florus was successful in his efforts. The Jews, goaded to madness, paid no attention to the warning of Herod Agrippa, who told them of the folly of opposing Rome, and took up arms to avenge their wrongs. Cestius Gallus, the Prefect of Syria, who had allowed the



THE ARK AND FURNITURE OF THE TEMPLE.—1 Kings vi. 23.

crimes of Florus to pass unnoticed, now endeavored to stop the disorders, but in vain. Hostilities at once began, and the Roman garrison at Jerusalem was massacred by the Jews, who, in a short while, gained complete possession of the city. Cestius Gallus made an ineffectual attempt to recapture it, but was compelled to retire. The Jews then followed him to his camp at Scorus, and in three days gave him one of the most crushing defeats ever sustained by a Roman army. His catapults and balistæ were taken from him, and reserved by the Jews for the final siege. This occurred on the 8th of Marchesvan (beginning of November), A. D. 66.

The insurrection was now general throughout Judæa, and war with Rome inevitable. Nero, who received the news in Greece, committed the conduct of the war in Judæa to his ablest general, T. FLAVIUS VESPASIANUS (afterward the emperor), who sent his son TITUS before him. It was evident that the siege of Jerusalem was only a question of time. Ananus, the High Priest, a moderate and prudent man, took the lead; the walls were repaired, arms and warlike instruments and machines of all kinds fabricated, and other preparations made. In this attitude of expectation—with occasional diversions, such as the expedition to Ascalon, and the skirmishes with Simon Bar-Gioras—the city remained, while Vespasian was reducing the north of the country, and till the fall of Giscala (Oct. or Nov. 67), when John, the son of Levi, escaped thence to Jerusalem, to become one of the most prominent persons in the future conflict. Nor must we omit to mention here John's great rival, Joseph, the son of Matthias, who is best known by his adopted Roman name of FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, the historian of the Jews and of this war. A priest of the most illustrious descent, distinguished alike for his ascetic piety and his Hebrew and Greek learning, he was appointed by the moderate party to defend Galilee and keep down the zealots. His energy in the latter task made him a mortal enemy to John of Giscala, while his brilliant, though vain, defence of Jotapata, before which Vespasian himself was wounded, earned him the respect of the Roman chief, who attached him to his person during the war, used his services as a mediator, though to no purpose, and at last rewarded him with a grant of land in Judæa, a pension, and the Roman franchise. For the details of the war Josephus is our only authority, most unfortunately; for, besides the natural bias toward pleasing his imperial patrons, his sense of the hopelessness of the Jewish cause overcame all patriotic sympathy with resistance to intolerable oppression, and per-

sonal animosity leads him to paint the zealots in the blackest colors. Nor is it quite needless to warn the Christian reader against judging the merits of the Jewish cause by the higher ends which their doom was destined to fulfil.

From the arrival of John, two years and a half elapsed till Titus appeared before the walls of Jerusalem, which now stood alone, like a rock, out of the flood of conquest that had overwhelmed all the country. While Vespasian reduced Galilee, the Samaritans, who making common cause with the Jews in their extremity, had gathered their whole force on Mount Gerizim, and, being compelled by thirst to surrender to Petilius Cerealis, were treacherously massacred—Trajan, the father of the emperor, took Jamnia, the frontier fortress of Judæa, and Joppa, its only port, (A. D. 67.) In the second campaign the Romans swept Paræa, as with the besom of destruction, and multitudes of the flying inhabitants were slaughtered and drowned at the fords of Jericho. Vespasian had re-united his forces at that city, and was preparing to advance upon Jerusalem, when the news of Nero's death suspended his operations, upon what seemed to him a higher issue than the fate of the Holy City (A. D. 68). At Alexandria, whither he had retired with Titus to await the event of the civil war in Italy, he was proclaimed emperor by his soldiers on the 1st of July, A. D. 69, and his generals at Rome secured his accession by the overthrow and death of Vitellius on the 21st of December. Vespasian did not sail from Alexandria till the following May, leaving Titus to finish the Jewish war, which had been suspended for nearly two years. The whole of that time was occupied in contests between the moderate party, whose desire was to take such a course as might yet preserve the nationality of the Jews and the existence of the city, and the Zealots or fanatics, the assertors of national independence, who scouted the idea of compromise, and resolved to regain their freedom or perish. The Zealots, being utterly unscrupulous, and resorting to massacre on the least resistance, soon triumphed, and at last reigned paramount, with no resistance but such as sprang from their own internal factions. For the repulsive details of this frightful period of contention and outrage the reader must be referred to other works. It will be sufficient to say that at the beginning of A. D. 70, when Titus made his appearance, the Zealots themselves were divided into two parties: that of John of Giscala and Eleazar, who held the Temple and its courts and the Antonia—8,400 men; that of Simon Bar-Gioras, whose head-quarters were in the tower Phasaëlus, and who

held the Upper City, from the present Cœnaculum to the Latin Convent, the Lower City in the valley, and the district where the old Acra had formerly stood, north of the Temple—10,000 men, and 5,000 Idumæans, in all a force of between 23,000 and 24,000 soldiers, trained in the civil encounters of the last two years to great skill and thorough recklessness. The numbers of the other inhabitants, swelled as they were by the strangers and pilgrims who flocked from the country to the Passover, it is extremely difficult to determine. Tacitus, doubtless from some Roman source, gives the whole at 600,000. Josephus states that 1,100,000 perished during the siege, and that more than 40,000 were allowed to depart into the country, in addition to an “immense number” sold to the army, and who, of course, form a proportion of the 97,000 “carried captive during the whole war.” We may, therefore, take Josephus’ computation of the numbers at about 1,200,000. Even the smaller of these numbers seems very greatly in excess, and it can hardly have exceeded 60,000 or 70,000.

This state of the doomed city—overcrowded with Jews, whose native passions and fervor, exasperated by the late war and exalted by the season of the Passover, doomed to be their last, were stimulated by the Zealots and inflamed by factions—might well prepare those who knew the people for horrid deeds and more horrid sufferings. Pent up like sheep for the slaughter, they equally resembled wolves devouring one another. But the scene had a far more awful aspect, viewed in the light of ancient prophecy, as well as of Christ’s recent denunciations of woe. As they who rejected him did but “fill up the measure of their fathers,” so the warnings uttered to those fathers by Moses, by Solomon and by the prophets, were but made more pointed and more instant in our Lord’s discourse at his last departure from the Temple. But the special significance of the destruction of Jerusalem, as the fulfilment of the last great prophecy uttered under the Old Covenant, as the proof of His authority who gave it, and as “the removal of those things that are shaken that those things which cannot be shaken might remain,” will be best considered in their place as the climax of the first stage in the history of the Christian Church. It need only be added here, that the Christians in Jerusalem were saved by the Lord’s warning from the judicial blindness of their fellow-countrymen. Taking advantage of the space before the siege was formed by Titus, they departed in a body to Pella, a village of the Decapolis, beyond Jordan, which became the seat of the “Church of Jerusalem” till Hadrian permitted their return.

Titus' force consisted of four legions, and some auxiliaries—at the outside 30,000 men. These were disposed on their first arrival in three camps—the 12th and 15th legions on the ridge of Scopus, about a mile north of the city; the 5th a little in the rear; and the 10th on the top of the Mount of Olives, to guard the road to the Jordan valley, and to shell the place (if the expression may be allowed) from that commanding position. The army was well furnished with artillery and machines of the latest and most approved invention. The first operation was to clear the ground between Scopus and the north wall of the city—fell the timber, destroy the fences of the gardens which fringed the wall, and level the rocky protuberances. This occupied four days. After it was done, the three legions were marched forward from Scopus, and encamped off the northwest corner of the walls, stretching from the Tower Psephinus to opposite Hippius. The first step was to get possession of the outer wall. The point of attack chosen was in Simon's portion of the city, at a low and comparatively weak place near the monument of John Hyrcanus, close to the junction of the three walls, and where the Upper City came to a level with the surrounding ground. Round this spot the three legions erected banks, from which they opened batteries, pushing up the rams and other engines of attack to the foot of the wall. One of the rams, more powerful than the rest, went among the Jews by the sobriquet of *Nikôn*, the conqueror. Three large towers, 75 feet high, were also erected, overtopping the wall. Meantime, from their camp on the Mount of Olives, the 10th legion opened fire on the Temple and the east side of the city. They had the heaviest balistæ, and did great damage. Simon and his men did not suffer these works to go on without molestation. The catapults, both those taken from Cestius, and those found in Antonia, were set up on the wall, and constant desperate sallies were made. At last the Jews began to tire of their fruitless assaults. They saw that the wall must fall, and, as they had done during Nebuchadnezzar's siege, they left their posts at night, and went home. A breach was made by the redoubtable *Nikôn* on the 7th Artemisius (about April 15th); and here the Romans entered, driving the Jews before them to the second wall. A great length of the wall was then broken down; such parts of Bezetha as had escaped destruction by Cestius were levelled, and a new camp was formed on the spot formerly occupied by the Assyrians, and still known as the "Assyrian camp."

This was a great step in advance. Titus now lay with the second

wall of the city close to him on his right, while before him at no considerable distance rose Antonia and the Temple, with no obstacle in the interval to his attack. Still, however, he preferred, before advancing, to get possession of the second wall, and the neighborhood of John's monument was again chosen. Simon was no less reckless in assault, and no less fertile in stratagem, than before; but, notwithstanding all his efforts, in five days a breach was again effected. The district into which the Romans had now penetrated was the great Valley which lay between the two main hills of the city, occupied then, as it is still, by an intricate mass of narrow and tortuous lanes, and containing the markets of the city—no doubt very like the present bazaars. Titus' breach was where the wool, cloth, and brass bazaars came up to the wall. This district was held by the Jews with the greatest tenacity. Knowing, as they did, every turn of the lanes and alleys, they had an immense advantage over the Romans, and it was only after four days' incessant fighting, much loss, and one thorough repulse, that the Romans were able to make good their position. However, at last, Simon was obliged to retreat, and then Titus demolished the wall. This was the second step in the siege.

Meantime, some shots had been interchanged in the direction of the Antonia, but no serious attack was made. Before beginning there in earnest, Titus resolved to give his troops a few days' rest, and the Jews a short opportunity for reflection. He therefore called in the tenth legion from the Mount of Olives, and held an inspection of the whole army on the ground north of the Temple—full in view of both the Temple and the Upper City, every wall and house in which were crowded with spectators. But the opportunity was thrown away upon the Jews, and after four days, orders were given to recommence the attack. Hitherto the assault had been almost entirely on the city; it was now to be simultaneous on city and Temple. Accordingly two pairs of large batteries were constructed, the one pair in front of Antonia; the other at the old point of attack—the monument of John Hyrcanus. The first pair was erected by the 5th and 12th legions, and was near the pool Struthius—probably the present *Birket Israil*, by the St. Stephen's gate; the second by the 10th and 15th, at the pool called the Almond pool—possibly that now known as the pool of Hezekiah—and near the high priest's monument. These banks seem to have been constructed of timber and fascines, to which the Romans must have been driven by the scarcity of earth. They

absorbed the incessant labor of seventeen days, and were completed on the 29th Artemisius (about May 7). John, in the meantime, had not been idle; he had employed the seventeen days' respite in driving mines through the solid limestone of the hill, from within the fortress to below the banks. The mines were formed with timber roofs and supports. When the banks were quite complete, and the engines placed upon them, the timber of the galleries was fired, the superincumbent ground gave way, and the labor of the Romans was totally destroyed. At the other point, Simon had maintained a resistance with all his former intrepidity, and more than his former success. He had now greatly increased the number of his machines, and his people were much more expert in handling them than before, so that he was able to impede materially the progress of the works. And when they were completed, and the battering rams had begun to make a sensible impression on the wall, he made a furious assault on them, and succeeded in firing the rams, seriously damaging the other engines, and destroying the banks.

It now became plain to Titus that some other measures for the reduction of the place must be adopted. It would appear that hitherto the southern and western parts of the city had not been invested, and on that side a certain amount of communication was kept up with the country, which, unless stopped, might prolong the siege indefinitely. The number who thus escaped is stated by Josephus at more than five hundred a day. A council of war was therefore held, and it was resolved to encompass the whole place with a wall, and then recommence the assault. The wall began at the Roman camp—a spot probably outside the modern north wall, between the Damascus gate and the N. E. corner; from thence it went to the lower part of Bezetha—about St. Stephen's gate; then across Kedron to the Mount of Olives; thence south, by a rock called the "Pigeon's rock,"—possibly the modern "Tombs of the Prophets"—to the Mount of Offense. It then turned to the west; again dipped into the Kedron, ascended the Mount of Evil Counsel, and so kept on the upper side of the ravine to a village called Beth-Erebenethi, whence it ran outside of Herod's monument to its starting-point at the camp. Its entire length was thirty-nine furlongs—very near five miles; and it contained thirteen stations or guard-houses. The whole strength of the army was employed on the work, and it was completed in the short space of three days. The siege was then vigorously pressed. The north attack was relinquished, and the whole force concentrated on the Antonia. Four

new banks of greater size than before were constructed, and as all the timber in the neighborhood had been already cut down, the materials had to be procured from a distance of eleven miles. Twenty-one days were occupied in completing the banks. At length on the first Panemus or Tamuz (about June 7), the fire from the banks commenced, under cover of which the rams were set to work, and that night a part of the wall fell at a spot where the foundations had been weakened by the mines employed against the former attacks. Still this was but an outwork, and between it and the fortress itself a new wall was discovered, which John had taken the precaution to build. At length, after two desperate attempts, this wall and that of the inner fortress were scaled by a bold surprise, and on the fifth Panemus (June 11), the Antonia was in the hands of the Romans. Another week was occupied in breaking down the outer walls of the fortress for the passage of the machines, and a further delay took place in erecting new banks, on the fresh level, for the bombardment and battery of the Temple. During the whole of this time—the miseries of which are commemorated in the traditional name of *yomin deëka*, “days of wretchedness,” applied by the Jews to the period between the seventeenth Tamuz and the ninth Ab—the most desperate hand-to-hand encounters took place, some in the passages from the Antonia to the cloisters, some in the cloisters themselves, the Romans endeavoring to force their way in, the Jews preventing them. But the Romans gradually gained ground. First the western, and then the whole of the northern external cloister was burned (twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth Panemus), and then the wall enclosing the court of Israel and the holy house itself. In the interval, on the seventeenth Panemus, the daily sacrifice had failed, owing to the want of officiating priests; a circumstance which had greatly distressed the people, and was taken advantage of by Titus to make a further though fruitless invitation to surrender. At length, on the tenth day of Lous or Ab (July 15),—the ninth, according to the Jewish tradition—by the wanton act of a soldier, contrary to the intention of Titus and in spite of every exertion he could make to stop it, the sanctuary itself was fired. It was, by one of those rare coincidences that sometimes occur, the very same month and day of the month that the first temple had been burned by Nebuchadnezzar. John, and such of his party as escaped the flames and the carnage, made their way by the bridge on the south to the Upper City. The whole of the cloisters that had hitherto escaped, including the magnificent triple colonnade

of Herod on the south of the Temple, the treasury chambers, and the rooms round the outer courts, were now all burned and demolished. Only the edifice of the sanctuary itself still remained. On its solid masonry the fire had had comparatively little effect, and there were still hidden in its recesses a few faithful priests who had contrived to rescue the most valuable of the utensils, vessels and spices of the sanctuary.

The Temple was at last gained; but it seemed as if half the work remained to be done. The Upper City, higher than Moriah, enclosed by the original wall of David and Solomon, and on all sides precipitous except at the north, where it was defended by the wall and towers of Herod, was still to be taken. Titus tried a parley first through Josephus, and then in person, he standing on the east end of the bridge between the Temple and the Upper City, and John and Simon on the west end. His terms, however, were rejected, and no alternative was left him but to force on the siege. The whole of the low part of the town—the crowded lanes, of which we have so often heard—was burned, in the teeth of a frantic resistance from the Zealots, together with the council-house, the repository of the records (doubtless occupied by Simon since its former destruction), and the palace of Helena, which were situated in this quarter—the suburb of Ophel under the south wall of the Temple, and the houses as far as Siloam on the lower slopes of the Temple mount.

It took eighteen days to erect the necessary works for the siege; the four legions were once more stationed at the west or northwest corner, where Herod's palace abutted on the wall, and where the three magnificent and impregnable towers of Hippicus, Phasaëlus, and Mariamne rose conspicuous. This was the main attack. Opposite the Temple, the precipitous nature of the slopes of the Upper City rendered it unlikely that any serious attempt would be made by the Jews, and this part, accordingly, between the bridge and the Xystus, was left to the auxiliaries. The attack was commenced on the 7th of Gorpæus (about Sept. 11th), and by the next day a breach was made in the wall, and the Romans at last entered the city. During the attack John and Simon appear to have stationed themselves in the towers just alluded to; and had they remained there, they would probably have been able to make terms, as the towers were considered impregnable. But, on the first signs of the breach, they took flight, and, traversing the city, descended into the valley of Hinnom, below Siloam, and endeavored to force the wall of

circumvallation and so make their escape. On being repulsed there, they took refuge apart in some of the subterraneous caverns or sewers of the city. John shortly after surrendered himself; but Simon held out for several weeks, and did not make his appearance until after Titus had quitted the city. They were both reserved for the triumph at Rome.

The city being taken, such parts as had escaped the former conflagrations were burned, and the whole of both city and Temple was ordered to be demolished, excepting the west wall of the Upper City, and Herod's three great towers at the northwest corner, which were left standing as memorials of the massive nature of the fortifications.

Of the Jews, the aged and infirm were killed; the children under seventeen were sold as slaves; the rest were sent, some to the Egyptian mines, some to the provincial amphitheatres, and some to grace the triumph of the Conqueror. Titus then departed, leaving the 10th legion, under the command of Terentius Rufus, to carry out the work of demolition. Of this Josephus assures us, that "the whole was so thoroughly levelled and dug up, that no one visiting it would believe that it had ever been inhabited."

For more than fifty years after its destruction by Titus, Jerusalem disappears from history. During the revolts of the Jews in Cyrenaica, Egypt, Cyprus, and Mesopotamia, which disturbed the latter years of Trajan, the recovery of their city was never attempted. Of its annals during this period we know nothing. Three towers and part of the western wall alone remained of its strong fortifications, to protect the cohorts who occupied the conquered city; and the soldiers' huts were long the only buildings on its site. But in the reign of Hadrian it again emerged from its obscurity, and became the centre of an insurrection, which the best blood of Rome was shed to subdue. In despair of keeping the Jews in subjection by other means, the Emperor had formed a design to restore Jerusalem, and thus prevent it from ever becoming a rallying point for this turbulent race. In furtherance of his plan, he had sent thither a colony of veterans, in numbers sufficient for the defence of a place so strong by nature against the then known modes of attack. To this measure Dion Cassius attributes a renewal of the insurrection, while Eusebius asserts that it was not carried into execution till the outbreak was quelled. Be this as it may, the embers of revolt, long smouldering, burst into a flame soon after Hadrian's departure from the East, in A. D. 132.



MOUNT OF OLIVES.

The contemptuous indifference of the Romans, or the secrecy of their own plans, enabled the Jews to organize a wide-spread conspiracy. Bar-Cocheba, their leader, the third, according to the Rabbinical writers, of a dynasty of the same name, princes of the captivity, was crowned king at Bether by the Jews who thronged to him, and by the populace was regarded as the Messiah. His armor-bearer, Rabbi Akiba, claimed descent from Sisera, and hated the Romans with the fierce rancor of his adopted nation. All the Jews in Palestine flocked to his standard. At an early period in the revolt they became masters of Jerusalem, and attempted to rebuild the Temple. Hadrian, alarmed at the rapid spread of the insurrection, and the ineffectual efforts of his troops to suppress it, summoned from Britain Julius Severus, the greatest general of his time, to take the command of the army of Judea.

A desperate struggle now ensued for two years. Then the Romans took Jerusalem after a fierce siege, in which Bar-Cocheba was slain. The siege and final reduction of Bether followed in A. D. 135, and the war was brought to a close by the triumph of the Romans. Thousands of lives were lost on both sides. Over half a million Jews fell by the sword, and countless numbers perished by the attendant calamities of the war. The conquerors bought their victory so dearly that Hadrian, in his letter to the Senate, announcing the close of the struggle, did not adopt the usual congratulatory phrase.

Jerusalem was now utterly obliterated. The ruins which Titus had left were razed, and the ploughshare passed over the foundations of the Temple. A Roman colony was afterwards located here, and increased by a number of the Emperor's veteran legionaries. A temple to the Capitoline Jupiter was built on the site of the Temple, and in the following year, A. D. 136, the name of the city was changed to *Ælia Capitolina*. Christians and pagans alone were allowed to reside in the new city. Jews were forbidden to enter it on pain of death, and this prohibition remained in force until the time of Tertullian. About the middle of the fourth century the Jews were allowed to visit the neighborhood, and afterward, once a year, to enter the city itself, and weep over it on the anniversary of its capture. Jerome has drawn a vivid picture of the wretched crowds of Jews who, in his day, assembled at the wailing place, by the west wall of the Temple, to bemoan the loss of their ancestral greatness. On the ninth of the month Ab might be seen the aged and decrepit of both sexes, with tattered garments and disheveled hair, who met to weep over the downfall of Jerusalem, and purchased permission of the soldiery to prolong their lamentations. So completely were all the traces of the ancient city obliterated, that its very name was in process of time forgotten. It was not until after Constantine built the *Martyrion*, on the site of the crucifixion, that its ancient appellation was revived. In the seventh canon of the Council of Nicæa the bishop of *Ælia* is mentioned, but Macarius, in subscribing to the canons, designated himself bishop of Jerusalem.

The annals of the new colony of *Ælia* are a blank until the fourth century, when pilgrimages to the Holy Places became common in the Christian world. The aged Empress, Helena, mother of Constantine, visited Palestine, A. D. 326, and, according to tradition, erected magnificent churches at Bethlehem and on the Mount of Olives. Her son, fired with the same zeal, swept away the shrine of Astarte, which occupied the site of the Resurrection, and founded in its stead a chapel or oratory.

In the reign of Julian, A. D. 362, the Jews, with the permission and at the instigation of the Emperor, made an abortive attempt to lay the foundations of a temple. From whatever motive, Julian had formed the design of restoring the Jewish worship on Mount Moriah to its pristine splendor, and during his absence in the East the execution of his project was entrusted to his favorite, Alypius of Antioch. Materials of every kind were provided at the Emperor's expense, and

so great was the enthusiasm of the Jews, that their women took part in the work, and in the laps of their garments carried off the earth which covered the ruins of the Temple. But a sudden whirlwind and earthquake shattered the stones of the former foundations; the workmen fled for shelter to one of the neighboring churches, the doors of which were closed against them by an invisible hand, and a fire issuing from the Temple mount raged the whole day and consumed their tools. Numbers perished in the flames. Some who escaped took refuge in a portico near at hand, which fell at night and crushed them as they slept. Whatever may have been the coloring which this story received as it passed through the hands of the ecclesiastical historians, the impartial narrative of Ammianus Marcellinus, the friend and companion in arms of the Emperor, leaves no reasonable doubt of the truth of the main facts, that the work was interrupted by fire, which all attributed to supernatural agency. In the time of Chrysostom the foundations of the Temple still remained, to which the orator could appeal. The event was regarded as a judgment of God upon the impious attempt of Julian to falsify the predictions of Christ: a position which Bishop Warburton defends with great skill in his treatise on the subject; but other writers of high authority regard it as a legend invented by superfluous and short-sighted zeal.

The conquest of Jerusalem by Titus and the overthrow of the insurrection against Hadrian had the effect of scattering the Jews over the face of the then civilized earth. Their dispersion had begun as early as the Babylonish captivity; but the victories of the Romans completed it, and left them literally without a country. In the East they continued to hope for a restoration of their nationality. The laws of Justinian were very severe upon them, but gave them less trouble than was experienced by their brethren in Europe. "In litigations between Christians and Jews, or between Christians only, their testimony was admitted; but that of a Samaritan or a Manichæan was of no value. By another law, all unbelievers, heathen, Jews, and Samaritans, could neither be judges nor prefects, nor fill any other dignity in the state. Justinian also enacted, that in mixed marriages between Jews and Christians, the chief authority over the children should rest with the Christian parent. A Jew parent could not disinherit his Christian child. But the Samaritans were treated more harshly; they were entirely deprived of the right of bequeathing or conveying their property to unbelievers. Those of their children who

embraced Christianity inherited to the exclusion of the rest. Samaritans could not sue in courts of law. Their synagogues were ordered to be destroyed."

Segris, Bishop of Cæsarea, obtained a mitigation of these severities against the Samaritans; but Justin revived all the oppressive statutes of his father, and the result was that the Samaritans gradually became extinct as a race. The supposition is that the majority of them embraced Christianity for the purpose of saving their property.

The Jews, still cherishing the hope of reviving their lost nationality, and surprised and enraged at the rapid spread of Christianity,

eagerly welcomed the advance of the Persian monarch, Chosroes II., who, in A. D. 610, invaded Palestine. They rose unanimously, joined the Persians, and assisted them to capture Jerusalem, then a Christian city. Once in possession of the place, they massacred the Christian inhabitants, but were soon terribly punished for their mad course by the victorious Emperor, Heraclius.



EASTERN WATER-CARRIER.

Mahomet was at first hopeful of winning over the Jews to his religion;

but finding them unwilling to accept as the greatest of the prophets a descendant of Ishmael, turned his arms against them, and after a long struggle captured their castles and strongholds in Arabia, where they were very numerous and powerful. Omar and his generals conquered Jerusalem, Tiberias, Damascus, Antioch, and Alexandria from the Byzantines, and subdued Persia, thus bringing most of the eastern Jews under the rule of Islam. The Caliphs, the successors of Mahomet, proved very friendly to the Jews. The later Caliphs favoring every science, Jewish studies revived, especially in Babylonia, where the Jews lived under the immediate rule of a prince of the captivity,

and where their great schools soon became famous. Under the Caliphs, they spread along the coast of Northern Africa, but their prosperity was that of a scattered people, for they no longer had a country of their own.

Large numbers of Jews had settled in Greece, Italy, and other parts of the Roman Empire, previous to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the final dispersion increased these colonies very largely. Their lot in Europe was a checkered one. Justinian was the first to put in force really oppressive measures against them, and as Christianity continued to spread through the Continent, their lot grew worse. The converted pagans of Europe seemed to regard it as their religious duty to make the fate of the Jews as hard as possible. It will be impossible to present to the reader a detailed account of the history of the Jews during the dark ages of Europe, and we shall have to content ourselves with but a brief summary of some of the leading events of that period.

In Italy, the Gothic kings had protected the Jews; but in Spain, this race of kings proved their worst enemies. The most stringent laws were enacted against them, and at length they were commanded to either quit the country or embrace Christianity. Numbers of them sought safety in flight, others were thrown into prison, and ninety thousand were baptized. The Fourth Council of Toledo granted them some respite; but the Eighth and Twelfth Councils of Toledo persecuted them with increased fury. They were threatened with floggings, imprisonment, torture, and even with death, if they continued to practise their religion in Spain, and one of these Councils even went so far as to decree that the whole Jewish race should be considered slaves, that their property should be confiscated, and their children seized and compelled to receive Christian education. Thousands fled to the Saracens in Africa, and it is no wonder that they rendered willing and valuable service to the followers of the Prophet when they conquered Spain. Under the Moorish kings of Spain the Jews saw their best days in Europe, and were highly esteemed, and were trusted with important positions by those sovereigns.

In France they were at first received kindly, but the early kings soon began to persecute them. Charlemagne protected them, and filled many important offices with Jews during his reign. Louis le Debonnaire was also friendly to them, as was Charles the Bold, until the fanatical clergy induced him to sanction extreme measures against them. The Council of Meaux forbade their holding offices of trust

under the government. Philip Augustus, after they had suffered great persecutions, banished them from his dominions in 1180, confiscated their possessions, and declared all debts due them to be annulled. About the year 1,200, the Jews were permitted to return to France, and came back in great numbers. For about two hundred years they were alternately protected and persecuted, until Charles VI. banished them from the kingdom (1395).

In England they were alternately protected and persecuted. When Richard I. was crowned king, the Jews of York were barbarously massacred, (1189.)

Their sufferings continued throughout England in the reigns of John and Henry III., and Edward I. banished them from the country.

“Germany, where the greatest anarchy prevailed, was the scene of their bloodiest persecutions, the most frightful of which took place in the cities on the Rhine during the great desolation by the black plague, which depopulated Europe from the Volga to the Atlantic, (1348-50.)

Pointed out to the ig-

norant people as having caused the pestilence by poisoning the wells, the Jews were burned by thousands on the public squares, or burned themselves with their families in the synagogues. Almost every imperial city had a general persecution of the Jews. The Swiss towns imitated their neighbors, almost all banishing their Jews. They were banished from the cities of Italy into separate quarters, and obliged to wear distinctive badges. In 1493, all the Jews of Sicily, about 20,000 families, were banished. In Spain, during a long drought in 1391-92, the Jewish inhabitants were massacred in many cities.”



MODE OF TRAVELLING IN THE EAST.

After serious persecutions, it was resolved to extirpate them from the country, and this inhuman measure was carried into effect by Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1492. "More than 70,000 families sought refuge in Portugal, where, for a large sum of money, the fugitives were allowed to remain for a few months, in Africa, Italy, Turkey, and other countries. Not the fifth part of them survived the horrors of compulsory expatriation, shipwreck and subsequent famine. The Jews of Portugal were banished in 1495 by King Emanuel, being robbed of their children under fourteen years of age, who were sent to distant islands to be brought up as Christians. The numerous converted Jews of the Peninsula were still persecuted for more than two centuries." These persecutions had the effect of driving the bulk of the European Jews into Poland, Hungary, and Turkey. In Poland and Hungary they were better off than in any other countries in Europe, notwithstanding the massacre of many of them by the revolted Cossacks in Poland.

Their condition in the whole of Europe during the dark ages, however, was horrible. They were compelled to rely exclusively upon mercantile pursuits for a living, and began to acquire those cunning and usurious traits which have thrown such dark stains upon their history. It seems strange that any of them should have escaped from the terrible ordeal through which they were compelled to pass. Indeed, we are forced to admit that but for the promise that a remnant of Israel shall be spared until the final coming of the Messiah, they must all have perished.

As the world continued to advance in civilization, a better spirit began to prevail. In 1588 the cruel edicts of the Catholic Church against them, were rescinded by Pope Sixtus V., and this step may be regarded as the first effort towards doing justice to them. In the early part of the seventeenth century they began to find favor in Holland, and to secure the right to prosecute their lawful avocations in peace. In 1657, Cromwell allowed them to return to England, after a banishment of three hundred and seventy years, but in 1702 the English Parliament enacted a statute prohibiting them from disinheriting or casting off their children who had embraced Christianity. In 1723 they acquired the right to hold land in England. In 1746 a bill passed the two houses of Parliament to naturalize the professors of the Jewish religion in Ireland, where two hundred of them then resided, but was refused the royal assent. In 1753, however, a general naturalization law was adopted and they were admit

ted to the privileges of English citizenship, but the act was repealed the next year in consequence of petitions to that effect from all the cities in England.

The French Republic showed great favor to the Jews, granted them numerous privileges in France, and even went so far as to declare, in 1790, that the Jews of Spain, Portugal and Avignon were citizens of France. In 1806, Napoleon I. assembled a sanhedrim at Paris, and submitted to them twelve questions concerning the moral and social doctrines and discipline of the Jews. Their answers being found satisfactory, an ordinance was issued giving the Jews a regular organization throughout France, and placing them on the same footing as other Frenchmen. This wise and just act continues in force at the present day. In Prussia and the other German States, similar laws have at length done justice to this persecuted and oppressed race, but in Russia they are still subject to many restrictions, which were modified very greatly in 1862.

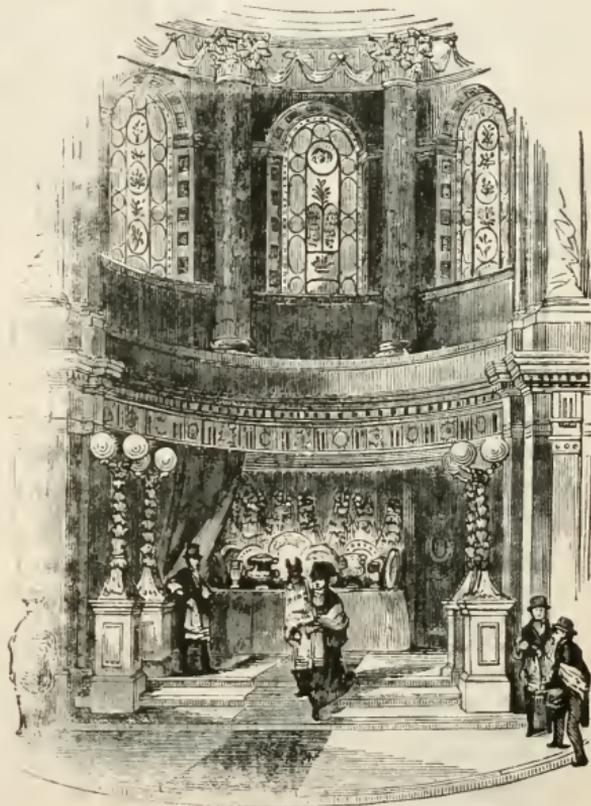
In England they have enjoyed the largest privileges. As early as the middle of the last century, efforts were made to place them on the same footing as other British subjects, but without success. In 1835, one of their leading members, Mr. David Salomons, was elected Sheriff of London. He was the first Jew that had ever held this high office, and an act was passed enabling him to serve. In 1836, an effort was made to secure a general emancipation of the English Jews from their political disabilities, but the bill failed in the House of Commons. Moses Montifiore, Esq., was elected Sheriff of London in 1837, and on the 9th of November of that year, was knighted by the Queen, being the first of his race on whom this honor was ever conferred. In 1855, Alderman Salomons was elected Lord Mayor of London, the first Jew ever chosen to that office, and in 1865, Alderman Benjamin Samuel Phillips became the second Jewish Lord Mayor. In 1849, Baron Lionel de Rothschild was elected to Parliament for the city of London, and in 1857, Alderman Salomons was returned for Greenwich. Baron de Rothschild was again returned for the capital in 1852, and at the two general elections in 1857. Neither of these gentlemen were able to take their seats, the oath required of a member of Parliament being such that only a Christian could subscribe to it. Repeated efforts were made to modify the official oaths of the kingdom, and in 1846 a law was passed providing a special form of oath for Jews holding civil offices. In July, 1858, Parliament passed an act, which received the royal assent, enabling Jews to

sit in that body, and on the 26th of that month Baron de Rothschild took his seat as the representative of the city of London. In 1860, Parliament adopted an act permitting Jewish members to omit the words "on the faith of a Christian" from the usual oath. This is at present the condition of the Jews in Great Britain, where they form a large and flourishing community, and are admitted on all sides to be amongst the best and most devoted citizens of the kingdom.

The Roman Catholic Church, however, has not ceased to persecute the Jews. In June, 1858, a youth named Edgar Mortara was forcibly taken from his parents by order of the Arch-bishop of Bologna, on the plea of having been baptized, when an infant, by a Roman Catholic maid-servant. His parents implored his release, but in vain. The Jews in England and France brought great influence to bear upon the Papal court, and even the French government urged the restoration of the lad, but

all without effect. The Papal court was deaf to the voice of humanity, and blinded by bigotry, and the lad's family were forced to submit to their cruel bereavement. Again in 1864, the Jews were subjected to a cruel and bigoted persecution in the city of Rome.

The Jews, at an early day, commenced to emigrate to America, and the perfect equality guaranteed to all religions by the United States, has had the effect of drawing large numbers of them to the United States, where they have prospered to a remarkable degree.



MODERN JEWISH SYNAGOGUE.

The civil and religious freedom guaranteed to all by our institutions, and the admirable opportunities here enjoyed for amassing wealth, attract them from all parts of the world. They are increasing rapidly in numbers and wealth. They are largely interested in the financial operations of the country; they own much real estate; they are engaged in every department of industry, and their thrift and business capacity have added largely to the wealth and commerce of the land. Their religious edifices are among the most imposing in the country; their charitable, benevolent, and educational establishments among the noblest. In the city of New York alone their synagogues are valued at more than \$4,000,000.

It is usually calculated that there are about five or six millions of Jews in the world. From the best information at our command, we estimate their numbers, as follows, in the various countries of the globe:

In Morocco . . . . .	about 540,000 souls.
In Egypt . . . . .	" 2,000 "
In Bokhara . . . . .	" 2,000 families.
In Persia . . . . .	" 2,974 "
In Mesopotamia and Assyria . . . . .	" 5,270 "
In Arabia . . . . .	" 18,000 souls.
In Syria and Palestine . . . . .	" 16,059 "
In the Turkish dominions, not including the Barbary States . . . . .	" 800,000 "
In the Russian Empire . . . . .	" 2,000,000 "
In the Austrian " . . . . .	" 1,049,871 "
In Denmark . . . . .	" 6,000 "
In Sweden . . . . .	" 450 "
In Prussia . . . . .	" 134,000 "
In the German States (not given above) . . . . .	" 108,000 "
In Belgium . . . . .	" 3,000 "
In Holland . . . . .	" 70,000 "
In France . . . . .	" 110,000 "
In Spain . . . . .	" 4,500 "
In Italy . . . . .	" 50,000 "
In Great Britain . . . . .	" 36,000 "
In the United States . . . . .	" 260,000 "

Thus scattered over the face of the earth, divided by the language and the customs of the various countries they inhabit, they constitute one and the same race—a race which is patiently awaiting the time when it shall be the good pleasure of Jehovah to gather them to himself from the ends of the earth, under the kingdom of the triumphant Messiah—that Messiah whom they now despise, but whom they will then acknowledge as the true heir of his father David.

A remarkable character this Jew, wandering in the earth, a man of all nations, but with no country of his own, a man who once had David and Solomon for his kings, but now has no king; who in the early days gave laws to the whole world, and is now subject to the laws of all the civilized nations of the globe. Remarkable in his ancestry, in his character, in his intellectual ability, in his separateness from all other peoples—in fact, the most remarkable of all men! The Jew has helped to make the world. He has taken it up, as it were, and moulded it in his hands; all other men combined have not so changed the earth as has the Jew. He is well worth studying, and we trust the reader is fully alive to the imposing scenes in his history which are depicted upon the preceding pages.

It is a question that might well be studied, how the Jew should be so distinct in his characteristics. Just as God raised up this people of old for himself, so not only as a nation did he separate them, but he even separated them in their physical characteristics, in their physiognomy, in their features, in their speech, as well as in many other respects. And how wonderful it is that the Jew should be so capable of adapting himself to all climates and all countries, and yet should continue from age to age in all those remarkable features which distinguished him from others. Go where he will, he is the same Jew. Persecution does not kill him; oppression does not weaken his tough fibre; spears do not drive him back. Battles do not waste his blood; all the malice of men seems but to prosper him, multiply him, enrich him, and render him more than ever a Jew.

Think of the long struggle of that race; think that since the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, that terrible siege which forms one of the darkest pages of history, the Jew has had to fight for existence even more courageously than he did before. As when he marched through the Red sea and the wilderness into the promised land, all the surrounding people were his enemies, seeking to drive him back beyond that sacred stream whose waters had miraculously opened for his footsteps, so in modern times, tribes, powers, armies and thrones have been his foes, but the Jew is mightier in the earth to-day than ever. This is one of the strange facts in human society. These things can be said concerning no others. The tenacity with which the Jew holds to his ancestral traditions, his religious ideas, his historical characteristics, in short, to himself—how mysterious! Why does not the Jew fade away? Why does he not disappear in the earth? Why, as drops of water fall into the stream, is he not lost in the great current

and onward movement of the world? But he is not lost; he is just as tough and firm in his individuality to-day as he was thousands of years ago.

He will not marry outside his own sect. He will not worship with Christians. He will not permit marriage into his own family unless the person so uniting with a Jew becomes formally a Jew also. But with that peculiar shrewdness which has always distinguished him, and which is evidently essential if he is to maintain his individuality in the earth, he will do business with Christians and he will not permit himself to be out-witted. And so it has come about that poor Jews are few in number, except in countries where they have been oppressed into the very dust. Rarely are they found in criminal courts, rarely in the penitentiary, rarely in the poorhouse.

He is a unique character, this Jew—God's man, of whose blood is the Redeemer of the world—nation born of old, continued through the ages, divided off from all others, that in its veins might be lodged the divinest blood of the race; that through this channel all kingdoms and countries might be blest. Who shall deny the providence? Who shall say that more than human hand is not in this history, which has now been unfolded? Who shall say that this Hebrew life, beaten against by the lives of a hundred nations, yet undestroyed and unscarred, is not the life from which the world may hope the most? We despise the Jew, but we should not. Blinded he is, and was to be according to the prophecy of the great apostle, but do not forget that along with that prophecy of the veil that hides the eyes, is a dearer prophecy that the hiding veil shall be taken away. Then it is not too much to say that, in the future life of the earth, the Jew shall act a conspicuous part. When the final history is written, his name will be no less prominent than it is now when we uncover the annals of the past.

Races and peoples have their education as well as individuals, and what they become is due to a very great extent to the forces which have been brought to bear upon them. Barbarism yields to the onward march of Christianity; a long time it takes to work out of national character what has grown and developed through ages; still, the strongest fibre can be made to yield, and grander revolutions than are wrought by battles and victories can be gained by moral and spiritual influences. In a very remarkable manner can this be said of the Jew. If we look even into his early history we may discover that his character was formed and developed to a great extent by his

surroundings. In Egypt he was oppressed; he was made to serve; he was placed in chains, and naturally became hostile toward his oppressors; all along he has had to fight his way, and when he has not been oppressed by such conquerors as the haughty Romans, he has been persecuted by those who were unfriendly to his religion. This will account to a great extent for the character of the Jew. He is what he has been made; he has grown up into a strong nationality, so that he maintains his old-time character, prejudices and opinions, despite all the educating and Christianizing influences of the present time.

This Jewish nation has done enough for the world to retire from the scene, and hold a heavy account against humanity. It has given to man his Christ, his civilization, his renewed and glorified earth. It could pass from existence, and leave the finest of all histories behind it. But its career is not ended, and when the great consummation shall come, it will be found that this nation stands foremost in shaping the world's destiny

# A

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,

SHOWING

THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF JEWISH AND CONTEMPORANEOUS HISTORY, FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

B. C.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
4004	Creation of the world.	
2650		Chinese Empire founded.
2349	The deluge.	
2020		} Sesostris, king of Egypt.
2010		
1996	Birth of Abraham.	
1921	Call of Abraham.	
1896	Isaac born.	
1856		Kingdom of Argos founded.
1837	Birth of Jacob and Esau.	
1729	Joseph sold into Egypt.	
1571	Moses born.	
1493		Cadmus introduces letters into Greece.
1491	The Passover instituted—Departure from Egypt.	
1491	The Law given from Mount Sinai.	
1451	Death of Moses and Aaron—Joshua leads the Israelites into Canaan.	
1352	} The Judges.	} Corinth founded. Rise of Assyria. Search for the Golden Fleece. War against Troy
1273		
1263		
1193		
1136	Samson slays the Philistines.	
1120	Death of Samson.	
1102		Sparta a kingdom.
1095	Saul made king.	
1075	Death of Samuel.	
1056	Death of Saul and Jonathan.	
1048	David, king over Israel—Takes Jerusalem.	} Tyre flourishes under Hiram.
1042	The Ark removed to Jerusalem.	
1023	Revolt of Absalom.	
1015	Death of David and accession of Solomon.	
1012	Foundation of the Temple.	
1006	Dedication of the Temple.	
975	Death of Solomon—Revolt of the Ten Tribes—Kingdom of Israel established under Jeroboam.	

B. C.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
975	Shemaiah averts a civil war—Rehoboam, king of Judah.	
971	Shishak, king of Egypt, takes Jerusalem and pillages the Temple.	
957	Abijah defeats the king of Israel ; 50,000 men are slain in the battle.	Tabrimmon, king of Damascus,
906	Israel afflicted with the famine predicted by Elijah.	
901	The Syrians besiege Samaria.	
897	Elijah translated to heaven.	
896	Death of Ahab, king of Israel.	
895	Miracles of Elisha the Prophet.	
878		
776		Carthage founded by Dido.
771	Israel invaded by the Assyrians under Phul.	Commencement of the Olympic Era.
758		
753		Syracuse founded.
747		Rome built.
741	Pekah, king of Israel, lays siege to Jerusalem ; 120,000 of the men of Judah are slain in one day.	Era of Nabonassar.
740	Ahaz, king of Judah, being defeated by Pekah, calls in the assistance of Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, and becomes tributary to him—Israel is also made tributary to the same king—A Syrian altar is set up in the Temple, and the sacred vessels sent to Assyria.	
721	Samaria is taken by the king of Assyria—The Ten Tribes carried into captivity—End of the Kingdom of Israel—Isaiah and Micah, prophets in Judah.	Numa Pompilius, B. C. 715.
710	Sennacherib invades Judæa, but the destroying angel enters the camp of the Assyrians, and in one night destroys 185,000 of them.	
698	Manasseh, king of Judah—Gross idolatry of Judah.	
678	Samaria colonized by Assyrians.	Scythian invasion of Western Asia.
658		Byzantium founded.
656	Holofernes is killed at the siege of Bethulia by Judith.	
625		Alyattes, king of Lydia—Nabopolassar of Babylonia and Cyaxeres of Media destroy Nineveh.
624	In repairing the Temple Hilkiiah discovers the book of the law, and Josiah keeps a solemn Passover—Jeremiah, prophet.	
608	Josiah killed in battle—Jehoiakim, king.	Babylon a great kingdom.

B. C.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
605	Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70 years' captivity—Nebuchadnezzar invades Judæa, takes Jerusalem—Jehoiakim, his vassal.	
602	Jehoiakim revolts from Babylon.	
598	Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem.	
597	Jerusalem taken—Jehoiakim deposed, and succeeded by Jehoiachin, who rebels.	
597	Zedekiah made king over the remnant of Judah.	
594		Solon, legislator at Athens.
588	Jerusalem having rebelled against Babylon, is besieged by Nebuchadnezzar.	
586	Jerusalem taken and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar—Zedekiah's eyes are put out—He is taken to Babylon, where he dies—End of the kingdom of Judah.	
580	} The Jews captives in Babylon.	Copper money coined at Rome
572		Fall of Tyre.
569		Amasis, king of Egypt.
562		First comedy performed at Athens.
559		Founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus.
539		Marseilles built by the Phœnicians.
539		Babylon taken by Cyrus and united to Persia.
536	Cyrus allows the Jews to return to their own country—Return of the first caravan under Zerubbabel and Joshua.	
535	Rebuilding of the Temple.	
534	Opposition of the Samaritans.	Tarquinius Superbus, king of Rome.
529	Letter to the Persian king from the adversaries.	Death of Cyrus.
525		Egypt conquered by Cambyses.
522	Work on the Temple stopped by a royal decree.	Death of Cambyses.
521	Haggai and Zechariah.	
520	Building of the Temple resumed.	
515	Dedication of the Second Temple.	
510		Expulsion of the Tarquins—Rome and Athens republics.
494		Tribunes.
490		Battle of Marathon.
486		Xerxes (the Ahasuerus of Esther).
480		Battles of Salamis and Thermopylæ—Persians burn Athens.

B. C.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
479		Battles of Platæa and Mycale—Persians retreat from Greece.
474	Esther and Mordecai.	
468		Death of Aristides—Socrates born.
466		Cimon defeats the Persians.
465		Death of Xerxes.
458	Commission of Ezra.	Cincinnatus dictator.
457	Great reformation.	
449		Decemvirate at Rome—Appius Claudius.
444	} Commission of Nehemiah—The walls rebuilt—Reading of the law—	Herodotus.
443		} Opposition of Sanballat.
431		
429		
429		Peloponnesian War.
429		Pericles dies—Plato born.
404		Lysander takes Athens—Death of Alcibiades.
400	Malachi.	Xenophon—Retreat of the 10,000.
399		Death of Socrates.
390		Rome taken by the Gauls.
371		Battle of Leuctra.
367	Murder of Joshua.	
362		Death of Epaminondas.
356		Birth of Alexander the Great—Temple of Diana at Ephesus burned.
351	Alleged captivity of the Jews.	
350	Jaddua, High Priest.	
348		Death of Plato.
336		Alexander the Great succeeds to the throne.
335		Destruction of Thebes.
333		Battle of Issus—Damascus taken and Tyre besieged by Alexander.
332	The High Priest induces Alexander to spare Jerusalem.	Alexander, king of Epirus in Italy.
331	Settlement of Jews at Alexandria.	Battle of Arbela.
330	Onias, High Priest.	Demosthenes' oration for the crown.
323		Death of Alexander.
322		Romans humiliated by the Samnites at the Caudine forks—Demosthenes and Aristotle die.
320	Ptolemy takes Jerusalem—Jewish settlements in Egypt and Cyrene.	
315		Thebes rebuilt.
314	Palestine under Antigonus.	
312	Commencement of the Era of the Seleucidæ.	Appius Claudius, censor.
300	Simon I., the Just, High Priest.	
298		Third Samnite war.

B. C.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
292 265	Elcazar, High Priest.	Commencement of the Punic wars.
251 241 235	Manasseh, High Priest.	End of the First Punic war. Temple of Janus closed for the first time since Nurna.
219 218	Antiochus overruns Palestine.	Second Punic war. Hannibal crosses the Alps.
217	Ptolemy recovers Palestine, profanes the Temple, but is driven out supernaturally—He persecutes the Jews of Alexandria.	Battle of Trasimene.
216 215		Battle of Cannæ. Chinese wall built.
206 205	The Jews submit to Antiochus, the Great—Are well treated at first.	Dynasty of Han in China.
204		Scipio in Africa—Defeat of the Carthaginians.
201		Peace with Carthage.
197	Palestine and Cœle-Syria conquered by Antiochus the Great, and confirmed to him by the peace with Rome.	
187	Attempt of Heliodorus to plunder the Temple.	
183 175	Onias III. degraded from the High Priesthood which is sold to Jason.	Death of Hannibal and Scipio.
171		Third Macedonian war
170	Jerusalem taken by Antiochus Epiphanes—Great cruelties towards the Jews.	
168	Menelaus deposed—Massacre at Jerusalem—Beginning of the Maccabæan war of independence.	End of the Macedonian kingdom.
167	Judas Maccabæas defeats the Syrian Generals.	
166	Judas takes Jerusalem—Re-dedication of the Temple.	
164	Death of Antiochus—He is succeeded by Antiochus V., Eupator, who takes Bethsura and besieges Jerusalem—Peace with the Jews.	
162	Alcimus made High Priest—Judas calls on the Jews to resist.	
161	Victory of Adasa—Embassy to Rome—Death of Judas—Death of John Maccabæus.	Alliance between Rome and Judæa.
158	Peace with Syria.	
153	Jonathan, High Priest.	Celtiberian war.
149		Third Punic war.
146	Alliance with Demetrius, whose life Jonathan saves.	Destruction of Carthage.

B. C.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
144	Death of Jonathan.	
141	Tower of Zion taken—First year of Jewish freedom.	
140	Simon made hereditary prince of the Jews.	
137	John Hyrcanus, High Priest.	
128	Hyrcanus goes to Parthia with Antiochus, who is killed there—Judæa independent.	Death of Tiberias Gracchus.
125	Hyrcanus conquers the land east of Jordan.	
121		Death of Caius Gracchus.
109	Hyrcanus destroys the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim.	
107		Marius, First Consul.
106	Death of Hyrcanus—Aristobulus, High Priest, assumes the title of king.	Jugurtha taken—Cicero and Pompey born.
105	Alexander Jannæus—Civil war.	
100		Julius Cæsar born.
83		Sylla, dictator.
78	Alexandra, queen of Judæa.	
71		Defeat and death of Spartacus.
69	Hyrcanus II., king, deposed by his brother after 3 months—Succeeded by Aristobulus II.—Rise of Antipater.	
66		Syria a Roman province.
65	Civil war between the rival brothers—Appeal to the Romans.	
64	Arbitration of Pompey.	
63	Pompey carries Jerusalem by assault—Judæa subject to Rome from this time.	Cicero, consul.
57	Alexander, son of Aristobulus II., makes war on Hyrcanus, but is defeated by Gabinius, Proconsul of Syria.	
55		Cæsar's first descent on Britain.
54	Crassus at Jerusalem; plunders the Temple.	Second invasion of Britain.
52	Cassius enslaves 30,000 Jews, the partisans of Aristobulus.	
49	Cæsar releases Aristobulus, who is put to death by the Pompeians—Alexander put to death by Scipio at Antioch.	Cæsar crosses the Rubicon.
48	Antipater, first Roman Procurator of Judæa—Hyrcanus, Ethnarch.	Battle of Pharsalia—Death of Pompey.
46	Antipater appoints his sons Phasaël and Herod captains of Judæa and Galilee.	Reform of the Callendar.
44	Decree of Cæsar for refortifying Jerusalem.	Death of Cæsar.
43	Cassius plunders Jerusalem.	Death of Cicero.

B. C.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
42	Herod defeats Antigonas, and enters Jerusalem in triumph—Is reconciled to Hyrcanus, and betrothed to Mariamne.	Battle of Philippi—Death of Brutus and Cassius.
40	Herod appointed king by the Roman Senate.	Roman Empire divided—Octavian and Antony at Rome.
37	Herod takes Jerusalem on the day of atonement—Marries Mariamne—Death of Antigonas—End of the Asmonæan line—Annel made High Priest.	Renewal of the triumvirate for five years.
36	Herod compelled by Cleopatra to make Aristobulus High Priest.	Antony and Cleopatra.
35	Murder of Aristobulus.	
34	Herod appeases Antony by gifts—Antony gives Cœle-Syria to Cleopatra.	
31	Herod defeats the Arabians—Dreadful earthquake in Judæa.	Battle of Actium.
30	Herod meets Octavian at Rome, and is confirmed in his kingdom.	Death of Anthony and Cleopatra—Egypt a Roman province.
29	Herod puts Mariamne to death.	
28	Murder of Alexandra, mother of Mariamne.	
27		The name of Augustus conferred upon Octavian
26	Herod murders the last of the family of Hyrcanus—Introduces heathen games into Jerusalem.	
24	The dominions of Herod increased by the addition of Trachonitis, Batanea, and Auranitis—Sends his sons Alexander and Aristobulus to Rome.	
23	Herod visits Agrippa at Mytilene.	Death of Marcellus.
21	Herod rebuilds his palace—Founds Cesarea.	
18	Rebuilding of the Temple.	
17	Completion of the Holy Place.	
12	Refuses the hand of Salome to the Arabian Syllæus.	Augustus <i>Pontifex Maximus</i> .
10	Herod opens David's tomb in search of treasure.	
6	Murder of Alexander and Aristobulus, Herod's sons by Mariamne—The Pharisees refuse the oath to Cesar and Herod, and are fined.	
4	Birth of Christ, according to the common reckoning—Death of Herod.	Augustus, Emperor of Rome.
A. D.		
1	Archelaus and Antipas, tetrarchs.	
6	Judæa annexed to the Roman province of Syria.	Tiberius in Germany—Famine at Rome.
9	Birth of Saint Paul.	Varus defeated by the Germans.
14		Death of Augustus—Accession of Tiberius.
26	Baptism of John.	

A. D.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
27 } to 30 }	Pontius Pilate — Ministry of Jesus Christ.	} Tiberias, Emperor of Rome.
30	Crucifixion and ascension of our Saviour.	
31	Spread of the Gospel at Jerusalem.	
36	Pilate deposed — Martyrdom of St. Stephen.	
37	Conversion of St. Paul.	Caligula, Emperor.
39	Caligula attempts to set up his statue in the Temple.	
41		Claudius, Emperor.
43	Herod Agrippa builds the walls of Jerusalem.	
54 } 64 }	Spread of Christianity in Judæa and the Roman Empire.	} Nero, Emperor—Rome on fire for six days.
66	The Jews throw off the Roman yoke—Beginning of the war with Rome	
67	Vespasian overruns the country.	Death of Nero.
69		Vespasian, Emperor.
70	The Christians of Jerusalem retire from the city to Pella before the siege is formed—Capture and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Titus.	
130	Hadrian rebuilds Jerusalem, calling it Ælia Capitolina, and erects a temple to Jupiter.	Hadrian, Emperor.
135	Rebellion of the Jews under Bar-Cocheba.	
136 } to }	Second conquest and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans—More than 500,000 Jews put to the sword—Final desolation of Judæa—The Jews forbidden to return to the Holy City—Final dispersion of the Jews—During this time they are scattered over the face of the earth—In the Eastern countries they are generally well treated—In Europe they are sometimes persecuted, and sometimes well treated. For the events of this period of their history, the reader is referred to the History of the Jews already given in the body of this work.	} The events of Gentile history from A. D. 136 to 1078 are of the highest importance: the chief are the persecution and final triumph of Christianity; the downfall of the Roman Empire; the civilization of Europe, and the establishment of the age of chivalry.
1078	} Jews first settle in England.	} The first Crusade.
1095		Second Crusade.
1146		
1189	The Jews of London massacred at the instigation of the priests on the occasion of the coronation of Richard I.	
1187		Jerusalem taken by Saladin.
1204	Barbarous treatment of the English Jews under King John.	

D.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
1215		Magna Charta.
1348	A fatal distemper raging in Europe, the Jews are suspected of having poisoned the springs, and numbers of them are massacred.	
1357		Turks in Europe.
1492	} Jews banished from Spain, Portugal, to and France — Terrible sufferings caused thereby.	Discovery of America, 1492.
1494		
1588		Edicts against Jews rescinded by Pope Sixtus V.
1603	Jews favored in Holland.	Accession of James VI. of Scotland to the English crown.
1657	Jews allowed by Cromwell to return to England.	Death of Cromwell.
1658		Queen Anne—Victories of Marlborough and Prince Eugene.
1702	Statute to compel them to maintain their Protestant children enacted.	
1723	Jews acquire the right to own land in England.	
1724		Congress of Cambrai.
1732		George Washington born.
1746	Failure of bill to naturalize Jews in Ireland.	Battles of Falkirk and Culloden.
1753	Jews naturalized in England.	
1754	Jewish naturalization bill repealed by Parliament.	
1755		War between France and England carried on in America—Earthquake at Lisbon.
1775		American Revolution.
1783		American Independence.
1789		Organization of the United States of America.
1790	The Jews of Spain, Portugal, and Avignon are declared citizens of France by the Republic—Beginning of universal toleration and protection for the Jews in Christian countries.	
1801		Iron railways in England.
1806	Sitting of the great Sanhedrin of Paris, convened by the Emperor Napoleon.	
1807		Robert Fulton made his steamboat.
1808	London society founded for promoting Christianity among the Jews.	Duke of Wellington made lieutenant-general of the British army.
1812		War between England and the United States of America—Gaslights in the streets of London.
1815		Napoleon defeated by Wellington at Waterloo—Algiers bombarded.
1819		First steamboat crossed the Atlantic, New York to Liverpool.
1820	Alexander of Russia grants land on the Sea of Azof to converted Jews.	

A. D.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
1822		The Greek Revolution.
1829		Catholic emancipation in England.
1831		Lord John Russell's Reform Bill.
1833		Girard College in Philadelphia founded.
1835	Mr. David Salomons, the first Jewish Sheriff of London, elected; Parliament confers upon him power to act.	Boston and Lowell railroad completed, the first in the United States.
1836	Bill for Jewish emancipation in England lost on the second reading in the Commons.	James Smithson founds the Smithsonian Institution—Chinese expel English and other "barbarians."
1837	Moses Montefiore elected Sheriff of London, being the first to receive the honor of Knighthood from the Queen.	Morse's patent for the electric telegraph.
1840	Persecution of the Jews at Damascus, arising from the disappearance of a Greek Priest.	Penny post in England.
1845		Sir John Franklin makes a voyage to the Arctic Seas.
1846	Parliamentary act passed to relieve Jews elected to municipal offices from taking oaths.	Pius IX. becomes pope—City of Mexico captured—California ceded to the United States—Thames tunnel opened.
1848		French Revolution—Louis Napoleon III. President.
1849	Baron Lionel de Rothschild elected to Parliament for the city of London, but not allowed to sit.	Rome a republic.
1851	Alderman Salomons elected to Parliament for Greenwich, but not allowed to sit—Jewish Oaths of Abjuration Bill passes the House of Commons.	The first Great Exhibition, London.
1852	Baron Rothschild again elected to Parliament for the city of London—Violent outbreak against the Jews in Stockholm.	Louis Napoleon III. becomes Emperor of France.
1853	Jewish Oath Bill again passed in Commons, and thrown out in the House of Lords.	
1854		The Crimean war.
1855	Alderman Salomons the first Jewish Lord Mayor of London.	Alexander II., born 1818, becomes Czar of Russia.
1856	Jewish Oath Bill several times passed in Commons and thrown out in the House of Lords, 1854-7.	Peace between England, France, Italy, and Turkey—War between England and Persia—Bombardment of Canton by the English fleet.
1857		Attempt to lay the first Atlantic cable fails—The Dred Scott decision—Storming of Delhi and Relief of Lucknow.

A. D.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
1858	The Archbishop of Bologna orders Edgar Mortara, a Jewish child, to be forcibly taken from his parents on the plea that a Roman Catholic maid-servant had him baptized in infancy—The English House of Commons passes by resolution an act enabling Jews to sit in Parliament—Baron Lionel de Rothschild takes his seat as Member of Parliament for the city of London, and endows a scholarship in the city of London School to commemorate the event.	Dispute between the United States and Great Britain respecting the right of search—Completion of the first Atlantic telegraph—Orsini attempts to assassinate Napoleon III.—Minnesota admitted as a State—The Danubian principalities constituted—India subject to the British crown.
1859	Protest respecting the seizure of the boy Mortara signed at London by the Archbishop of Canterbury, bishops, noblemen, and others, and presented to Lord John Russell, also sent to the French ambassador.	Dispute between the United States and Great Britain concerning Vancouver's Island—War between Spain and Morocco—Death of Washington Irving—Death of Lord Macaulay.
1860	Repeal of oppressive laws against the Jews in the Austrian Empire—Act passed in England permitting Jewish Members of Parliament to omit from the oath the words "on the faith of a Christian."	Abraham Lincoln elected President of the United States—Cession of Savoy and Nice to France—The Prince of Wales visits the United States—Discovery of oil-wells in Pennsylvania.
1861		Secession of the Southern States of the Union—Confederate States organized with Jefferson Davis as President—Capture of Fort Sumter by the Confederates—Battle of Bull Run—Mason and Slidell captured by Commodore Wilkes—William I. King of Prussia—First Italian Parliament meets at Turin—Death of Prince Albert, born 1819, Consort of Queen Victoria.
1862	Extension of political privileges to the Jews in Russia and Poland.	Capture of Fort Donelson—Battle of Shiloh—Capture of New Orleans—Battles of Antietam and Fredericksburg—War between France and Mexico—International Exhibition at London.
1863		Emancipation proclamation—Battle of Chancellorsville—Capture of Vicksburg and Port Hudson—Battles of Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge—Maximilian Emperor of Mexico.

A. D.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
1864	Outbreak of persecution against the Jews at Rome.	Ulysses S. Grant, commander-in-chief of the Union armies—Battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania — Sheridan's valley campaign — Sherman's march to the sea—The Alabama sunk by the Kearsarge—Re-election of President Lincoln—Dynamite introduced.
1865	Alderman Benjamin Samuel Phillips, second Jewish Lord Mayor of the city of London.	Fall of Richmond—End of the great civil war—Assassination of President Lincoln—Death of Lord Palmerston.
1866	Acts passed in England prescribing an oath in form unobjectionable to Jews to be used in Lords and Commons.	Death of Winfield Scott—Reconstruction of the Southern States —Rome evacuated by the French.
1867		Nebraska admitted into the Union —Maximilian shot by the Mexicans — Dominion of Canada constituted — The emperor of Austria crowned king of Hungary—Reoccupation of Rome by the French.
1868	The Right Honorable Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of England; resigns after being ten months in office; is offered a peerage by the Queen, which he accepts for his wife.	Impeachment, trial, and acquittal of President Johnson—General U. S. Grant elected President of the United States—Fall of Queen Isabella of Spain.
1869		Pacific Railway completed—Formal opening of the Suez Canal.
1870	London synagogues federated by act of Parliament—First Jewish newspaper in Australia published at Melbourne.	The Fifteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution ratified by the States.
		Death of Gen. R. E. Lee—War between France and Germany begun—Battle of Sedan—Surrender of Napoleon III.—Fall of the French Empire—Rome occupied by the Italian troops—The German empire proclaimed.
1871	Anglo-Jewish Association formed to cooperate with the Alliance Israélite of Paris.	Treaty between the United States and Great Britain—Great fire at Chicago—British Columbia united to the Dominion of Canada—King William of Prussia proclaimed Emperor of Germany—Thiers President of the French Republic—Paris occupied by the Germans—Rome made the capital of Italy.
1872	Israelitish Alliance founded at Vienna.	Settlement of the Alabama claims —Re-election of Pres. Grant—Death of Horace Greeley.

A. D.	JEWISH HISTORY.	CONTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS.
1873		Modoc war—Financial panic—Abdication of King Amadeus of Spain—Republican government in Spain—International Exhibition at Vienna—Death of Dr. Livingstone.
1874	The Right Honorable Benjamin Disraeli again becomes Prime Minister of England.	Death of Charles Sumner, March 11—Carlist war in Spain.
1875		Death of ex-President Johnson.
1876		International Exhibition at Philadelphia—Massacre of Gen. Custer by the Sioux Indians—Celebration of the completion of the first one hundred years of American independence.
1877		Rutherford B. Hayes, President—
1878		War between Russia and Turkey. War between England and Afghanistan—International Exhibition at Paris.
1879	Privilege of citizenship granted to Jews in Roumania.	Resumption of specie payments by the United States—The Zulu War—MacMahon resigns the presidency of the French Republic—Jules Grevy, President.
1880		Tenth census of the United States; population 50,152,559—James A. Garfield elected President—Famine in Ireland.
1881	Riotous opposition to Jews in Roumania and Berlin.	Assassination and death of President Garfield—Centennial celebration at Yorktown—Assassination of Alexander II., Czar of Russia.
1882		Execution of Guiteau, the assassin of President Garfield—Troubles in Ireland—Assassination of Lord Cavendish and Mr. Burke—Death of Garibaldi—Troubles in Egypt.
1883		Depredations committed in England by the use of dynamite.
1884		Grover Cleveland elected President of the United States.
1885	Death of Sir Moses Montefiore.	President Cleveland inaugurated.
1886		Labor agitations throughout the United States.
1888		Benjamin Harrison elected President of the United States.
1889		President Harrison inaugurated—Centennial celebration at New York City of the inauguration of George Washington.











