

L

LIBRARY
OF THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
AT
PRINCETON, N. J.

DONATION OF
SAMUEL AGNEW,
OF PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Letter...

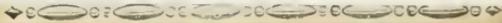
No.

March 15th 1855.

BS 2505 .W454 1824

Wells, D.B.

St. Paul vindicated
.....
.....







—0—

ST. PAUL VINDICATED.

—0—

ST. PAUL VINDICATED:

BEING PART I. OF

A

REPLY

TO A

LATE PUBLICATION BY GAMALIEL SMITH, Esq.

ENTITLED

“Not PAUL, but JESUS.”

BY D. B. WELLS, M. A.

OF CHRIST COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

As the excellent characters of the first believers and teachers of Christianity, are in general a strong recommendation of it to mankind; so that of St. Paul in particular shines with distinguished lustre through his whole history, but especially his Epistles, the faithful pictures of his Soul. SECKER.

CAMBRIDGE:

Printed by J. Smith, Printer to the University;

FOR T. STEVENSON;

AND SOLD BY C. & J. RIVINGTON, AND J. HATCHARD & SON,
LONDON; AND J. WOLSTENHOLME, YORK.

1824

PREFACE.

HAVING lately met with a Book entitled, "*Not Paul but Jesus,*" upon the perusal, I found it abounded in gross misrepresentations, and unjust accusations. Professing to be a candid enquiry into the conduct of the Apostle Paul, the Work in question seemed evidently dictated by a spirit of hostility towards Christianity itself. Where the facts relating to the history of the Apostle are not mis-stated altogether, they are so distorted and discoloured, as to wear an appearance totally foreign to their real nature. It must, however, at the same time be allowed, that some of the arguments are brought forward with such an air of plausibility, and truth and falsehood are so artfully interwoven with each other, that it is easy to imagine they might, at first sight, stagger a careless and superficial enquirer: those persons, indeed, who are content to form their notions

of Christianity, from the representations of its enemies, without examining into its evidence themselves, might be inclined to consider the distorted portrait, which the Author has drawn, as a faithful likeness of the Apostle of the Gentiles. But I am well persuaded that those, who, with candid and impartial minds, examine the real conduct and pretensions of St. Paul, will be so far from concurring in the opprobrious malignity, with which he is assailed, that additional reverence and delight, will be the result of their enquiry. Indeed, if ever there was a person, who exhibited a desire to adorn, by his life and conversation, the pure and heavenly precepts of the blessed Jesus; if ever there was one, who to the most fervent zeal, united the most rational and exalted devotion, who combined firmness with moderation, wisdom with humility, and toleration with truth, or who to abilities most splendid, added in a just cause industry most persevering; if ever, in short, there was one, who more than another, followed the steps of his divine Master, *that* man was St. Paul. To vindicate such a character, from the most malignant imputations, and to advocate the cause

of truth, so shamefully violated by the Author of "*Not Paul but Jesus*," has been my object in the following pages. Those who have investigated the testimony by which the Gospel Revelation is supported, may, perhaps, think that I have imposed upon myself a needless task, as they will naturally suppose, that scarce any readers would be deceived by the shallow sophisms, and false inferences, by which an attempt is made to invalidate the writings, and destroy the character of St. Paul. To such my reply is, that there are persons who are apt to imagine, that infidel publications, if unanswered, are unanswerable. Others may be of opinion, that it would have been better not to have given additional notoriety to a work that deserves to slumber in oblivion and contempt. But if only one person should encounter the publication, "*Not Paul but Jesus*," and desirous of seeing its arguments refuted, should find such refutation in the following pages, I shall deem the time and labour, expended in the composition of them, not fruitlessly employed^a.

^a Since the first part of my Reply was written, I have perused an excellent pamphlet of the Rev. T. S. Hughes,
late

At the hands of the ministers of the Gospel, and from those of the Established Church in particular, the public have a just right to expect a defence of the doctrines of Christianity: I considered, therefore, that a portion of that leisure, which was afforded me by an intermission of the more active duties of my profession, would not be ill applied in an endeavour to refute the misrepresentations of such a writer, as is the present object of animadversion. How far the arguments I have made use of, are calculated to convince others, I must leave to my readers to determine. But, whatever be the result of the present undertaking, I shall always have the satisfaction of reflecting, that my sole aim was to vindicate what, after

late Fellow of Emmanuel College, on the same subject. Had I entertained any idea that the able exertions of the Christian Advocate would have been called forth against such an adversary, my own labours would most probably have been superseded. As, however, Mr. Hughes has at present abstained from a *minute* confutation of his opponent, and as I find, upon a careful perusal of his book, that we have in many instances arrived, by *different* methods, at the *same* result, I have not thought it necessary to withdraw my Work. In revising it for publication, I have frequently referred with pleasure to a new edition of The Acts of the Apostles, by the Rev. Hastings Robinson, M. A. Fellow of St. John's College, of which only the first nine chapters have hitherto been published. I am glad to find that my own opinions are, for the most part, confirmed in the notes to that Work.

a most diligent and impartial enquiry, I still believe to be the truth "once delivered to the saints." I can say with the Apostle Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." With this conviction, I hold it to be a sacred duty to contend earnestly for the faith; I trust, however, that my zeal is according to knowledge, and that it has not betrayed me into any language, unbecoming a clergyman, or a Christian. I abhor persecution, as altogether inconsistent with the precepts, as well as the practice, of the Redeemer of the world. When certain Samaritans refused to receive Jesus, and his disciples, James and John, on this account, said to him, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them;" he turned and rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of;" and on another still more trying occasion, when the disciple Peter drew a sword to fight in his cause, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear, the benevolent Jesus not only healed the wounded man, but said to Peter, "Put up

again thy sword, for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword." Hence we may learn, that nothing is more contrary to the spirit of Christianity, than violence and persecution, and that reason and argument, are the proper weapons, wherewith we ought to combat the enemies of our religion. The proper armour of the Christian is not carnal, but spiritual, and taking "the shield of faith," and "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," he need be "in nothing terrified by his adversaries," for the Gospel will stand the test of the most scrutinizing investigation. Every time it is submitted to the trial, it will come forth with increased lustre. The religion of the Christian being founded on the rock of truth, and having the God of truth for its author, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As to those who abandon the bright hopes, and glorious prospects of the Gospel, to wander in the sterile paths of infidelity and darkness, who "forsaking the fountain of living waters, hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water," for them every reflecting Christian will feel the most sincere compassion; a compassion

which must still more be excited, when we see such characters endeavouring by impiety and ridicule to make proselytes to their own comfortless opinions. Charity should induce us to hope that, whether most deceiving or deceived, such persons are not aware, either of the extent of the mischief they commit, or of the guilt they incur, by opposing a religion, every way adapted to promote the present peace, and eternal happiness of mankind. Surely they are like one that scatters fire-brands, “and says, Am I not in sport?” Let Christians then pray for them in the language of the blessed Jesus: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:” and more especially let those, who stand forward as the advocates of Christianity, remember the excellent advice, which the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy: “The servant of the Lord must not strive^a; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instruct-

^a The verb μάχεσθαι, in the original, signifies, 1. To fight, contend, in fighting, or battle. 2. To strive, contend in words. It is evident that an *angry, hostile*, manner of disputing, as opposed to gentleness, forbearance, meekness, is the *only* thing here forbidden to Christians.” Parkhurst.

Hence too, Hesych. explains διακρινομένων. μαχομένων.

ing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

March, 1824.



CONTENTS.

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1

CHAP. I.

SECT. 1. St. Paul's Conversion.—The Probability and Consistency of the Accounts concerning it, with Preliminary Observations	5
SECT. 2. The Consistency of the Accounts considered, in continuation	9
SECT. 3. Vision seen by Ananias	19
SECT. 4. Ananias's Visit to St. Paul	26
SECT. 5. Accounts of what the Vision is said to have revealed to Ananias consistent with each other	30
SECT. 6. St. Paul preaches Christ in the Synagogues at Damascus	31
SECT. 7. The Purposes for which the Visions appeared to St. Paul and Ananias, perfectly consistent with the Gospel Revelation	33
SECT. 8. St. Paul's Commission from the Jerusalem Rulers .	38
SECT. 9. St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians does not contradict the Account given of his Conversion in The Acts of the Apostles	42

CHAP. II.

SECT. 1. St. Paul's Motives for embracing Christianity, considered	46
SECT. 2. St. Paul's Visit to Arabia	55
SECT. 3. The Jews at Damascus conspire against St. Paul .	59
SECT. 4. St. Paul's Visit to Arabia is not inconsistent with what is related in The Acts of the Apostles	61
SECT. 5. The Jewish Teacher Gamaliel, had no part in St. Paul's Conversion to Christianity	63

CHAP. III.		Page
SECT. 1. St Paul's Divine Commission credited by the Apostles.....		65
SECT. 2. Gamaliel Smith's desultory Mode of Enquiry...		66
SECT. 3. St. Paul believed—Topics connected with his five Visits to Jerusalem.....		67
SECT. 4. Self-written Biography; its title to belief greatly increased, when borne out by the corroborating Testimony of another Historian.....		71

CHAP. IV.

SECT. 1. St. Paul believed, continued. First of his five Visits to Jerusalem after his Conversion.....	73
SECT. 2. Motives of St. Paul's first Visit to Jerusalem....	88
SECT. 3. Manner of St. Paul's Escape from Damascus...	92
SECT. 4. Length of this first Visit.—St. Paul's Employment during it.....	97
SECT. 5. Termination of this first Visit.....	99
SECT. 6. Causes of the Termination of this Visit, considered.....	102

CHAP. V.

ST. PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

SECT. 1. A Dearth having been predicted by Agabus, Collections are made at Antioch for the Brethren in Judæa.....	107
SECT. 2. St. Paul and Barnabas deputed to convey the Contributions to Jerusalem.....	113

CHAP. VI.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. 1. St. Paul's third Visit to Jerusalem—Dissension and Debates about Circumcision.....	117
SECT. 2. Additional Testimony in support of St. Paul's Character, and Divine Commission.....	125
SECT. 3. St. Paul's third Visit to Jerusalem, continued...	127

CHAP. VII.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

	Page
SECT. 1. Conference between St. Paul and other Apostles .	130
SECT. 2. Conference between St. Paul and other Apostles, —continued	137

CHAP. VIII.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. 1. Interview between St. Paul and St. Peter at Antioch—Paul reproves Peter	143
SECT. 2. St. Paul and Barnabas separate	145

CHAP. IX.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. 1. His fourth Visit to Jerusalem	154
--	-----

CHAP. X.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. 1. His fifth and last Visit to Jerusalem	156
SECT. 2. Motives of this Visit considered	157
SECT. 3. St. Paul's fifth Visit to Jerusalem—continued . . .	161

CHAP. XI.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. 1. His Arrival at Jerusalem, and reception by the Apostles	169
SECT. 2. St. Paul declares the things which God wrought among the Gentiles, by his Ministry	171

CHAP. XII.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

	Page
SECT. 1. At the recommendation of the Apostles, St. Paul complies with certain Jewish Ceremonies.....	174
SECT. 2. St. Paul's life endangered by a Tumult, excited by Jews	183
SECT. 3. St. Paul Vindicated from the Charge of Perjury .	188
SECT. 4. St. Paul's Epistles afford no Proof, that he taught Jews to contemn the Mosaic Law	194

INTRODUCTION.

THE Author of "Not Paul but Jesus" seeks, in the Introduction to his publication, to prejudice his reader's mind, at the very outset, against the character of St. Paul; but, as he deals rather in assertions than facts, I deem it unnecessary to dwell long upon that part of his performance. There is one passage, however, so flagrantly absurd and unjust, that it may not be amiss to offer a few observations upon it on this occasion. "The dissentions," says Mr. Gamaliel Smith, "which at all times have had place among persons professing the religion of Jesus, are but too notorious. The mischiefs produced by these dissentions, are no less so. These dissentions, and these mischiefs, in what have they had their source? In certain words. These words, of whom have they been the words? Of Jesus? No: this has not been so much as pretended: of Paul, and of Paul alone: he giving them all along, not as the words of Jesus, but as his own only:—he all along preaching, (as will be seen) in declared opposition to the eleven,

who were undisputedly the Apostles of Jesus : thus, of Paul only have they been the words^a. “The dissensions,” which have prevailed among persons professing the religion of Jesus, must ever be a subject of regret to the sincere Christian ; but, so far is it from being true, that “those dissensions, and the mischiefs produced by them,” have had their origin in any words of St. Paul, that they have arisen from a neglect of those precepts of peace and forbearance, which that Apostle, in conformity with the example of his Redeemer, so zealously laboured to inculcate. The dissensions of Christians have sprung from pride and passion, from ignorance and prejudice ; and diversity of opinion exists, not only with regard to doctrines contained in St. Paul’s Epistles, but with regard to those ascribed to our Lord by the Evangelists. Nor have religious dissensions been peculiar to the Christian world, but they have prevailed, more or less, in every age and country. The heathen philosophers had their different partisans and supporters, and if the various sects among them contended less zealously for their respective opinions than Christians have done for the doctrines of Christianity, it was because there was nothing in the absurd poly-

^a Pp. 5, 6.

theism of the heathen, for which life or ease was deemed worth risking. If, however, any one had the boldness to expose the mummery of heathen superstition, we see, in the treatment of the virtuous and philosophic Socrates, the fate that awaited him. Thus much for the opinion of Mr. Gamaliel Smith, respecting the cause of religious dissensions; and, I think, equally unfortunate, on enquiry, will be found his assertion, that, in “the Gospels and Paul’s Epistles, two quite different, if not opposite, religions are inculcated, and that, in the religion of Jesus may be found all the good, that has ever been the result of the compound so incongruously and unhappily made—in the religion of Paul all the mischief, which in such disastrous abundance, has so indisputably flowed from it^b.” Mr. Gamaliel Smith tells us, that from those materials with which history has furnished us, he has been compelled to deduce the following conclusions:—1st, That Paul had no such commission as he professed to have; 2d, That his enterprize was a scheme of personal ambition, and nothing more; 3d, That his system is fraught with mischiefs in a variety of shapes, and in as far as it departs from, or adds to, those of Jesus, with good in none,

^b Page 7.

and that it has no warrant, in any thing that, as appears from any of the four Gospels, was ever said, or done, by Jesus." So far from concurring in these opinions, I have, after a most diligent investigation, arrived at conclusions diametrically opposite, and am content to join issue with the author on the points in question, and, I trust, I shall be able to offer just and substantial reasons, for concluding from the history with which we are furnished relative to that Apostle, 1st, That St. Paul *had* such a commission as he professed to have; 2dly, That personal ambition formed *no* part of his enterprize; 3dly, That the doctrines which he taught, were in every respect worthy of a Christian Apostle, and in *perfect conformity* with those, which were inculcated by Jesus, and his other Apostles.

CHAP. I.

SECT. I.

St. Paul's Conversion.—The Probability and Consistency of the Accounts concerning it, with Preliminary Observations.

THAT part of the sacred Scriptures, contained in what is entitled, “The Acts of the Apostles,” offers such a strong body of evidence in favor, not only of the character and principles of St. Paul, but also in confirmation of the divine mission of Jesus, that any one opposed to the doctrines of the Gospel, must naturally wish to invalidate its authenticity, and to throw discredit upon its Author. Hence it is not surprising that Mr. Gamaliel Smith should labour so earnestly to shake the credibility of that portion of Scripture. When I come to that part of the enquiry in which he attempts to shew, that St. Luke was *not* the author of The Acts of the Apostles, I trust I shall be able to offer satisfactory reasons for the contrary.

Let us suppose in the mean time that The “Acts of the Apostles” were written by St. Luke,

who also wrote one of the Gospels, and who is styled in the Epistle to the Colossians "the beloved physician." Now some of the principal facts which are related respecting the conversion of St. Paul^a in The Acts of the Apostles are as follows—that St. Paul being a Jew, and brought up according to the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, a Pharisee, was proceeding from Jerusalem to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests, in order that if he found any of the disciples of Christ, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. That as he journeyed, with attendants, towards Damascus, about mid-day suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven, that he and his companions fell to the earth, and, when they were all fallen to the ground, Paul heard a voice from heaven, saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And Paul said, Who art thou Lord, to which question a voice replied, I am Jesus

^a In The Acts of the Apostles he is called Saul till the ninth verse of the thirteenth chapter, and afterwards he is always called Paul. No satisfactory reason has been assigned for this change. Perhaps the best conjecture is that of Bishop Pearce. Saul, who was himself a citizen of Rome, probably changed his name, i. e. his Hebrew name Saul, to the Roman name Paul, out of respect to this his first Roman convert, i. e. Sergius Paulus. Acts xiii. 7. *Bishop Tomline.*

of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest, and further directed him to go to Damascus to a disciple named Ananias; that the companions of Paul saw the light, and heard the voice; but understood not the words which were spoken; that when Paul arose, and opened his eyes, he found himself deprived of sight, and being conducted by the men who were with him to Damascus, to the disciple named Ananias, he recovered his sight, and from that time became a zealous defender and propagator of the Christian religion. Such are some of the principal circumstances relating to the conversion of St. Paul, but before we proceed to consider the probability, and consistency, of the different accounts of the matters in question, it will be proper to state a few chronological data^b, to which we shall have occasion to refer in the course of the ensuing enquiry. The year after the birth of Christ, in which St. Paul's conversion is said to have occurred was A. D. 35; and we find in the history given in the Acts, that when St. Paul was about to go to Jerusalem from Greece, after his second visit into that country, St. Luke was in his company—for after mentioning certain persons,

^b These, and other chronological data to which reference is made in the following pages, will, I trust, be found generally correct, as I have taken them from approved authorities.

St. Luke says, "These going before tarried for *us* at Troas, and *we* sailed away from Philippi." This was in the year 58, and from that time to the year 63, in which St. Paul was set at liberty after his first imprisonment at Rome, St. Luke appears to have been almost always his companion. Thus during a period of about five years, St. Luke would have an opportunity not only of hearing from St. Paul the particulars of his former history, but he would be an eye-witness of a very interesting portion of his life, and consequently the better qualified both to judge of his conduct, and to bear testimony to his character. Having made these preliminary observations, I proceed to shew the consistency of the three different accounts, given in The Acts of the Apostles, relative to the conversion of St. Paul. The first is that related by the historian in his own person: the second is that which St. Paul is reported to have delivered, when apprehended at his last visit to Jerusalem; the third is that which St. Paul is said to have given of the matter when pleading before king Agrippa.



SECT. II.

The Consistency of the Accounts considered, in continuation.

I. THE historical Account given by the Author
of The Acts of the Apostles :

ACTS, ch. ix. ver. 1—9.

IX. 1. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2. And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus : and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven : 4. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? 5. And he said, Who art thou, Lord ? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest : it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8. And Saul arose from the earth ; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man : but they led him by the hand, - and brought him into Damascus. 9. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."

II. St. Paul's first Account (when apprehended at Jerusalem.)

ACTS, ch. xxii. ver. 3—11.

XXII. 3. "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. 6. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8. And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus."

III. St. Paul's second Account when pleading before King Agrippa.

ACTS, ch. xxvi. ver. 9—17.

XXVI. 9. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. 12. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13. At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shiing round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17. Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee."

In the above plain and unvarnished accounts of St. Paul's conversion, so perfectly clear and consistent in all essential points, Mr. Gamaliel Smith pretends to have discovered a want of conformity as to the ten following circumstances :

Omissions. . . . 1. The light seen.

————— 2. The dialogue.

————— 3. Falling to the ground.

————— 4. Language of the voice.

————— 5. Kicking against the pricks.

Contradictions. 6. The Lord's commands.

————— 7. Paul's companions' posture.

————— 8. Paul's companions' hearing or
not hearing.

————— 9. If hearing, what they heard.

————— 10. Nothing seen but the light.

1. *Light seen.* "In Acts it is a 'light,' in Paul's first 'a great light,' in both it is about mid-day. But in Paul's second account it is above the brightness of the sun at that time of the day." p. 12. So far from being contradictory, these accounts, respecting the supernatural light, strongly corroborate each other. But, says Gamaliel Smith, Paul having on the second occasion abundant time, "flowers were to be collected," and this respecting the light, "is one of them;" but what motive St. Paul

could have for such an embellishment (had it been one) Gamaliel Smith does not attempt to shew. The very description given by the Apostle sufficiently proves that the light was supernatural^a, and in reply to Gamaliel Smith's flippant enquiries as to the necessity of it, and his idle speculations respecting it, I may observe that the occasion of such a miraculous exertion of power was in every respect worthy of its divine Author. St. Paul possessed the requisite qualifications for becoming an instrument in the hands of Providence for the propagation of the Gospel, but through a blind and mistaken zeal he had bitterly persecuted the disciples of Christ, thinking that thereby he was doing God service; and we may reasonably conclude that nothing less than an immediate revelation from God himself could have converted him to the truth, since he had shewn himself deaf to the eloquent and forcible reasoning of St. Stephen. The interposition of God in behalf of St. Paul was, therefore, an act not less of wisdom than of mercy.

2. *Dialogue.* Under this head I shall content myself with observing that Gamaliel Smith has

^a Mr. Robinson in his note on Acts ix. 3. thinks that thunder and lightning were the symbols of the divine presence on this occasion, as we are told they were upon Mount Sinai, at the delivery of the Law. See his note.

been guilty of great carelessness, or a wilful disregard of truth, by saying, that Paul “knew the voice to be the Lord’s” (that is, Jesus’s.) The direct contrary may be inferred from the question, “Who art thou, *Lord?*” and as to the conversation or dialogue, it will be found to be in each account to the same effect.

3. *Falling to the ground.* In this instance Gamaliel Smith is wrong again. He says, “By Paul *alone* was this prostration experienced.” In none of the accounts is it said, that the prostration was experienced by Paul *only*, and we are assured in Paul’s second account, that the contrary was the case.

4. *Language of the voice.* Gamaliel Smith says, in Acts’ account, and Paul’s first account, “of the language nothing is said.”

In reply to this, I may observe, that, as it was in the Hebrew language^a, in which the Apostle spoke in his first account, it was unnecessary for him to say, that the vision addressed him in that language; but as it is most probable, that Paul, when pleading before king Agrippa and the Roman governor at Cæsarea, spoke in the Greek language, with which St. Paul was perfectly conversant, it was extremely natural for him, then, to remark, that the voice

^a Acts xxi. 40.

which he heard, “spake unto him in the Hebrew tongue.”

5. “*It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*^b.” This proverbial expression is left out in Paul’s second account, but the omission is by no means a proof, that it was not uttered by the Vision.

We come now to what Gamaliel Smith calls contradictions.

6. *The Lord’s commands.* Under this head, there is neither a “sad contradiction, or disastrous difference,” as Gamaliel Smith would have us believe. If we look at the first, or historical account, we shall find, that the companions of Paul led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus,—a circumstance perfectly consistent with the declaration in Paul’s first account, that the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into Damascus, as well as with the account in Paul’s second speech, of the Lord’s intention to make St. Paul “a minister, and a witness of those things which he had seen, and of those things in the which the Lord would appear unto him.”

^b This was a proverbial method of expressing impotent rage, (like the ox kicking against the goad) which hurts only itself, not those against whom it is levelled.—Dr. Hales. See also Mr. Robinson’s note on Acts ix. 5. This proverb here mentioned is omitted in Griesbach’s edition.

7. *Paul's companions—their posture.* “Per Acts (says Gamaliel Smith,) though he fell, they stood it out.—Per Paul’s second, they fell.” In the original Greek, which Mr. Gamaliel Smith professes to understand, the word rendered in our English translation *stood*^a, signifies also, to remain, to continue, to stop; and it need not surprize any one, that the companions of St. Paul, terrified as they are reported to have been, should have remained, or stopped for some time, before they attempted to rise, move, or speak.

8. *Paul's companions, their hearing, or not hearing.* “Per Acts, they not only saw the light, but heard the voice. Per Paul’s first, they did not hear the voice^b.” This at first looks like a formidable contradiction, but when the English reader is told, that in the Greek language there is a word, which signifies 1, to hear; 2, to understand; and when I inform him, that this is the very word used by St. Paul, in the passage in question, the difficulty, and apparent

^a εἰστήκεισαν, Acts ix. 7. See Mr. Robinson’s note, where the apparent difficulty with respect to this word is entirely removed. See also Mr. Hughes’s Defence, p. 64.

^b τὴν δὲ φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν. Acts xxii. 9. Mr. Robinson, in his note on Acts ix. 7. confirms what I have said on the different significations of ἀκούω. He adds, on comparing the two accounts, “Nullam certè in his repugnantiam inveniet, qui ad talium investigationem sobrius accedit.” See also Mr. Hughes, p. 65.

contradiction, will vanish, and we shall find, per Acts, that the men which journeyed with Paul, heard indeed the voice, but by Paul's first account, they understood it not.

9. *Paul's companions, if they heard, what it was they heard.* The contradiction attempted to be established under the preceding head, being already refuted, the superstructure which Gamaliel Smith has raised upon it, falls to the ground: but I shall make one or two remarks in reply to the following passage: "How was it, says Gamaliel Smith, that Paul's companions were able to lead Paul by the hand. All that he saw was the light, and by that light he was blinded. But all that he saw, they saw; this same light they saw as well as he. This same light, then, by which he was blinded, were they not likewise blinded by it? Was it a privilege—a privilege reserved for a chosen favourite?" I have already shewn, that there existed a powerful reason for the interposition of Providence in the case of St. Paul; the temporary blindness to which he was subjected, formed a part of that interposition, and the restoration of his sight afterwards at Damascus, would add confirmation to the truth of his reported supernatural conversion; but the case was different in regard to his companions: they

saw enough, indeed, to enable them to bear witness to St. Paul's miraculous conversion, upon which, most probably, their own would follow; there existed no necessity for them to suffer blindness, and I may add, that St. Paul being blinded by a light which others saw, without feeling any ill effects from it, clearly shews, that St. Paul's blindness was not produced by lightning, or any other natural cause, but was the immediate act of God himself.

10. *Nothing seen but the light.* "Saw no man. Yes, so says the English version, but the original is more comprehensive; Saw no person says the original, i. e., to speak literally, no person of the masculine gender.—No person, and therefore, no Lord, no God."—p. 20. If the reader turns to the eighth verse of the ninth chapter of The Acts, he will see how ill-timed are the above remarks of Mr. Gamaliel Smith. Paul, it is true, "saw no man" after he had been blinded by the supernatural light; but that Jesus manifested himself to St. Paul before the blindness took place, is plainly to be inferred from each of the accounts.

SECT. III.

Vision seen by Ananias.

WITH regard to the wonderful fact of St. Paul's conversion to the truth of Christianity, we may truly say, "we are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses." The matter does not rest on one or two insulated circumstances, but is supported by such strong internal, as well as external, evidence, as must carry conviction to every unprejudiced mind. Lest any doubt should exist with any of the disciples at Damascus, respecting the reality of St. Paul's conversion, or lest the report of the vision which he had seen on the road to Damascus, should be deemed a concerted scheme between St. Paul and his companions, additional testimony was given to [the fact by our Lord himself, who appearing in a vision to Ananias at Damascus, directed him to go to the house of one Judas, where he would find Saul praying. The account of this vision is related in the ninth chapter of The Acts, with admirable clearness and simplicity, and is further corroborated by what St. Paul is reported to have said when apprehended at Jerusalem.

The two accounts are as follows :

1st Acts' Account.

CHAP. ix. ver. 17—22.

IX. 17. " And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized. 19. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21. But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."

St. Paul's Account.

ACTS, Chap. xxii. ver. 12—16.

XXII. 12. " And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13. Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his

will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard. 16. And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

I might safely leave the consistency of the accounts here given to the judgment of every impartial reader, being persuaded that there is not the slightest circumstance in the one, tending to shake the credibility of the other; and I will further venture to affirm that looking at the history given in the ninth chapter of The Acts, there is no rational mode of accounting for the conduct of Ananias, but by supposing the vision he is reported to have seen, to have really taken place. Was it probable that Ananias, who was a disciple of Christ, unless he had been really convinced of the truth of St. Paul's conversion, would have sought out St. Paul. Would he have madly rushed into the arms of one, whom (as appears from the account) he knew to be invested with authority from the chief priests, and to have set out for Damascus with the express design of persecuting the followers of Christ. Most assuredly not. But it may be said, might not Ananias have been deceived through too much credulity; or might he not have mistaken the reveries of his own brain

for a vision. Look at the account, and you will find, that instead of possessing that aptitude of belief, which is most liable to imposition, he was slow of heart to believe what the vision declared to him. He doubted not only of the fact of St. Paul's conversion, but expressed his dread of him. "Lord, I have heard by many, (said Ananias,) of this man how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that call on thy name;" nor was it, till further assured by the vision of the reality of St. Paul's conversion, that he obeyed the command, and went his way and sought out St. Paul. If the vision which Ananias is reported to have seen, had been unreal, how are we to account for his going to the house where St. Paul was? for his telling that Apostle what had occurred to him on his way to Damascus? or for St. Paul receiving his sight, and being baptized by Ananias? circumstances which are clearly stated in the history. Again, it may be asked, might not Ananias have been engaged in a concerted plan with St. Paul to impose upon the Jews, and the disciples of Christ, a story of visions which had never had existence? To this I may reply, that such a supposition is not less

repugnant to all that is related of the matter, than it is to reason; for St. Paul had companions with him on his journey, and if it was pretended that he had seen a vision on his way to Damascus, when travelling with attendants, those attendants would naturally be examined on the subject, and if no such circumstances as those reported had occurred, then instead of any possible utility, or advantage, arising therefrom to either Paul, or Ananias, they must have been immediately covered with shame and contempt, and treated as impostors unworthy of belief. It was not likely, either that the Jews or the disciples of Christ would suffer such a remarkable circumstance as St. Paul's conversion to be passed over without enquiry. The Jews incensed against him for having embraced Christianity, and the followers of Christ fearful of him on account of his former persecutions, would be equally interested in ascertaining the reality of his conversion. Besides, independent of the improbability and uselessness of such a conspiracy between St. Paul and Ananias, the character given of the latter proves him to have been a very unlikely person to have engaged in a fraud of such a nature: for "he was a devout man according to the law, having a good report among all the Jews

who dwelt at Damascus." Mr. Gamaliel Smith affects surprise at the character given of Ananias: he wonders how Ananias could have been a "devout man according to the law;" but neither Gamaliel Smith, or any other person, can find any passage in Scripture in which it is said, that men could not be devout under the Jewish dispensation: to say nothing of numerous worthies in the Old Testament, of whose devotion so much is recorded, we are told by St. Luke, that Simeon was both just and devout^a, and as at the time when Simeon is said to have possessed this character, he could not have had any knowledge of religion beyond that afforded by the Mosaic dispensation, he must have been devout according to the law. The fact is, both Christ and his Apostles approved of that part of the Jewish religion, which is called the moral law, and so far from annulling it, Christ said, "Whosoever should break one of its least commandments, and should teach men so to do, he should be accounted least in the kingdom of heaven." The law, as St. Paul observed, was "holy, just, and good;" but because it was clogged with numerous burthensome ceremonies, which were only "a shadow of good things to

^a Luke ii. 25.

come," Christ and his Apostles taught men a more excellent way of religion, and by the preaching of the Gospel brought life and immortality to light.

But, says Gamaliel Smith, "if Ananias was so happy as to be the subject of this good report, this man who was already a Christian, this man, and not Paul, who of all opposers of Christianity had been the most fierce, would naturally have been the man to receive the supernatural commission. Supposing his vision real and the reports of it true, no difficulty, rationally speaking, could he have found in obtaining credence for it, at the hands of the Apostles^b." That Ananias was one of many excellent witnesses to the truth of Christianity appears clear from the history which is given concerning him, but that he was so well qualified to become a propagator of Christ's religion as St. Paul, is, what I must beg to deny; for independent of St. Paul's peculiar attainments, the very circumstance of his having once been a bitter enemy, and persecutor of the disciples of Jesus, renders his testimony the more important, and the more entitled to belief; and I perfectly concur in the observation

^b Page 21.

of Lord Lyttleton, that "the conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, is, of itself, a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation^a." The visions, then, which are reported to have been seen by St. Paul and Ananias being real, and from what has been said, we have every reason to believe they were so, we shall find that the circumstances which followed were such as were promised, and might naturally be expected to be accomplished.

SECT. IV.

Ananias's Visit to St. Paul.

To suppose that St. Paul, who had been blind three days, could immediately receive his sight from the mere words of Ananias without believing Ananias to have been invested with supernatural power, would be to yield up our minds to the most absurd credulity, especially when we consider that St. Paul's blindness was of no ordinary kind. "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house, and putting

^a Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, by the late Right Hon. George Lord Lyttleton.

his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. *And immediately there fell from his eyes scales, and he received sight forthwith.*" Acts ix. 17, 18.

We are informed in the New Testament, that when Jesus was about to ascend to heaven after his resurrection, he said to the eleven disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Agreeably to this command we find baptism was administered by his Apostles, and indeed the outward sign of water was well calculated to represent the internal purity of heart enjoined by Christ's religion, and the cleansing efficacy of that blood which was shed for the salvation of mankind. It was usual for the new converts to Christianity to comply with the rite of baptism, as a test of their profession of the Gospel: it was, therefore, perfectly consonant with the religion of Jesus, that St. Paul should give this outward evidence of his conversion—an evidence that appeared in his case the more necessary, from his having so recently been a persecutor of the followers of Christ. Accordingly we read, that St. Paul

received baptism on the occasion of Ananias's visit.

“Arise, said Ananias to him, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts xxii. 16. “And he arose, and was baptized.” Acts ix. 18.

In this circumstance Mr. Gamaliel Smith has found matter for raillery, and I insert the following passage, absurd as it is, to shew how light and unbecoming are the remarks into which writers are betrayed, who indulge in a spirit of ridicule on sacred subjects.

“This is no light matter, if so it really were that according to the religion of Jesus by such a cause such an effect was, on that occasion, produced, that such effect could in a word, on any occasion, in any case, be produced, that murders (or not to embarrass the question with conceits of local jurisprudence) killings of men, killings of men by persecution carried on on a religious account—slaughters of Christians by non-christians, could thus, as in Paul's case, be divested of all guilt, at any rate of all punishment at the hands of Almighty justice, if impunity could, indeed, be thus conferred by the sprinkling a man with water, or dipping him in it, then would it be matter of serious consideration, not only what is the verity of that

religion, but what the usefulness of it, what the usefulness, with reference to the present life, at any rate not to speak of a life to come." *Not Paul but Jesus.* pp. 37, 38.

Now to offer many words in reply to such frivolous observations as those just cited, would be a waste of my own and my reader's time. With regard, however, to the circumstance of St. Paul being baptized, and the promise held out to him in the name of Jesus, of remission of his sins, I may remark, that we see in the instance of St. Paul, that the religion of Jesus is a religion of mercy, affording to every believing penitent the hope, that if like that Apostle he truly repents, and turns from the error of his ways, the blood which Christ shed upon the cross will prove effectual to atone for the guilt of his past transgressions, and to obtain for him, at the hands of Almighty justice, pardon and salvation. The Gospel bids us "repent and believe," and by holding out to us the promise of mercy to be obtained through Christ, it administers an antidote to despair, than which there cannot be a worse foe to reformation of life.

SECT. V.

Accounts of what the Vision is said to have revealed to Ananias consistent with each other.

IN the historical account, and that which is reported to have been delivered afterwards by St. Paul in his speech at Jerusalem, we may observe a striking conformity in regard to the matters stated to have taken place at the interview between St. Paul and Ananias; at the same time, it is to be remarked, that there is not that precise agreement in the language, which we may naturally suppose would have been adopted by a person who was forging a narrative, with a view to impose upon the world. Thus, in the historical account of what Ananias said to St. Paul, we read, “that the Lord said unto him (that is, to Ananias), Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name *before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel*: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” Acts ix. 15, 16. In the account given by St. Paul relative to the same circumstance, we meet with language to the same effect. “And he, that is, Ananias, said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that

thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. *For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.*" Acts xxii. 14, 15.

That St. Paul should be forewarned by God, and thereby the better prepared to encounter the sufferings that awaited him for preaching the Gospel of Christ, seems very natural, and as we proceed in our investigation we shall find, that St. Paul became what the vision declared he should be, a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, and that he actually did "suffer great things" for preaching Christ's religion.

SECT. VI.

St. Paul preaches Christ in the Synagogues at Damascus.

ENOUGH, I trust, has been already said to prove the reality of St. Paul's conversion, and of that event, we may, in what is related of his subsequent conduct, expect to witness the fruits in his zealous and successful propagation of the religion which he had before endeavoured to destroy. Conformably

to this opinion, we find, that after his interview with Ananias, St. Paul commenced "preaching Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God," a doctrine most unpalatable to the Jews who had persecuted Jesus and his followers, but most consolatory to those, who had embraced the Gospel; since, if Christ was indeed the Son of God, then must his religion have been true, and all the hopes and promises which he had held out to his disciples would, in due time, receive their full accomplishment. That St. Paul should preach Christ, that he is the Son of God—that he should bear witness to him as the very Christ, the long looked-for Messiah, and by proving this, should confound the Jews which dwelt at Damascus—that all that heard him should be amazed, and say, "Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests," are all matters perfectly consistent with the sincerity of St. Paul's conversion, but at the same time so incompatible with the opinions that Gamaliel Smith labours to inculcate respecting Paul's not preaching "Jesus, but himself," nor the Gospel of Jesus, but "one of his own making," that we need hardly be surprised at the cool assurance with which he denies the facts altogether. "Had

there really been any such preaching, well might have amazement followed it. But there was no such preaching, therefore no such amazement^a." Such is the language of Mr. Gamaliel Smith, and to his unproved and unsupported assertions we may safely oppose the well authenticated, long established, testimony afforded to St. Paul's preaching, by the author of *The Acts of the Apostles*.

SECT. VII.

The Purposes for which the Visions appeared to St. Paul and Ananias perfectly consistent with the Gospel Revelation.

WITH regard to the purposes for which Ananias represents St. Paul as chosen by God, they are perfectly consonant with the religion of Jesus, and shew most clearly that St. Paul was invested with such a commission to preach the Gospel as he professed to have. St. Paul, before his conversion, was unacquainted with the will of God, and had approved the deeds of those who had been "the betrayers and murderers of the

^a Page 44.

Just One," but by the supernatural revelation made to him, the eyes of his understanding were enlightened, the will of God was made known to him, and he was enabled to see the "truth as it is in Jesus." "The God of our fathers" (said Ananias to St. Paul) "hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth: for thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard." The historical account speaks to the same effect, saying, "The Lord said unto him," that is, Ananias, "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." St. Paul also, in giving an account of the purposes, for which the vision appeared to him in the way, represents Jesus as thus addressing him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister, and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Now if Jesus really did

appear to St. Paul for the purposes above-mentioned, and there is every reason to believe that he did, then must St. Paul have been a minister, and an Apostle commissioned by divine authority; and I can only attribute it to Mr. Gamaliel Smith's unhappy anxiety to disprove St. Paul's Apostolic character, that he has indulged in language, of which mature reflection must, I think, shew him the extreme impropriety. "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." To his life's end, says Gamaliel Smith, a man might be hearing such stories as these, and still at the end of it be none the wiser—no additional doctrine—no additional Gospel—no declaration at all—no Gospel at all here. *Not Paul but Jesus*, pp. 48, 59. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me;" "this," says Gamaliel Smith "is not doctrine—this is not Gospel," p. 49. So far from subscribing to these opinions of Gamaliel Smith, I think the passage in question shews that Paul was commissioned to preach very important doctrine—doctrine perfectly consistent with the religion of Jesus, which informs us, that "through the tender mercy of our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them

that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace;" and that, "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." It is a matter of regret rather than surprise, that there should be found any who can ridicule the most sacred truths, that there are those who hear unmoved "to their lives' end" the most important doctrines, for some men "love darkness rather than light:" but as St. Paul says, "If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world, hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Instead, however, of approving, or joining in, the idle cavils of the sceptic, the Christian will exclaim with St. Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*^a."

^a 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

Mr. Gamaliel Smith argues, that because the account given by St. Paul in one part of *The Acts of the Apostles*, of the purposes for which God had chosen him, differs in some minute particulars from the account given by the historian of the same matters, when speaking in his own person—the whole is “a fable,” an invented fable, which the author of *The Acts* did not himself believe; and then he adds, “Yet this account, which, in the eyes of the very man by whom it is delivered to us, is but a fable, even those to whom in this same character of a fable it is delivered, this account it is, that Christians have thus long persisted in regarding, supporting, and acting upon as if it were from beginning to end, a truth—a great body of truth! O Locke! O Newton! where was your discernment^b!” Christians will, I doubt not, continue to believe that to be true, which Mr. Gamaliel Smith here calls a fable, notwithstanding the scoffs and sneers of vain and captious sciolists: but of the pretensions of Gamaliel Smith, Esq. to arraign the discernment of Locke and Newton, we shall be better qualified to judge, as we proceed in our enquiry. In the mean time it is satisfactory to remark, that those excellent and enlightened men, applying the great powers of their minds

^b Page 50.

to investigate the evidences of Christianity, were firmly persuaded of its truth, and not only themselves believed the Scriptures, but devoted a portion of their studies to illustrate the beauties, and to elucidate the difficulties contained in Holy Writ.

SECT. VIII.

St. Paul's Commission from the Jerusalem Rulers.

WE read in the ninth chapter of The Acts, that "Paul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem," and St. Paul, when apprehended at Jerusalem, confirms the account here given, and is reported to have appealed to the high priest and the elders, as to the truth of his having been invested with such an authority. With his usual scepticism, Mr. Gamaliel Smith doubts the truth of the matters altogether, and makes the following very sapient remarks: "Supposing the appeal made, the multitude might have

saved themselves the trouble of putting him to death : those rulers against whom, by his own confession, he had committed this treason, would have been ready enough to proceed against him in the regular way, and take the business out of the hands of an unauthorized mob^a." Now, according to the received chronology, the time when St. Paul was invested with the commission to apprehend the disciples at Damascus, was A. D. 35. The time when he made the appeal to the high priest, was A. D. 58. I need not say to those who are at all acquainted with the Jewish history, that numerous changes, not only in the office of the high priesthood, but in other affairs, had taken place in the intervening 23 years. At the time when Paul set out on his commission to Damascus, Caiaphas was the high priest, soon afterwards he was deposed, and Jonathan set up in his stead.

After him, we read in Josephus, that the office of high priest was held by Theophilus, Simon, Matthias, Elionæus, Josephus, and Ananias, the last of whom appears to have exercised it at the time when St. Paul was apprehended at Jerusalem. Yet, according to Gamaliel Smith, we are to shut our eyes to all that might have happened in the interval between

^a Page 59.

the two periods; we are to suppose the same high priest, and the same elders to have been all living, and in office; and, that spite of the Roman authority, spite of St. Paul's Roman citizenship, nothing would have been more easy than to have had Paul taken up, and put to death, and for what? for not having executed, 23 years before, a commission to bind and persecute the Christians, a commission in itself most barbarous, cruel, and unnatural, not to say illegal. Such are the absurdities to which Gamaliel Smith's hypothesis inevitably leads! That St. Paul should declare that the elders, and the person who was high priest at the time he was speaking, could confirm his testimony on the subject of his commission to persecute the disciples, was extremely natural, for they could not be ignorant of such a commission having formerly been granted to St. Paul; for even supposing there were no public records in the archives of the high priesthood of the fact, St. Paul's conversion to Christianity, and the circumstances attending it, could not have been otherwise than well known in Jerusalem, especially to the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews, from whose predecessors St. Paul had received his commission, to apprehend the disciples at Damascus, and bring them bound

to Jerusalem. It was a blind and mistaken zeal, that induced Paul to become a persecutor of the followers of Jesus, but as he himself declares, he "obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief;" and when convinced by the vision which he saw on the road to Damascus, that the religion of Christ was true, and consequently, that the commission which he had received from the chief priest and the elders was cruel and unjust, he resolved to set it at defiance, although, from the treatment experienced by Christ, and the still more recent fate of St. Stephen, he must have well known, that such a line of conduct would be attended with the utmost danger to himself. That the Jews afterwards pursued him with the utmost malice, is evident from various parts of his history. St. Paul, however, never suffered any personal consideration to divert him from what he considered the path of duty. He thought it better to "obey God rather than men," and hence it was, that, reckless of consequences to himself, he not only set at nought his commission from the high priest, but went and preached in the very synagogues of the Jews at Damascus, that Christ was the Son of God. And we shall find, as we proceed, that without subjecting himself to the imputa-

tion of rashness, or enthusiasm, his conduct was that of a man who was firmly persuaded of the truth of what he taught, and who was ready to lay down his life for the name and religion of Jesus.

SECT. IX.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians does not contradict the Account given of his Conversion in The Acts of the Apostles.

SPEAKING of St. Paul's conversion, Gamaliel Smith says, "All this while now, for little less than 1800 years, from Paul's own pen, we have an account of this his conversion, and of any such story as that of its being effected through the instrumentality of visions in this account of his, not any *the slightest trace* is to be found, *not any the slightest allusion to it*^a!! Now let us turn to the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and we shall see the utter falsity of the above remarks. Gal. i. 1. "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ. Ver. 10. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to

^a Page 64.

please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. Ver. 11. But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me *is not after man*. Ver. 12. *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" We here observe the most direct allusion to those visions St. Paul is reported to have seen; for if St. Paul received not the Gospel of men, neither by man, how did he receive it, and by whom was it revealed to him? Undoubtedly from Christ himself, who appeared to him in those visions of which we have such clear and satisfactory accounts in The Acts of the Apostles. Again, Gamaliel Smith errs in saying, we have an account (if by account he means a regular history), from Paul's own pen, of his conversion. St. Paul had preached the Gospel among the Galatians, before he wrote his Epistle to them, and had therefore had an opportunity of personally giving them an account of the manner of his conversion, while among them^b; consequently, there was no need for

^b There is a great difference of opinion among the learned, concerning the date of this Epistle (to the Galatians,) some supposing that it was written as early as the year 52, and others as late as the year 58. There is, however, an expression in the beginning, which appears to fix its date with a considerable

him to give the history of it in his Epistle: but there was a reason, which made it extremely proper for him to assert the divine authority by which he preached the Gospel, since it appears from the Epistle, that a Judaizing faction, who wanted to introduce circumcision, and other Jewish ceremonies among the Galatians, had endeavoured to undermine his character, by comparing it with that of Peter, and the other Apostles, who had been the companions of Jesus during his ministry on earth. Enough is said in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, to confirm the account given in

considerable degree of probability. "I marvel, (says the Apostle), that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel." This passage seems to prove, that the Epistle was written soon after the Galatians were converted to Christianity. From the history of St. Paul it appears, that he preached in Galatia in the year 51, and again in the year 53. No mention is made in this Epistle, of St. Paul having been twice in Galatia, and, therefore, I conclude, that it was written in the interval between his two visits, and, most probably, in the year 52, while he was at Corinth, or it might have been written, as Michaelis thinks, in Macedonia, before St. Paul went to Corinth. *Bp. Tomline.*

Paley has shewn, that the subscription, which, says the Epistle to the Galatians, was written from Rome, is erroneous, and also, that the subscriptions at the end of five other of Paul's Epistles, (viz. first Epistle to Cor., 1 Thess., 2 Thess., 1 Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus,) are either false or improbable. The subscriptions attached to the Epistles are to be regarded, as Paley remarks, as ancient scholia and nothing more.

The Acts of his conversion, and St. Paul's not having said more on the subject, is not the slightest contradiction to the truth of what is related by St. Luke concerning him. Gamaliel Smith, either from ignorance, or what is worse, wilful misrepresentation, speaks of St. Paul's Epistles, as if they had been written in order to give a history of his life, whereas they were written with no such design, but chiefly with a view to confirm those to whom they were addressed, in the faith of Christ, and to give them instructions in various points of doctrine suited to their peculiar circumstances. Thus, in this Epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle's object, as Locke has justly remarked, was "to dehort and hinder the Galatians from bringing themselves under the bondage of the Mosaical law;" but that St. Paul was not "acting in opposition" to the Apostles at the time of writing that Epistle, will be shewn hereafter.

CHAP. II.

SECT. I.

St. Paul's Motives for embracing Christianity considered.

WE see, from the accounts given in The Acts of the Apostles, that about the time of St. Paul's conversion to Christianity, the Christians were liable to be persecuted from city to city, and that they held not only property, but life itself, and all that, in a temporal point of view could render life desirable, upon the most precarious tenure. That implacable hatred which had been displayed by the Jews towards our Lord, appears after his death to have raged in their bosoms with undiminished fury, and to have been directed against the followers of Jesus. But notwithstanding the violence of persecution, the cause of the Gospel, being the cause of truth, was daily gaining ground, and the number of the disciples increasing. That number, however, was now, and long afterwards, very trifling, compared with the countless multitudes of their adversaries. To imagine, therefore, that St. Paul

could have been so infatuated as to join the Christians from a hope of temporal advantages, is to make a supposition contrary to reason and to fact, especially when we consider what were the prospects of St. Paul previous to his conversion. He was not only a Jew, but belonged to the most powerful sect among the Jews, being a Pharisee, and had been instructed by a celebrated Rabbi, Gamaliel, in the Jewish law. He was, moreover, of the popular tribe of Benjamin, and although, as was customary among the Jews^a, he had been instructed in a trade, great attention must have been paid to his education, since he appears to have possessed a perfect knowledge of the Greek, as well as Hebrew, language. He had also the additional advantage of having been born free of the city of Rome, being a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia, a city which enjoyed the great privileges of a Roman colony. With such attainments and advantages, St. Paul might have reasonably hoped to have risen to posts of the highest honor and dignity among his countrymen the Jews; but by embracing the Gospel, St. Paul knew not only that all such prospects must be abandoned, but that he would incur the reproach

^a It was a maxim among the Jews, that "he who teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief."

and hatred of his former friends and companions, and be exposed to poverty, hardships and persecutions. Under such circumstances it seems the very acme of absurdity, to suppose that St. Paul became "a declared convert to the religion of Jesus, for the purpose of setting himself at the head of it, and of acquiring power and opulence^a." Yet this is what Gamaliel Smith has ventured to assert, and has been guilty of the grossest misrepresentation in the vain attempt to substantiate the charge. Engaged in a common cause, and united by a sense of their common danger, the first disciples, agreed soon after the death of Christ, "to have all things common, neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." Among other arrangements, dictated by charity and benevolence, it appears that provision was made, out of the public funds of the Christian community, for the indigent widows who belonged to it^b.

^a Page 73.

^b Commenting upon 1 Tim. v. 9. Paley has the following excellent remarks: "It is not altogether unconnected with our general purpose, to remark in the passage before us the selection and reserve which St. Paul recommends to the governors of the church of Ephesus, in the bestowing relief upon the poor, because it refutes a calumny which has been insinuated, that the liberality of the first Christians was an artifice

ACTS vi. 1—5.

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

artifice to catch converts; or one of the temptations, however, by which the idle and mendicant were drawn into this society: "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for her good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work, but the younger widows refuse." (ver. 9, 10, 11.) And in another place, If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." And to the same effect, or rather more to our present purpose, the Apostle writes in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians: "Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither let him eat, i. e. at the public expense: for we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, *working not at all*, but are busy-bodies; now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." "Could a designing or dissolute poor take advantage of bounty regulated with so much caution; or could the mind which dictated those sober and prudent directions be influenced in his recommendations of public charity, by any other than the properest motives of beneficence." *Horæ Paulinæ.*

4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch^a.

Now, if St. Paul before his conversion knew of the above circumstances, if he was aware that the Christians had all things in common, and that the greatest care and circumspection were exercised in regard to their temporal affairs, then was it in the highest degree improbable, that a desire of opulence could have induced him to join the disciples of Christ. If, on the other hand, he knew nothing of their affairs, then must he have been equally uninfluenced by considerations of gain. Either supposition affords a refutation of Gamaliel Smith's absurd calumny. But fertile in invention, and ever ready to impute base motives to the Apostle, Gamaliel Smith says, St. Paul, while occupied in persecuting the disciples, could not have failed to have obtained "an insight into their

^a These officers were appropriately called Deacons: for the Greek word *Διακονος* literally signifies, a minister or servant properly at table, and hence it was properly applied to those ministers whose more especial business it was to take care of and minister to the wants of the poor. See Mr. Robinson's note on Acts vi. 2.

worldly affairs," and that he had probably heard of the offer of Simon Magus the sorcerer to the Apostles. Now while Paul was a persecutor of the Christians, he was certainly one of the last persons to whom the disciples would have revealed the state of their affairs; but if he had heard of the offer of Simon Magus, and the utter detestation and contempt with which that offer, and he who made it, was treated by the Apostles, he certainly could have expected no worldly advantages, or sinister gains, by joining men of such inflexible integrity. Really, when I see Gamaliel Smith making such groundless, and malevolent, attacks upon the character of St. Paul, I can scarce forbear saying to him, as the Apostle Peter did to the sorcerer above-mentioned, "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God: repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity."—Worldly gain, then, not being St. Paul's motive for becoming a convert to the Gospel, let us next enquire, whether he appears to have been influenced by the desire of power or ambition. Now all power, as well as wealth, at the time of St. Paul's conversion was with

the enemies of Christianity, and not unfrequently exerted with the most ruthless severity against those, who espoused the religion of Jesus. To the authority of Jews and Heathens, equally opposed to the propagation of the Gospel, there seemed not the slightest prospect that the Christians could offer any successful resistance; nor was it till three centuries had rolled away after the birth of Christ, that a period was put to the long train of sanguinary persecutions, carried on at various times against them. It may be said, however, that *civil* authority was not what St. Paul desired, but that having a thirst for command, he wished to exercise a sort of *spiritual* sway over the Christian community, and to this end declared himself a convert. Had he, however, been actuated by such a motive, it is evident that he might have attained his object more safely and effectually, by continuing to adhere to the religion in which he had been educated, and in which he had made no inconsiderable proficiency: or if he had been ambitious of applause, he might with his acquirements, have established a reputation as a teacher, by embracing the philosophy of the heathen. But St. Paul was so far from coveting dominion, that we shall find him ready on numerous occasions to consult with the other Apostles; that his humility was as conspicuous

as his zeal; and that neither his language, nor his conduct were those of a man anxious for authority. In his Epistle to the Galatians, he says: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world^a." In his Epistle to the Ephesians, he says, "I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace given unto me by the effectual working of his power: unto me, who am less than the least of all the saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ^b." To the Corinthian converts, he writes, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase^c; and again, in another place, he says to the Corinthians, "I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God^d." To the Philippians, he writes: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus^e." A man,

^a Gal. vi. 14.

^b Ephes. iii. 7, 8.

^c 1. Cor. iii. 6, 7.

^d 1. Cor. xv. 9.

^e Philip. iii. 13, 14.

ambitious of power or applause, would not thus have acknowledged his own demerits; but St. Paul's is evidently the language of one who was desirous of the praise, not of men, but of God, and whose heart and affections were fixed on things above. When, indeed, calumniators sought to decry his character, and thereby to injure that Gospel which he preached, then it was, and *then only*, that for his own sake, and the Gospel's, he asserted his indefatigable labours, and appealed to his manifold sufferings in the cause of Christ; and yet, on such occasions, his language is that of an ingenuous man to whom it was painful in the extreme to be constrained to pronounce his own panegyric. Thus, after recounting to the Corinthians what he had done and suffered for the Gospel, he adds, "I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you, for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I be nothing."

Enough, I trust, has been already said to shew St. Paul could not have been influenced by the desire of power or of opulence, the prevailing motives^e to which Gamaliel Smith ascribes his

^a Mr. Gamaliel Smith does not accuse St. Paul of being a visionary enthusiast; and therefore it did not come within the scope of my understanding, to shew that St. Paul's zeal
for

conversion ; but, as we proceed in our investigation, other opportunities will occur for reverting to the subject of St. Paul's disinterestedness and humility, of which virtues we shall find him giving the most signal proofs on various occasions. We may observe in the mean time, that the account which has been already given of the vision which he saw on his way to Damascus, affords the most satisfactory solution of St. Paul's conduct, and fully accounts for his having embraced the religion of Jesus, that religion which before his conversion he had so zealously laboured to extirpate.

SECT. II.

St. Paul's Visit to Arabia.

IF St. Paul had been actuated by such motives as those which Gamaliel Smith imputes to him, it would have been his interest to have immediately established some connection with the Apostles at Jerusalem. Instead of doing this

for Christianity could not arise from enthusiasm; but Lord Lyttleton has ably demonstrated that St. Paul's conversion, and subsequent conduct, was totally uninfluenced by fanatic delusions. See Lord Lyttleton's excellent Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul.

he goes into Arabia, and delays, for a period of three years, to hold any intercourse with any of the Apostles. This circumstance alone may convince us, that there was not the slightest collusion between St. Paul and the other Apostles, and is perfectly consistent with Paul's declaration to the Galatians, that "he received the Gospel not of man, neither was he taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." The revelation which was made by Christ to St. Paul was complete; consequently there existed no necessity for his going to Jerusalem immediately after his conversion to consult with the other Apostles: hence, he says, "when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus." Gamaliel Smith says, "Paul repaired to Arabia; so in his Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. i. 17.) he himself informs us: in that little known country, he continued three whole years, so also in the same place he informs us: there it was that he experienced that success, whatever it was, that went to constitute the ground of the recommendation, given him by Barnabas to the Apostles.

From thence he returned to Damascus^a." Here is one instance of that artful mixture of truth and falsehood, of which there are so many specimens in Gamaliel Smith's publication. That St. Paul went into Arabia and from thence returned to Damascus, is true, but that he remained *three whole* years in Arabia, Gamaliel Smith is not warranted in saying: for independent of St. Paul's stay at Damascus immediately after his conversion, which was for certain days, and sufficiently long to afford him opportunities for preaching in the Jewish synagogues, and confounding the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, we must take into the account St. Paul's visit to Damascus on his return from Arabia. St. Paul after alluding to his conversion says, "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and *returned again* unto Damascus." Thus we may perceive how incorrect is Gamaliel Smith's assertion, that Paul continued three whole years in Arabia, and hence we may see the necessity of narrowly examining his representations. Again, how contrary it is to the fact, to say, that "it was in Arabia that Paul experienced that success, whatever it was, that went to constitute the ground of the recommendation given of him

^a Page 75.

by Barnabas to the Apostles." Whatever success St. Paul might have in Arabia, and I am by no means inclined to undervalue it, it was so far from being the ground on which Barnabas recommended him to the Apostles, that Barnabas did not *even notice it*. Look at the account. "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem he assayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles, and *declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*" Acts ix. 26, 27. Here we see that it was the vision—that vision which Gamaliel Smith says, (p. 91) "Paul would not venture to submit any account of to the jealous scrutiny of the Apostles," that vision it was, that formed one of the principal grounds of the recommendation of Paul, at his first interview with two of the most distinguished Apostles, viz., Peter and James. We have already seen with how much assurance Gamaliel Smith denied Paul's preaching at Damascus, yet that bold preaching, by which he confounded the Jews, appears also to have been another ground for the recommendation given of him by Barnabas. Thus we see, that

when submitted to the test of enquiry, Gamaliel Smith's assertions prove most unfortunate. Mr. Gamaliel Smith *asserts* that there was "probably no such person as Ananias at Damascus," and that Paul "had no companions" on his way thither, but without wasting time, I will only refer my reader to what is related in the ninth chapter of The Acts of the Apostles,—an authority which, I think I need not now say, is entitled to at least as much credit as Gamaliel Smith.

SECT. III.

The Jews at Damascus conspire against St. Paul.

WE have already seen that St. Paul after his conversion boldly preached in the synagogues at Damascus, and confounded the Jews by proving that Jesus was the very Christ, and it appears that incensed against him, (as on this account they naturally would be,) on his return from Arabia to Damascus they took counsel to kill him, and not only did they lay wait for him, but in order that he might have the less chance of escape, by their insinuations, or other means,

they obtained a special guard from the person who was governor under Aretas king of Arabia, to keep the gates. The disciples, however, were not regardless in the mean time of St. Paul's safety, but desirous of preserving the life of one who was justly dear to them, from having proved himself so able a defender of the Christian cause, and from his having confounded their malignant enemies the Jews, they contrived the means of his escape, which was effected by letting him down by the walls of the city in a basket. The corresponding accounts of the circumstance are as follows^a:

And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: but their laying await was known of Saul, and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. Acts ix. 23, 24, 25.

In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands. 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.

^a These two accounts evidently relate to the same circumstance, and yet they are told in such a different way, that the person who wrote one, cannot be supposed to have copied his relation of the matter from the history given of it in the other, and it is from such striking, yet undesigned coincidences, that we have such strong ground for considering The Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's Epistles, authentic.—Paley, in

In the above statement will be found a complete refutation of Gamaliel Smith's fiction, about the Jews being desirous to apprehend Paul "in a regular way^b," for having set at nought the commission from the high priest. Had the Jews thought it either just or prudent to proceed against St. Paul, on that account, he gave them abundant opportunity of doing so, when he preached boldly in their synagogues at Damascus. The real cause of their conspiracy against him, is undoubtedly to be found in his having preached, that Christ was the Son of God. This was a subject, that must have come home to their guilty consciences, and filled their hearts with fearful anticipations of future retribution.

SECT. IV.

St. Paul's Visit to Arabia is not inconsistent with what is related in The Acts of the Apostles.

ST. Paul's visit to Arabia is not mentioned in The Acts of the Apostles, and on this subject

in his masterly performance, entitled "*Horæ Paulinæ*," has shewn the truth of the Scripture history of St. Paul, by a comparison of the Epistles which bear St. Paul's name with The Acts of the Apostles, and with one another.

^b Page 82.

Gamaliel Smith says, "In design, rather than accident, or heedlessness, or want of information, may be found the cause of a silence so pregnant with misrepresentation^a." If, indeed, it had been said in The Acts, that St. Paul made no such visit, or if the visit was incompatible with what is there related, it might have been justly said, that the historian had been guilty of misrepresentation, but this is not the case; and I may here observe, that whether St. Luke did, or did not, know of St. Paul's visit to Arabia, it was evidently not his intention to give a history in "The Acts of the Apostles," of all that occurred to Paul or the other Apostles, during the thirty years over which his account extends, but of such facts and circumstances as he deemed most interesting and important.

There are several circumstances omitted in The Acts, that are mentioned by St. Paul^b. This visit of St. Paul to Arabia is one. The visit

^a Page 85.

^b St. Luke, says Mr. Biscoe, in his masterly work, *The History of The Acts confirmed from other Authors*, has most probably omitted the relations here mentioned, as also that of the severe sufferings of St. Paul, enumerated 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25. because they most likely happened in the first nine or ten years after his conversion, during which time he preached the Gospel in Arabia, (Gal. i. 17.), Syria and Cilicia, (Gal. i. 21.) and when St. Luke was not with him. See also Mr. Robinson's note on Acts ix. 19.

of St. Peter to Antioch, when Paul rebuked him, is another^c, and various omissions of a similar nature might be pointed out; but, although, there are omissions in The Acts, there are no contradictions to any thing stated in Paul's Epistles; and in numerous important particulars, "The Acts" and the Epistles strongly corroborate each other.

SECT. V.

The Jewish Teacher Gamaliel, had no part in St. Paul's Conversion to Christianity.

ACCORDING to the author of "Not Paul but Jesus," Gamaliel, the doctor of the law, under whom St. Paul had studied, was instrumental in St. Paul's conversion to Christianity^d; for this supposition, there exists not the slightest foundation in Scripture, for it does not even appear; that Gamaliel himself embraced Christianity, although the advice which he gave, when Peter and the other Apostles were brought before the Jewish Council, remains, to this day, a lasting monument of his good sense, and

^c Gal. ii.

^d Page 87, 88.

moderation. “ And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God^a.” Acts v. 38, 39.

^a “ The event has proved, that Gamaliel was a wise, as well as a pious man; and what was thus so seasonably spoken to the first enemies of the Gospel, may with equal propriety be addressed to them who oppose it in these latter days.” Beattie’s Evidences of the Christian Religion.



CHAP. III.

SECT. I.

St. Paul's divine Commission credited by the Apostles.

It appears, from what has been already said, not only that St. Paul was miraculously converted to Christianity, but invested by our Lord with a divine commission to preach the Gospel, and that, in consequence of that commission, he preached boldly in the name of Jesus. We have also had occasion incidentally to remark, that when St. Paul, at his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, was introduced by Barnabas to two of the Apostles, the vision which St. Paul had seen, and his subsequent exertions as a preacher of the Gospel, formed the basis of Barnabas's recommendation; but we shall have occasion to revert to that visit, and shall find, that not only on *that*, but on several other occasions, St. Paul's commission and Apostleship were recognized by the Apostles at Jerusalem; strong confirmation be-

ing thereby afforded, to what has been already stated, respecting the reality of the vision which St. Paul saw, and his conversion consequent thereupon.

SECT. II.

Gamaliel Smith's desultory Mode of Enquiry.

THE vague and desultory mode in which Gamaliel Smith has pursued his enquiry, and the incoherent way in which he has hurled his random accusations against the character of St. Paul, renders it difficult to pursue the discussion in a continued and regular manner. To advert, in every instance, to his minute and frivolous cavils, to charges more distinguished by the flippant volubility with which they are brought forward, than by any shew of reason by which they are supported, would be not only a thankless, but a superfluous, task. It will therefore be my object, in wading through the mass of crude assertions, and unsupported ipse dixits, to select from the rest those only, which, from the ingenuity of perverted argument, or the unblushing boldness of misrepresentation, may seem distinguished from the general heap.

SECT. III^a.

St. Paul believed—Topics connected with his five Visits to Jerusalem.

GAMALIEL Smith says, (Chap. iii. Sect. 2.)
 “In the course of the interval between the date assigned by Paul to his conversion, and that of the last particulars of his history, mention, more or less particular, may be found of four visits of his, distinctly four related visits, and no more than four, to that metropolis of the new Church, (viz. Jerusalem.) On no one of these occasions, could he have avoided using his endeavours towards procuring admittance to the fellowship of the distinguished persons so universally known, in the character of the select companions, and most confidential servants, of Jesus^b.”

Now, so far is it from being true, that “there are only four distinctly related visits, that we shall find, on referring to the history, that between the time of his conversion, and

^a This Section, in some measure, anticipates subjects that belong to a subsequent part of the enquiry, and which are more amply discussed afterwards.

^b Page 90.

the period at which the account given of him in The Acts of the Apostles concludes, the Apostle Paul made five visits to Jerusalem, all of which are related in the most clear and distinct manner; and in considering the accounts that are given of these five visits, I think I shall clearly demonstrate, that if on every one of these occasions, St. Paul's divine commission and Apostleship were not distinctly recognized in express terms, yet, that such recognition is plainly to be inferred from the accounts given by the historian. The first of the five visits which St. Paul made to Jerusalem, was immediately after he had been the second time at Damascus, and took place three years subsequent to his conversion^a. This visit, according to the received chronology, was A.D. 38, and it was on this occasion, that Barnabas introduced him to the Apostles Peter and James. St. Paul's second visit to Jerusalem was undertaken, when he was deputed with Barnabas to convey the contributions made by the disciples at Antioch, in Syria, for the relief of the brethren in Judæa, who were suffering from the effects of a famine, which had been foretold by a prophet of the name of Agabus^b. This visit was made A.D. 44. The third visit

^a See Acts ix. 20. Gal. i. 18.

^b See Acts xi. 22—30.

of St. Paul to Jerusalem, took place in consequence of the dissensions which had arisen at Antioch in Syria, from certain persons from Judæa having taught the Gentile converts, that, unless they observed circumcision and the Mosaic institutions, they could not be saved^c. In a matter of so much importance to the peace of the Church, it was highly desirable to have the advice and concurrence of the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem, lest it should seem, that those, who taught that the observance of circumcision was unnecessary in the case of the Gentiles, were acting in opposition to, or at any rate without the sanction of, the heads of the church at Jerusalem. It was, therefore, determined, that Paul and Barnabas, with certain others, should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders, to consult with them upon the subject; and in taking this step, (as appears from Gal. ii. 2.) they were acting in conformity with a revelation made from heaven. This third visit took place A. D. 49. St. Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem was made A. D. 53, and is so distinctly related by the author of The Acts^d, that one would be surprized, that Gamaliel Smith should suppose the account of it

^c See Acts xv. 1—29. Gal. ii. 1—10.

^d See Acts xviii. 19—23.

“fictitious,” had we not already seen with what cool assurance he takes upon himself to pronounce other parts of “The Acts of the Apostles” “an invented fable.” There does not appear, indeed, to be any *direct* allusion to this fourth visit in St. Paul’s Epistles; but that is not any argument against its having occurred, as there are numerous circumstances recorded of St. Paul in The Acts of the Apostles, of which he does not himself make any mention. It appears, from the historical account in The Acts, that having determined to keep the approaching feast at Jerusalem, St. Paul declined complying with a wish expressed by the Ephesians, with whom he then was, that he would continue longer with them at that time. Promising, however, that if God permitted, he would return to them. He sailed from Ephesus to Cæsarea^a, from whence he proceeded to Jerusalem where he is supposed to have arrived just before the feast of Pentecost. Having kept the feast, St. Paul went down to Antioch in Syria, and after making a short stay at that place, he passed through Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the disciples in those countries, and thence, agreeably to his promise, he returned to Ephesus. St. Paul’s fifth visit to Jerusalem took place just before the feast of Pentecost, A. D. 58^b. The occasion of it was

^a Cæsaræa Palestinæ.

^b See Acts xxi. 1—19.

principally for the benevolent purpose of taking the alms which had been collected among the Christian converts in Greece, for the poor disciples at Jerusalem. This is what Gamaliel Smith terms the Invasion Visit, an appellation, of which the absurdity will be plainly manifest, when we come to the consideration of the circumstances under which it was undertaken, and of the cordial and affectionate reception which St. Paul met with on the occasion from the church at Jerusalem.

SECT. IV.

Self-written Biography; its title to belief greatly increased, when borne out by the corroborating Testimony of another Historian.

I HAVE before remarked, that it was evidently not the intention of St. Paul, to give, in his Epistles, a regular history of his life; and that, when he adverted to his own conduct, it was in general with some particular view to the matters which he was discussing; I believe, however, that if we had no other evidence in favour of the character of St. Paul, than what is afforded by himself, we might safely conclude,

that he was not only a very enlightened Apostle, but also a very excellent and sincere Christian. It must nevertheless be admitted, that self-written biography ought to be received with vigilant examination, and, in some instances, not without suspicion and distrust, since self-partiality must naturally incline a man, when writing of his own actions, not only to shed a false lustre over the more imperfect parts of his character, but to palliate or omit his infirmities and defects. When, with an artless ingenuousness, we perceive a person acknowledging his weaknesses and faults, there is indeed the greater reason to give him credit for sincerity and truth; but, after all, he will certainly possess a stronger title to these qualifications, when we find, that in many important particulars which he relates of himself, he is borne out by the corroborating testimony of another historian, who has had frequent opportunities of judging of his conduct, and who had apparently no motive, either to exaggerate his merits, or to extenuate his failings. Applying these remarks to the case of St. Paul, we may perceive, that the accounts given of him in his own Epistles, and in The Acts of the Apostles, have a strong claim to our belief.

CHAP. IV.

SECT. I.

St. Paul believed continued. First of his five Visits to Jerusalem after his Conversion.

WITH a view to invalidate the history given in *The Acts of the Apostles*, Gamaliel Smith labours to shew that there is a contradiction between St. Paul, and the Author of *The Acts*, as to the time when this first visit took place; hence he asserts, that according to Paul himself, it was not till after three years spent in Arabia, but that, according to *The Acts*, it was immediately after Paul's conversion. "As to contradiction," (says Gamaliel Smith) "contradiction cannot easily be much more pointed, than it will be seen to be between the account in respect of time, as given in this instance by Paul, and the account given of it by his historiographer in *The Acts*^a." Let us not be misled by this bold assertion, but examine the grounds of it by attentively looking at the accounts, and we shall, I imagine, perceive its fallacy.

^a Page 113.

In Galatians, chap. i, St. Paul says, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19. But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. 20. Now the things which I write unto you, behold; before God, I lie not." Thus far Paul's own account; let us now refer to that given of the matter, by the Author of The Acts.

ACTS, ch. ix. ver. 8—28.

8. "And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jeru-

salem: 14. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21. But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. 23. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24. But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. 26. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27. But Barnabas took him, and brought

him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem."

Now if it can be shewn that the phrase "many days," which is used in the twenty-third verse, is ever applied by any other author to signify so long a space as three years, it must be admitted, that not only is there no contradiction between Paul and the Author of The Acts, as to the time when Paul made his first visit to Jerusalem, but the most perfect consistency between the two accounts. With this view, then, I must request the reader to look at the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth verses of the second chapter of the first book of Kings, where he will find the same words used with the same latitude. "And Shimei dwelt at Jerusalem *"many days,"* and it came to pass at the end of *three years,* that two of the servants of Shimei ran away." What is related from the eighth to the end of the twenty-second verse of the ninth chapter of Acts, evidently applies to what occurred on the occasion of St. Paul's first visit to Damascus, immediately after his conversion; and the two following verses relate to circumstances which happened subsequent to St. Paul's return to Damascus from Arabia. Nor is there any con-

tradition given to the above accounts, by what is reported by the Author of *The Acts*, as having been spoken by St. Paul before the Jewish king Agrippa; for we are to consider the occasion on which Paul was speaking, and the objects he had in view: he was pleading in defence of himself and the doctrines of Christianity, and to this end appealed to some of the more important circumstances of his past life, and miraculous conversion. To have entered into a minute detail of all that he had done and suffered, or to have recounted his travels over a very considerable portion of the known world, for the purpose of propagating the Gospel, would have been an unnecessary waste of time; hence, like a judicious speaker, St. Paul compressed into a small compass the matters to which alone he deemed it necessary to advert. After having stated the purposes for which Jesus appeared to him in a vision, he proceeds to shew that he had not been regardless of the divine commission with which he had been invested. "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but shewed first unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Is not what is here said in conformity

with what Paul elsewhere declares, as well as what is stated by the Author of *The Acts* concerning him? Did not Paul immediately obey the vision by preaching at Damascus? Did he not afterwards preach at Jerusalem and in Judæa, and after that, among the Gentiles in Greece, and Asia, and numerous other places, which he visited prior to the time when he pleaded before king Agrippa? With a view to shew that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, it was not necessary for St. Paul to say how long he had staid at Damascus, how many times he had been there, or how many places he had visited previous to his going to Jerusalem. If, as Gamaliel Smith supposes, St. Paul had wished "to ingratiate himself with the Jewish king Agrippa, by magnifying the services he had done to the Jews," St. Paul might have appealed, not only to his earnest endeavours to convert them to the truth at Damascus, but also to his zealous labours in the same cause at Corinth, at Ephesus, and various other places. Having thus shewn that no contradiction exists between St. Paul and the Author of *The Acts*, it would be superfluous to dwell upon the supposed motives to which Gamaliel Smith imputes the discordance: but it may be proper, on this occasion, to point out some of the mistakes and misrepresentations, into which that

writer has fallen, in regard to what St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Galatians. Gamaliel Smith says, “ On the occasion on which Paul himself “ speaks, what was the persuasion which it was his “ endeavour to produce? It was that for a number “ of years commencing from the moment of his “ conversion,—with no persons who to this purpose “ could be called Jews, had he to any such purpose “ as this had any intercourse, for this being ad- “ mitted, it follows of course, that if, on the subject “ of the religion of Jesus, he had really received “ the information he declared himself to have re- “ ceived, it was not from the Apostles that he had “ had it, or any part of it: On them, says he, I am “ perfectly independent: to them I am even supe- “ rior. With Jesus they had no communication “ but in a natural way, with the same Jesus *I* have “ had communication in a supernatural way, in the “ way of revelation. My communication with him “ is, moreover, of a date posterior to their’s, to any “ that they can pretend to: in so far as there is any “ contrariety between what I teach and what they “ teach, it is for their’s on both these accounts,—it “ is for their’s to yield to mine. From God is my “ doctrine: in opposition to it, if either they or “ any other men presume to persevere, let the “ curse of God be on their heads, (ver. 8). Ac- “ cordingly at the time of my first visit to Jeru-

“ salem, after my conversion, no communication
 “ had I with them, (for no such communication,
 “ teaching as I did from revelation, could I stand
 “ in need of). I had already passed three years
 “ at least in Arabia, teaching to the Gentiles there
 “ my peculiar doctrine. This peculiar doctrine, as
 “ I made no scruple of teaching it to those Gentiles,
 “ as little on the occasion of that visit of mine to
 “ Jerusalem, did I make any scruple of teaching
 “ it to Jews as well as Gentiles. True it is, I did
 “ not then teach it publicly: I did not teach my
 “ peculiar doctrine so publicly as they did their’s.
 “ But as to this comparative secrecy, it had for its
 “ cause the advantage of being free from oppo-
 “ sition: for had the fact of my teaching this
 “ doctrine, so different from their’s, been known
 “ to them, they might have opposed it, and thus
 “ my labours might have been lost.” *Not Paul
 but Jesus*, p. 118, 119. After this Gamaliel
 Smith adds, with an affectation of candour, “whe-
 ther in the representation here given of what he
 (Paul) says to his Galatians, there be any misre-
 presentation, the reader may judge.” Now I will
 take upon myself to say, that in many parts of the
 above “representation” there is very gross mis-
 representation, but whether it arose from igno-
 rance, or design, I pretend not to determine.
 In the first place, I may remark, that it was not

St. Paul's "endeavour" to produce a persuasion, that for a number of years, commencing from the moment of his conversion, with no persons who could be called Jews had he had any intercourse, but to shew that he had not, until three years after his conversion, had any intercourse with any of the Apostles,—that he had not been instructed by them or by any man in the doctrines of the Gospel, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ; consequently that those who undervalued Paul, by invidiously comparing him with those Apostles who had been the companions of Jesus during his ministry on earth, did him injustice. In the next place, I may observe, that it was not to any of the Apostles that St. Paul intended to apply his anathema, but against those false teachers who had "troubled" the Galatians, and were desirous of "perverting" the Gospel of Christ, that Gospel, the truth of which St. Paul, and the other Apostles of Jesus, were equally anxious to maintain,—neither did St. Paul arrogantly boast, as Gamaliel Smith would have us believe, that he was superior to the other Apostles, but he shews that he was full as well qualified to teach the Gospel as they were, since it had pleased God to reveal it to him by his Son Jesus Christ, and that being thus instructed, he had no need of conferring with them who were Apostles before

him, in order to qualify him for being a teacher of the doctrines of Christianity. Gamaliel Smith has unfortunately confounded what relates to two distinct periods, and has stated that Paul preached a "peculiar doctrine," a doctrine different from the other Apostles, but this assertion the language of St. Paul does not warrant. What St. Paul states in the latter part of his first chapter to the Galatians, has reference to what occurred at, and about the time of his first visit to Jerusalem, whereas what he states in the beginning of his second chapter, refers to his third visit to Jerusalem, and to the doctrine of circumcision, and the freedom of the Gentiles from the Mosaic law. This was a doctrine which (as is evident from the fifteenth chapter of Acts) the other Apostles concurred in and sanctioned. This doctrine of freedom from circumcision, St. Paul had preached *publicly* to the Gentiles, but he had thought it right at Jerusalem to preach it *privately*, and to persons eminent for their faith and knowledge of the Gospel, lest he should give unnecessary offence to the Jews, lose his labour, and retard the success of Christ's religion. I believe, on referring to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, the above statement will be found correct. I will now, in confirmation of my opinion, cite the passages in question, and transcribe the paraphrase of a very able

writer, the celebrated Locke, who appears to me to have given the correct sense of St. Paul's language, and whose authority, though it may not have much weight with Gamaliel Smith, will, I doubt not, be deemed worthy of respect by every impartial person.

GAL. chap. I.

Ver. 6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7. Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have

PARAPHRASE.

I cannot but wonder that you 6 are so soon removed from me (who called you into the covenant of grace which is in Christ) unto an-

other sort of gospel, which is not 7 owing to any thing else but only this, that ye are troubled by a certain sort of men who would overturn the gospel of Christ, by making circumcision, and the keeping of the law, necessary under the gospel.

But if even I myself, or an angel 8 from heaven, should preach any thing to you for gospel, different from the gospel I have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

I say it again to you, If any one 9 under pretence of the gospel, preach any other thing to you than what ye have received from me, let him be accursed. For can it be doubted of me after having done and

received, let him be accursed.

10. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

11. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ:

13. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it:

14. And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

suffered so much for the gospel of Christ, whether I do now at this 10 time of day make my court to men, or seek the favour of God? If I had hitherto made it my business to please men, I should not have been the servant of Christ, nor taken up the profession of the gospel.

But I certify you, brethren, that the 11 gospel which has been every where preached by me, is not such as is pliant to human interest, or can be accommodated to the pleasing of

men, (For I neither received it from 12 man, nor was I taught it by any one as his scholar;) but it is the pure, and unmixed immediate revelation of

Christ to me. To satisfy you of 13 this; my behaviour, whilst I was of the Jewish religion, is so well known, that I need not tell you how excessive violent I was in persecuting the Church of God, and destroyed it

all I could; and, that being carried 14 on by an extraordinary zeal for the traditions of my forefathers, I outstripped many students of my own age, and nation in Judaism. But

15. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

20. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

21. Afterwards I came into the re-

when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and by his especial favor called me to be a Christian, and a preacher

of the gospel, to reveal his son to me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I thereupon applied not myself to any man for

advice what to do: neither went I up to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me, to see whether they approved of my doctrine, or to have further instructions from them: but I went immediately unto Arabia, and from thence returned again to

Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days.

But other of the Apostles saw I none but James the brother of our

Lord. These things that I write to you I call God to witness, are all true, there is no falsehood in

them. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. But

gions of Syria and Cilicia :

22. And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ :

23. But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 And they glorified God in me.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles; but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek,

with the churches of Christ in Judea, I had had no communication; they had not so much as seen my

face; only they had heard that I who 23 formerly persecuted the Churches of Christ, did now preach the gospel, which I once endeavoured to sup-

press, and extirpate. And they glorified 24 God upon my account.

CHAP. II.

Then fourteen years after I went 1 up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus also with me.

And I went up by revelation, and 2 there laid before them the gospel which I preached to the Gentiles; but privately to those who were of note, and reputation amongst them, lest the pains that I have already taken, or should take in the gospel,

should be in vain. But though I 3 communicated the gospel which I preached to the Gentiles, to the eminent men of the Church at Jerusalem, yet neither Titus, who was

was compelled to be circumcised:

4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

with me being a Greek, was forced to be circumcised: nor did I yield any thing one moment, by way of subjection^a to the law, to those false brethren, who, by an unwary admittance had slyly crept in, to spy out our liberty from the law, which we have under the gospel, that they might bring us into bon-

dage to the law. But I stood my ground against it, that the truth of the gospel might remain among you.

I think any one who reads the foregoing extracts, will immediately perceive how very widely Gamaliel Smith's representation of St. Paul's language to the Galatians, differs from the truth.

^a "Τῇ ὑποταγῇ, by subjection. The point, those false brethren, contended for, was that the law of Moses was to be kept. See Acts xv. 5. St. Paul, who on other occasions was so complaisant, that to the Jews he became as a Jew, to those under the law, as under the law, (1 Cor. ix. 19—22.) yet when subjection to the law was claimed as due in any case, he would not yield the least matter: this I take to be his meaning of οὐδὲ εἴξαμεν τῇ ὑποταγῇ, for where compliance was desired of him upon the account of expedience, and not of subjection to the law, we do not find him stiff and inflexible, as may be seen Acts xxi. 18—26, which was after the writing of this Epistle." *Locke*.

SECT. II.

Motives of St. Paul's first Visit to Jerusalem.

GAMALIEL Smith has been pleased to call St. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, a reconciliation visit. He says, "As to Paul's motive for this visit, he has endeavoured to keep it to himself: but by the result, according to the account he himself gives of it, it is betrayed. It was to effect the so much needed reconciliation—his reconciliation with the Apostles: without an interval of considerable length, all such reconciliation would have been plainly hopeless^a." If, as I have before remarked, St. Paul had been actuated by a "plan of worldly ambition," or, if he had thought himself in need of "the countenance of the Apostles," it is highly improbable, that he would have so long delayed to have any intercourse with those distinguished individuals. We do not find that any steps were taken, or any overtures made by him, in the three years that immediately followed his conversion, to gain their friendship. On the contrary, we perceive from the accounts given in *The Acts*, that at

^a Pages 112, 113.

this first visit to Jerusalem, the memory of his former persecutions was still fresh in the minds of the Apostles. Time had not impaired the terrors which his former conduct had inspired: "distrust of him was not lessened, nor confidence strengthened." It is therefore reasonable to suppose, that it would have been quite as easy for St. Paul to have obtained countenance and support from the Apostles, (had such been his object) immediately after his first visit to Damascus, as it was at a much later period, after his sojourn in Arabia. "As to Paul's motive for this visit," says Gamaliel Smith, "it must be left to inference, to conjecture grounded on circumstances," and Gamaliel Smith has chosen to infer from St. Paul having said, that "after three years he went up to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days," that the visit was undertaken with a view to a reconciliation with the Apostles. Now, if uninfluenced as he was by any worldly considerations, St. Paul's object had been merely to seek a reconciliation with those disciples, whom, from an ignorant zeal, he had formerly persecuted, his conduct would have been entitled to praise, and worthy of a Christian; but we may conjecture from circumstances which are stated, that higher and more important con-

siderations induced St. Paul to undertake this visit to Jerusalem; that he went there under a persuasion, that his evidence and abilities would be of service to that Gospel, which he, and the other Apostles, were commissioned to preach, and that he might concert with Peter one of the chief of the Apostles, as to the best means of promoting its success, and of defeating the machinations of its adversaries. This conjecture is borne out by what is stated respecting the repeated conferences which took place, between St. Paul and the two Apostles Peter and James, as well as by what is related of his conduct, during the time he remained in Jerusalem. He was with them for fifteen days, (Gal. i.) coming in and going out at Jerusalem, and he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, Acts ix. 28. The person, moreover, who introduced St. Paul to the Apostles on this occasion, was one, who was very unlikely to lend himself to the furtherance of any scheme of worldly ambition, (had Paul been actuated by any such project,) for Barnabas had been one of the first to give a disinterested support to the cause of the Gospel, and the welfare of the Christian community. "And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which

is, being interpreted, The Son of Consolation,) a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet." (Acts iv. 36, 37.) Barnabas was also "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." (Acts xi. 24.) Gamaliel Smith is pleased to call Paul's account of this visit to Jerusalem, a "loose account," p. 131. So far is it from being a loose account, that it is much more circumstantial and particular, than that given in "The Acts" relative to the same transactions. The historian speaks in general terms as of facts, at which he was not present, but St. Paul "particularizes time, names, and circumstances."

I agree with Locke, that "no man ever called St. Paul a loose writer, who was not himself a loose reader," and the author of "Not Paul but Jesus" affords an illustration of the remark. Numerous, indeed, are the instances, in which Gamaliel Smith has shewn his ignorance of the meaning of Scripture; and occasionally there are passages in his book, which induce me to think, that he has either not read the whole of the New Testament, or that, if he has read it, his perusal has been of a very cursory, as well as unprofitable, nature. Among other gross mistakes into which he has

fallen, I may here notice his calling “Jerusalem the birth-place of Jesus^a.” Let Gamaliel Smith refer to the two Evangelists^b, who have recorded the particulars of our Saviour’s birth, and he will find, that Jesus was born, not in Jerusalem, but in Bethlehem of Judæa! Ignorance, unaccompanied by arrogance or presumption; is rather deserving of pity than of censure; but when a man, affecting to comment on the Scriptures, not only betrays how little he is acquainted with the matters on which he writes, but attacks characters and subjects the most sacred, with profane and indecent levity, it is difficult to say, whether his arrogance, or his temerity, is most to be condemned.

SECT. III.

Manner of St. Paul’s Escape from Damascus.

I HAVE already shewn the absurdity of Gamaliel Smith’s supposition, that St. Paul fled from Damascus to avoid being apprehended in a “regular way” for the purposes of justice; “and that the accounts given by the Author of

^a Page 125.

^b Matt. ii. 1. Luke ii.

The Acts and Paul himself, relative to the transaction, have a striking, yet evidently undesigned coincidence. Gamaliel Smith, in again alluding to this "adventure of the basket," as he is pleased to term it, says, "By the reference made to a matter of fact, which, supposing it real, must in its nature have been notorious, to wit, the existence of a king of the name in question, in the country in question, at the time in question, a comparative degree of probability seems to be given to Paul's account. A curious circumstance is, that in this Epistle of Paul's, (the second Epistle to the Corinthians) this anecdote of the basket stands completely insulated, it has not any the slightest connexion with any thing that precedes or follows it^a." Now, so far from not having any connexion with any thing that precedes it, I think this "anecdote of the basket" is intimately connected with, and naturally suggested itself to St. Paul's mind, from what he had just been writing, with respect to being "in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen;" for it appears from the history, that not only did a base unprincipled band of Paul's own countrymen, the Jews, lie in wait to kill him, but that, instigated by those same Jews, the heathen governor,

^a Page 134.

who kept the city with a garrison, was desirous of apprehending him. Whether there was, or was not, a governor with a garrison at Damascus, upon Paul's visit to that place, immediately after his conversion, I think perfectly immaterial^a. The Scriptures were not written with a view to gratify idle curiosity, but to make men "wise unto eternal life." For this purpose, they contain all the information, and are supported by all the evidence, that reasonable men need desire; and it is gratifying to know, that in many important circumstances, the sacred historians are corroborated by the testimony of other writers, who cannot be suspected of any design to represent matters in a light favourable to the Christians. If, previous to writing his invectives against St. Paul, Mr. Gamaliel Smith had attentively perused the Jewish historian Josephus, he might have found, not only that such a person as Aretas king of Arabia really existed, but reasons for his having a governor with a garrison at Damascus, at the time when Paul is reported to have been let down from the walls of that city in a basket. It was not long after St. Paul's conversion, that the animosity, which had for some time

^a Mr. Robinson, in his note on Acts ix. 23, has, I think, fully explained this seeming difficulty.

subsisted between Aretas king of Arabia, and Herod the tetrarch, broke out into open war. The cause of this animosity originated in Herod's having put away his wife, the daughter of Aretas, in order that he might marry Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Aretas, having collected a sufficient force, made war upon Herod, and, in a set battle, Herod's army was completely overthrown^a. Herod, upon the destruction of his army, applied himself to his master, the Emperor Tiberius, who was so far wrought upon by the representations of Herod, that he was exceedingly displeased at the success of Aretas, and at his audacity in making war in his dominions; and that he immediately wrote letters to Vitellius, governor of Syria, ordering him to undertake the war, and to bring the rebellious Aretas prisoner, or to send his head to Rome. It was about the time of St. Paul's return from Arabia to Damascus, that Aretas was engaged in making preparations against the *intended* attack of Vitellius. It was therefore extremely probable, that among other warlike measures of

^a Josephus informs us, that it was commonly believed among the Jews, that the defeat of Herod's army proceeded from the immediate vengeance of heaven, for his having murdered the honest and virtuous John the Baptist. See Joseph. Antiq. Book XVIII. Chap. v. Sect. 1, 2, 3. and Book XIII. Chap. xv. Sect. 2.

defence, Aretas should have a governor and a garrison in the important and populous city of Damascus, which though in Cœlo-Syria, was at this time in subjection to Aretas. As to the governor having been influenced by the Jews to apprehend St. Paul, it is easy to assign a motive for his conduct. The Jews were a commercial people,—they were, moreover, at this time, numerous in Damascus^a, having synagogues there, and among other expedients it was not unlikely that Aretas, or his governor, might have occasion to apply to them for some kind of assistance during the impending war. Political considerations might therefore have induced the governor to pay court to the Jews, and it is hardly possible to conceive any way in which he could more effectually do so, than by attempting to destroy so zealous a propagator of Christ's religion as St. Paul.

^a See Mr. Robinson on Acts ix. 2, where this assertion is corroborated by a quotation from Josephus.



SECT. IV.

Length of this first Visit. St. Paul's Employment during it.

IT appears that on the occasion of this first visit to Jerusalem, St. Paul remained there fifteen days, and his employment during his stay was consistent with his Apostolic character, for we find that he was not only credited by Peter and James, with whom he was in frequent conference, but that he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians.—“Why with the Grecians and no other?” says Gamaliel Smith. “The reason is no mystery. Greek was the language of Paul.—Greek, for any thing that appears, was not the language of Peter, or of any other of the Apostles,” p. 143. It is probable that St. Paul might preach to others as well as the Grecians,—be that as it might, a much juster reason than that given by Gamaliel Smith, may be assigned for St. Paul's directing his discourses more particularly on this occasion to the Grecians. The expression used in the original passage^b will apply to such proselytes to Judaism as had resided

^b Ελάλει τε καὶ συνέζητει πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλλημιστάς. Acts ix. 29.

always or mostly in Grecian cities, and consequently, whose common tongue was Greek. Now if we turn to the sixth chapter of *The Acts*^a, we shall find that there was a synagogue, called the synagogue of the Libertines and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia; and that the members of this synagogue were the persons who stirred up the persecution against St. Stephen; and as St. Paul had on that occasion unhappily countenanced them in error, so it was an act of kindness, and peculiarly proper in him now to endeavour to bring them to a knowledge of the truth of Christianity. This I apprehend to have been the reason of St. Paul's addressing himself to the Grecians. St. Paul, it is true, was well skilled in the Greek language, but he appears to have been equally conversant with the Hebrew: but, in reply to Gamaliel Smith's observation, that "it appears Greek was not the language of Peter, or of any other of the Apostles," I would ask him, if they did not understand Greek, how came it to pass that the Apostle St. Peter was able to write his Epistles in the Greek language? How did it happen that the Gospel and other books of the New Testament were written by the Apostles, John, James, and

^a See Mr. Robinson's Notes on Acts vi. 9.

Jude, in the same Greek language? The means by which these Apostles, who were originally unlearned men of Galilee, and whose native tongue was Hebrew, attained to a knowledge of the Greek language, the Christian readily discovers in the second chapter of The Acts of the Apostles. To return to the conduct of St. Paul. It appears that the same prejudices which had prevented the persons who stirred up the persecution against Stephen from believing the Gospel, frustrated St. Paul's meritorious exertions in the same cause, on the present occasion. Instead, therefore, of attempting to refute his arguments, these Grecians sought to take away his life. "And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him." Acts ix. 29.

SECT. V.

Termination of this first Visit.

THE disciples at Jerusalem, like those of Damascus, appear to have appreciated the excellence of St. Paul's character, and to have been equally interested in his safety. Hence it was

that when they found the Grecizing Jews were plotting his destruction, they determined to send him forth to Tarsus^a, his native city, where, among his relations and friends, they might naturally hope he would be safe. It appears that some of the disciples accompanied him on his way as far as Cæsaræa, probably with a view of protecting him against the murderous designs of his and their own adversaries. "And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsaræa, and sent him forth to Tarsus," Acts ix. 29, 30. There are two towns of the name of Cæsaræa mentioned in The Acts; one was a sea-coast town of Palestine, and called Cæsaræa^b, or Cæsaræa Palestinæ,

^a "Tarsus the native place of St. Paul, situated at the north-east corner of the Mediterranean sea, was a town of such note in the times of the Roman Empire, that it was not only made the capital of Cilicia, but was peculiarly honoured with the great privileges of a Roman colony, on which account we read (Acts xxii. 25.) that St. Paul pleaded the privilege of being a free-born Roman. Here were many Jews resident, among whom were the parents of St. Paul. This city possessed an academy, furnished with many eminent men, and hence it was that St. Paul became instructed in liberal knowledge, and so well acquainted with heathen Authors." See *Dr. Wells's Geography of the Old and New Testaments*, Vol. II. Part ii. Chap. 2.

^b The ancient name, as Josephus informs us, was Strato's Tower.

the other, Cæsaræa Philippi, was an inland town, nigh mount Lebanon, on the borders of Syria. Now from what St. Paul says (Gal. i.) about going into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, at a time when he was personally unknown to the churches in Judæa, I apprehend it was not Cæsaræa, the sea-coast town in Palestine, but Cæsaræa Philippi, to which St. Paul was conducted by the Apostles on this occasion. If St. Paul made the journey by land, as he probably would if he went into Syria, Cæsaræa the sea-coast town would have been out of his way, whereas Cæsaræa Philippi would have been in his route. From the manner in which Gamaliel Smith speaks on the subject, one may infer that he had never heard of more than one town of the name, and that his geographical knowledge on the subject, was, to say the least, very defective. "Cæsaræa (he says) was a town upon the coast,—one among those maritime towns, which, whether parts or not of Syria, are in the way between the inland city of Jerusalem, and the coast of Cilicia, with which coast, by a river, Tarsus, marked in the map with the mark of a capital town, appears to communicate." It is very easy for any man to fall into mistakes,

and I should have considered any trifling errors less worthy of remark, had I not frequently observed the self-sufficient manner in which Mr. Gamaliel Smith has chosen to hazard his assertions.*

SECT. VI.

Causes of the Termination of this Visit considered.

WITH regard to St. Paul's departure from Jerusalem, we have two accounts, both by the author of The Acts; but these accounts, though different, are not irreconcilable with each other. The first is contained in the ninth chapter of Acts, and is as follows: "And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians; but they went about to slay him, which, when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsaræa, and sent him forth to Tarsus." St. Paul, in his address to the assem-

* Mr. Gamaliel Smith says, p. 24. Judas Iscariot was an "inhabitant of Iscara." This Iscara never had existence, except in the fertile brain of Mr. Gamaliel Smith. Karioth, or Kerieth, (mentioned by Joshua, chap. xv. ver. 25.) is supposed to have been the place from whence the traitor received his surname.

bled multitude at Jerusalem, (on the occasion of his fifth and last visit to that city), after having related how the Lord had appeared to him on his way to Damascus, and what occurred at the interview with Ananias, proceeds afterwards to say, "And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance, and saw him, (i. e. the Lord), saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me^b." Acts xxii. 17, 18. Now what Paul is here reported as saying, certainly does not contradict what is related as above, in the ninth chapter of Acts. St. Paul, anxious to repair to the utmost of his power, the mischief done to the Christian cause by his former persecutions, and particularly by his conduct in assenting to the death of St. Stephen, by his zealous preaching in the name of Jesus, incurred, (as we have already seen), the enmity of some Grecizing Jews, who were bent on his destruction. Conscious of the purity of his motives, and the importance of that religion to which he had been converted, it is most probable that St. Paul would have continued at Jeru-

^b This passage corroborates St. Paul's account (Gal. chap. i.) concerning the shortness of his stay at his first visit to Jerusalem.

salem, and been fruitlessly sacrificed to the fury of his enemies, before the great objects of his ministry had been accomplished, had not the Lord revealed to him that his further stay at Jerusalem at that time, could answer no good end, as the Jews, (including the Grecian proselytes above-mentioned), would not receive his testimony concerning Jesus. When enjoined, however, by divine command, to depart from Jerusalem, and to go to the Gentiles, St. Paul readily obeyed, and fell in with those arrangements which the disciples made with a view to his safety; and being conducted by them to Cæsaræa, went forth to Tarsus. In recording the circumstance of St. Paul's departure from Jerusalem, in his ninth chapter, there was no necessity for the author of The Acts to mention that that departure took place in consequence of a revelation made from heaven, especially as that would afterwards be seen to be the case from what he should relate in giving a speech of St. Paul's in a subsequent part of the history. It was, however, extremely natural for St. Paul to notice this especial revelation, when pleading before the Jews, that it might appear unto the Jews that he did not, out of caprice or ill-will, leave them and preach to the Gentiles, but in compliance with the divine command.

On the subject of the revelation made to St. Paul, in order to warn him to leave Jerusalem, Mr. Gamaliel Smith says, "A circumstance not altogether clear, nor worth taking much trouble to render it so, is on the occasion of this dialogue, the change made of the supernatural vehicle, from a "vision" into a "trance." Whatsoever, if any is the difference, *they* agree in the one essential point, namely, that it *is* in the power of any man, at any time, *to have had* as many of them as he pleases: hearing and seeing, moreover, in every one of them, whatsoever things it suits his convenience to have heard or seen." p. 150. There is such a want of clearness and grammatical propriety in the above remarks, that it is difficult to say what ideas the author of them intended they should convey. If, however, he meant to say that it is in the power of any man to have such revelations from heaven as were made to St. Paul, I must take the liberty of denying his assertion. A man may *pretend* to have seen "visions," or to have heard or seen any thing in a trance that "it suits his convenience" to declare, but unless his pretensions to supernatural revelations should be supported by the most convincing testimony, it is unlikely they would be believed. The reason why credit is due to what St. Paul is reported to have seen

and heard in visions, is because, in his case, the most powerful evidence is afforded to the miracles he is said to have wrought, as well as to the truth of his pretensions^a.

^a If the reader refers to Parkhurst's Greek and English Lexicon, (Article *Ἐκστασις*), he will see with what *strict propriety* our English Translators have used the word "Trance" in The Acts, ch. x. 10. xi. 5. xxii. 17.

CHAP. V.

ST. PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

SECT. I.

A Dearth having been predicted by Agabus, Collections are made at Antioch for the Brethren in Judæa.

THE actions of corrupt and wicked men, are often rendered subservient by God, to the wisest and most benevolent purposes. Thus, the persecution in which perished the proto-martyr Stephen, and which was intended to give a check to the progress of Christianity, turned out to the furtherance of the Gospel.

ACTS xi. 19, 20, 21.

19. Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians^a, preaching

^a From the manner in which these Grecians are spoken of as contradistinguished from Jews, (ver. 19.) it would seem, that these

the Lord Jesus. 21. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

The very means employed by the enemies of Christianity, to oppose the progress of truth, contributed to diffuse it more extensively. It seems, that the offers of salvation through Christ, were in the first instance to be made to the Jewish people, and, after that, to be extended to all the other nations of the world. Hence it was, that our Lord's ministry was principally confined to Judæa, and that he said, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and hence it was, that the Apostles and first teachers of Christianity addressed themselves at first only to the Jews. It was on this account, that those who went to Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preached the word unto none but Jews only. When, however, the conversion of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, by St. Peter, had convinced all the Apostles, that "to the Gentiles also God had granted

these Grecians were Gentiles, and not Grecizing Jews: and, indeed, we may the more safely make such a supposition, as the Alexandrian MS. authorizes us in reading *Ἕλληνας* instead of *Ἑλληνιστας*, and Doddridge goes so far as to say, "that common sense would require us to adopt this reading (*Ἕλληνας*,) even if it were not supported by the authority of any manuscript at all." Griesbach has received it into the text.

repentance unto life," they no longer confined their preaching to the Jews. At Antioch, the capital of Syria, considerable success attended the preaching of the Gospel among the Grecians; hearing of this success, the Apostles, with a view to give further effect to the labours so happily commenced, sent Barnabas to Antioch.

ACTS xi. 22, 23.

22. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. 23. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

From Antioch, Barnabas, being anxious for St. Paul's assistance, went to Tarsus^a, to seek

^a "We cannot doubt, says Paley, but that the new Apostle had been busied in his ministry, yet of what he did, or what he suffered, during this period, which may include three or four years, the history professes not to deliver any information. As Tarsus was situated upon the sea-coast, and as though Tarsus was his home, yet it is probable he visited from thence many other places, for the purpose of preaching the Gospel, it is not unlikely, that in the course of three or four years, he might undertake many short voyages to neighbouring countries, in the navigating of which, we may be allowed to suppose, that some of those disasters and shipwrecks befel him, to which he refers in the quotation before us, 'thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep.' (2 Cor. xi. 25.) This last clause I am inclined to interpret, of his being obliged
to

him. St. Paul would doubtless be exceedingly rejoiced to learn the success which the Christian religion had obtained at Antioch. To that city he immediately accompanied Barnabas, and it appears, they both continued there a whole year, in the faithful exercise of their ministry. "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." (Acts xi. 25, 26.) While Paul and Barnabas were thus engaged, a prophet, whose name was Agabus, came to Antioch, and foretold a famine which was to prevail throughout the land of Judæa.

I must here advert to one or two misrepresentations, in which Mr. Gamaliel Smith has chosen to indulge, on the subject of this prediction. After saying, that "Agabus had lived at Jerusalem under the spiritual dominion of the Apostles," he presently adds, "The fact for the purpose of predicting, or giving information of, which this useful emissary was, on the present

to take to an open boat, upon the loss of the ship, and his continuing out at sea in that dangerous situation a night and a day. St. Paul is here recounting his sufferings, not relating miracles." *Horæ Paulinæ.*

occasion, sent from Jerusalem to Antioch, was that of signifying, that there should be a great dearth; an inference deduced from it was, that at this same Antioch, for the relief of the brethren at Jerusalem, contributions should be collected and sent to Jerusalem." Now, if we look at the account, we shall find there is not the slightest foundation for asserting, that Agabus lived under the dominion of the Apostles, it does not even appear, that previous to this prediction they knew of the existence of such a person, much less that he was an 'emissary' sent forth by them to Antioch.

ACTS xi. 27—30.

27. And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world^a: which

^a I think Macknight has clearly shewn, that *πάσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην*, (Luke ii. 1.) which answers to the expression *ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην*, here translated "all the world," signifies all the land of Israel. See Macknight's Harmony of the Gospels, Vol. I. Chronological Dissertation "Of the Taxing."

On this subject, I may also quote the opinion of the learned and ingenious Lardner. "The original word (*οἰκουμένη*), does sometimes signify, not the whole world, but a particular country only. It is evident, that the prophecy was understood by the disciples at Antioch, in whose hearing it was delivered, to relate to Judæa only. There is not the least hint of any thought of sending relief to any other place, nor yet of any
hesitation

came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar. 29. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa: 30. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

I think it extremely improbable, had Agabus been an impostor, or "a false prophet," as Gamaliel Smith insinuates, that he would have hazarded a prediction on such a subject as that of a famine, throughout the whole of an extensive province like Judæa. We have, however, not only the authority of St. Luke for saying, that Agabus did foretel the famine above-mentioned, and that it came to pass agreeably to his prediction; but the foregoing account receives corroboration from Josephus, who tells us, that such a dearth occurred in Judæa in

hesitation in taking the resolution here mentioned, for fear their own circumstances might be necessitous," &c. See *Credibility of the Gospel History*, Part I. Book 1. chap. xi. If it be enquired, if the land of Judæa only be meant, what does the term ALL signify; I answer, it was very proper to be added. At the time when St. Luke wrote, and, indeed, from the death of Herod, which happened soon after the nativity of Jesus, the land of Judæa, or of Israel, had suffered a dismembering. Archelaus had to his share Judæa, properly so called, together with Samaria and Idumæa, and the province of Judæa, which was afterwards governed by Roman Procurators, was pretty much of the same extent. But Galilee, Ituræa, and other parts of the land of Israel, had been given to other descendants of Herod the Great. *Credibility of the Gospel History*, Part I. Book II. chap. i.

the reign of Claudius Cæsar, and that writer not only says nothing of the famine having extended to Syria, but he informs us, that vast quantities of corn were sent up to Jerusalem from other countries^a. What is stated, therefore, in The Acts, receives confirmation from what is related by Josephus, and we may safely conclude, that this prophecy of Agabus must have been dictated by the Spirit of God, who took this method of providing for the wants of the Christians, in the approaching dearth. The reason, then, is obvious, why “contributions should be sent from Antioch to Jerusalem, rather than from Jerusalem to Antioch.”

SECT. II.

St. Paul and Barnabas deputed to convey the Contributions to Jerusalem.

THE conduct of the disciples at Antioch, upon hearing the prediction of Agabus, was extremely meritorious, and worthy of that religion in which they had been instructed. They seem to have felt, that “it was more blessed

^a See Joseph. Antiq. Book XX. Chap. ii. Sect. 6. and Chap. v. Sect. 2.

to give than to receive^a," and that wealth is never so well applied, as when it is employed in relieving the distresses, and promoting the happiness of mankind. They immediately determined, according to their ability, to send relief to the brethren at Jerusalem; and the persons they selected, as the bearers of their contributions, were Barnabas and Paul, more just and honourable men than whom it was impossible to have chosen. The account of the manner in which these persons fulfilled their mission is short, but very satisfactory. "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark." Acts xii. 25. I confess, that in the admirable conciseness and simplicity, with which this, and other circumstances are related by the author of *The Acts of the Apostles*, I see strong ground

^a Gamaliel Smith cannot discover, he tells us, where Paul "got these words," which he is represented as using, Acts xx. 35. "In the works of the four received biographers of Jesus, with Cruden and his concordance for guides, all search for them has been fruitless," p. 154.

The Evangelists have informed us, that they neither have related, or intended to relate, all that Jesus did or said. Those words, therefore, might have been well known among the Apostles, to have been uttered by our Lord. But, although the words themselves cannot be found in the Evangelists, the substance of them may be discovered in various places, as Luke vi. 38. and xvi. 9.

for deeming the history authentic. The writer appears to have had no other object in view, than to relate facts, as he believed them to have occurred. Paul and Barnabas, the history says, were sent with the money to the *elders*. Now, this is a title given to the Apostles themselves, as well as to inferior ministers, who were appointed "overseers of the flock of Christ, to feed the church of God." It is highly probable, therefore, that at this, as well as other visits, St. Paul had an interview with such of the Apostles, as were then at Jerusalem. Having rendered a full and satisfactory account of all the contributions entrusted to their care, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch. As to Mr. Gamaliel Smith's observations, about St. Paul's having "a personal project" in view on this occasion, and about "the situation of President of the Christian commonwealth being the prime object of his ambition," they are so utterly unfounded, as to be unworthy of a reply. When Gamaliel Smith attempts to shew, by arguments drawn from St. Paul's conduct and writings, that St. Paul was influenced by personal ambition, I will endeavour to shew the fallacy of his reasoning.

It was about the time of this second visit, that Herod Agrippa commenced a persecution

against the church at Jerusalem. In this persecution James, the brother of John, was slain, and Peter being imprisoned, was miraculously delivered by an angel. The wretched end of the royal persecutor, is mentioned towards the conclusion of the twelfth chapter of The Acts^a.

^a “The fidelity and accuracy of St. Luke, as an historian, are confirmed by Josephus in every particular of this narration of the death of Herod, as to the place, (Cæsaræa,) the set day, the gorgeous dress, the acclamations of the assembly, the peculiar turn of the flattery, the manner in which it was received, and the sudden and critical attack of the disease.”—Paley. See Joseph. Antiq. Book XIX. Chap. viii. Sect. 2.

CHAP. VI.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. I.

St. Paul's third Visit to Jerusalem—Discussions and Debates about Circumcision.

THE occasion of St. Paul's third visit to Jerusalem, as has already been remarked, was a dissention which arose at Antioch, in consequence of certain persons from Judæa having taught the brethren, that "unless they were circumcised, they could not be saved." The question being one of great importance to the peace of the Christian churches, it was determined, that Paul and Barnabas, with certain others, should go up to Jerusalem, to consult with the Apostles and elders on the subject. It appears from the history, (Acts xv. 5.) that when Paul and Barnabas had arrived at Jerusalem, a party of Pharisees, who had been converted to Christianity, taught the necessity not

only of circumcision, but of observing the whole law of Moses, with its burdensome rites and ceremonies.

ACTS xv. 1—5.

1. And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissention and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the Apostles and elders; and they declared all things that God had done with them^a. 5. But there rose up certain of the

^a Gal. i. 18, 19. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem, to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Acts xv. 4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders; and they declared all things that God had done with them.

Gamaliel Smith says, p. 161, there is a contradiction between these two passages, and with his usual habit of invention, he proceeds to assign motives for the contrariety: but he must be a careless reader, indeed, who does not know, that the two passages relate to *two different visits*; that in the Epistle to the Galatians, to Paul's first visit, and that in The Acts, to Paul's third visit to Jerusalem.

sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

On account of the conduct of the Pharisees in question, it was the more necessary, in order to check the growing mischief, that the Apostles and elders should hold a speedy consultation on the subjects respecting which, Paul and Barnabas had been deputed, by the Antioch disciples, to confer with them. Accordingly, a council of the church at Jerusalem was immediately assembled, and the following is the account of what took place on the occasion :

ACTS xv. 6—29.

6. And the Apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us ; 9. And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11. But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. 12. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and

Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 13. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me; 14. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16. After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17. That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day. 22. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23. And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 24. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment; 25. It

seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26. Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29. That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

We see from the above account, that it was determined by a decree of the whole council, not to impose circumcision, or other Jewish rites upon the Gentile converts. The decree, however, enjoined, that the Christian churches in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, should abstain from meats offered to idols, from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. The three first of these prohibitions, could not be said to contain any thing "burdensome;" the fourth had reference to a sin which was not only prohibited in the law of Moses, but which was utterly incompatible with the holiness and purity required by the Gospel. This prohibition too was the more necessary, as it related to a vice, which was not only lightly esteemed by the heathens, but was sometimes even practised as a part of their idolatrous

worship. In the decision adopted by the council, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, prudence was united with wisdom. The Jewish converts to Christianity were numerous in various parts of the world, and having been brought up in a zealous regard for the law of Moses, they could not easily be induced to lay aside their prejudices; so that had the Apostles and elders decreed a *total* neglect of the Jewish law, they would have increased those divisions in the Christian Church, which it was their grand object to heal and prevent. It was, therefore, equally the part of kindness and condescension, thus to pay regard to the prejudices of those weak and scrupulous, though well meaning persons, who were still attached to the Mosaic institutions. On the other hand, the prohibitions enjoined to the Christian converts in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, were of a nature so reasonable and simple, that they could not well object to them. Speaking of the decision of the council, Gamaliel Smith says, "Spite of reason, religion and Jesus, the victory is, in this account, given to James^a." In vain, however, do we look into the account itself for any thing to warrant this conclusion. With as much propriety might we say, that the

^a Page 168.

victory was given to Peter, or to Barnabas and Paul, who pleaded, that circumcision was unnecessary, since great success had attended their ministry among the Gentiles. The fact is, the Apostles were not contending one against another for victory, but they were "striving together for the faith of the Gospel," and the peace of the church: they were consulting how they might best defeat the machinations of those who "troubled" the Christians by "perverting the Gospel of Christ." And truly it must be admitted, that the arguments made use of, and the decree which was adopted, were well calculated to achieve the important objects they had in view. Mr. Gamaliel Smith has fallen into an error by supposing, that the decree was to be universally acted upon; hence he says, "the religion of Jesus spread itself in spite of the decision of the Apostles, the elders, and the whole church," and that "St. Paul wrote against the decree with all his might^b." Now a very little attention to the real state of the case will enable us to see the fallacy of his remarks. The decree was written, not with a design to be universally acted upon, but with a view to the state of the churches in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. And so far from the reli-

^b Page 170.

gion of Jesus having spread itself in those places, in spite of the decree, the decree promoted peace, and the success of the Gospel, and gave the utmost satisfaction to the churches. "So when they," (that is, the persons who were charged with the delivery of the letter and decree) "were dismissed, they came to Antioch, and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the Epistle, which, when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation." Acts xv. 30, 31. And "as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep; that were ordained of the Apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. *And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily*^a." Gamaliel Smith

^a The author of the "Miscellanea Sacra," in an ingenious Essay "on the Apostolical Decree," has an opinion, that appears to be well founded; that there is, in this part of The Acts, a transposition of the text, and that the fourth and fifth verses of the 16th chapter of The Acts, ought to follow the last verse of the 15th chapter: the entire passage will then be as follows: "And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God: and he went through Syria and Cilicia, (to the Christians of which countries the decree was addressed,)" confirming the churches. "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and elders, which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." The 16th chapter then commences with a fresh section of the narrative, "Then came he to Derbe, and Lystra, &c." Barrington's *Miscellanea Sacra*, Vol. II. Essay iv.

says not a word about this last passage, it would not have answered his purpose to mention it; but we may see in this instance, how little his representations are to be depended on. Again, where do we find, in St. Paul's writings, any one word against the decree. So far from writing against it, St. Paul approved it, and was one of those, who delivered it to the churches for whom it was intended, in order that they might "keep," or observe it^b. To those, indeed, to whom the decree did not apply, St. Paul wrote, that the observance of circumcision, and other Jewish rites, was not necessary to salvation.

SECT. II.

*Additional Testimony in support of St. Paul's Character,
and Divine Commission.*

SUPPOSING the document containing the letter and decree to be genuine, and, to use Mr. Gamaliel Smith's own words, "in favour of its genuineness, reasons present themselves^c," what an important body of evidence does it afford

^b φυλασσειν. Acts xvi. 4.

^c Page 171.

to St. Paul's character. How completely does it refute those absurd and senseless calumnies, which represent St. Paul "as not having been credited by the Apostles," but as "quarrelling with, and opposing them," as "preaching not Jesus, but himself," as "having peculiar doctrines of his own, doctrines different from those which were taught by the other Apostles." By universal consent of the church at Jerusalem, are St. Paul's character and pretensions fully recognized: he is styled the "beloved" Paul, (for this endearing epithet, in the original Greek^a, is in the plural number, and therefore applies to Paul, as well as Barnabas.) And with just reason was St. Paul so styled: his zeal, his virtues, and his talents, had acquired him a claim to the title, for he had given every possible proof of the sincerity of his faith, and was "a man who had hazarded his life for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ^b." We need not wonder, that those who were persons of eminence, and who were pillars of the church, such as James, and Peter, and John, should desire the friendship of such a man, or, that they should give him as a pledge of their sincere regard, "the right hand of fellowship."

^a σὺν τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν. Acts xv. 25.

^b Acts xv. 26.

Yet strange to say, Mr. Gamaliel Smith, (notwithstanding all that is related in the foregoing account,) still persists in calling Paul “an unreconciled enemy of the Apostles and their disciples, in a word, of all who preached in the name of Jesus:” nay, he even goes so far as to say, in defiance of the most positive evidence to the contrary, that the countenance given to St. Paul by the Apostles, was “partial, cold, and guarded,” pages 205, 206.

SECT. III.

St. Paul's third Visit to Jerusalem, continued.

AMONG others, who accompanied St. Paul on this third visit to Jerusalem, it appears was Titus, whom being a Grecian, Paul refused to circumcise, on account of those false brethren, who were anxious to scandalize the liberty which Christians enjoyed under the Gospel dispensation. To have submitted, on such an occasion, would have been an unworthy compliance on the part of St. Paul, and might have afforded a dangerous precedent to those, who wanted to impose on the Gentiles the observance of the ceremonial law of Moses. The

question in the case of Titus was, whether circumcision was necessary to be practised by the Gentile converts. St. Paul, therefore, would not yield to those who were desirous of bringing Christians into subjection to the law, but made a resolute and effectual resistance, that the truth of the Gospel might continue. His determination in this respect was perfectly consistent with the decree adopted by the Apostles and elders; nor was his conduct afterwards, in regard to circumcising Timothy, inconsistent with what is above related. St. Paul circumcised Timothy, because his mother Eunice^a was a Jewess^b, and he thereby avoided giving offence to the Jews, without establishing any precedent for the circumcision of the Gentile converts.

ACTS xvi. 1—3.

1. Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2. Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters.

^a 2 Tim. i. 5. Acts xv. 1.

^b Selden says, "Israelitidis prolem, sive a pagano, sive a servo, susceptam generis esse Israelitici." See Selden, de Jur. Nat. lib. V. chap. xv.

On the above, as well as on other occasions, St. Paul proved equally incapable of unworthy compliances on the one hand, and of intolerant bigotry on the other. He did not regard circumcision as necessary to salvation, either for Jewish or Gentile converts; but in things lawful and indifferent, St. Paul yielded to the wishes and prejudices of others; where, however, an important principle was at stake, as in the case of Titus, he would not give way, no, not even for an hour.



CHAP. VII.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. I.

Conference between St. Paul and other Apostles.

GALATIANS, ch. ii. ver. 1—16.

1. “**T**HEN fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles; but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 6. But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person: for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles :) 9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship ; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10. Only they would that we should remember the poor ; the same which I also was forward to do. 11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles : but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him ; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews ? 15. We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

The object of St. Paul, in writing his Epistle to the Galatians, has been already stated ; we have seen, that it was with a view to counteract

the attempts made by a judaizing faction, to undermine his character, and to prevent the Galatian converts from being brought into bondage to the Mosaic institutions. We have also seen what was meant by his preaching privately, and unto them which were of reputation, that Gospel, or doctrine of freedom from the Jewish law, which he preached among the Gentiles; and what sort of characters the false brethren were, to whom Paul would not give place, no, not even for an hour. Consistently with what St. Paul had said in a former part of his Epistle, respecting his not having any need of being instructed in the Gospel, by any of those Apostles, with whom the judaizing faction had invidiously compared him, he proceeds to say, that those very Apostles, had not only imparted to him no new information, but that they had themselves borne testimony to the truth of his Apostleship, by giving him the right hand of fellowship, upon hearing of the success, which had attended his ministry among the Gentiles. As a further proof, that he had not derived his authority or Apostleship, from any of the Apostles, he tells the Galatians, that when Peter was in error, he boldly rebuked him to his face. From the beginning of the sixth, to the end of the twelfth verse of chap. ii. of Galatians, we may consider St. Paul as writing

to the following effect: “As for those, who
“were really men of eminence and value,
“what they were heretofore, it matters not at
“all to me. God accepts not the person of
“any man, but communicates the Gospel to
“whom he pleases, as he has done to me by
“revelation, without their help, for in their
“conference with me, they added nothing to
“me, they taught me nothing new, or that
“Christ had not taught me before; nor had they
“any thing to object against what I preached
“to the Gentiles. But on the contrary, *James,*
“*Peter, and John,* who were of reputation, and
“justly esteemed to be pillars, *perceiving* that
“the Gospel which was to be preached to the
“Gentiles was committed to me, as that which
“was to be preached to the Jews was committed
“to Peter, (for he that had wrought powerfully
“in Peter, to his executing the office of an
“Apostle, had also wrought powerfully in me, in
“my application and Apostleship to the Gentiles).
“*And knowing* the favour that was bestowed
“on me, *gave* me, and Barnabas, the right hand
“of fellowship, that we should preach the Gospel
“to the Gentiles, and they to the children of
“Israel. All that they proposed was, that we
“should remember to make collections among
“the Gentiles, for the poor Christians of Judæa,

“which was a thing that I myself was forward
“to do^a.”

Upon comparing what is said in this second chapter to the Galatians, about “false brethren,” who wanted to have Titus circumcised, with what is stated in the fifteenth chapter of The Acts, respecting the conduct of certain of the Pharisees, there is reason to believe that the conference alluded to, between Paul, James, Peter, and John, took place on the occasion of St. Paul’s third visit to Jerusalem, when Paul and Barnabas went up to consult with the Apostles and elders, on the subject of circumcision. St. Paul’s saying (Gal. ii.) that he went up by revelation, affords no contradiction to such a supposition: for it is highly probable, that St. Paul might be admonished immediately by a revelation from heaven, as to what steps he ought to take in a question that seemed so seriously to affect the Christian Church, yet this circumstance might not have been imparted to St. Luke^b. To me it appears altogether reason-

^a Locke’s paraphrase.

^b If the above explanation is not satisfactory to Mr. Gamaliel Smith, I would have him consider that there exists no actual *necessity* for supposing the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in Acts xv. 2. is the same with that spoken of in Galatians, chap. ii. Paley, I am aware, thought it probable that Paul and Barnabas had taken some journey to Jerusalem, the mention of which is omitted in The Acts, and he observes, that “the omission of such

able to conclude that the visit to Jerusalem, mentioned in the beginning of the second chapter of Galatians, is the same with that related in the fifteenth chapter of The Acts; and that this conference between Paul and other Apostles, was held either immediately before or after the Council, which was assembled at Jerusalem, to consult about the question of circumcision. This conference certainly did not take place at St. Paul's first visit, since on that occasion he saw none of the Apostles, except Peter and James, and there is no ground for supposing it to have taken place, at Paul's second visit to Jerusalem. Before I proceed to consider the nature of the conference, I will here advert to one or two remarks of Mr. Gamaliel Smith, who says^c, "unnamed are the persons, whom Paul calls false brethren: thus much only is said of them, that they came from James. It seems from thence, that it was James from whom they received support, that those scruples of their's, out of which sprung these differences, originated^d." It is scarce necessary

such a journey, would not be unsuitable to the general brevity with which those memoirs are writtten, especially of those parts of St. Paul's history, which took place before the historian joined his society."

^c Page 176.

^d Mr. Gamaliel Smith asks, (p. 176) "Who are *they* to whom in every thing that goes before the twelfth verse of the
second

to say, that the Apostle James is no where represented, as countenancing or supporting "false brethren;" but if we refer to the chapter (Gal. ii.) we shall immediately discover that, in the above observations, Gamaliel Smith has confounded together what took place *at Jerusalem*, (ver. 1—10.) with what occurred upon another occasion at Antioch, ver. 11, &c.

Gamaliel Smith urges as a reason for discrediting what is related in The Acts, respecting Peter's visit to Cornelius, the "miracles and visions included^a," that Paul makes no mention of those circumstances in his Epistle to the Galatians. To this a very ready answer may be given; St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, was not writing a history of The Acts of the Apostles, but a vindication of himself, and the doctrines of the Gospel.

second chapter of Galatians, Paul is alluding?" I will answer his question. The pronoun "they" in the fourth verse, applies evidently to the false brethren there spoken of, but in each verse afterwards, to ver. 10. the word "they" applies to James, Cephas, and John. In proof of this observation, I may remark, that in the Greek Original the copulative conjunction *και* in the ninth verse, unites the participles, *ιδοντες* ver. 7, and *γνοντες* ver. 9, which participles agree with the nominative cases (*viz.* James, Cephas, and John,) to the verb *εδωκαν*. ver. 9.

^a Pages 182, 183.

SECT. II.

*Conference between St. Paul and other Apostles,—
continued.*

WE have seen in the account of the conference mentioned in the preceding Section, that when James, Peter^a, and John, perceived the grace that was given unto Paul, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, and that they determined that Paul and Barnabas should direct their mission to the Gentile world, while they themselves laboured more particularly among the Jews. In this arrangement, so perfectly consistent with those revelations^b, which had declared that St. Paul

^a He is called Cephas^s, (Gal. ii. 9.) which is the Hebrew name for Peter.

^b See Acts ix. 15. xxii. 21. It is evident from St. Paul's own writings, that he considered himself more particularly an Apostle of the Gentiles. Thus he says to the Romans, (ch. xi. 13.) "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles:" and again Rom. xv. 15, 16, "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." There is, however, nothing in Scripture to warrant the idea, that St. Paul's ministry was to be confined solely to Gentiles. The contrary is evident from Acts ix. 15.

should be a minister and a witness of Christ unto the Gentiles, Mr. Gamaliel Smith's inventive mind has discovered a regular "partition treaty," in which the "contracting parties" were Paul and Barnabas on the one part," and James, Peter, and John, on the other, with "financial stipulations," and a division of territory, by which Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, "a minute portion of the world," were reserved to the Apostles, while Paul and Barnabas were allowed to exercise dominion over every other part of it^a. Such are the strange and fanciful conceits, in which Gamaliel Smith, Esq. giving the reins to his imagination, has chosen to indulge. But let us now attend to some of his observations on the subject of "this important treaty" as he terms it.

"In the financial stipulation, which may have been observed in it, may be seen a circumstance, by which an additional degree of credibility, seems to be given to Paul's account of the transaction, at the same time that light is thrown upon the nature of it. Paul alone with his adherents were to address themselves to the Gentiles: but in return for the countenance given to him by Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, he was *to remember the poor*, which is what (says he,) I also was forward to do." Now as to the remembering the poor, what is meant by it at

^a Pages 183—203.

this time of day, was meant by it at that time of day, or it would not have been meant by it at this :—supplying money (need it be added?) for the use of the poor. Whatsoever in relation to this money was the intention of the rulers, whether to retain any part in compensation for their own trouble, or to distribute among the poor the whole of it, without deduction ; in other words, whether profit, as well as patronage, or patronage alone and without profit, was to be the fruit ; human nature must in this instance have ceased to be human nature, if to the men in question (Apostles as they were) the money could have been altogether an object of indifference. According to a statement, to which as above (ch. ii.) though contained in this anonymous history, there seems no reason to refuse credence, community of goods, was a principle acted upon in those days, by the Jewish Christians. The property of each was thrown into one common stock, and the disposal of it was committed to a set of trustees, who it is positively related were confirmed, *and to all appearance, were recommended* by, and continued to act under the influence of the Apostles.”—*Not Paul but Jesus*, p. 183, 184.

I cannot say, I envy that morbid disposition of mind, which is inclined to impute to every action a corrupt and sordid motive. That “man is far gone from original righteousness” and that his conduct is too frequently tainted by selfishness, I readily admit : yet to argue that disinterestedness has never had existence among the children of men, is to pronounce a libel upon humanity. Candour and justice, (not to mention Christian

charity) alike forbid, that in the absence of all proof, corruption should be charged against any man. It is not generous, it is not just that the characters of those who have laboured for the benefit of mankind, should be frittered away by vague phrases, and miserable innuendoes. Let Mr. Gamaliel Smith, then, if he can bring forward proofs that the Apostles were influenced by a desire of profit or of patronage. In vain will he attempt it. Happily the characters of those righteous men, the Apostles, are placed beyond the reach of suspicion or reproach: their whole history mocks the representations of malevolence, and shews that they were as incorruptible as they were kind, and that their proceedings were distinguished by the most disinterested benevolence: they renounced the enjoyments and honors of the world, the endearments of home and of kindred, and braved danger, persecution, and even death, to promote the happiness and salvation of mankind. Nothing this world could give, could compensate such sacrifices, but it was not in this world they looked for their reward; it was not profit, or patronage, or honor, of which they were ambitious, but they were persuaded of the truth of that Gospel which they preached, and that if they suffered for the name of Christ on earth, they would reign with him in glory.

We see in the sixth Chapter of The Acts (as I have already remarked) the care and circumspection which were exercised by the Apostles, in regard to the temporal affairs of the Christian community; but not one word is there in that, or any other, part of Scripture, to warrant the supposition that the Deacons^a, or, as Mr. Gamaliel Smith is pleased to call them, the trustees appointed for the administration of the temporal affairs of the Christians, *were* “*recommended by, or continued to act under the influence of the Apostles.*” But let us hear what Gamaliel Smith himself says on this same subject, in another part of his book. “These Deacons, by whom appointed? by the Apostles? No, but by the whole communion of the Saints, by the whole number of the members of the Christian commonwealth, and in the *way of free election*, on the principle of universal suffrage, p. 202, 203. Thus it is that Mr. Gamaliel Smith asserts any thing that suits his purpose; at one time he contradicts Scripture, at another time he contradicts himself. And shall we on the representations of such a writer, believe St. Paul an “Impostor^b” or the Apostles mercenary or

^a The appositeness of this title has been already shewn, chap. ii. §. 1.

^b “The Apostles,” says Gamaliel Smith, “could not be induced

corrupt. No! common sense, and common justice equally forbid it.

duced to regard Paul in any other light than that of an Impostor," p. 185; and then to make good the assertion he *misapplies* the following passage: "*They* will not receive thy testimony concerning me." Acts xxii. 18. Let the reader refer to the Bible, and he will at once see how grossly Scripture is, in this instance, perverted by Gamaliel Smith, Esq.



CHAP. VIII.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. I.

*Interview between St. Paul and St. Peter at Antioch—
Paul reproves Peter.*

GALATIANS, ch. ii. ver. 11—21.

11. **BUT** when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15. We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

It is not easy to determine whether the interview between St. Paul and St. Peter, mentioned in the above account, took place before or after St. Paul's third visit to Jerusalem. On either supposition, St. Paul's conduct was consistent with the uniform regard which he evinced for the religious liberty of the Gentiles, and the rebuke which he gave to Peter, was justified by the occasion which gave rise to it. Having arrived at Antioch, St. Peter it appears not only required conformity to Jewish rites and ceremonies, but withdrew himself from the society of the Gentile converts, "fearing them which were of the circumcision," and thereby scandalizing the liberty of the Gospel. Encouraged by this vacillating conduct the other Jews likewise dissembled, and even Barnabas was also carried

away by their dissimulation, so dangerous is bad example. "Peter therefore was to be blamed," and St. Paul by openly withstanding him, made an honorable stand for the truth and purity of the Gospel. His reproof of Peter was at once temperate and firm, and the arguments by which he justified it, were calculated to convince Peter of the error of his conduct; and that this rebuke produced no diminution of St. Peter's regard for St. Paul, is evident from the affectionate and commendatory manner in which the former spoke of St. Paul, in an Epistle written subsequent to the above interview. "Account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our *beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you,*" 2 Pet. iii. 15.

SECT. II.

St. Paul and Barnabas separate.

NOT content with having stigmatized St. Paul as an "impostor," our author proceeds to represent him as a despot, a title which, utterly unwarranted as it is by any thing Paul ever did or wrote, seems to accord well enough with

Mr. Gamaliel Smith's conceit, that "Paul was to cast forth his shoe" over the whole heathen world^a. "In no place," says Gamaliel Smith, "can this man exist, but to exercise hostility, or to provoke it: with no man can he hold intercourse, without acting towards him, if not in the character of a despot, in that either of an open and audacious, or in that of a secret adversary, or both." p. 196. In the angry and virulent style of invective, in which Mr. Gamaliel Smith has indulged, we may discern strong presumptive proof of the weakness of that cause which he has unfortunately espoused. Nothing daunted, however, by Mr. Gamaliel Smith's hard words, let us proceed to examine the grounds for his assertions. In regard to the rebuke given by St. Paul to Peter at Antioch, it has already appeared, that Paul was fully justified. We are now about to take a view of what afterwards passed in Antioch, as far as regards Paul, Barnabas, and Silas.

ACTS xv. 35—41.

Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. 36. And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where

^a Page 203.

we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. 37. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 38. *But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.* 39. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other : and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus ; 40. And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

“With regard,” says Gamaliel Smith, “to Paul’s separation from Barnabas, departure from Antioch, and taking Silas for a companion, we have nothing from Paul himself, *nothing from any other source, than as above, The Acts.* In The Acts, though the contention is said to be sharp, *no cause is stated for it other than a difference respecting the choice of a companion*^a.” Now, even had Gamaliel Smith’s assertion been correct, which it is not, the above account would afford ample vindication of St. Paul’s conduct on the occasion. St. Paul felt an affectionate solicitude for the welfare of the churches, which he and Barnabas had planted ; when, therefore, he was about to visit them, for the purpose of confirming them in the faith, it was natural that he should wish to be accompanied by

^a Page 195.

such persons as would be likely, by their zeal and activity, to promote the success of the Gospel. Firmness, and industry, are qualifications at all times requisite for the faithful and effectual discharge of the Christian ministry, and never were they more necessary, than in the times of the Apostles, when the preaching of the Gospel was attended with the most formidable obstacles. In these qualifications, John, (whose surname was Mark), had shewn himself deficient, and either from fear, or from lukewarmness in the Christian cause, he had departed from Barnabas and Paul at Perga in Pamphylia, (Acts xiii. 13.) instead of continuing to share in their labours and their dangers. "No man," said Christ, "having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven." St. Paul, therefore, judged wisely, in not taking with him, as a companion, one who seemed so little qualified, at this time, "to be profitable to him in the ministry." There is, however, an incidental mention of Mark, in one of St. Paul's Epistles^a, which throws additional light on this matter, and shews us what it was that induced Barnabas, who in general acted so well, to form an erroneous judgement on this occasion. This John Mark

^a Coloss. iv. 10.

was a near relative to Barnabas, being his sister's son. We need not doubt, therefore, but that a fond partiality influenced Barnabas to entertain a more favourable opinion of his nephew, than that nephew's actions justified. So far from St. Paul's conduct being blameable, it is entitled to the highest praise. Christianity, by its tendency to inspire it's professors with a most noble and disinterested spirit of benevolence and philanthropy, is admirably calculated to promote virtuous friendships; and we cannot suppose, that he who has told us "to be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; to weep with them that weep, and to rejoice with them that do rejoice^b," was himself a stranger to the most generous sensibilities of the human heart. No! St. Paul must have been susceptible, in the highest degree, of the pure and exquisite delights of friendship, and in Barnabas he had met with one, for whom, from a similarity of pursuits, and a partnership in dangers, he must have felt a more than ordinary regard. St. Paul would not, however, suffer the private feelings of affection to interfere with the faithful discharge of his public duty. He had no corrupt objects to attain, no party feelings to influence

^b Rom. xii. 10, 15.

his judgment. Hence, in looking out for a companion in the ministry, he naturally enquired, who was most worthy of the honourable employment, (for honourable it was, although attended with poverty and danger.) The first consideration with St. Paul always appears to have been, how he might best please, not his friend, but his God. “Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do^a?” was the language of his lips, and the rule of his actions, and nothing could more forcibly evince the singleness of heart, and sincerity of purpose, with which St. Paul devoted himself to the duties of his high calling, than his conduct on the above occasion. Had the author of *The Acts*, (as Mr. Gamaliel Smith would have us believe,) been anxious “to paint every incident in colours favourable to Paul^b,” he might have found, in this circumstance alone, ample ground for panegyric. But St. Paul’s conduct stood in no need of praise, and, therefore, St. Luke has stated facts, leaving the world to draw its inferences; and where prejudice does not pervert the judgement, such inferences will always be favourable to St. Paul^c. But, according to Mr. Gamaliel

^a Acts ix. 6.

^b Page 193.

^c That no lasting animosity subsisted between Paul and Barnabas, may be fairly inferred from the mention which
St. Paul

Smith, the number of Paul's enemies in Antioch, the time he had passed there, being considered, could not have been small. It was, therefore, a matter of prudence for him "to plan and execute a new missionary excursion," and, with this view, "he looked out for a humble companion, and found one in Silas," "of whom," adds Gamaliel Smith, "no character is given, except the being found in company with Paul, in some of the places which Paul visits^{d!!!}" Surely Mr. Gamaliel Smith could not have anticipated, that any one would take the trouble to trace his numerous deviations from truth, or he would not have hazarded such barefaced assertions. This Silas, of whom he speaks so contemptuously, is acknowledged, (Acts xv. 22.) as a "chief man among the brethren," and this acknowledgement is represented as publickly proceeding from the Apostles

St. Paul makes of Barnabas, 1 Cor. ix. 6. A very little reflection would probably convince Barnabas of his error, and he would find in St. Paul, every disposition to forgiveness and reconciliation: and, with regard to Mark, "by St. Paul's severity he was brought," as Nelson observes, "to a sense of his former indifferency in the work of the Gospel, and became so useful a minister of Christ, that he not only deserved to be a companion of St. Paul, but received from him a high testimony of his zeal, that he was 'profitable to him for the ministry.'" 2 Tim. iv. 11.

^d Page 197.

and elders, with the whole church at Jerusalem. We may also infer, from the honourable testimony borne to the conduct of Silas in a subsequent part of the history, that St. Paul could not have chosen a more excellent companion^a. But let us look at the manner of St. Paul's leaving Antioch. Is it like that of a man stealing away from his enemies? No! The history informs us, that the prayers and benedictions of the brethren accompanied his departure. "And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God." Acts xv. 40. Indeed, wherever St. Paul went, his virtues, and the glad tidings of the Gospel which he preached, appear to have acquired for him the respect of the upright and the just. Nay, even his very enemies could not gainsay the excellence of his character. "We find no evil in this man," said the Scribes^b. "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds^c," exclaimed Festus and Agrippa. If, however, in the places which St. Paul visited, there was a corrupt sorcerer, who sought to pervert the right ways of the Lord, if there were a set of unbelieving Jews,

^a This Silas is supposed to be the Sylvanus mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistles to the Thessalonians, and 2 Cor. i. 19.

^b Acts xxiii. 9.

^c Acts xxvi. 31.

leagued with the very dregs of society, or if there were any, who reaped "no small gain" from lies and superstition, such men were sure to be the enemies of St. Paul, of him, who was the friend of man, of righteousness, and truth^d.

^d See Acts xiii. 6, &c. xvii. 5. xvi. 16, &c. xix. 24, &c.

CHAP. IX.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.**His fourth Visit to Jerusalem.*

ACTS xviii. 19—23.

19. **AND** he came to Ephesus, and left them there : but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not ; 21. But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem : but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22. And when he had landed at Cesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

There are several obvious reasons why Mr. Gamaliel Smith should be desirous of regarding the above interesting account as “fictitious.”

1. It proves, that St. Paul was not afraid to shew himself at Jerusalem, or among Jews, which would naturally have been the case, if

he had been engaged in any scheme of imposture, or personal ambition. 2. It evinces the high regard in which St. Paul was held among the Ephesian converts, who must have been well acquainted with his character. 3. It illustrates St. Paul's piety and submission to the will of God. 4. It shews the cordial harmony which subsisted between St. Paul and the church at Jerusalem. 5. It demonstrates the absurdity of Gamaliel Smith's opinion, that St. Paul had formerly fled from Antioch, because "the number of his enemies in that place was not small." 6. It exhibits additional proof of St. Paul's unwearied zeal and diligence in the cause of the Gospel.

With regard to the cause of this fourth visit, it was undertaken with a view to keep the feast, as some learned men have supposed, of the Passover. But whatever feast it was, for the celebration of which he went to Jerusalem, it is plain, that he received on this, as well as on other occasions, proofs of regard and attachment from the church at that place; for he did not depart without saluting that church, which, (as Gamaliel Smith himself declares) was "composed of the Apostles of Jesus, and his and their disciples," p. 93.

CHAP. X.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. I.

His fifth and last Visit to Jerusalem.

NUMEROUS specimens of our Author's inventive faculties, have already been exhibited; under the head of St. Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, (absurdly denominated an "Invasion Visit") fresh instances of his talent for fiction, present themselves. His object being to ridicule and vilify St. Paul, and the writings which record his history, simple truth and the plain detail of facts, would not have answered his purpose. Hence, to give a sort of dramatic effect to his performance, he again has recourse to imagination, and with the versatility of a performer in a modern pantomime, he now transforms St. Paul, whom he before represented as an "impostor" and a "despot," into a monarch, who influenced by "spleen," "vengeance," "ambition," and a "love of money," makes an invasion of Jerusalem^a.

"Sed tamen amoto quæramus seria ludo."

Leaving these romantic fictions of Gamaliel

^a Pages 210, and 216, 217.

Smith, Esq. to those who have a taste for such inventions, let us proceed seriously to consider the *real* motives, by which St. Paul was actuated in making this, his fifth and last visit to Jerusalem.

SECT. II.

Motives of this Visit considered.

IT has been already seen, that in the conference between Paul, Peter, James, and John, it was resolved, that collections should be made for the poor Christians of Judea^b. St. Paul did not prove unmindful of this benevolent arrangement; he not merely preached, but he also practised that part of charity, which consists in alms-deeds: for while he appealed to others, to contribute to the relief of the necessitous, he himself laboured with his hands, that instead of being himself chargeable, he might have to give to them that needed^c. A recommendation of charity, enforced by such a character, could scarce fail to have its due weight, and accordingly

^b Galat. ii.

^c See Acts xx. 33, 34. 1 Thess. ii. 5—9.

we find that contributions were made for the poor of Jerusalem, by the Christian converts of Greece, particularly in Macedonia, and Achaia^a.

^a The following observations will satisfy us, concerning the purity of our Apostle's conduct, in the suspicious business of a pecuniary contribution.

1st, He disclaims the having received any inspired authority for the directions which he is giving: "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love," (2 Cor. viii. 8.) Who that had a sinister purpose to answer, by the recommending of subscriptions, would thus distinguish, and thus lower the credit of his own recommendation?

2dly, Although he asserts the general right of Christian ministers, to a maintenance from their ministry, yet he protests against the making use of this right, in his own person: "even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel; but I have used none of these things, neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me; for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying, that is, my professions of disinterestedness, void," 1 Cor. ix. 14, 15.

3dly, He repeatedly proposes, that there should be associates with himself, in the management of the public bounty; not colleagues of his own appointment, but persons elected for that purpose, by the contributors themselves: "and when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send, to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem; and if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me," (1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4.) And in the second Epistle, what is here proposed, we find actually done, and done for the very purpose of guarding his character against any imputation that might be brought upon it, in the discharge of a pecuniary trust: "and we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel, throughout all the Churches; and not that only, but who was also chosen of the Churches, to travel with us with this grace (gift), which is administered by us, to the glory of the same Lord, and the declaration

To convey these contributions to Jerusalem, was one motive, which induced St. Paul to undertake the present journey. This we learn from certain passages in Epistles, which he wrote just before he made this fifth visit. Thus he says to the Corinthians, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one lay by him in store, according as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me^b.” To the Romans he says, “Now I go unto Jerusalem, to minister unto the saints, for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints, which are at Jerusalem^c. Agreeably to what is stated in the above passages, we find in the history given in The Acts, that when St. Paul was at Ephesus,

declaration of your ready mind; avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance, which is administered by us; providing for things honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men,” that is, “not resting in the consciousness of our own integrity, but in such a subject, careful also to approve our integrity to the public judgement.” (2 Cor. viii. 18—21.) *Paley's Horæ Paulinæ.*

^b 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4.

^c Rom. xv. 25, 26.

subsequent to his fourth visit to Jerusalem, "he sent Timotheus, and Erastus into Macedonia," while "he himself stayed in Asia for a season," Acts xix. 22. St. Paul also himself afterwards visited Macedonia, in his way to Jerusalem; and, indeed, St. Paul, when pleading before Felix the Roman Governor, modestly alludes to the occasion, which gave rise to this his fifth visit to Jerusalem. "Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings," Acts xxiv. 17. Such being the primary object St. Paul had in view, it appears that this journey was undertaken to benefit, not himself, but others.

When once this truly excellent Apostle was persuaded, that any undertaking was agreeable to the will of God, no sense of personal danger; no entreaties of his friends; no fear of his enemies, could divert him from his purpose. Hence, although the Holy Ghost witnessed to Paul, that bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city, none of those things moved him, neither (as he said,) did he count his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, (Acts xx. 23, 24.) We learn from the history, that in his way from Greece to Jerusalem,

Paul determined to sail by Ephesus, because he hasted to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. The reason of this is obvious. Although St. Paul could not, as a Christian, attach any great importance to this religious feast of the Jews, yet he knew that as it was customary, for a vast concourse of people to attend on such solemn occasions, he should have the greater opportunity of testifying of Christ, and the doctrines of Christianity.

SECT. III.

St. Paul's fifth Visit to Jerusalem—continued.

BEFORE we proceed to review the occurrences which took place upon St. Paul's arrival at Jerusalem, it will be interesting to advert to some of the events which happened on his route thither. Having arrived from Greece at Miletus, a town of Ionia, near the sea-coast, and not far from Ephesus, St. Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the Church. St. Paul had personally ministered among the Ephesians for the space of about three years, and his labours among them had been fol-

lowed by the happiest consequences, "so that mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." Acts xix. 20. The elders of Ephesus would, therefore, rejoice at the opportunity afforded them of receiving advice from one whose ministry had been attended with such successful results, while on the other hand, St. Paul would feel equal pleasure in testifying the regard which he entertained towards the Ephesians, and in giving the elders of their church, such instructions as would most conduce to its peace and welfare. When, therefore, the elders had arrived, St. Paul addressed them in a speech which was characterized by strong feeling, ardent piety, and sound instruction; a speech at once calculated to display the deep interest which St. Paul took in the success of the Gospel, and the disinterested and unwearied zeal, with which he had devoted himself to the discharge of his ministry among them^a. And when he had thus spoken, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him; sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship. Acts xx. 36, 37, 38. The scene here described may

^a See Acts xx. 18—35.

be not unaptly compared to that of honourable and dutiful children, taking their last farewell of a beloved parent, about to quit this world and its concerns for ever:—for, in a spiritual point of view, St. Paul had been to these Ephesian elders as a parent. He had instructed them in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.” He had watched over their spiritual interests with paternal anxiety, and whatever advance they had severally made, “in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ^b” their attachment to St. Paul must have “grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength.” The affectionate regard therefore which they evinced on this occasion towards the Apostle, whom they supposed they should behold no more, was not less honourable to themselves, than it must have been gratifying to him, and afforded the best guarantee that the instructions which he gave them would not be disregarded. Having taken leave of the elders at Miletus, St. Paul sailed with his companions unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence to Patara. Here finding a ship that was bound

^b Ephes. iv. 13.

for Phœnicia, a country in Syria, they went on board, and leaving Cyprus on their left, sailed to Tyre. It was at this last-mentioned place, they met with certain disciples, who endeavoured to dissuade St. Paul from making this visit to Jerusalem. "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days, who said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem." Acts xxi. 4. This verse at first appears to contradict what is stated in the 22d verse of the 20th chapter of The Acts, where St. Paul says, in his speech to the Ephesian elders: "And now behold I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, that is, powerfully persuaded by divine influence to undertake the journey." In reply to this apparent difficulty, and Mr. Gamaliel Smith's cavil on the subject, it may be observed, that it had been revealed to these disciples by the Spirit, that St. Paul could not go up to Jerusalem without exposing himself to danger, and therefore from the kindest and most charitable motives, they endeavoured to persuade him to give up the journey^a. When

^a "By the spirit of prophecy, they (i. e. certain disciples at Tyre) foretold Paul's sufferings at Jerusalem which accordingly befel him, and they being ignorant of his undertaking that journey, at God's command, out of commiseration and pity, dissuade St. Paul from going to such a place where they foresaw he

the disciples at Tyre found, however, that St. Paul was bent on going to Jerusalem, they evinced their esteem for him, by conducting him out of the city to the sea-side, where Paul and his companions, having first joined with them in prayer, bade them farewell, and sailing to Ptolemais, they there saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. From Ptolemais they proceeded to Cæsarea^b, which was about twenty-seven miles from Jerusalem. Wherever there were any Christian disciples, St. Paul appears to have held intercourse with them, and to have received the most signal proofs of attachment. At Cæsarea further demonstrations of affection awaited him. While he was at this place, residing with his fellow-travellers at the house of Philip the Evangelist, the prophet Agabus arrived from

he would suffer so much. And this it is said they did through the Spirit, because they had that foreknowledge of all his sufferings from the Spirit, and knowing but in part, being ignorant of that special command St. Paul had had to go to Jerusalem, they did, according to what they knew, dissuade Paul from that journey: but they knowing that their prophecy about St. Paul's sufferings must be fulfilled, and that the Spirit by which they spake could not err or be mistaken, how came they to dissuade St. Paul from going to Jerusalem? It may be answered, that they might think this prediction of his sufferings to be only conditional in case he went to Jerusalem, as David was told that the men of Keilah would deliver him to Saul (1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12,) that is, in case he had trusted himself among them."

Poole's Annotations.

^b Cæsarea Palestina.

Judæa, and “when he was come he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the *Jews* at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the *Gentiles*.”

This prediction we find (Acts xxi. 33, &c.) was strictly accomplished; for, by the instrumentality of *Jews*, Paul was not only bound with two chains, but delivered over to the *Roman authorities*.

ACTS xxi. 8—14.

8. And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 9. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. 10. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus^a. 11. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the

^a A certain prophet. The Greek word *τις*, here translated, a “certain” has various significations, and is sometimes used to import dignity, or eminence. From the original passage, therefore, and from the quarter from whence Agabus is said to come (Judæa,) it is most probable that this was the same Agabus, whom St. Luke had mentioned in a preceding portion of the history, as having eminently distinguished himself by the prediction relative to the famine. Acts xi. 27, 38.

Gentiles. 12. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am not ready to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 14. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

From the above interesting account it is manifest, that the sole cause of the reluctance, which the disciples at Cæsarea felt at St. Paul's undertaking this visit to Jerusalem, arose from an anxious and affectionate solicitude for his safety; and it is equally clear, that St. Paul himself, would not, for a moment, suffer any personal considerations to divert him from the faithful discharge of what he regarded as his duty. St. Paul was perfectly ready, if necessary, to sacrifice his life in defence of the "Truth as it is in Jesus." He knew that "if his earthly house of this tabernacle was dissolved, he should have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens^b." Instead therefore of clinging to this world, as those do who have no hope, no wishes, no treasures beyond it, St. Paul could joyfully anticipate that period, when "mortality should be swallowed up of life^c." In the mean-

^b 2 Cor. v. 1.

^c 2 Cor. v. 4.

time, he felt prepared to do and suffer all that his heavenly Father should allot him. Hence, instead of yielding to the entreaties of his friends, he persevered in his intended visit to Jerusalem, in spite of the dangers that, he was well assured, there awaited him. Certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, it appears, accompanied St. Paul and his companions to Jerusalem, taking with them an old disciple of Cyprus, of the name of Mnason, with whom it was proposed that Paul and his companions should take up their abode during this visit. It is probable, this Mnason might have been converted by St. Paul, when that Apostle went with Barnabas to Cyprus, soon after his second visit to Jerusalem^a. In that case, a feeling of gratitude would naturally make him the more anxious to afford St. Paul every accommodation on the present occasion. Be that as it might, this aged disciple could not but feel honoured and happy, in receiving as a guest one who was so generally, and so justly esteemed, as was St. Paul.

^a Acts xiii. 4.



CHAP. XI.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. I.

His Arrival at Jerusalem, and Reception by the Apostles.

So far were the brethren, at Jerusalem, from viewing St. Paul as an intruder, or an unwelcome visitor, that they received him and his companions with feelings of delight. The conduct of James, and other Apostles and elders, clearly evinced the estimation, in which they held the life and character of St. Paul, since they proposed that certain measures should be adopted, with a view to protect his reputation and his person, against the malevolence of his enemies. Mr. Gamaliel Smith has laboured hard to shew, that on the occasion of this last visit to Jerusalem, Paul had no intercourse with any of the Apostles, except James. A little consideration, however, will shew us how unadvisedly he has written on the subject. The history says, “And

the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present." Acts xxi. 18. Commenting upon this passage, Gamaliel Smith says, "Who were they? the elders, all the elders; of the Apostles not so much as one besides James. Let it not be said, that under the word elders, the Apostles were meant to be included: on other occasions, on which elders are mentioned, (Acts xv. 4, 6, 23.) the Apostles are mentioned as forming a body, distinct as they naturally would be, distinct from these same elders," p. 233. Now, in spite of this bold declaration of Mr. Gamaliel Smith, I am prepared to contend, that by the term elders, the Apostles, where they are not distinctly mentioned, are included. James, and all the elders were present. From the expression used, we may fairly infer that James was one of the elders. John the beloved disciple of Jesus was also an elder, so he himself more than once declares^a. The Apostle Peter also was an elder, as he himself assures us^b. Thus, without further controversy, it appears that three of the most distinguished Apostles, at the least, were present on this occasion, and if those three Apostles were elders, it is highly probable, that other

^a 2 John i. and 3 John i.

^b 1 Pet. v. 1.

of the Apostles were occasionally designated by a like title, and were present at this interview with St. Paul^c.

SECT. II.

St. Paul declares the Things which God wrought among the Gentiles, by his Ministry.

HIGHLY honourable to St. Paul, was the reception which he met with from the Apostles and elders, assembled to greet him on his arrival; and the grateful humility, with which they ascribed to God the glory of St. Paul's success among the Gentiles, while it evinced their perfect dependence on the author of "every good and every perfect gift," clearly shewed that they regarded

^c Mr. Gamaliel Smith, heedless of what is stated in The Acts (xii. 2.) says, "That the number of the legitimately instituted Apostles, had as yet" (namely, at the time of St. Paul's last visit to Jerusalem,) "suffered any diminution, is not, by any of the documents, rendered so much as probable. Neither in the works of Paul himself, nor in that of his historiographer, is any intimation to any such effect to be found," p. 217. Gamaliel Smith also tells us, that St. Luke was one of the eleven Apostles, and an eye-witness of all that he relates, (p. 342.) and that *Aquila*, and *Priscilla*, were *two female* disciples of Paul's!! (p. 370.) See Luke i. 2. and Acts xviii. 2. O Gamaliel Smith! "Where was *your* discernment!"

St. Paul as an Apostle, whose ministry was derived from, and accompanied by the blessing of God. Gamaliel Smith says, St. Paul did not, on this occasion, speak of the miracles which he is reported to have performed, and that "his silence proves them unreal," p. 238. I entirely disagree both with Mr. Gamaliel Smith's assertion, and the inference drawn from it. St. Paul's Apostleship having been so often recognized by the other Apostles, it was by no means requisite, that he should, on his own account, speak of the miracles which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry; but that St. Paul did mention the miracles which he had performed, a very little attention either to the English Translation, or the Greek Original, will clearly shew; and we may safely conclude, that his reason for doing so, arose from a persuasion, (which was justified by the event,) that the Apostles would hear with emotions of delight and satisfaction, the success with which his ministry, accompanied by miracles, had been attended, and glorify God on that account. "And the day following Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared *'particularly,'* what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." The Ori-

ginal Greek is, if possible, still more explicit, and might very correctly be rendered^a, And when he had saluted them, he declared one by one, (that is, particularly) each of those things, which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. Now if he mentioned *each thing*, which God had wrought by his ministry, St. Paul must have mentioned miracles, since the author of The Acts expressly relates, that miracles had been performed by him among the Gentiles; but not only did St. Paul mention his miracles, but he particularized them, in giving an account of them to the Apostles. Besides, the very expression used, is that which is applied by the same writer in other passages of The Acts, when speaking of the performance of miracles. Thus, in Acts xix. 11, it is said, “God” wrought “special miracles by the hands of Paul^b.” But I need not dwell longer on this point, since both the Greek Text, and the English Translation, refute what Mr. Gamaliel Smith asserts about Paul not having mentioned his miracles on this occasion.

^a Καὶ ἀσπασάμενος αὐτοὺς ἐξηγεῖτο καθ’ ἓν, ἕκαστον ὧν ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι διὰ τῆς διακονίας αὐτοῦ. Acts xxi. 19.

^b Δυνάμεις τε οὐ τὰς τύχουσας ἐποίει ὁ Θεὸς διὰ τῶν χειρῶν Παύλου. Acts xix. 11.

CHAP. XII.

ST. PAUL BELIEVED—*continued.*

SECT. I.

*At the Recommendation of the Apostles, St. Paul
complies with certain Jewish Ceremonies.*

WE come now to the discussion of a subject, which Mr. Gamaliel Smith has studiously endeavoured to involve in much verbiage and mystification, namely, the proceedings adopted by St. Paul, at the recommendation of James, and other Apostles and elders. It would be superfluous to point out all the mistakes and misrepresentations of Gamaliel Smith, in reference to this matter: the propriety and integrity of St. Paul's conduct, will be best illustrated, by having recourse to the account given in The Acts of the Apostles, of what occurred on the occasion. The Jews, as I have before remarked^a, were exceedingly tenacious of the Mosaic institutions, and regarding themselves as the chosen people

^a See above, Chap. vi. Sect. 1.

of God, they indulged a supercilious feeling towards the Gentiles. Even such of the Jews as had embraced Christianity, were, for the most part, attached to the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, and as at this time, there were assembled in Jerusalem great multitudes of Jewish converts^b, it was very desirable not to offend the prejudices of those persons, not only lest they should relapse into Judaism, but lest other Jews should be deterred from embracing Christianity. It seems that a report had reached Jerusalem, that St. Paul had taught such of the Jews, as dwelt among the Gentiles, "to forsake Moses," and that they ought not to circumcise their children, or conform to the customs of the Jewish law. There is no ground for believing that Paul had persuaded Jews to violate or neglect the observances of the law; on the contrary, we find, that he not only circumcised Timothy, who was the son of a Jewish woman, but himself complied on various occasions with Jewish customs^c. St. Paul doubtless regarded Jewish ceremonies as ineffectual for the purposes of salvation, and considered that "by the deeds of the law, should no flesh be justified in the sight of God^d," and that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availed any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which work-

^b Acts xxi. 20.

^c See Acts xvi. 3, and xviii. 18.

^d Rom. iii. 20.

ed by love^a," and that men could only "be justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus^b." These doctrines St. Paul had strenuously maintained. Hence he had resisted the attempts of those, who had sought to impose the observance of Mosaic rites, upon the Gentile converts. But in fact, the real cause of the prejudice excited against him, was his having asserted the right of the Gentiles to be admitted to the privileges of Christianity, without conforming to the Jewish law; and hence had originated the reports, that St. Paul had taught the Jews to forsake Moses and the law. With a view therefore to allay the prejudice entertained against St. Paul, and which seemed likely to prove detrimental, not only to that Apostle, but also to the success of the Gospel among the Jews, the Apostles and elders advise St. Paul to comply with certain Jewish ceremonies, and to bear the expenses of four persons, who had taken upon themselves a vow.

ACTS xxi. 19—26.

19. "And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. 20. And when they heard it,

^a Gal. v. 6.

^b Rom. iii. 24.

they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 24. Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 25. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 26. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

Upon comparing what is said above, in the 23d and 24th verses, with the account given of the qualifications of the Nazarites in the Old Testament^c, it appears evident, that the vow which the four men had upon them, was neither more nor less than the vow of a Nazarite.

^c See Numbers vi.

By advising St. Paul to purify himself agreeably to the Mosaic law, and to defray the expenses which these four men would incur, in order to offer the appointed sacrifices, the Apostles suggested to him a course calculated to remove the opinion which the Jews had imbibed concerning him, that he despised the law of Moses^a.

While the line of conduct recommended to St. Paul, seemed well adapted to conciliate the Jews, it demanded no unworthy compromise on the part of that Apostle. It did not require him to renounce the doctrines he had taught the Gentiles, respecting their freedom from the law of Moses, nor did it pledge him to abstain from teaching such doctrines in future. It did not call upon him to forego intercourse with the Gentiles, as St. Peter had done at Antioch; it did not stigmatize or offend the Gentile converts, by affixing to them any imputations of inferiority to the Jews, or afford a precedent for bringing the former into subjection to Jewish ceremonies. St. Paul, therefore, was not only justified in complying with the advice of the

^a It appears from a passage of Josephus, that it was deemed an act of piety among the Jews, to defray for those, who were under the Nazarite vow, the expenses which attended its completion. The custom, as mentioned by him, is remarkable, and in close conformity with this scriptural account. *Paley*. See Joseph. Antiq. Book IV. Chap. iv. Sect. 4.

Apostles, but in so doing, he pursued that course, which was best suited to promote the cause of the Gospel. From the time of his conversion, St. Paul appears to have entertained the most just and enlightened views of Christianity. Bigotry and intolerance, those dire enemies to true religion, formed no part of his character. Hence, he did not offer a needless, and violent opposition to the prejudices of others, in cases where such prejudices would not produce injurious effects. His compliance, on this occasion, so far from being censurable, reflected the highest credit on his understanding, and shewed him to be a skilful and accurate discerner of human nature, and consequently, one who was well qualified to be a preacher of righteousness^b. It was not from any selfish

^b “ We may, (observes a learned and pious writer) expressly allow and indulge those prejudices for a season, which seem to stand against the truth, and endeavour to introduce the truth by degrees, while those prejudices are expressly allowed, till, by degrees, the advanced truth may of itself wear out the prejudice. Thus God himself dealt with his own people the Jews, after the resurrection of Christ; for though, from the following days of Pentecost, when the Gospel was proclaimed and confirmed at Jerusalem, the Jewish ceremonies began to be void and ineffectual for any divine purpose, yet the Jews, who received Christ the Messiah, were permitted to circumcise their children, and to practise many Levitical forms, till that constitution, which then waxed old, should in time vanish away. Where the prejudices of mankind cannot be conquered at once,

feeling, or any unworthy fears, that St. Paul, on this occasion, gave way to the prejudices of others ; for, in making the journey to Jerusalem, notwithstanding the dangers that he knew awaited him, he had shewn himself regardless of every personal consideration, but it was his anxious endeavour, on all occasions, so to act, as “not to give offence in any¹ thing, that his ministry might not be blamed^a.” There were, at this time, in Jerusalem, “many thousands of Jews, who believed, and they were all zealous of the law.” (Acts xxi. 20.) There is every reason to suppose, that a delicate and honourable regard to their feelings and scruples, induced St. Paul to adopt the course suggested by the Apostles. His complaisance was disinterested, and “practised for the benefit of mankind.” In writing to the Corinthians, before the period at which these occurrences at Jerusalem took place, St. Paul had expressly described the grounds of his accommodating conduct, both towards Jews and Gentiles. “Unto

but they will rise up in arms against the evidence of truth, there we must make some allowances, and yield to them for the present, as far as we can safely do it, without real injury to truth ; and if we would have any success in our endeavours to convince the world, we must practise this complaisance for the benefit of mankind.” *Watts on the Improvement of the Mind.*

^a 2 Cor. vi. 3.

the Jews," he says, "I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, *that I might by all means save some*^b." St. Paul, by conforming to the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, not only exercised a sound discretion, but copied the bright example of his divine Lord and Master; for the blessed Jesus, instead of offering any rash and violent opposition to the law, enjoined, on various occasions, an observance of its precepts. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember, that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift^c." To one whom he had healed of leprosy, he said, "Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded^d." So far was our Lord from speaking with disrespect of the law, that his general exhortation to the people

^b 1 Cor. ix. 20—22.

^c Matt. v. 24.

^d Matt. viii. 4.

was, "Whatsoever the Scribes and Pharisees command you to observe, that observe and do^a." On other occasions he said, "What is written in the law? how readest thou^b?" "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, and the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil^c." Christ, indeed, came into the world, not for the purpose of violently overturning the institutions of the Jewish law, but to accomplish its most important ends, to fulfil its types and prophecies, and gradually to supersede it by a more perfect law of grace and truth. St. Paul, therefore, in imitation of his divine Redeemer, carefully abstained from shewing any disrespect to the Mosaic institutions, while, at the same time, like him, he enforced the precepts and superior excellence of the Gospel covenant. Enough, I trust, has been already said, to shew, that Paul, in complying with the course recommended by the Apostles, was actuated by the most honourable and disinterested motives; but, as the best motives, and the most upright conduct, cannot always insure success, so, on this occasion, St. Paul's compliance did not protect him from the machinations of his enemies.

^a Matt. xxiii. 1—3.

^b Luke x. 26.

^c Matt. v. 17.

SECT. II.

*St. Paul's Life endangered by a Tumult excited by
Jews.*

INFLUENCED by the motives already described, St. Paul proceeded, (in compliance with the advice of the Apostles,) with the four men, who had the vow of Nazariteship, to the temple, with a view to purify or separate himself with them, agreeably to the forms prescribed by the law; he appointed a day on which he would (after the time of the vow was completed,) pay the money that was necessary to defray the charges, and buy the victims that were to be offered upon the occasion. Before, however, the time appointed had expired, certain Jews from Asia^a, having seen St. Paul in the temple, stirred up the people against him, and had it not been for the providential interference of Claudius Lysias, the Roman commander, they would, most probably, have accomplished the Apostle's destruction. The pretexts, which the instigators of the tumult made use of, to inflame the passions of the multitude, were, that St. Paul taught all men every where against the people,

^a Probably these were Jews who dwelt at Ephesus, but who were come up to Jerusalem, to observe the feast. See Acts xix. 9—17.

and the law, and the temple, and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and polluted that holy place.

ACTS xxi. 26.

26. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.
 27. And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,
 28. Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people^a, and

^a So far from being, as these Jews represented him, an enemy, St. Paul was the true friend, of the Jewish people. He zealously laboured to promote their best interests, and deeply deplored the infatuation, which caused so many of them to reject the means of salvation. Notwithstanding the ill usage he had frequently received from the Jews, the manner in which he spoke of, and acted towards them, was in the highest degree generous and affectionate. "I say the truth in Christ Jesus; I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish, that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." Rom. ix. 1—4. Again, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Rom. x. 1. But it is the very spirit of Christianity, "to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us," and, perhaps, no man ever partook more largely of the "spirit of Christ," than St. Paul.

the law, and this place : and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

With regard to the three first articles of the charge, which these Asiatic Jews alleged against Paul, they were well calculated to excite hostility against him, tenacious as the people were, even to bigotry, of the Mosaic institutions ; yet so little of truth was there in this part of the accusation, that the orator, or lawyer, Tertullus, (who was afterwards employed by the Jews to accuse Paul before Felix) did not even venture to name charges so vague and utterly unfounded. With regard to that part of the accusation, that related to the pollution of the temple, it arose from a supposition, that St. Paul had taken Trophimus, an Ephesian, into the inner court of the Jews, which it was unlawful for any stranger or foreigner to enter. This part of the charge it was, that Tertullus mainly insisted upon, in his speech, but that it was untrue, may be fairly concluded, from those who first made it, not having appeared to support it by evidence, as they would doubtless have gladly done, had it been in their power. "Certain Jews from Asia," said Paul, when pleading before Felix, "found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult, who ought to have been here before

thee, and object if they had ought against me^a." But the real source of the enmity excited against Paul, is to be found in his having maintained the right of the Gentiles to be admitted, equally with the Jews, to the privileges of the Gospel dispensation, as is evident from what is related in a subsequent part of the history: for when Paul had been delivered by the Roman commander from the infuriated populace, and was permitted to address the multitude from the stairs of the castle^b, they heard him patiently, till he spoke of a vision, which enjoined him to go unto the Gentiles, "for I will send thee far *hence unto the Gentiles.*" Acts xxii. 21. The author of The Acts says, "They gave him audience unto this word, and then lift up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." Acts xxii. 22. And it is clear from what St. Paul said, in his speech before king Agrippa, that he considered his mission to the Gentiles, as the chief cause of the hostility exercised against him by the Jews, and of that tumult in particular, whereby his

^a Acts xxiv. 18, 19.

^b The castle called Antonia, where the Roman garrison was stationed. It was built, or augmented, by Herod the Great, who named it from Marcus Antonius. *Bp. Pearce.*

life had been endangered, at this last visit to Jerusalem^c. After speaking of the occurrences, which happened on his way to Damascus, he proceeds in continuation, to give an account of what the vision declared, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear to thee, delivering thee from the people, and from *the Gentiles* unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me. "Whereupon O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. *For these causes* the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me." Acts xxvi.

^c For the arguments here used, I am indebted to Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, (Chap. viii. No. 1.), where the passages I have quoted, are applied in a similar manner.

SECT. III.

St. Paul vindicated from the Charge of Perjury.

As I shall have occasion, in a different part of my undertaking, to speak of those occurrences, which arose out of the tumult excited against St. Paul, and which terminated in his being sent prisoner to Rome, and there testifying to the truth of Christianity, it is unnecessary in this place, to dwell longer on the subjects which occupy the remainder of the history given in The Acts of the Apostles; but it may be proper before I quit this portion of the enquiry, to notice a few of the mistakes and false reasonings, by which Mr. Gamaliel Smith has attempted to establish, against St. Paul, a charge of "perjuriousness" in consequence of the proceedings in which St. Paul engaged, at the suggestion of the Apostles, during this last visit to Jerusalem. Mr. Gamaliel Smith says, the word which our English official translators, (as he terms them) have rendered "vow" in the twenty-third verse of the twenty-first chapter of The Acts, signifies also "an assertory declaration" and *should have*

been translated "oath^a." This assertion of Gamaliel Smith, I beg leave to deny, and so far from the word vow being a "mistranslation," I contend it was the most proper term which our English translators could have employed. The word^b in the original signifies, 1. A prayer poured forth to God. 2. A religious vow; and in this latter sense, it is not only frequently used in the Septuagint, but also by the prophane writers, as the classical reader will find on reference to Scapula's Greek Lexicon. But Gamaliel Smith was desirous of making out a charge of perjury against St. Paul, and as the true meaning of the word would not have answered this purpose, he finds fault with our English translation, and gives to the Greek word a false and unauthorized interpretation. Again, Gamaliel Smith says, the phrase rendered (Acts xxi. 24.) "purify thyself^c" should have been translated "clear thyself," p. 258. In this instance, also, Gamaliel Smith has the misfortune to be at variance with approved authorities. The learned Parkhurst tells us that the verb which is rendered "purify" in the passage of The Acts in question, signifies in the active voice to "purify" ceremonially, or leuitically, and in the passive and middle voice to be sepa-

^a Page 258.

^b ευχη.

^c αγμισθητι.

rated, or to separate oneself, by a vow of Naziriteship: and this sense of the verb is fully justified by the second and third verses of the sixth chapter of Numbers, in the Septuagint, where the same verb is used in a similar manner^a. But let us take another specimen of Gamaliel Smith's capricious, and at the same time erroneous, criticisms on our English translation of the Bible. Mr. Gamaliel Smith tells us, the participle which is translated in the twenty-sixth verse of the twenty-first chapter of The Acts, by the present tense, "purifying himself," is in the Greek original in the *past* tense^b. This is not strictly true. In the Greek, the word is in what is called by grammarians the first Aorist, a tense of which the very name implies that it is used in reference to an indefinite period of time, and, as in the passage of The Acts just mentioned, the participle applies to an action commenced, but not concluded, our translators have most properly rendered it in English, by the present tense, the only tense of which in

^a ἀγνίζω, also signifies to purify internally and spiritually. In this sense it occurs James iv. 8. 1 Pet. i. 22. and 1 John iii. 3. It is likewise sometimes rendered by the Latin word *expiō*, to expiate or atone, to purge by sacrifice: but any one acquainted with Scripture and with Greek, knows that the verb could not have been used in this sense, in the passage of The Acts (xxi. 24.) much less could it have been translated "clear thyself," as Mr. Gamaliel Smith asserts.

^b ἀγνισθεῖς Acts xxi. 26.

our language the case admitted. That the charge of perjury, alleged by Gamaliel Smith against St. Paul, is without foundation, has, I think, been already shewn; indeed nothing could be more ridiculous than such an accusation, and the mode, by which Gamaliel Smith has attempted to sustain it, is both fallacious and disingenuous. Let us take a specimen. "The evidence," says Gamaliel Smith, "from The Acts "is of the circumstantial kind; the evidence from "the Epistles is direct. To Paul was imputed "as a misdeed, the having recommended the "forsaking of the Mosaic law, recommended, "namely, to such disciples of his, as having "been born and bred under it, were found "by him settled in some Gentile nation. Proof, "Acts xxi. 21. They the Jews which believe "*are informed of thee*, that thou teachest all "the Jews, which are among the Gentiles, to "forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not "to circumcise their children, neither to walk "after the customs." *Not Paul, but Jesus.* p. 255. Now, allowing to circumstantial evidence its due importance, what does the passage just cited prove? not that Paul was guilty of the charge alleged against him, of teaching Jews to forsake the law of Moses, but that such a sinister report prevailed to the Apostle's dis-

advantage in Jerusalem. But what upright judge, what honest unprejudiced man, would, for a moment, condemn a person on the ground of vague surmises, and uncertain rumours?

The very evidence which Gamaliel Smith has brought forward "to warrant," as he tells us, "a verdict of guilty," may be considered as so much circumstantial evidence, that the Apostles regarded the charges, which the Jews brought against St. Paul as utterly unfounded. To this end, I must request the reader attentively to peruse the following passages.

ACTS xxi. 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29.

23. We, (the Apostles and elders) have four men which have a vow on them; 24. Them take and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that. . . . all may know that those things whereof they *were informed* concerning thee *are nothing*, but that *thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law*^a. 26. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be

^a The construction of the original passage is thus stated by Parkhurst. Ὅτι οὐδεν (τουτων) ὦν (for αἱ) κατηχηνται περι σου εστιν. For what reason (adds he) can be given why ὦν is in the genitive case, but that it is drawn into that case by the preceding word τουτων understood? That none of those things which they have heard concerning thee is, or exists, that is, real or true.

offered for every one of them. 27. And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28. Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29. For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, *whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple*^b.

It appears evident from the above account, especially from the 24th verse, that the Apostles and elders considered the charge alleged against St. Paul of teaching Jews to forsake the law as altogether unfounded, nay, that they believed him to be one, who "walked orderly and kept the law," and consequently a very unlikely person to encourage others to contemn it. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to prefer the testimony of Mr. Gamaliel Smith, to that of the Apostles, we cannot hesitate for an instant to pronounce St. Paul innocent.

^b This verse, Gamaliel Smith disingenuously omits, after quoting those which precede it.

SECT. IV.

*St. Paul's Epistles afford no proof that he taught
Jews to contemn the Mosaic Law.*

BUT let us now look at what Mr. Gamaliel Smith calls the direct evidence, evidence from Paul's own pen, of "teachings to forsake Moses." For this purpose, Gamaliel Smith makes the following extracts from Paul's Epistles.

Rom. xiv. 14. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Rom. iii. 20. By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his (God's) sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Rom. iii. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also: 30. Seeing it is one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Rom. x. 9. — If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 12. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him. 13. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved^a.

Rom. xiv. 2. — One believeth that he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 5. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike^b.

^a It is well known that, "Christ crucified" proved in many instances to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. Hence, St. Paul obviates in this chapter, the doubts and scruples of those who distrusted either the power or willingness of Christ to save such as believe, whether Jews or Gentiles. The doctrine which St. Paul teaches in the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th verses of this Chapter has a striking conformity with that of Christ. (Matth. x. 32, 33.) "*Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.*"

^b "Behold, here," says Gamaliel Smith, "the degree of importance attached by Paul to Sabbaths." p. 274. That St. Paul religiously observed the Sabbath is manifest, from what is related of him, in The Acts of the Apostles. See Acts xiii. 14—44. xvii. 2. xviii. 4. With regard to other festival days, appointed by the ceremonial law of Moses, and which the converted Jews thought it right to keep holy, but the observance of which, the Gentiles deemed unnecessary under the Gospel dispensation, St Paul gave advice worthy of a liberal minded conscientious man. "Let every man be fully persuaded

1 Cor. vi. 12. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient, all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it, and them.

1 Cor. viii. 8. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

1 Cor. ix. 19 to 23. 19. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21. To them that are without law, as without law, (*being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,*) that I might gain them that are without law. 22. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

2 Cor. iii. 12 to 17. 12. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. 13. And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: 14. But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 15. But even unto this day, when Moses

in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." The whole of this chapter (Rom xiv.) strongly illustrates the liberality and goodness of St. Paul's heart.

is read, the veil is upon their heart. 16. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

17. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Rom. ii. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. 25. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. 26. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision. 27. And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision, dost transgress the law? 28. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Rom. iii. 1, 2. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

Rom. iv. 9, 10, 11, 12. 9. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised: that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12. And the father of circumcision to them who are

not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.

Rom. xv. 8. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.

1 Cor. vii. 18. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. *Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.* 19. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Now to what, I would ask, do all the foregoing passages amount? do they prove that St. Paul taught the *Jews* which were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses? most assuredly not! they only shew that which St. Paul never attempted to deny, that he considered that the Gentiles were to be freely admitted as well as Jews, to the privileges of the Gospel, that the Gentiles were not under any obligation to observe circumcision, and other ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and that by those ceremonies, neither Jews or Gentiles could obtain justification in the sight of God. But it so happens, that the very Epistle to the Romans, from which Mr. Gamaliel Smith quotes, to prove that St. Paul had taught Jews to forsake Moses, contains decisive counter-evidence, proving St. Paul's deference to the Mosaic law.

Rom. vii. 7, 12, 14, 16. 7. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law. 12. The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 14. For we know that the law is spiritual. 16. I consent unto the law that it is good."

These and similar expressions, clearly shew that however weak and ineffectual St. Paul might regard the law, as to the purposes of salvation, he neither spoke of, or treated it with contempt. The fact was, St. Paul knew and acknowledged that "the law was good if a man used it lawfully^a," and hence, instead of resting in the letter of it, as did the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, condemned by our Lord, St. Paul acted agreeably to its spirit and intention, and always kept in view "the *end of the commandment, which is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned*^b."

^a 1 Tim. i. 8.

^b 1 Tim. i. 5.

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01249 4979

