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DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS

BY JOHN KITTO D.D.

THE APOSTLES AND THE EARLY CHURCH.

Shipwreck of St. Paul

WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND COMPANY EDINBURGH 1858

DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS:

BEING

ORIGINAL READINGS FOR A YEAR,

ON SUBJECTS RELATING TO

SACRED HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, GEOGRAPHY, ANTIQUITIES, AND THEOLOGY.

ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

BY JOHN KITTO, D.D., F.S.A.,
EDITOR OF 'THE PICTORIAL BIBLE,' 'CYCLOPÆDIA OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE,' ETC. ETC.

Evening Series.

THE APOSTLES AND THE EARLY CHURCH.

OCTOBER—DECEMBER.

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PREFACE.

THE closing Volume of the entire series of DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS is now presented to the reader.

The views on which the author has proceeded, and the objects at which he has aimed, have been too often stated to need further explanation. As this, however, is the last opportunity that will be afforded him of alluding to the subject, he may be allowed to say, once for all, that, in the execution of this work, it has been his desire to make the new familiar, and to make the familiar new. This has been pronounced by a great authority[1] to be a worthy object of human endeavour. How far—how very far—the author has fallen short of his own aims and purposes, none can know so well as himself: how far he has reached towards them, must be judged by a public from which, during a long intercourse, he has experienced too much indulgence to have any wish to appeal from its decisions.

In the present Volume the historical intimations contained in the Epistles have been carefully gathered up, and interwoven with the leading matter from the Acts of the Apostles. The conclusions exhibited are founded on a critical reading of the sacred text—the special results of which are, whenever necessary or when peculiarly interesting, explained; but are more frequently embodied in the statement or recital without remark.

Although the author has exercised an independent judgment upon the matters that have come before him in the progress of this work, and has perhaps been favoured by circumstances with some peculiar advantages for the under-

[1] DR JOHNSON, in *Life of Pope*.

taking now completed, he has felt it due to his readers, to the essential usefulness of the work, and to the demands of the time, to avail himself of every source of information to which he could obtain access. The essentially popular plan of the work has not, however, allowed of minute references to books. Some have been given, when particularly required; but the titles of works thus furnished, bear only an exceedingly small proportion to the number actually consulted. It may suffice to state that (apart from Commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles) the works by which he believes himself to have been most materially aided in the present Volume, or to which he has had most frequent occasion to refer, are:—Conybeare and Howson, Life and Epistles of St Paul, 1853; Lewin, Life and Epistles of St Paul, 1850; Benson, History of the First Planting of the Christian Religion, 1750; Cave, Lives of the Apostles; Lorenz, Annales Paullini, 1769; and the Chronological writings of Pearson, Burton, Gresswell, Moldenhauer, Schott, Wieseler, Anger, and Gumpach: Hemsen, Der Apostel Paulus, seine Leben, Wirken und seine Schriften, 1830; Schrader, Der Apostel Paulus, 1830–34; Hessel, Das Leben des Apostel Paulus, 1837; Scharling, De Paulo Apost. ejusque adversariis Comment., 1836; Biscoe, History of the Acts confirmed, 1742; Paley, Horæ Paulinæ, by T. R. Birks, 1850; Tate, Continuous History of St Paul, 1840; Neander, History of the Planting, etc., of the Christian Church—translated by T. E. Ryland, 1851; James Smith of Jordanhill, Esq., Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul, 1848; Maitland, Church in the Catacombs, 1846.

In conclusion, the author trusts it will not be deemed presumptuous to express the hope—the prayer—that a blessing from above may rest upon even this humble endeavour to promote the knowledge of God's word, by rendering the *apprehensive* study of its contents a labour of love to many.

J. K.

LONDON, January 1854.

CONTENTS.

FORTIETH WEEK.

	Page
The Holy Ghost,	9
A New Apostle,	12
Pentecost,	16
The Gift of Tongues,	19
The Beautiful Gate,	23
The Lame Beggar,	27
All Things Common,	33

FORTY-FIRST WEEK.

Ananias and Sapphira,	38
Peter's Shadow,	44
Gamaliel,	48
Theudas and Judas,	52
Murmurs,	57
Stephen,	61
Stoning,	68

FORTY-SECOND WEEK.

The Persecution,	74
Philip the Evangelist,	78
Simon Magus,	83
The Ethiopian Eunuch,	89
Saul of Tarsus,	93
Tarsus,	98
Saul at School,	103

FORTY-THIRD WEEK.

Scripture Reading,	109
Saul at Jerusalem,	112
Saul's Conversion,	116
Incidents of Saul's Conversion,	121
Evidence from Saul's Conversion,	126
Damascus,	131
Saul in Arabia,	138

FORTY-FOURTH WEEK.

	Page
Grace,	144
Saul's Escape from Damascus,	148
Aretas the King,	152
Visit to Jerusalem,	157
Corroborative Circumstances,	161
The Brethren of Jesus,	165
James the Lord's Brother,	169

FORTY-FIFTH WEEK.

The Heart of Flesh,	176
The Rest of the Church,	182
Tabitha,	187
Peter's Vision,	193
Cornelius,	196
The Vision of Cornelius,	201
Conversion of Cornelius,	205

FORTY-SIXTH WEEK.

A Mistake,	209
Christians,	213
Saul in Cilicia,	217
Antioch,	220
Agabus and the Dearth,	227
Herod-Agrippa,	232
James the Brother of John,	238

FORTY-SEVENTH WEEK.

The Praying Church,	242
Peter in Prison,	245
Death of Herod-Agrippa,	249
Bar-Jesus,	254
Sergius Paulus,	260
"Paul,"	264
Mark,	269

FORTY-EIGHTH WEEK.

Persecutions,	274
Antioch in Pisidia,	278
Paul and Barnabas at Lystra,	283
The Council,	290

Page
The Decree, ... 295
The Visit to Jerusalem, ... 299
Peter's Fault, ... 305

FORTY-NINTH WEEK.

Paul's Reproof, ... 310
The Sharp Contention, ... 315
Timothy, ... 319
The Galatians, ... 322
The Thorn in the Flesh, ... 326
Luke, ... 331
Philippi, ... 335

FIFTIETH WEEK.

Lydia, ... 340
The Pythoness, ... 344
The Jailer, ... 350
Thessalonians and Bereans, ... 357
Athens, ... 361
Paul on Mars' Hill, ... 367
Corinth, ... 374

FIFTY-FIRST WEEK.

An Ignorance, ... 381
Ephesus, ... 386
Three Years' Labour, ... 393
Silver Shrines, ... 397
Eutychus, ... 403
Forewarnings, ... 408
The Tower, ... 412

FIFTY-SECOND WEEK.

A Good Conscience, ... 419
Felix, ... 423
King Agrippa, ... 430
The Voyage, ... 435
The Shipwreck, ... 441
Melita to Rome, ... 446
The Catacombs, ... 451

INDEX, ... 461

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

FRONTISPIECE:—St Paul's Bay, Malta.
VIGNETTE:—St Paul's Shipwreck—Study of an Ancient Galley.

Page

St Stephen's Gate at Jerusalem, ... 69
Modern Turkish School, ... 106
Damascus, ... 132
House on Wall at Damascus, ... 152
Coin of the Emperor Caius Caligula, ... 182
Oriental Mode of Prostration, ... 201
Antakiyah, the ancient Antioch, ... 226
Coin of Herod Agrippa, ... 238
Coin of Cyprus, of the Age of Sergius Paulus, . . . 263
Jupiter as the Tutelary Deity of a City, ... 287
Mercury, from an Antique Intaglio, ... 288
Coin of Macedonia Prima, ... 337
Coin of Philippi, ... 337
Turkish Prayer Hut, ... 340
Delphic Tripod, with Priest and Priestess of Apollo, . . . 345
Roman Lictor with Fasces, ... 351
Athens, ... 362
The Acropolis at Athens, ... 364
Corinth, ... 374
Figure of Artemis, the Diana of Ephesus, ... 389
Silver Shrine of Diana, ... 398
Coin of Ephesus, ... 402
Roman Soldier and Prisoner, ... 448
The Tullianum, ... 451
The Catacombs at Rome, ... 453
Monogram with Crown and Palm, ... 460

DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.

Fortieth Week—First Day.

THE HOLY GHOST.—ACTS I. 1-8.

THE last words of our Lord to his apostles, before He ascended into heaven, conveyed a promise that, according to previous intimation, they should speedily be prepared and qualified, by the operation and influence of the Holy Ghost, for the great work that lay before them—"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This promise involved a clear intimation, that the great evangelical message was then to be opened to all nations, and not limited, as it hitherto had been, to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It also clearly implies, that much as they had been with Christ, much as they loved Him, and though they had heard all his words, and seen all his miracles, they were still unqualified for the work to which they had been appointed. Whoever has read the preceding volume of these Readings will be at no loss to apprehend this fact, and will have seen that the state of unfitness still existed, even after the resurrection. The question asked by them of their Master, just before his ascension—"Lord, wilt Thou *at this*

time restore the kingdom to Israel?" shows that the narrow Messianic notions, to which we have so often referred, possessed their minds to the last; and there can be little if any doubt that, even after the ascension, they still looked for Christ's speedy return in great power and glory, to commence his Messianic reign.

If this be the case, the usual view is too narrow of the work which it remained for the Holy Spirit to perform upon our Lord's chosen disciples.

It was the peculiar office of the Holy Ghost, then and since, to qualify the ministers of the gospel for their service, and to render that service effectual.

These qualifications—such qualifications as ministers now need—were required also by the apostles. But under their extended commission to all nations, and as the first proclaimers of the gospel in the fulness of that salvation which it brings, they further needed peculiar and extraordinary qualifications, which should in themselves avouch the truths they declared. Of these qualifications, they had already received from their Lord the gift of working miracles; and the most remarkable of the *extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit, which it remained for them to receive on the day of Pentecost, was that of "tongues" or languages, whereby they were enabled at once to speak and understand any of the various languages of the nations to which their mission was then extended.

But this was not all.

The Holy Spirit was to "guide them into *all* the truth," as their Master before He suffered had promised.[1] He was to teach them *all* things, and bring *all* things to their remembrance that their Lord had said unto them.[2] How crude their views previously were; how imperfectly they realized the full scope of the Divine power for the redemption of a ruined world, we have already seen. They knew less of this subject than is now known even unto babes; but, under the influence and teaching of the Holy Spirit, they would be en-

[1] John xvi. 13. [2] John xiv. 26.

abled to remember much that their Lord had said, which, at the time of utterance, had not made any distinct impression on their minds; and not only to remember, but to *understand*, that which, when delivered, was, as repeatedly intimated in the Gospels, difficult or altogether incomprehensible to them. But when all had been fulfilled—when Christ had suffered, had died, had risen, had ascended into heaven; and when the Holy Ghost came as the promised teacher, comforter, and guide, their understandings were opened; they were enabled to connect the declarations, the acts, and the sufferings of Christ into one harmonious whole, and to apprehend the gospel plan in all its glorious and beautiful completeness, in all its boundless love, in all its fulness and grace. There was thenceforth no uncertainty or obscurity in their views. They knew that they were taught of God; they knew that they had the mind of the Spirit, who had come to dwell in them, and to abide with them for ever. There was now only one strange thing to them, and this was, that they should ever have been so blind in discerning, so slow of heart in believing, all that the prophets had spoken concerning their crucified, risen, and ascended Lord.

These views opened to them a far different career from that which they had formerly contemplated. They had to cast to the winds all their worldly dreams of being princes, lords, rulers of tribes, judges, commanders, officers of high estate; and to become instead the lights of the world, the salt of the earth, the proclaimers of that everlasting gospel—whose blessedness had now become known to themselves—to the nations sitting in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death. And their higher charge of opening the gates of mercy to mankind, these chosen servants of the Lord were enabled, under the enlightenment they had now received, to embrace with joyfulness, and with entire devotedness of heart; although they knew full well that, in the discharge of the obligations it imposed, none of the earthly honours which men covet, and which had formerly seemed glorious in their eyes, awaited them; but that they should be baptized with

the baptism which their Lord was baptized with, and receive in full measure the heritage of scorns, of revilings, of bonds, of scourgings, and of deaths.

But none of these things could move them now. Henceforth they were content to suffer the loss of all things, and to count them but dung, that they might win Christ, and achieve the real honours of his kingdom. Henceforth they cared not, any more than their Lord, to hide their face from shame and spitting. Henceforth they counted not their own life dear unto them, but pursued, with resolute steps and unflinching countenance, the course whose end was in this world DEATH—but glory evermore, and victorious palms, beyond.

Fortieth Week—Second Day.

A NEW APOSTLE.—ACTS I. 15-26.

THE apostles had been instructed by their Lord to remain at Jerusalem until they should receive the Holy Ghost. This promised gift they obtained ten days after the ascension. We are informed that, while waiting for the great blessing which they had been taught to expect, they employed their time chiefly in daily attendance at the temple, where their presence in a body as the known followers of the crucified Jesus, gave evidence to his enemies that his party still lived; and enabled them to satisfy the many inquirers who, doubtless, applied to them for information respecting the extraordinary circumstances of which they had been witnesses, about which there must have been many and contradictory reports current throughout the city. The rest of their time they spent mostly together in prayer and supplication, and godly discourse, in a large upper chamber of the house which some of them occupied. Nor were they alone, it seems, in this religious meeting; for mention is made of about one

hundred and twenty disciples and "the women." Who these women were is not particularly stated, "Mary, the mother of Jesus," being the only one who is named. This is the last notice of her in Scripture; and from it we learn that she had now cast in her lot with the apostles, to the care of one of whom she had been specially entrusted, and she seems to have thenceforth had no other house than his. It is not difficult, however, to apprehend that the other women were pre-eminently those who had been the first witnesses of the Lord's resurrection—Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome the mother of Zebedee's sons; to these we must probably add the women who had come from Galilee—Joanna and Susanna. We are unwilling to suppose that the sisters of Lazarus were not of the number, as their brother doubtless was among the one hundred and twenty male disciples. There were probably others of whose names we are uninformed. Most of those whom we do know were relatives of the apostles or of Jesus himself; and it is not unlikely that some of the women thus generally indicated were wives of the apostles. We know that Peter was married; and that his wife went about with him;[1] and this may have been the case with some of the other apostles, as it was a very rare circumstance among the Jews for a man to pass beyond his youth unmarried.

The only transaction recorded as having taken place during these ten days, is the election of an apostle to fill up the vacancy occasioned by the treachery and death of Judas. It devolved on Peter to explain this matter to the assembled brethren; and he took occasion to recite briefly the circumstances by which the vacancy had been created. The occasion suits us well for the same retrospection.

When Judas perceived the issue of his treachery in the condemnation of Jesus by the Sanhedrim, his conscience was awakened to a sense of the atrocity of the crime he had committed, and, goaded by its sharp stings, his first impulse was to cast from him with abhorrence, as an unclean thing,

[1] Matt. viii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5.

the bright silver which had been the fruit, as it had been in some measure at least the incitement, of his sin. The fact that his first movement, under this mental torture, was to cast away the bribe he had won so dearly, seems to denote very significantly that the possession of this had been his strongest inducement, and so far to corroborate the intimations of the evangelists that covetousness was the sin that ruined him. He hastened to the temple, and throwing down the money before the priests and elders, he cried,—"I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood!" They answered him coldly, that this was his concern, not theirs. But he heeded them not; and, lashed by the scourging vengeance within, he hastened on to a self-inflicted felon's death. "He went and hanged himself;" and with such angry vehemence did he cast himself off, that the rope broke, and he fell down headlong with such force, that he lay dead upon the ground, a foul, crushed, and disfigured mass.

Some have concluded, from this proceeding on the part of Judas, as already intimated, that, when he betrayed his Master, he did not contemplate the possibility of His being condemned to death. It may be so. It is possible that he deceived his own heart with the show of good intentions. But if this is not the impression the evangelists themselves received of his character and conduct—and we think that it is not—the explanation stands on very precarious ground. Nor is his late remorse at all favourable to that impression; for how often, in the annals of crime, we find that a conscience-stricken horror falls upon the criminal on the completion of the deed, which in the distance he had planned deliberately, and contemplated without dismay.

In supplying the deficiency in the number of the apostles caused by the downfall of Judas, Peter stated the qualification to be, that he should be one who had been their constant associate from the commencement of the Lord's ministry until his ascension, so as to be a witness of all his sayings and deeds, and especially of his resurrection. This description seems to indicate that the selection was to be made from

the seventy disciples; for it would obviously appear that our Lord's previous choice of these from the general body of his followers for evangelical service, was in itself a recommendation for the apostleship which could not be advanced for the others. Among the number there were two whose claims from character and standing were so conspicuous, that the apostles felt unable to determine which of them was entitled to preference, or were perhaps divided in their judgment concerning them. One of these was Matthias, and the other Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus. They, therefore, referred the decision to the Lord by the lot, after solemn prayer, that He would be pleased thus to indicate the person whom *He* had chosen. The lot fell upon Matthias, who was thenceforth reckoned among the apostles. It is thought by some that it was not merely the difficulty of choosing between Matthias and Joseph that induced the apostles to resort to the lot, but also an unwillingness to appoint a new apostle upon their own authority; for, seeing that all the others had been specially appointed by Jesus himself, one who had only their appointment might have seemed to occupy an inferior position to them. The text, however, favours the former opinion, seeing that they supplicated the Lord to show "which of these two" He had chosen; indicating that had there been but one, they, in dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, would not have hesitated to proceed to his appointment. Indeed, the ground for this reference to the lot could not have existed, had there not been two persons before them; unless, perhaps, they had in that case proposed to ask whether or not (yea or nay) the Lord approved of the person whom they nominated. Still, the special ground which may have existed for this reference to the lot, is very important; and receives force and illustration from the course taken by St Paul, when he insisted that *his* call to the apostleship was neither of men nor by men, but from the Lord himself, though it came later than that of any of the others. This specialty, also, removes the case from being used as a precedent for reference to the lot.

Of Matthias, thus elected to the apostleship, no further record exists in Scripture; but there is an uncertain tradition that, after remaining some time in Judea, he carried the gospel into the interior of Asia, where he suffered death from the hands of a barbarous people.

Fortieth Week—Third Day

PENTECOST.—ACTS II. 1-3.

We formerly alluded to the Feast of Pentecost, and described it as the feast which, for various reasons, was frequented, more than any other, by Jews from foreign parts.[1] It seems therefore, probable, that the wisdom of God deferred for ten days after the ascension of Christ, the striking manifestation which has rendered this Jewish festival memorable in the annals of the Christian church, in order that it might occur at a time when Jerusalem was filled with strangers, who would bear back the intelligence of it, and of the circumstances connected with it, to their distant homes; thus preparing the way for the subsequent appearance and ministrations of the apostles in those parts. Indeed, many returned home from this feast as converts to the doctrine of Christ, and were thereby ready in all quarters to receive with gladness the preachers of that doctrine, when they came among them. It is impossible to estimate too highly the importance of the occasion, which, through the Jews present at the feast, and afterwards returning to the countries of their sojourning, enabled the seed of the gospel to be sown broad-cast into all lands, yielding in the end abundant and glorious fruits. This, therefore, seems to supply the motive—certainly a most adequate one—for the delay of the ardently expected boon.

The Feast of Pentecost is not known by that name in the

[1] Evening Series—Thirty-First Week, Seventh Day.

Old Testament, being a Greek term for denoting the festival, as being celebrated on the *fiftieth* day from the Feast of Unleavened Bread or the Passover. It was a festival of thanksgiving for the completion of the harvest, which *commenced* immediately after the Passover. It is hence called in the Old Testament the Feast of Harvest; and it was also designated the Feast of Weeks, because it was *seven* weeks, or, according to the Hebrew mode of expression, "a week of weeks," from the first day of the Passover. The primary object of the festival was undoubtedly to render thanks to the Lord for the blessings of the season; and its first fruits were then rendered as an offering to Him in a basket, with the words given in Deut. xxvi. 5-10, beginning, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous;" and after proceeding to recite how they were afflicted in that country, and how the Lord, "with great terribleness," delivered them, ending thus: "He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey: and now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land which Thou, O Lord, hast given me." It was hence also called the Feast of First Fruits.

There is no trace in Scripture that this feast was also designed, at least in part, to commemorate the giving of the law from Mount Sinai; but the impression that it was so designed was in later times entertained, and has acquired especial prominence, since the Jews have been cast forth from their own "good land;" and, in all the countries of their sojourning, have ceased to be an agricultural people, or to take interest in agricultural affairs.

This was one of the three great yearly festivals, which all the adult males were, in strictness, required to attend at the place of the Lord's altar. In most of the passages where it is mentioned, under any of its various names, it might seem to have lasted only for a day; but it was in reality of a week's duration, although the first day alone was distinguished by the religious solemnities described in the books of the law.

When this first day of Pentecost was fully come, the apostles (and probably the other disciples) were assembled at their usual place of meeting, and a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, filled all the house where they were sitting. It does not seem that there was actually any wind, but only the *sound* of it, which sound pervaded all parts of the house. This wind, or sound of wind, was an appropriate emblem of the descent and ingress of the Holy Spirit, which is frequently designated as a breath or a wind. Indeed, in the Old Testament the proper term for spirit is a word which equally denotes these two things. It was therefore of the nature of a sign to them of what was to take place, and which they were expecting, though they knew not the form of the manifestation. Presently divers masses of lambent flame appeared moving through the place, and settled upon their heads in the shape of "tongues of fire" —called tongues, from the general resemblance, both in shape and movement, of a lambent flame to a tongue. Thus was fulfilled the prediction that they should be "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire"—Matt. iii. 11—and the frequency with which the manifestations of the Divine presence are connected in the Old Testament with the appearance of fire, rendered this a peculiarly appropriate and intelligible symbol of the descent upon them of the Divine Spirit. They had thus both audible and visible evidence of the reality of this manifestation—audible in "the *sound* of the rushing mighty wind;" visible in "the tongues of fire." That these tongues of fire, or rather of flame, settled upon each of the subjects of this grace, must have been more satisfactory than a single body of flame diffused over the heads of all; as then the question might have arisen, whether there were not some who had not received it: but all misconception was prevented by every one being marked out individually by the fiery sign. And if there were some present who did not receive this power from on high, it was the more essential that those who did receive it, should be thus manifestly distinguished. On this point there is some difficulty. The

general impression seems to be, that the apostles only were present, and that they alone received the sign, and the gifts which followed. But we have supposed it probable that the one hundred and twenty disciples were also present with the apostles. On that supposition the question arises, Did *they* also receive the Holy Ghost? It would be improper to be very positive on this point; but from the freedom with which we find the apostles at all subsequent periods imparting (as they were authorized to do) the gifts they on this occasion received, to others who were to preach the gospel, it seems that these gifts were not by any means intended to be peculiar to the apostles, and suggests the probability that the disciples then present, were also recipients of the same Divine influence. This supposition appears to be corroborated by the large terms employed in describing the event, and especially by Peter's application to it of the prophecy of Joel —Acts ii. 16–18—the expressions in which are very full and extensive.

Fortieth Week—Fourth Day.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES.—ACTS II. 4-47.

THE "tongues of fire" which rested on the heads of the apostles afforded no vain show. They were a sign, and the fact indicated by that sign was at once known to be a reality by what at the same moment took place within them. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost;" by which language the sacred historian clearly means that they then received, in full measure, through the Spirit of God, all the blessings from on high, which their Master had so often promised to them. They were at once enlightened, instructed, cheered, exalted, inspired. This was so well known to have been expected, and to have been received, that the historian does not dwell upon the fact, but passes on to specify a most extraordinary endowment, which, from its nature, excited great amazement,

and for which expectation had not even in the evangelical circle been distinctly prepared. "They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance:"—that is to say, they began to preach the gospel in languages they had not previously known, but the mastery of which was at once given to them. Much has been said to divest this fact of a miraculous character, under various explanations. But it is all in vain. No other hypothesis will agree with what ensued, or meet all the circumstances of the case. It was *necessary* that these men—belonging to one small nation, and speaking one of the least diffused of tongues—should, in receiving the charge to preach the gospel in every land, know the languages of the nations among whom they were to labour. And it was requisite either that they should be inspired with this knowledge, and thereby be qualified for immediate work; or that they should sit down to learn these languages, and labour at the task many weary years, during which the gospel would remain unpreached. There was therefore every reason to expect, from antecedent probability, that the Lord would in this age of qualifying and attesting miracles, remove such a discouragement from the path of his servants in the discharge of that duty to which they were called. It was the Lord's purpose that his word should at once have free course and be glorified among the nations, through their ministration; and how this was to be brought to pass, while the appointed messengers were shut up in the narrow dumbness of one tongue, and mostly with habits of life unused to the acquisition of languages by the common process, it is hard to see. God had undertaken to supply all their needs, and to afford them every requisite qualification for the work to which they were called. There could be for them no need more urgent, no qualification more important, than that they should be enabled to declare to the nations in their several languages, the wonderful works of God; and therefore, in "the gift of tongues," this need was supplied, this qualification was furnished.

Besides, the reality of this marvellous endowment was at

once, and on the spot, subjected to test and recognition. There were then present at the feast Jews from all parts, to most of whom some foreign tongue was native, just as English, or French, or German, is native to Jews born in England, France, or Germany. The regions from which they principally came are specified, and these extend from the Euxine to the Indian Ocean, and from the Persian Gulf to the Tyrrhenian Sea, and the coast of Africa. Many of these strangers, together with the native Jews, flocked to the spot, as soon as the report of this marvellous transaction had spread throughout the city. To the latter, who knew not what was said, nor recognized the words as those of known languages, all they heard seemed idle babble, and they derided the speakers as men drunk with wine. This imputation was warmly repelled by Peter, who pointed to the earliness of the hour (nine o'clock) as an adequate disproof. And such it was. For, although it is certainly possible for men to get drunk before that hour, morning drunkenness is not anywhere usual, and it found a peculiar prevention in Palestine, owing to the custom of abstaining from meat or drink until that very hour, when the morning sacrifice was offered. But the strangers were astonished, as they recognized their several languages, and said one to another, "Behold, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? we do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

Perceiving their perplexity, the apostles stood up, and Peter, after vindicating them from the slander just indicated, proceeded to explain the real nature of the transaction, and, in a most noble sermon, to declare the great doctrine of Christ crucified for their sins, and raised again for their justification. This was the first evangelical sermon, and it was gloriously acknowledged by the Holy Spirit under whose influence it was delivered; for they that heard it were "pricked in their heart," and cried to the speaker, and to the rest of the apostles, "What shall we do?" The answer was ready: that they should repent and be baptised into the name of the

Lord Jesus for the remission of sins—thereby attesting their belief in Him as their Messiah and Redeemer, and expressing their purpose of heart to become his followers and disciples. With "many other words" than those recorded, did the earnest apostle press these doctrines upon his hearers, urging them to save themselves "from this untoward generation." Moved by the Spirit, hundreds—thousands—received his words into their hearts, and that day there were added to the church by baptism no fewer than three thousand souls. This was a glorious triumph, well suited to encourage the apostles in the labours that lay before them; for it showed them that there was no limit to their holy conquests, seeing that they were to be won, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

It is observable that we have here another instance in which the apostles are recognised as Galileans by their peculiar speech. The fact of such a plainly distinguishable provincial dialect, is not at all strange. Every country affords parallel examples, and perhaps none more so than our own. We know from various authorities that the dialect of Galilee was reckoned very barbarous and corrupt by the people of Judea. It seems to have been characterised by a sort of vague or indistinct utterance of particular letters, and by the mispronunciation, confusion, or suppression of certain other letters, especially the gutturals. Thus the nice ear of a metropolitan Jew was frequently at fault with regard to the meaning of the words; and, out of their own province, the Galileans were often understood to say something very different from what they meant. Many curious instances of this may be collected from the rabbinical writings. Two may suffice. A Galilean woman said, "Whose is this lamb?" but she pronounced the first letter of the word for "lamb" (*immar*) so vaguely, that the hearers could not determine whether she meant a lamb, an ass (*chamor*), wine (*chamar*), or wool (*amar*). Another woman, saying to her neighbour, "Come, I will feed you with milk" (*tai doclic chalaba*), pronounced the last two words in such a manner (*toclic labc*)

that they might be understood as a curse, "Let a lion devour thee."

That so many foreign Jews heard the apostles speak in their own tongues, implies that they severally spoke different tongues; and not that all tongues were at once known to and spoken by every one who received this gift. To each was given the power of speaking those tongues he would have occasion to use in the course of his ministrations; and possibly additional languages were given when the occasion for their use arose. If a stranger should come to a place manifestly unable to speak its language, and suddenly acquire power to preach in that language with ease and force—this would be a sign to the people, almost as signal as the one by which the strangers at Jerusalem were on the present occasion so strongly impressed. That there were differences in this respect is clear, from the declaration of Paul to the Corinthians, that he spoke with tongues more than they all (1 Cor. xiv. 18); and this fact corroborates the view we have stated, for the missionary travels of the apostle to the Gentiles were most extensive, and he had need of many languages, that he might be able to preach the gospel in the various lands to which he went.

Fortieth Week—Fifth Day.

THE BEAUTIFUL GATE.—ACTS III. 1, 2.

THERE were many gates to the temple. Those in the extent of the *outer* wall were surrounded by gate-houses thirty cubits high, and therefore risin; five cubits beyond the wall itself, which was twenty-five cubits high. The breadth of these gate-houses was half the height; and the entrance itself was twenty cubits high, and ten broad. The outer gates were of timber, plated with brass, and led into the spacious court called the Court of the Gentiles. No particular sanc-

tity was attached to this court, and hence Gentiles were freely admitted, mendicants were allowed to beg, and dealers to buy and sell. A person was not considered properly to enter "the temple," in the more definite sense, until he had passed the outer court, and entered the interior enclosure. This also had a wall, with gate-houses and gates, covered, not with brass, but with gold and silver, and leading into the Court of the Women, which (notwithstanding its name) was the common place for worshippers, both men and women. Beyond this, and above it—for it was over an ascending site, crowned by the Holy House—lay the Court of the Priests, wherein the sacred services were celebrated. This had the same wall of general enclosure with the Court of the Gentiles, but was separated from it by a cross wall, in which was one large and ponderous gate, exactly fronting that of the Holy House. This is the general description. It remains to state, that the Holy House itself fronted the east, and that consequently the principal entrance, in each of the successive walls, was on the same side. On that side there was but one gate to each of the courts; and these, standing directly opposite the Holy House, were deemed entitled to particular distinction from the others, in their materials, proportions, and ornaments.

The gate on this side, in the outer enclosure, had, however, the singular distinction of having the least elevated gate-house, the upper part rising not more than six cubits above the entry, whereas the others rose ten cubits; and, instead of being like the others, five cubits higher than the wall, it was no more than one cubit. There was a reason for this. The red heifer directed by the law to be burned "without the camp," in order that "the water of purification" might be prepared from its ashes, was, after the foundation of the temple at Jerusalem, burned without the city, upon the Mount of Olives; and as it was conceived that the blood of the heifer was to be sprinkled before, or in presence of, the temple, this gate was kept low, because if it had been as high as the others, the clear view of the temple by the officiating

priest would have been intercepted. In another respect, however, this gate, though low, was not undistinguished. It was called "the Gate of Shushan," because the city or palace of Shushan (memorable in the history of the Captivity) was represented thereon; or, according to other accounts, was depicted in one of the side chambers of the gate-house. This was, as some say, by order of the Persian government, to keep the Jews in remembrance of their allegiance to the power reigning in Shushan, or, according to others, as a voluntary memorial of the Captivity. The nature of the representation may be guessed, from the mode in which towns and palaces are represented in the Assyrian sculptures, of which some specimens were given in the second volume of our Evening Series.

The corresponding gate, across the Court of the Gentiles, and leading into the Court of the Women, being the front and therefore the most distinguished of the entrances into what was properly regarded as the temple, was considered the most splendid of all the gates. In comparison with the gate Shushan, this gate "was goodly and lofty (as Lightfoot observes), and stood bravely mounted upon the far higher ground;" but was mainly distinguished by its materials. The other gates in this enclosure were of wood plated with gold and silver—the posts and lintels, as we apprehend, of silver, and the valves of gold; but *this* gate was wholly of "Corinthian brass, more precious than gold." So says Josephus; and as it was doubtless of the best kind of Corinthian brass, other ancient writers support his testimony to its extreme costliness. This "Corinthian brass" was of several varieties of different values: one which took a golden hue from the quantity of gold; one of paler hue from the predominance of silver; one wherein the component metals, gold, silver, copper, and tin, were combined in equal proportions. The use of this metal was probably rare in a country which did not tolerate statuary, and hence this gate would attract, from the unusualness, special attention and admiration.

The gate opposite to this, leading directly into the court

where the temple stood, was also of bronze, probably of a different quality, and seemingly not Corinthian bronze; and it seems to have further differed from the other in that it was not *wholly* of bronze, but had its posts and lintel of, or overlaid with, silver. This gate was, however, distinguished from all others by its large proportions, and the immense weight of its valves. It is said that it required the strength of twenty men to close it: and of it this wonder is recorded, that notwithstanding the force thus required to shut it, and being besides firmly bolted and barred, it one night flew open of its own accord. This is declared to have been forty years before the destruction of the city; and as that date coincides with the death of our Lord, it is open to a suggestion that this incident (if correctly reported) took place at the same time that the veil of the temple was rent, and an earthquake shook the city.

Now of these three gates, which was "the Beautiful Gate," mentioned in Acts iii. 2, where we read that "a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple"?

We have no doubt that, judging from the descriptions which we have given, most readers would declare for the second or Corinthian gate, which certainly was regarded by those who lived while the temple was standing, as the most magnificent of them. We ourselves are of this opinion. There is, however, probably from imperfect information respecting these gates, a general impression that the outer gate was meant; founded perhaps on the notion that beggars were not likely to be admitted *into* the temple court, and that it is expressly said that this beggar was placed there to ask alms of those "who entered into the temple." But we have shown that no particular sanctity was attached to the other court, and that the second gate was properly the entrance into the temple. There was nothing to prevent a beggar from being stationed there; and if he could be placed there, he was more likely to choose that position than to remain

at the outer gate. These grounds of doubt cannot therefore stand; and we are at liberty to suppose that the gate really most beautiful was the one distinguished as the Beautiful Gate.

The stationing of beggars, especially maimed beggars, at the gate of the temple, was evidently suggested by the persuasion that the feelings of those who were proceeding to, or had been engaged in, an act of solemn worship, would be more inclined to charity and benevolence than at ordinary times. It is in the same calculation that at the present day the gates of the great continental churches, as well as the approaches to Mohammedan mosques, are thronged with beggars at the hours of prayer. We know also that the Pharisees and others in those days bestowed much alms in the most public places, that their ostentatious charity might "be seen of men;" and the perception of this weakness in a class of people so wealthy, had doubtless considerable influence in causing the beggars of Jerusalem to resort in large numbers to places so public, and through which the Pharisees were so continually passing, as the gates of the temple—these people being more constant than others in their attendance at the sacred courts.

Fortieth Week—Sixth Day.

THE LAME BEGGAR.—ACTS III. 3-IV. 31.

We have already been told in general, that "many signs and wonders were done by the apostles;" and a particular instance is now given, not perhaps as the most remarkable in itself, but as one from which some important consequences resulted. This was the case of that lame man whom we yesterday saw lying at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; a case notable from its undeniably miraculous character, and from the great notoriety which the circumstances involved. If the man's calamity had been the result of casualty or

disease, it might have seemed more easily cured; but it was known to every one that this man had been lame from the womb—that he never had walked. The mere fact that he was constantly "carried" to the station at the gate, shows that he could not in the least degree walk or stand. It was a case past the help of staves or crutches; for the man's limbs lay as dead underneath him. Besides, he was taken "daily" to the most conspicuous of the temple gates, and having been there day after day for years, he must have been one of the persons best known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this tended further to magnify the miracle, when he, whose person and condition were so familiarly known, appeared one afternoon at the hour of public prayer in the temple, "walking, and leaping, and praising God."

The circumstances are simple but exceedingly impressive.

Peter and John were proceeding to the temple at the time of evening prayer, being the ninth hour, or three o'clock, when, as they passed, this lame mendicant asked alms of them, as he did of others. Regarding his disease as incurable, he had long since abandoned the hope of being healed, if he had ever entertained it; and all his thought was now for the sustentation of his miserable existence—although, perhaps, from the habit that use breeds,[1] he had himself ceased to feel the misery of his condition. It was Peter who answered this appeal. Earnestly regarding the poor man, the apostle, to fix his attention, said to him, "Look on us." And doubtless the man looked very eagerly, in the hope of some valuable donation. But Peter, perceiving this, proceeded, in words which conveyed the assurance, that he and his friend would willingly relieve his wants, if in their power; but they also were poor: "Silver and gold have I none." We may easily conceive that the cripple's countenance fell at this announcement, and that he was about to turn from the barren sympathy with disappointment, and perhaps with some little resentment at the seeming mockery of a frustrated hope, when his attention was forcibly recalled by the words: "But

[1] "How use doth breed a habit in a man."—SHAKSPERE.

such as I have, give I thee." Then the apostle had something to give after all; something which is not silver and gold, and yet might be as good. And indeed he had. He had that to bestow which is far more precious than aught that the wealthiest of those who passed by could give—far more rich in joy and blessing than he could have received, had

"Affluent Fortune emptied all her horn"

into his cup. For Peter, in the concentrated energy of faith, cried aloud, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" This, at the first view, might have seemed an absurd command. "For the cripple might have readily objected, Why hast thou not first given me legs and feet? This is a plain mock, when as thou biddest a man without feet to go."[1] But the man understood the words aright; for they were interpreted to him by the tingling life that, as they were uttered, rushed triumphantly into his dead limbs. Peter also took him by the hand and helped him up; and forthwith he followed his deliverers into the temple, "walking, and leaping, and praising God." He had never before set the sole of his foot upon the ground—never before put one foot before another, but now he walks and leaps. Perhaps the phrase may be meant to denote that the man's first effort at the unknown art of progression upon his feet, was a peculiar movement, partly leaping and partly walking, as would, we imagine, have been natural under the circumstances. His first impulse would probably be to move *both* feet at once, and this would be "leaping;" but finding this was wrong, he would try to move his limbs alternately, and this was "walking." The leaping may, however, have been a spontaneous act expressive of his gladness, and calculated to satisfy himself, and to show others, that he was perfectly healed.

The man clung to the apostles, as they made their way to Solomon's Porch; and the people recognising his familiar

[1] Calvin: *Comment. on the Acts*, in Fetherstone's fine old Translation, lately reproduced by the Calvin Translation Society. Edin. 1844.

face, and gathering from his bursts of gratitude and adoring praise what had taken place, ran together from all quarters to that spot. Peter took the opportunity of addressing them. Seeing how earnestly the congregation gazed on those who had performed a work so marvellous, the apostle disclaimed all inherent power or authority to do this deed. It then became necessary to tell by whose authority it had been accomplished—who, indeed, was the real author of the miracle. He told them it was Jesus, "the Holy One and the Just," whom they had lately slain, and the deep guilt of whose death lay at their doors. It was by faith in his name that this man had been made whole. Not, as some imagine, the faith of the man, but the faith which Peter and John had exercised in believing that their Lord would listen to their voice. Seeing that he had made some impression by his first words, the apostle spoke more tenderly, and assured them that there was still room for repentance, and that they might still secure their part in the Divine kingdom which Jesus had established. To Him all the prophets had borne witness, and He still stood ready to bless them—and how? "By turning them from their iniquities."

While he was speaking, or when he had just finished, a report—probably vague and garbled—of these proceedings, and of the words of Peter, was carried to the Sanhedrim, then sitting in a chamber close by. The members of this high court had not expected to hear anything more of Jesus. He was dead; and his humble followers, deprived of their head, seemed little likely to revive his cause, or to give any ground of apprehension. No; they would doubtless disperse to their homes, resume their occupations, and look back upon all the past as a time of visions and dreams.

The council were grievously mistaken! That which they deemed to be ended was only begun.

Probably the quietness of the disciples during the interval from the Crucifixion to the day of Pentecost, confirmed the Sanhedrim in the impression that, through their vigorous treatment of Jesus, they had put an end to a matter that

had once seemed so threatening. The boldness, therefore, with which the apostles came forth, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, to proclaim the crucified Jesus as still the Son of God, still the Messiah, still the Hope of Israel, still the Redeemer of the world; to speak of his death as a murderous and fatal crime, calling for deep repentance; and to declare that He still lived and reigned—all this alarmed the Jewish rulers; and they stood observing with deep solicitude whereunto this matter would grow; fearful of committing any new mistake, but watchful for any ostensible ground of interference.

This the present occasion seemed to supply; and further delay seemed dangerous, as it was evident that a strong impression—somewhat analogous to that caused by the resurrection of Lazarus—had been made upon the minds of the people. They therefore sent to apprehend Peter and John, having probably, to overawe the multitude, obtained the assistance of the Roman guard from the adjacent tower of Antonia.

It was already later than the time when the court of the Sanhedrim usually rose; and the members were not inclined to concede an extra or a prolonged sitting to the case of these poor fishermen. No; they might lie in prison till the next day, lest their examination should interfere with the dinner of these "reverend signiors." In the morning, the two apostles, having had their first taste of the "imprisonments" to which they were afterwards so long and so often subjected, were brought up into the chamber Gazeth, where the Sanhedrim usually held its sittings.

And from this point it is worth while to note that the Sadducees appear as the chief opponents of the apostles and their cause, and not the Pharisees, as in the time of Jesus. The reason appears to be that the apostles gave prominence to the doctrine of the resurrection, as illustrated by the resurrection of their Lord—a doctrine hateful to the Sadducees, but very acceptable to the Pharisees. Hence we shall see the latter often inclining to take the part of the apostles at

times when the Sadducees were most opposed to them. So on this occasion the Pharisees are not named; but the Sadducees are introduced as "being grieved, that they (the apostles) taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

Those who had been strongly impressed even to conviction by the discourse of Peter the day before, were not fewer than five thousand; and of these there was no doubt a large and anxious number present to watch the course of the proceedings. It is not unlikely that the presence of a large audience manifestly favourable to the cause of the accused, may have had considerable influence upon the demeanour of the Sanhedrim.

On being questioned, Peter spoke boldly, to the same purport as in his sermon of the day before. Seeing that the apostles were men of the common class, the learned audience was amazed at the boldness, power, and knowledge with which they spoke; and seeing that the man who had been healed stood by, ready to extol and support by his testimony the true miracle that had been wrought, the court was not anxious to go into any evidence, but, upon conferring together, agreed that "a notable miracle" had undeniably been wrought. It was useless, they admitted, to say anything against it, or to press the inquiry further. The best course must be to smother the matter quietly, and put an end to it, by enjoining Peter and John under serious penalties "not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus." But they found to their amazement that the apostles were not disposed to be liberated under the shackle of any such condition. Both answered, or perhaps Peter for both—"Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For *we cannot* but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

So after some further threatening, Peter and John were liberated unconditionally, the rulers not finding any matter for which they could be punished, and perceiving that the popular feeling was decidedly with the apostles, on account

of the miracle of mercy they had wrought on a poor creature whose miserable condition had, for many long years, been constantly before the public eye. For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been wrought, and we know that he had been a cripple from his birth.

Fortieth Week—Seventh Day.

ALL THINGS COMMON.—ACTS II. 41-47; IV. 32-35.

Before the day of Pentecost, there were at least one hundred and twenty disciples at Jerusalem—that day added three thousand to the church; and many of those who "heard the word," after the miracle at the Beautiful Gate, believed, to the number of about five thousand. This enumeration makes altogether eight thousand one hundred and twenty souls; but, besides these, we are told that intermediately the Lord had "daily added to the church such as should be saved." We may, therefore, safely conclude, that the church at Jerusalem comprised even now not fewer than ten thousand members. This was the primitive church; and it is deeply interesting to inquire into its state, and examine the principles by which it was animated. The record before us, in the Acts of the Apostles, affords some interesting materials for such an inquiry.

From this record it appears that the lives and manners of the new converts, after the great day of Pentecost, assumed a character in perfect conformity with the first principles of the religion into which they had been led; and it were impossible to find a more pleasing picture than that which these intimations give, of all that is amiable and instructive in the religion of Jesus. As charity, in the true sense of the word,—as the love of mankind, founded on the love of God through Christ,—as a more perfect and exalted holiness ani-

mated their whole conduct, we behold nothing but that happy community of sentiment, which is the ornament and perfection of the Christian church. Having been through grace enabled to "save themselves" from the entanglements and dangers of "an untoward generation," they gathered closely around the apostles and early disciples of Him whom they now recognized as their Lord and their Redeemer. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine"—hearing the apostles declare the way of salvation; and manifesting the proper fruits of the Spirit "in fellowship,"—that is, not communion but communication, or a generous and unaffected liberality to all the brethren; "in breaking of bread,"—that is, some have supposed, in the participation of the Lord's Supper, but assuredly, at least in the exercise of an open and unrestrained hospitality; and "in prayer," presenting their united petitions to their Heavenly Father, through Him who alone makes prayer acceptable, and who had promised that, whatever they should ask the Father in his name, He would bestow.

We are next informed, that they who "believed were together, and had all things common." This statement we cannot suppose to mean either that they assembled at one time in one place—for their number was too large for such a meeting, nor that they resigned all particular interest in the property they possessed; for some, we soon afterwards find, sold such possessions as they had, that the proceeds might be disbursed to relieve the wants of the poorer brethren, which they could not have done had they literally had *all things common* before. It is certain, however, that in the time of our Saviour, the apostles held their money in a common stock, Judas being their treasurer. They regarded themselves as a family, having common wants, so that there was no use or reason in their possessing property by themselves. Besides, it was then a matter of convenience among men living and travelling together as they did; for one who at any time had something of his own, would find himself so strongly called to satisfy the wants of others, who at that

time had nothing, that it was obviously the best course for every one to cast into a common stock whatever came to him. This practice was without doubt retained by the apostles so long as they remained together; and to the new converts it might seem a model for their conduct also, at least for the time. Yet, even in our Lord's days, the apostles themselves did not relinquish all their private property. The Galilean fishermen did not sell their most valuable possessions—their boats, but still had them, and used them, after our Lord's resurrection. It appears also that John possessed some property which he retained, and which enabled him to offer a home to the mother of Jesus.[1]

It is clear, indeed, that our Lord did not command the apostles to give up their property into a common stock; and it is equally clear that the apostles themselves did not enjoin it; for we shall presently hear Peter asking one who had dealt perversely in this matter—"While it remained was it not thine own, and after it was sold was it not in thine own power?"[2] It was therefore an entirely voluntary act throughout, and by no means imposed upon the new converts, or exacted from them by the apostles. It was a mode naturally suggested by the exigencies of the infant church, of applying those principles of brotherly love, and of self-suppression, which the Lord himself had constantly inculcated. The need to be met was instant and special, and such as did not exist afterwards among the churches formed among the heathen, where, consequently, we find nothing of this practice mentioned by the apostles in their epistles. On the contrary, the practice there enjoined is, that every one should lay aside week by week "as the Lord had prospered him," some portion of his earnings for the poorer brethren; and it was expected that he would contribute liberally, according to his means, to the collections made on special emergencies. We read of such collections among the churches in Asia Minor and Greece, for "the poor saints at Jerusalem," in which Paul greatly interested himself, and which he urgently enforced. This constant

[1] John xix 27 [2] Acts v 4.

remembrance of the Christians in Judea by those in foreign parts, points to some peculiar cause of destitution which did not in the same degree exist elsewhere. This cause it is not difficult to find. The converts in Judea, by the mere fact of their adhesion to Christ, "suffered the loss of all things," unless they had property independent of the will, favour, or patronage of others—and the proportion of these was few. So deep an offence against Jewish prejudices cast them loose from Jewish charities, and involved loss of business to such as were traders, and dismissal from their employments to such as were workmen and servants, producing a state of destitution which rendered extraordinary exertions necessary on the part of the more prosperous brethren; and how nobly they responded to the demands of this great emergency is shown in the record before us. This is no conjecture. It is illustrated and proved by what we actually see in operation at this day in Jerusalem. In that city some converts from Judaism are made; and no sooner does the fact transpire, than they are instantly cut off from all aid, support, and employment from the Jews there, and would starve but for the missionaries, upon whose resources they are entirely thrown, and who are obliged to sustain them until they can find some means of employment for them, or can raise funds to send them out of the country. Hence great sacrifices are made by those on the spot for their relief, and hence the earnest appeals sent home for help to the converts at Jerusalem. The parallel is as close as it can well be.

The necessity was too great for the richer brethren to be able to meet it from their income merely; and therefore they sold so much personal property or real estate (for *both* are specified) as was requisite to supply the wants of the destitute brethren, and brought the proceeds to the apostles, that they might make distribution "as every man had need." This practice, through the eager liberality of the prosperous converts, soon laid upon the apostles (as we shall by and bye see) a burden too heavy for them to bear. But the picture of cheerful and happy unanimity which prevailed under this

state of things in the infant church, is most cheering to contemplate, while it yet raises a sigh for that day when we may behold the like again. "The multitude of them that believed were of ONE HEART AND OF ONE SOUL. Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." They possessed as not possessing, regarding all as but held in trust for the Lord's service, and being always ready for any claims which that service might make.

Forty-First Week—First Day.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.—ACTS IV. 36-V. 11.

THE sacred writer gives two instances of the practice which we last evening inquired into—one an example, the other a warning.

The first case is that of Joses, a man who, from his excellent qualities and amiable manners, acquired the surname of Barnabas, or "son of consolation." This name, which afterwards became illustrious in the church, was that of a Levite, who, although then residing at Jerusalem, was a native of Cyprus. He sold his estates, and voluntarily bringing to the apostles the produce—which, from the manner in which his conduct is singled out for contrast with that of another less amiable character, was doubtless very considerable—rejoiced to take his share in the general distribution. Although this extent of relinquishment was not obligatory, it was natural that they who thus manifested their love to the brethren, and their devotedness to the service of the church, should appear to great advantage, and be much looked up to in comparison with others who, though not strictly bound to follow such examples, at least had the same motives to disinterestedness and zeal, and yet abstained from this noble and generous course. These, unless prevented by some special and recognisable reasons, must, in such a state of society, have appeared in a strange and anomalous position, and could not fail to be held in less esteem, if only as "weak brethren."

This was felt by a disciple named Ananias, and his feeling was shared by his wife Sapphira—a beautiful name, which the infamy of this woman has unhappily thrown out of use. They loved the praise of men, and were not content to be held

in less consideration than such bright examples as Barnabas. But, on the other hand, they loved money quite as well —even better. They could not bear the idea of giving this price for the good opinion of others to which they aspired. They had not faith to cast their cares upon God, by giving up all they had for Him. They feared they might come to want—they feared to endanger their comforts beyond recall —they wished to retain some security against the contingencies which the future might produce. In one word, they loved money, and had not the heart to part with it altogether. No doubt man and wife talked over this matter night and day, until they fell upon what both regarded as a brilliant conception, an admirable device for securing *both* objects, winning the respect of the church, without altogether abandoning their substance. It was known that they possessed an estate; this they would sell—really sell it. Every one would know the fact; but it would not be known what price they received; for estates were not in those days sold by auction, and it is likely that this estate was away somewhere in the country, and not near Jerusalem. What more easy, therefore, than to give into the hands of the apostles, for the general good, a certain sum as the whole produce of the sale, reserving the rest as a secret treasure for themselves? They would thus enjoy their private comforts and satisfactions, their little securities against the time to come; and while thus pursuing very second-rate conduct, they would win the credit of first-rate sacrifices. What could be easier than this? Nothing. For, "as easy as lying," is a proverb. It was altogether a most precious plot, neat and well compacted. In it nothing was forgotten—except God; every thing was remembered—save Him. Yet, although they could deceive man, they could not deceive Him—and He was to be their Judge in that day when the dark secrets of many hearts shall be revealed to the eyes of men and angels. And even here they would not have realised what they sought; for every day the thought how little they really deserved the credit they had acquired among their fellows, would have

been a sharp sting in the midst of all the enjoyments of their secret wealth.

But there was an eye even on earth that saw it—the eye of Peter. He had been apprised of what took place, by special revelation, perhaps; or it may be, the important faculty of "discerning of spirits," in the exercise of which those who had plenarily received the Holy Ghost, as the apostles had, were able to read the hearts and souls of others, sufficed for the occasion.

When, therefore, Ananias appeared with his money, and tendered it to the apostles as the produce of his estate, generously and liberally offered by him for the wants of the Church, he was confounded by the stern and solemn voice in which Peter addressed him,—"Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own; and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?—THOU HAST NOT LIED UNTO MEN, BUT UNTO GOD." At these words, which disclosed to himself the guilt and enormity of his conduct, and declared it in the presence of others; and, above all, when he was denounced as one who had lied unto God, the wretched man was overwhelmed, and, without uttering a word, fell to the ground—DEAD. This was the finger of God—his finger, whether, as some suppose, by the instant and judicial immolation of the offender by supernatural means; or whether the death was accomplished through natural means—the smiting terrors of conscience, the shame, the horror, the exposure, at the moment when all seemed most secure, giving such a shock to the frame as might quite suffice to produce sudden death. It has often done so in the case of other men. Peter did not sentence him—did not denounce his death. But God undoubtedly designed that he should die, to warn the Church of His abhorrence of hypocrisy; and whether He saw fit to inflict that death by natural or supernatural means is of small consequence.

This awful judgment made a deep and powerful impression

upon those by whom it was witnessed, and indeed upon all who heard of it. When the first agitation had a little subsided, the young men of the congregation who were present, advanced to prepare the body for interment. They wound it up in the usual burying clothes and bandages, which served instead of coffins among the Jews, as is still the case in Eastern nations, to which coffins, as receptacles for the dead, are unknown. They then bore the body away, to deposit it in the cemetery beyond the city. All seems to have been done in an orderly and decent manner, though there must have been the absence of those circumstances which would ensue when a man died "in his nest," and among his relatives—the wailings, the train of mourners, and the like. The Jews usually buried their dead soon after death, as we have more than once seen; but this was quicker than usual—simply because it was desirable to remove the body, and there was an object in not taking it to his own home, even if those then present knew where that was.

As some little time had elapsed in the first instance, for then the body had to be prepared for burial, and taken beyond the city, and as the grave had to be digged when the spot was reached, it was three hours after the death of Ananias before the young men returned from the burial. It was just as they reached the place, that another and a similar judgment upon the wife of Ananias supplied a fresh occasion for their painful services.

Sapphira had then entered quite ignorant of all that had occurred, and prepared, no doubt, to receive her share of the consideration and approval which the Christian generosity of her husband must, she would suppose, have secured. But Peter knew or suspected her complicity in this shameful transaction, if, indeed, the crime had not been originally of her suggestion—tempting, like another Eve, her husband to the sin which ruined both.

Peter immediately spoke to her when she came in, asking her if the land had been sold for "so much?"—naming the sum which Ananias had brought as the entire produce of the

sale. Thus was an opportunity graciously afforded her for repentance—and in many a guilty but more ingenuous heart, the very question of the apostle would have produced instant and tearful confession of the wrong that had been done. Such a moment for reflection as was given to her, has often by God's grace saved a soul. But Sapphira's heart was hardened; and she made herself more guilty than her husband, by deliberately and emphatically confirming the fraud, in answer to a direct question from one of the pillars of the church, and in the presence of that assembly, composed of persons who had come out from the untoward generation of worldly men. Under the fixed eye of the apostle, which was looking into her soul, she blenched not to answer "Yea, for so much"—an assertion which must have given a thrill of dismay and horror to those then present, who had not long before witnessed the doom of her husband. Peter himself dealt with this atrocity even more severely than in the case of the husband. Then, he had declared the crime, but did not denounce the punishment. Now, he not only declares the offence, but judicially sentences the offender. "How is it," he said with painful emotion, "that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" and then raising his voice, yet shrinking to name directly the doom he felt impelled to pronounce, he cried: "Behold the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door—AND SHALL CARRY THEE OUT." Thus in one moment she received the dreadful information of her husband's end and of the instant approach of her own. Immediately she fell to the ground and died, as he had done, and the young men then coming in, took away the body, and buried her beside her husband.

This latter case being most manifestly the act and judgment of God, shows that both were so. It might be said, and could not be disproved, that Ananias died naturally though suddenly, from the nervous shock his system had received. But this was not the case in the latter instance; for Sapphira's death, then and there, was distinctly declared by the apostle—and however possible that the shock might

kill her also—the apostle could not have reckoned upon that as a certainty, and, from the hardihood the woman had evinced, the probabilities were rather against than for this result. The hand of God was *visible* here. It seemed good to Him by this severity of judgment to attest his hatred of worldliness, and double-dyed hypocrisy; to confirm the authority of the apostles, for judgment no less than mercy; and to maintain the purity of the infant church, which would have been seriously endangered had such offences as these passed without most signal punishment.

The effect upon the church of these miracles of judgment was important and solemnizing. "Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."—"And fear, rightly directed, is both proper and salutary to such a creature as man. The fear of God and the dread of sin, as displeasing to God, is the greatest blessing to the soul. This awful example would produce and cherish it. Great fear might well come upon all the disciples when they saw before their eyes the consequence of sin. This consequence we are ready to acknowledge; the difficulty is to feel a due conviction of the truth. We confess that the wages of sin is death. But 'because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.'[1] Here the sentence *was* executed speedily: here that judgment was witnessed, which it is part of our probation to believe—to receive on faith. And the whole event may well incline us to pray with David: 'Keep back thy servant, O Lord, from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.'"[2]

[1] Eccles. viii. 11.

[2] Psalm xix. 13. Archbishop SUMNER'S *Practical Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles.* 1838.

Forty-First Week—Second Day.

PETER'S SHADOW.—ACTS V. 12-26.

THERE is evidence that the death of Ananias and Sapphira attracted much public attention at Jerusalem, but it does not seem to have been formally inquired into by the authorities. In Eastern cities many things pass without notice, which would not fail to be fully investigated in communities such as our own; and in this case perhaps sufficient inquiry had been made, or report rendered to the Jewish rulers, to satisfy them that it offered no ground of charge against the apostles, and that any official notice of its occurrence could only tend to exalt them in the opinion of the people. Indeed, we are told that, as it was, this event inspired the unconverted Jews with great reverence for the apostles; and that while it deterred the worldly-minded or hypocritical pretenders to sanctity from joining the church, the strength and character of which could only have been injured by their presence, it by no means repelled the sincere and well-disposed, who were, indeed, attracted in large numbers by this new evidence of the Divine authority with which the apostles acted, and by the power with which they preached the doctrines of the gospel. Moreover, while they were authorized and enabled to show, that to their hands was in some measure entrusted the sword of God's judgments upon hypocrites, the exercise of mercy and kindness was more congenial to their functions; for their miracles of healing were performed without stint—all who applied—all who were presented to their notice, were forthwith healed. The fame of these wonderful works spreading abroad—and nothing spreads like this—the sick were brought from the neighbouring towns to Jerusalem, to be healed by the apostles. Peter, from his readiness in speaking and in acting, and from his part in the recent transaction, was regarded with especial honour, and being conceived to be peculiarly gifted in this respect, was more looked to than

the other apostles by the multitude; and at length the popular appreciation of the powers with which he was invested rose so high, that the sick were laid upon their beds along the streets he was in the habit of passing, in his daily going to and from the temple, in the expectation that the mere falling of his shadow upon them would be effectual for their cure. As he returned, after he had attended the evening service, and had remained discoursing to the crowding adherents and auditors in Solomon's Porch, which we are informed was the usual place of resort, it was probably towards sunset when he returned, and his lengthened shadow would be thrown far across the way as he passed. It is not expressly stated that those who took this course were healed; and it is clear the circumstance is mentioned in order to show the estimation in which the healing powers of the apostles were held. But the complexion of the statement, taken in connection with the context, seems to make it clear that they were healed. And this impression is confirmed by the analogous instance of the woman who secretly touched the hem of our Lord's garment;[1] and especially by the fact of the application to distant sick of handkerchiefs and aprons, that had been in contact with the person of Paul.[2] In both these instances cures were effected, and therefore probably in this also, as nothing to the contrary is said; and any argument that might be urged, from the improbability that an apparent superstition would be thus sanctioned, is at least as applicable to the "handkerchiefs," in the case of Paul, as to the "shadow," in the case of Peter. It is clear, however, that the power of healing was not in the shadow of Peter, any more than in the vestment of Jesus, or the handkerchiefs of Paul, but in the faith of the patients in the power of the Master and his servants to heal. Nor did Peter and the other apostles sanction any such superstitious notion as that to which we have referred. They constantly professed that they did *not* show forth these mighty deeds by any power of *their own*, but solely through the Divine power of Jesus.

[1] Matt. ix. 21, 22. [2] Acts xix. 12.

The publicity of these proceedings, with the crowds who gathered around the apostles daily in Solomon's Porch, at length led the Jewish rulers to believe that they could no longer neglect with safety, to take some step for the purpose of stemming a movement so rapid and so strong. The step they did take was very decided, for they sent and apprehended the apostles, shutting them up in "the common prison." It is not without meaning that the sacred historian mentions their arrest as especially the act of the Sadducees, with the high-priest, who seems to have been of the same sect. It would appear that at this time the Sadducees had gained a paramount influence in the Sanhedrim, and took this measure without the concurrence of the Pharisees who were members of that assembly. The animosity between these two sects was specially calculated to move the Sadducees to hostility against the apostles, for the Sadducees utterly denied the resurrection of the dead, which the Pharisees as strongly maintained; while the apostles gave great prominence to that doctrine, by insisting that Christ had risen from the dead, thus affording their sanction, and gaining popular adhesion to the tenet most hotly contested between the rival sects. That the Sadducees were able to arrest the apostles, shows that they were at this time in power; and that the apostles upheld a favourite tenet of their opponents, supplied a special inducement for their action in this case, where the Pharisees would probably have been passive; while the leniency of the latter towards the apostles is explained by the same circumstance. Besides, the Sadducees were proverbially severe in action and austere in judgment; and their prominence in the Sanhedrim would alone indicate the probability of active measures being taken against the teachers of the new doctrines.

So the apostles were imprisoned, with a view to their examination the next day before the Sanhedrim. But during the night an angel was sent to open the prison doors, and set them free. What course they might have taken if left to themselves, it is needless to inquire; but they were directed

by the angel to pursue exactly the same course, of publicly teaching in the temple, that they had followed before their imprisonment. We shall not now enter into the circumstances of this event, as a similar deliverance, related with more circumstantiality, will ere long engage our attention.

The next day there was a very full meeting of the council to examine the prisoners, whom the apparitors were sent to fetch from prison. These officers speedily returned, in strange excitement, and related that they had found everything secure in the prison—the doors fastened, and the guards keeping watch before them; but when the door of the chamber into which the apostles had been thrust was thrown open, the place was found to be empty—no prisoners could be found. Before the assembly had recovered from the astonishment which this strange story produced, news was brought that the men cast yesterday into prison were now at large, and were as usual teaching freely and undauntedly in the temple. On hearing this, the captain of the temple himself, with a suitable force, was sent to apprehend them. But from the manifest indications of the popular regard for the apostles, they found it necessary to act with great caution, lest any roughness or violence towards persons so venerated should awaken a commotion in which they might themselves be stoned to death—for the works of the temple, still in progress, caused many stones to be lying about, which had already more than once offered a ready resource for tumultuous resistance to armed men. They therefore behaved gently and civilly, and informed the apostles that the council then sitting desired their presence. The apostles at once obeyed the citation; and the people, seeing that they quietly followed the officers, did not attempt to interfere.

Forty-First Week—Third Day.

GAMALIEL.—ACTS V. 27-42.

When the apostles appeared before the Sanhedrim, the high-priest charged them with contumacy, seeing that they still taught the people "in this name," though they had been strictly forbidden to do so. He recognized the rapid progress of their doctrine among the people—"Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine;" and accused them as designing to inflame the public mind against the rulers, by teaching that they had shed innocent blood. His words were, "Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Now, the apostles did undoubtedly believe that their Lord had been virtually murdered by this council, which had thereby made itself liable to the judgments of God. This they again and again declared in the face of the Sanhedrim itself. It is indeed before that body that they chiefly urge it; but there is no evidence that they dwelt much upon it in their public preaching—and then, less for the purpose of bringing the council into discredit, than of maintaining the honour of their Lord's character, by showing that He was innocently slain; and that the nation, which had accepted this act of its rulers, had incurred deep guilt on that account.

It is well to take notice how curiously the high-priest evades using the name of Jesus, obscurely indicating Him by the phrases, "This name"—"This man." This contemptuous mode of designating our Lord, as "that man," or "this man," of which we have here the first instance, continued to be in use among the Jews. Many examples of it might be adduced from their writings. So a "heretic" is defined as "one that confesses *that man;*" and "heretics" as those who "are the disciples of *that man* who turned to evil the words of the living God"—Jesus being meant.

In answer to the charge of contumacy, Peter, who as usual took upon him to answer for all the apostles, by simply repeating his former declaration, "We must obey God rather than man," reminded the council that he had not undertaken to observe the previous injunction; and that, indeed, he had then, as now, declared, that he acted under obligations which must overrule any commands of theirs. He then proceeded with unshaken countenance, before that assembly which had condemned his Lord to death, to proclaim that "this man" —that Jesus whom they had crucified—had risen from the dead, and was now exalted at God's right hand a Prince and a Saviour; and he claimed for himself and his companions inspiration by the Spirit of God.

On hearing this defence, the most vehement wrath and indignation seized the hearts of the council, or at least the Sadducean part of it; and they insisted that it was needful these men should be put to death. It was usual to send prisoners out while the council deliberated on their sentences; but in their heated eagerness, this form was now overlooked, until one calm voice was heard directing the removal of the apostles. The voice was that of Gamaliel, the real president of the Sanhedrim, although, in right of his office, the chair was taken by the high-priest, when, as on the present occasion, he happened to be present. Gamaliel was a Pharisee, and, as such, disposed, on the grounds yesterday indicated, to lenient measures with the apostles; and even without the bias derived from antagonism to the Sadducees, he was naturally a man of mild character and moderate views. His eminent position in the council and in the nation, and his high character, together with the fact that his decision was to be regarded as carrying with it that of the powerful party to which he belonged, caused him to be heard with respectful attention, and gave weight to his opinion, even in an assembly where the Sadducean influence was so strong His counsel was admirably framed to serve the apostles, without committing him decidedly to any favourable opinion of their cause. He urged caution and forbearance, and enforced his advice

by examples from the past. Measures of forcible repression would only fan the popular excitement into a higher flame; whereas, if left to its course, that excitement would die out; or, if it rose to destructive violence, would be put out by the sword of the Romans, being, either way, extinguished like other great excitements, which he instanced, and which had at first awakened much expectation in some, and alarm in others. If the cause which the apostles upheld were destitute of vital strength, if it were not of God, it would assuredly come to nothing, whatever stir it made at the moment; but if there were any good in it, it would prosper, in spite of all their endeavours to put it down; and they would then incur the guilt of having endeavoured to lay a curse where God had laid a blessing.

Some have thought, from his admitting the supposition that the apostles *might* prove to be in the right, that he was secretly a Christian, or at least had a leaning in that direction. This does not seem to have been the case. The mere suspicion would have neutralised all his counsel. The hypothesis was necessary to his argument, and, as a liberal-minded man, he did not shrink from using it, for what it might be worth, in favour of persons so earnest in bearing testimony to the prominent doctrine of the Pharisees, who were favourable to the apostles, not because they believed in Christ, but because they preached the resurrection of the dead. It is likely also that Gamaliel's kindly feeling, if it were such, changed somewhat with the lapse of time; for we know that the man who "breathed threatenings and slaughter" against the Christians, came from his school. He also died with a high Jewish reputation, presiding over the Sanhedrim to the last, that is, until within eighteen years of the destruction of Jerusalem, or about twenty-two years after the events now under consideration. Lightfoot says, "for all the fairness of this man at this time, yet did he afterwards ordain and publish that prayer, called 'The Prayer against Heretics,' meaning Christians, framed, indeed, by Samuel the Little, but approved and authorized by this man, president of the San-

hedrim, and commanded to be used constantly in their synagogues; in which they prayed against the gospel, and the professors of it."

Gamaliel was a common enough name among the Jews, especially in and after this age. There is little doubt that the one before us is the most eminent of them, distinguished as Gamaliel the elder. The sacred historian indicates his eminence in the public view, by describing him as "a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people." A doctor or teacher of the law was one who had made the law and the traditions illustrative of it his especial study; and who taught it to others—like a professor to his class. Gamaliel was the first in reputation of those professors, and it was a distinction to have belonged to his class. This distinction was enjoyed by Paul, who more than once tells us that he was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel"—which is as much as to say that he had received the highest education which was obtainable at Jerusalem.

The information we possess concerning this eminent man entirely coincides with that here given. He was distinguished as Rabban Gamaliel; and as there were two other Rabbans of the name, one his grandson, and the other his great-grandson, he was further distinguished as Rabban Gamaliel the elder. Rabban was a title of the highest distinction—as much more dignified than Rabbi, as Rabbi was than Rab. There were, in fact, but seven persons, all presidents of the Sanhedrim, who ever bore it, and of these, four were of this family. The first was his father, Simeon, whom some have fancied to be the same who took the infant Jesus in his arms and blessed Him; and the others this Gamaliel and the two of that name just mentioned. So highly was the present Gamaliel esteemed, that the Jewish Mishna declares that when he died the glory of the law ceased, and purity and Pharisaism expired. A great mourning was made for him, and it is recorded that one of his pupils, Onkelos, the Targumist, burnt seventy pounds of frankincense in honour of the great Rabban when he died. This ostentation was

however, contrary to his wish, for it is recorded that he left orders that his corpse should be wrapped up in linen for burial; not in silk, as had been the custom. It is added, that this was very grievous to his relatives, who thought he had not been interred with sufficient honour.

So much of Gamaliel, with whose advice to "refrain from these men," that is, to leave them unmolested, the council so far agreed as to desist from the purpose of putting them to death; but fearful of compromising their own authority with the people, if they suffered them to go altogether unpunished, after they had avowedly disregarded the injunction which had been laid upon them, they were beaten or scourged, and then dismissed with a renewed injunction, "not to speak in the name of Jesus." This being a Jewish scourging, was of thirty-nine stripes, like those which Paul mentions that he had been subject to. 2 Cor. xi. 24. It was a common secondary punishment among the Jews; and our Lord had forewarned his disciples that they would be exposed to this pain and shame. And how did this first experience of it affect them? "They rejoiced." What for? Certainly not because they had been scourged, nor because they had escaped with their lives, but "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

The sacred historian is careful to add that, notwithstanding all that had passed, "daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Forty-First Week—Fourth Day.

THEUDAS AND JUDAS.—ACTS V. 36, 37.

LET us this evening return to the speech of Gamaliel, for the purpose of bestowing more particular attention upon the historical circumstances to which he refers. "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be some-

body; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed."

To this mention of Theudas an objection has been taken which it is important to clear up. It is said to be opposed to the statements of Josephus, who, in his Antiquities of the Jews, relates that when Fadus was Procurator of Judea, one Theudas prevailed upon a great multitude to take with them their wealth, and follow him to the river Jordan. For he gave himself out to be a prophet, and declared that the river, dividing at his command, would afford them an easy passage. Fadus, however, suffered them not long to enjoy their delusion, but sent a body of horse against them, which, falling upon them unexpectedly, killed many, and took many alive. They took also Theudas himself, cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem.[1] Now Josephus expressly tells us that this happened under the administration of Fadus, who was made Procurator after the death of king Herod-Agrippa, in the fourth year of the Emperor Claudius, and therefore *many years after* this speech was made by Gamaliel. It is therefore urged by unbelievers, that words are put into the mouth of Gamaliel by the writer of the Acts which he never uttered; that he is represented as relating an event of which he could not, at that time, possibly have had any knowledge, seeing that it happened many years after.

It will be seen that the force of the objection just stated, rests on the assumption that the Theudas here mentioned by Gamaliel, and the Theudas of whom Josephus speaks, are one and the same person. And this is attempted to be proved from the identity of the name and the similarity of the circumstances. Each boasted himself to be somebody, had a number of followers, and was slain. But, these being incidents common to almost all impostors who raise a re-

[1] Antiquities, xx. 5, § 1.

bellion, they by no means prove the point for which they are brought forward. On the other hand, there are circumstances stated in which the two transactions differ very widely. Gamaliel expressly says that his Theudas was before Judas of Galilee, who raised a sedition "in the time of the taxing," which taxing, as we have seen,[1] took place when Judea was made a Roman province, in the twelfth year of our era. But the Theudas of Josephus was under the Procurator Fadus, that is, in the year 45 or 46 A.D., as these two years formed the whole duration of his government. There was thus, from the data respectively supplied by the two historians, an interval little short, if at all short, of forty years between the two events and persons. In the next place, the Theudas of Josephus gathered together a much larger body of men than the Theudas of Gamaliel; Josephus says, "a very great multitude;" whereas Gamaliel says, "a number of men, about four hundred." Of the very great multitude who followed Theudas, Josephus asserts that many were killed and many taken alive; but Gamaliel affirms that when his Theudas was killed all his followers were scattered.

When we take into account this difference of time and other circumstances, it is obviously suggested that Gamaliel and Josephus had different events and persons in view. No argument to the contrary can be drawn from the name; for Theudas or Thaddeus was in this age a very common name among the Jews. Besides these, several persons of the name are mentioned in the Talmud; and one of the apostles bore the name of Thaddeus. The possibility of there being two such impostors of this name, is illustrated by the fact that several seditious leaders in this age were called Judas, besides Judas of Galilee; and a still larger number of public impostors bore the name of Simon. It is therefore not in itself unlikely that two leaders of the name of Theudas should appear at an interval of forty years.

That thus there was a Theudas, other than the one named by Josephus, who raised a sedition anterior, probably by

[1] Evening Series—Twenty-Eighth Week, Fourth Day.

some years, to that raised by Judas of Galilee at the time of the taxing, and that it is to him Gamaliel refers, has been the opinion, or rather explanation, given by many of the best ancient and modern interpreters. The insurrection of Judas of Galilee was after the close of the reign of Archelaus; and we may find a time, about the beginning of that reign, to which the other sedition may very well be assigned. This was when Archelaus was at Rome, soliciting from the Emperor Augustus the confirmation of his father's will. At that time, as described by Josephus himself, almost the whole of Palestine was in commotion. In Idumea, 2000 soldiers, who had been dismissed by Herod, in conjunction with several others, took the field against Achiab, a relation of Herod, and compelled him, with his soldiers, to retire to the mountains. In Galilee, Judas, the son of Hezekiah, the leader of a band of robbers that had been suppressed by Herod, made himself master of Sepphoris, armed his numerous followers from the arsenal of that city, pillaged the country, and spread devastation and terror on every side. In Perea, Simon, one of Herod's slaves, assumed the diadem, collected a band of desperate men, robbed the inhabitants, and, among other acts of violence, burnt the royal castle at Jericho. Another mob fell upon Amathus on the Jordan, and burnt the royal castle. A shepherd named Athronges also assumed the regal title, collected a large body of followers, and with his four brothers, all men of gigantic stature, laid waste the country, plundered and slew the inhabitants, and sometimes repulsed the Romans themselves. In short, the whole country was full of bands of robbers, each having a king or chief at its head; and they seem to have been expecting the Messiah to deliver them from the Romans, who then, instead of protecting the people, increased the distresses of the nation by their extortions.

It is therefore highly probable that the Theudas of Gamaliel arose at this time. There is certainly room for him here. He may even have been one of those just named; for, as is well known from the scripture history, it was very

common for Jews to have two names, and to be as often denoted by the one as the other. Archbishop Ussher thinks that the Judas, son of Hezekiah, mentioned just now, was the same with the Theudas of Gamaliel—an opinion quite uncertain. The practice referred to, however, makes it also far from certain that this Theudas is not mentioned by Josephus, though not by name, or not by the same name. But, assuming that he does not notice the circumstance, we may with confidence urge that the silence of Josephus concerning it is no good argument against its truth. His history is very brief, in many places passing over a number of years without relating any remarkable fact: as is shown in what he says, and does not say, of the "Judas of Galilee," to whom Gamaliel also refers. He has not one word of the death of this notorious person and the dispersion of his followers; yet no one ever doubted these facts because he has not affirmed them. What he tells us is, in agreement with Gamaliel, that Judas excited the people to rebellion, and had many followers;[1] and the rest of our information, forming the obvious sequel, we owe to the Rabban, whose speech St Luke has preserved. Josephus does, however, afterwards inform us that Jacob and Simon, the two sons of this Judas, were crucified by the Procurator Tiberius Alexander (A.D. 46-47) only a year or two after the appearance of the later Theudas;[2] but he does not even mention the crimes for which they suffered, though no one doubts that it was for spreading the seditious opinions of their father, and attempting to excite the people against the Romans. From the analogy which this case affords, some have supposed that the Theudas spoken of by Josephus, may have been the son of the Theudas mentioned in the speech of Gamaliel, it being no unusual thing for children to tread in the steps of their parents.

Of Judas of Galilee we have incidentally given all the information possessed. The "taxing" or census which took place under Cyrenius, when, after the deposition of Archelaus,

[1] De Bell. Jud. ii 8, § 1. Antiq. xviii 1, § 1. [2] Antiq. xx. 5, § 2.

Judea was made a Roman province, was a step which excited great discontent among the Jews, being regarded as a basis for further exaction by the Romans, and a mark of their complete subjection to Rome, which they had in part allowed themselves to forget while ruled by kings and ethnarchs of their own—possessing a shadow of independence. This discontent the high-priest Joazar exerted himself to allay by all the means in his power. But this Judas, aided by one Sadduc, a Pharisee, more successfully laboured to ferment the popular disgust, by representing the census of the people, the valuation of their property, and the payment of direct tribute, as the most shameful slavery, and contrary to the law which required the Jews to own no sovereign but God. By such representations, which had no real foundation in the law of Moses, they now raised a party, and excited great commotions. These, however, were suppressed, and Roman power thoroughly established. But the doctrine taught by these men survived as the tenet of a considerable sect; and, long after the time of Gamaliel's speech, it again broke out into action, contributing much to the disturbances of the nation, and to that last rebellion against the Romans which ended in the nation's overthrow.

Forty-First Week—Fifth Day.

MURMURS.—ACTS. VI. 1-6

Although the first converts to Christianity were all Jews, they were Jews of two distinct classes: First, the natives of Palestine, who spoke the vernacular Aramæan dialect, and including perhaps the Jews from the east, among whom the same dialect was in use; and, second, the western Jews, who, being settled in the different provinces of the Roman empire, generally spoke the Greek language. As Jews, there was always a sort of jealousy between these two classes, arising from the

pretensions to superiority of the Jews of Palestine, and particularly those of Jerusalem, on account of their birth and residence in the Holy Land, and especially in the Holy City, and because the foreign Jews could not so accurately observe the ritual worship as those living in Jerusalem or Palestine; and also because they used what was still popularly regarded as the holy language, being in fact a dialect thereof. This state of feeling on the part of the resident Jews, was, naturally enough, resented by the foreign Jews, who, although they did not despise the privileges on which the others rested their pretensions, considered that they were prized too inordinately, and formed no just ground of religious distinction. In fact, from their residence abroad, where many of them had been born, the local ties of this religion were in them considerably loosened, and they did not so absorbingly estimate the ritual observances with which, as they were practicable only at Jerusalem, they were comparatively unfamiliar; and on this account they were prepared, better than the native Jews, for the reception of the gospel. It should ever be remembered, that Judaism always was, and was intended to be, a local religion—confined to the Land of Promise; and such a state of difference between those who remain in and those who overpass the territorial bounds, is inevitable, under any local religion.

It is to be lamented that conversion to Christianity did not entirely extinguish this jealousy between the two parties, making them entirely and completely one in Christ Jesus; and we now come to a painful indication of its existence.

The recent establishment of a sort of universal hospitality among the followers of Christ, under which the rich laid aside the distinctions which wealth confers, and the poor were liberally supported from the common fund which the self-denial of the former provided, began to be attended with some difficulties as the numbers of the converts increased. Even the apostles were embarrassed by the multiplication of their duties, which extended not only to the instruction of the people, but to the administration of the secular business of

the community. Negligence or partiality cannot be ascribed to persons whose motives were so pure and spotless as theirs; but, from a subsequent avowal of Peter, it is clear that they were not equal to all the duties that grew upon them, and there was much danger that their daily cares in the distribution of the bread that perisheth to so many claimants, left them too little leisure for the impartation of spiritual food to the hungering multitude.

An unpleasant incident supplied occasion for the application of a wise and effectual remedy for this serious and growing evil.

It came to the knowledge of the apostles, that "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." It may be asked why the "widows," in particular, should be mentioned. In answer we may remark, that the claims of widows to charitable consideration are prominently produced in the Epistles, and always engaged the special solicitude of the early church. In their case was involved that of young fatherless children; and it was one of peculiar urgency, when their conversion cut them off from the aid of their natural connections. An Oriental widow so circumstanced, presents a case of even more absolute destitution than with us; for, in the East, any resources of remunerative occupation to a woman can be scarcely said to exist; and the comparatively secluded habits of life which custom exacts, prevent her from pressing her claims and wants on the attention of others, with that vigour and effect which among ourselves a widow may properly use. And it may also be observed, that widows then were more numerous than with us, as the feeling of society, though it did not forbid, or even openly blame, the remarriage of widows, was decidedly unfavourable to such marriages. Hence this consideration for the widows, and the susceptibility of the Hellenist converts, at the apparent neglect of "their widows in the daily ministration."

It is quite possible that there may have been *some* foundation for the complaints of the Hellenist converts; for where

the numbers to be attended to were so large, it may have happened that the least obtrusive dependants on the common fund, kept back also by the use of a foreign language, were somewhat overlooked. It will further be observed, that the "murmurs" were not against the apostles, but against "the Hebrews"—probably the agents who assisted the apostles in the distribution—for it was clearly impossible that the apostles could, with their own hands, deal out what was required to every individual. Indeed, by the promptitude with which they provided a remedy, they seem to have in some measure admitted the grievance, which we are not to suppose was urged upon *their* attention with any bitterness, but as an amicable representation of the fact.

The apostles convened the body of the believers, and declared their intention to abandon to other hands a trust which was already burdensome, and might become invidious. There had been a great increase in the number of the disciples, the charge of whose spiritual interests was quite sufficient to engage their entire attention; and if the temporal charge became incompatible with the spiritual, it could not be a question which of the two they ought to forego. They had decided to give their whole time and thought to the furtherance of the gospel, and to the discharge of the spiritual trust committed to them. The terms used are remarkable—"But we will give ourselves continually unto prayer, and to the ministry of the word." Here it is seen that "the ministry of the word" is not placed in the fore-front of their duties, and prayer thrown in as the incident of convenient seasons—but "prayer" is placed in the front as the chief and primary matter, and "the ministry of the word" follows in the second place—perhaps as a sequel or consequence. By this, if we like to be taught, we may learn that prayer holds no second place among our duties, or rather among the qualifying privileges of useful service. Since all success in the furtherance of the gospel is of God, prayer stands even before effort in the ministry of the word; if it be not rather that prayer is in itself effort—and effort of the most prevailing kind.

Determined, therefore, to free themselves from inferior trusts, which others might discharge as effectually as they, and to reserve all their strength for spiritual labours, the apostles directed that the church should, after due inquiry, select seven men of exemplary character, and already in possession of spiritual gifts and graces, and present these to them, that they might commit to their care the trust they themselves were ready to lay down. This course was very acceptable to the church, which in due time made choice of seven qualified persons, who were then solemnly set apart to the service by prayer and the imposition of the apostles' hands.

The names of the persons to whom this high and honourable trust was committed, were Stephen, who is specially distinguished by the sacred writer as one eminently endowed with faith, and other high gifts of the Spirit; Philip, of whom we shall hear more anon; Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, who is noted as "a proselyte of Antioch." From this it may be surmised that none of the others were proselytes; but as all their names are Greek, it may be inferred that they were all Hellenists; that is, that, in the fulness of Christian confidence and brotherly love, the whole seven had been selected from the body which had felt itself aggrieved—a step which could not fail to cut off for the future all grounds for suspicion or complaint against "the Hebrews" on the part of "the Grecians."

Forty-First Week—Sixth Day.

STEPHEN.—ACTS VI. 8.—VII.

THE first name in the list of the seven deacons is, as we have seen, that of Stephen; and to him the sacred narrative now calls our attention.

Although primarily appointed for a secular object, the deacons, in the discharge of their special duty, frequently came

in contact with home and foreign Jews; and since men endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, had been chosen for the office, they possessed both the inward call and the ability to make use of their opportunities for the spread of the gospel among the Jews. In these endeavours Stephen remarkably distinguished himself; nor were miraculous deeds wanting to attest the authority of his words. This soon awakened a fresh and vehement persecution, in which we might feel some surprise to find the Pharisees the active parties, notwithstanding their recent toleration, did we not closely examine the circumstances. The fact itself may suggest that some fresh, and to them abhorrent, aspect of Christian teaching had been produced, which had not indeed been previously suppressed, but which had not before been so strongly enforced upon their attention. If we look into the specimens of apostolic teaching which have hitherto occurred, we shall find it turn chiefly on this head—that the Jewish rulers had incurred deep guilt by the rejection and murder of Jesus, whose Divinity and Messiahship had now been attested beyond all question by his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven, where He sits, glorified, to bestow blessings on his followers, and remission of sins on the contrite, and whence He shall hereafter appear to judge the world. But we do not find a word directly applicable to the discontinuance and abrogation of the Mosaic system, as a thing that had become old and must pass away—and had already, as a ritual system, lost all force and binding obligation, by its complete fulfilment in Christ. This truth even the apostles were slow to perceive, as we see by the disputes which, at a later time, arose between Paul and Peter on the subject. But such a man as Stephen, who was in some respects a harbinger of Paul, had, as a Hellenist, undoubtedly from the first entertained freer notions of the Old Testament dispensation, in its relation to Christianity, than a Jew of Palestine could easily realize; and therefore the Holy Spirit might the more bring into *his* view that aspect of Christianity, by which it was to draw the heathen world

within the circle of that higher spiritual life which formed its essence, but which necessarily pre-supposed the dissolution of the temple of Jerusalem as a centre of union.

There were at Jerusalem a great number of synagogues, founded by the foreign Jews for their own use when at the holy city, and for that of their sons who were sent thither to complete their education. To these synagogues, schools and colleges were in most instances attached. With the members of such synagogues Stephen naturally came into especial contact, as he, on the assumption of his being a Hellenist, must have belonged to one of them. The fearless zeal with which Stephen declared to them the whole counsel of God, on points upon which the Jewish mind was most open to offence, and the vigour of argument and power of eloquence with which he enforced them, soon awakened the strongest opposition in some of these synagogues, the members of which united their forces to put him down—by dint of argument and insult, or, if that failed, by strength of hand. The synagogues foremost in this design were those of the Alexandrian and Cyrenian Jews; of Cilician Jews—to which the young Saul of Tarsus then belonged; of other Jews from Asia; and of the "Libertines." This last class has given occasion to some controversy. That they belonged to an unknown city called Libertum, is a conjecture to which no weight is now attached. It is better, and is indeed usual, to apprehend that it was a synagogue for the use of those who were freed-men; that is, Jews and proselytes who had been Roman slaves, and, with their descendants, had obtained their freedom. We are not, however, to suppose that freed-men only were connected with this synagogue, any more than that the other synagogues numbered among their members only men of Alexandria, Cyrene, or Cilicia. It is sufficient to understand that persons of this class preponderated in them. Young men must have formed an unusually large proportion of the members of these synagogues, seeing that so many were there engaged in their studies, the adult members of whose families were far away; and this fact, together with

the certainty that one of Stephen's most active opponents did belong to this class, warrants the conclusion that the movement against Stephen originated among the Hellenistic students, and was conducted by them. It was not for this the less formidable. Jewish students were, in the essentials of student life and character, the same as German, English, or French students—heady, reckless, intolerant, prejudiced, and often ferocious young men, more vehemently carried away by party zeal than those to whom more extended years have given broader views of men and things.

The first step taken under these influences was, that the synagogues put forward some of their members, of different nations, and skilled in the subtleties of the later Jewish teaching, to argue the points in dispute with Stephen. But "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." Ashamed of being thus openly defeated by a single adversary, and incensed that the religion which they opposed had thus received such signal confirmation, they suborned men of profligate consciences to accuse him of blasphemy before the Sanhedrim; and then brought him tumultuously before the council, in order to obtain a formal decree of condemnation against him.

The precise accusation was, "that he had spoken blasphemous words against Moses and against God;" and again, "that he ceased not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law: for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs [or rites] which Moses delivered us." This is said to have been the deposition of *false* witnesses. It does not, however, follow that it was entirely a fabrication of theirs, but only that they had so coloured and exaggerated what he did say, as to give it an aspect of blasphemy which did not properly belong to it; though it must be admitted that even a fair report of what the teaching of his Lord authorized him to declare, might have been deemed blasphemous by those before whom Stephen appeared. There can be little doubt that what this holy man had said, afforded

some basis for the misrepresentations of the witnesses; for before this time nothing similar had been advanced against the teachers of the Christian doctrine. Hence we may be able to collect, that what Stephen really did say was of the tenor already indicated. It is also observable that his defence plainly intimates that he by no means intended to repel the accusation as altogether a falsity, but rather to acknowledge that there was truth mixed up with it; that which he had really spoken, and which was already so obnoxious to the Jews, he had no wish to deny, but only to place what he had stated in its right connection, and to show that it was not open to the charge of blasphemy which had been laid against it. The "blasphemy against Moses," of which he had been accused, was probably found in his assertion that the authority of Moses was inferior to, or superseded by that of Christ. "The blasphemy against God" may have been involved in the blasphemy against Moses, inasmuch as God was the great Author of that religion which Moses had taught the Israelites by his command; or it may have lain in his ascribing Divinity to one who had lately suffered publicly as a malefactor. "The blasphemy against the holy place and the law," seems to have consisted in a prediction that the temple was to be destroyed, and the ritual law of course abolished.

When these charges were set forth, with a formality which, as before that assembly, invested them with ominous purport to the safety and even life of the prisoner, every eye was directed towards him to observe the impression produced upon him, as well as to scan the personal appearance of one, concerning whom so much had been lately said in the city. There he stood, serene, collected, and undismayed—if something more be not meant by the declaration that "all that sat in the council saw his face as it had been the face of an angel"—words which have led many, not unreasonably, to conclude that it pleased God to manifest His approbation of His servant by investing his countenance with a supernatural and angelic brightness, such as that with which the face of Moses shone when he had been speaking with the Lord.

Stephen in his defence took a rapid and interesting survey of Jewish history from the days of Abraham to those of Solomon, refuting the erroneous notions of the Jews concerning the excellence and the permanency of the Mosaic dispensation, and proving to them, from the records of their own Scriptures, that Abraham and the patriarchs had been chosen of God, and had served Him long before the law was given by Moses, and the tabernacle and temple were built; that Moses himself, commissioned as he was by God to be "a ruler and deliverer" of the people by whom he had been previously "refused," and to be the giver of the law to them, had nevertheless foretold the giving of a new law, inasmuch as he had announced, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; Him shall ye hear." The law of Moses was therefore avowedly of a temporary nature; and had on many occasions proved in sufficient to keep the people to their obedience; and the temple, like the tabernacle before it, which had been made by Divine command, and after a Divine pattern, was but of temporary duration, and was of no essential value in the sight of God. He then burst forth into a strain of severe reprehension, condemning the wilfulness of their fathers in resisting the Holy Ghost, and their own hereditary stubbornness of heart, charging their fathers with having slain the prophets who had foretold the coming of the Messiah, and themselves with having betrayed and murdered the Messiah himself, thus rebelling against the law of which they professed themselves such zealous maintainers—a law which had indeed been delivered to them by the ministry of angels, and which the Messiah came to fulfil and perfect.

Longer than this the audience could not endure to hear him. They would not suffer him to proceed with the application of his arguments. They broke in upon his defence with all the signs of malice, rage, and fury. "They were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." But he, regardless of their rage, and "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw" the

splendour of the Divine presence, and Jesus himself—the crucified Jesus—arrayed in glory, and in a posture of readiness to succour and receive him. As he saw, he spoke: "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man *standing* on the right hand of God." Jesus is usually represented as *sitting* on the right hand of God; the difference here is therefore noticeable, as if the glorified Redeemer had risen from his seat in sign of his readiness to aid his servant.

If these words do not mean to assert the Divinity of Christ, they have no meaning; and that the Jews understood them in this sense is clear, for, hearing in them a confirmation and aggravation of the "blasphemy" which he had been before accused of "speaking against God," they raised a tremendous outcry, and rushing upon him with one accord, cast him out of the city, and stoned him; thus inflicting upon him the death which the law awarded to blasphemers, but not awaiting, in their tumultuous impatience for blood, all the tedious formalities of judicial procedure. The last breath of the holy man was spent in a prayer to Jesus, first for himself, and then for his murderers. The words employed are more remarkable than they may seem. "They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The word *God* is not in the original, but is supplied, and so is printed in *italic* letters. Omitting this supplemented word, the passage may read: "They stoned Stephen, invocating and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." While the stones rained their cruel blows upon his frame, he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and then he sank to the ground in death; and such was the composure with which he yielded up his soul, under circumstances so tumultuous and so terrifying, that, as if he had died quietly upon his bed, the sacred historian says with beautiful simplicity, "And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Forty-First Week—Seventh Day.

STONING.—ACTS VII. 58.

STONING to death was the ordinary capital punishment among the Jews, just as much as hanging is with us, decapitation in France and Germany, and strangulation in Spain. In the law it is assigned to such offenders as blasphemers, false prophets, and the like; but it was not confined to them, and stoning is to be understood, wherever the punishment of death is indicated without any particular form being specified. It is true we read of persons being hanged; but that was the hanging up of the body (in particular cases only) after death had been inflicted. We also find persons "slain by the sword;" but this was the punishment for military or political offenders, sentenced by the sovereign, as with us such persons are shot or beheaded, while the ordinary death-punishment is hanging. It is noticeable that we first hear of death by stoning in the deserts of *stony* Arabia, this mode having been suggested probably by the abundance of stones, and the fatal effect with which they were often employed in broils among the people. It seems a very shocking form of death-punishment, but was less so than it may seem. Originally, it is likely, the people merely pelted the bound criminal with the stones lying about, till he died. But even in this crude form of its infliction, the first stone that struck the bared head would frequently close the painful scene. Latterly the punishment assumed a more orderly shape, and was subjected to arrangements, the object of which was to bring the criminal to his end as expeditiously as possible, and to divest the punishment of a tumultuary aspect. The particulars which the Jewish writers have left us, describe a form of stoning materially different from the idea which is usually entertained of that punishment, and which, as existing in the time of Stephen, deserves our attention. From these sources we learn that the manner of

execution was this:—A crier marched before the man who was to die, proclaiming his offence, and the names of the witnesses on whose testimony he had been convicted. This was for the humane purpose of enabling any one, possessing knowledge of the parties and the circumstances, to come forward and arrest the execution until his further evidence had been heard and considered. Hence, usually, the tribunal which had sentenced the prisoner, remained sitting to hear such evidence as might thus be produced, and did not rise until certified that the execution had taken place. The place of execution was always outside the town—as was, until about seventy years ago, the case in London, the condemned being conveyed from Newgate[1] to Tyburn, a distance of nearly three miles, for execution. At this day in Jerusalem, there is a gate which bears the name of Stephen, under the

belief, locally entertained, that through the old gate which this represents, the martyr was hurried to his death. The

[1] Through Holborn and Oxford Street, to a spot fronting Hyde Park, not far from the Marble Arch, and now a fashionable quarter of the metropolis. Cunningham, in his *Hand-Book of London*, says, "It [the gallows] stood, as I believe, on the site of Connaught Place, though No. 49, Connaught Square, is said to be the spot." The change to the present practice of hanging the condemned just outside the prison-gate, was made in 1782, and was thus animadverted on by Dr Johnson, according to Boswell:—"He said to Sir William Scott, 'The age is running mad after innovation, and

vicinity of this gate to the area of the temple (now the mosque of Omar), is in favour of the tradition; and as there is a path leading direct from this gate to the garden of Gethsemane, we may conclude that our Lord often passed through it in his way to and from the Mount of Olives—at least that He did so on the awful night of his agony.

Arrived at the place, the convict was divested of his clothing, except a small covering about the loins; and his hands being bound, he was taken to the top of some eminence—a tower, a building, or a cliff—not less than twice a man's height. When the top was reached, the witnesses laid their hands upon him, and then cast off their upper clothing, that they might be the more ready for the active exertion their position imposed—being virtually that of executing the sentence which had been the result of their evidence. To prevent their clothes from being lost, they were consigned to the care of some friend; and in the case of Stephen, the executing witnesses gave their garments in charge to "a young man whose name was Saul,"—of whom there will hereafter be much to say—and whose full and hearty complicity in the transaction is not only indicated by this fact, but is afterwards expressly affirmed in the words: "Saul was consenting unto his death." Indeed, from the stress that he himself, after his conversion, laid upon this circumstance—"When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I kept the raiment of them that slew him," (Acts xxii. 20)—we may gather that it implied an amount of active concurrence in the deed only a degree less than that of the witnesses; and the words themselves show, as we now proceed to explain, that the witnesses were also the executioners.

all the business of the world is to be done in a new way; men are to be hanged in a new way; Tyburn itself is not safe from the fury of innovation.' It having been argued that this was an improvement—'No, Sir,' said he, eagerly, 'it is not an improvement. They object, that the old method drew together a number of spectators. Sir, executions are intended to draw spectators. If they do not draw spectators, they don't answer their purpose. The old method was most satisfactory to all parties; the public was gratified by a procession; the criminal was supported by it. Why is all this to be swept away?'"

All being thus ready, one of the witnesses cast the condemned down from that high place with great violence, endeavouring to do it so that he should fall on a large stone, which was designedly placed below. The fall usually rendered him insensible, if it did not kill him; but if he was not dead, those below turned him upon his back, and then the other witnesses, remaining above, cast down a large stone aimed at the chest. This stroke was generally mortal; but if not, the people below hastened to cast stones at him till no life remained. Thus, the execution was quickly over, and was attended by fewer revolting circumstances than must have ensued from that indiscriminate pelting by the people, which is commonly supposed to have constituted the stoning to death. It would seem that Stephen rose from his fall to his knees, and in that posture prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers—a circumstance which imparts an additionally touching emphasis to his prayer.

In the narrative of our Lord's death, it is made plainly to appear that the Jewish tribunals had no power of inflicting the punishment of death without the sanction of the Romans; and it may be, and has been, asked—how it is, that we have here what seems, at the first view, a regular trial before the Sanhedrim, with the deposition of witnesses, the prisoner's defence, and the ordinary capital punishment among the Jews inflicted, without any mention of the Romans. As to the trial merely, that is easily explained. The Jewish tribunal necessarily tried the prisoner to find the nature of his offence; and if they found him guilty of a capital crime, they pronounced sentence against him, and reported it to the Roman governor for confirmation. If confirmed, the offender was given to them for execution by their own mode of stoning, unless the offence was of a political nature, as for sedition, when the Romans took the matter into their own hands, and inflicted *their* punishment of crucifixion. In the case of Stephen, however, it is very doubtful if even the trial was complete. But supposing that all the forms of legal process were observed, and sentence duly pronounced, it does not

follow that they did not exceed the bounds of their authority in carrying their own sentence into effect before the Romans could interfere to prevent it. That it is reported as having taken place, by no means proves that the act was legally performed. The Roman Governor ordinarily resided at Cæsarea, and was rarely at Jerusalem, except at the great festivals. In his absence they might feel more at liberty to carry out their own sentence, with little fear of being afterwards called to account on the report of the Roman commandant—partly because the Romans held cheaply the life of any one who was not a citizen of Rome, and partly because the governor stood in fear of the Jewish authorities at this time, and would be likely to wink at their proceedings. There was hence little to deter them from acting in the case, notwithstanding that the Roman check upon their authority did really exist.

All this is on the supposition that the trial was regular, and the execution irregular. But it will rather appear that the trial itself was irregular, and that the judicial act was not completed. There are, indeed, the witnesses, and part of the prisoner's defence; and here the legal action stops. The high-priest does not, as in our Lord's trial, ask the opinion of the council, and then deliver sentence in accordance with their views. We read of no conference, no sentence. The defence itself is interrupted, by the ungovernable rage of those who heard it; and when Stephen declared that he saw Jesus standing at God's right hand, they stayed to hear no more, but rushed upon him, and hurried him away to death. This has all the aspect of a tumultuary proceeding—a violent interruption of that course of action, by which they purposed, in the first instance, to arrive at a sentence, to be reported to the Roman Governor for his sanction. Indeed, the matter reached a point at which they might have felt authorized to act without the usual formalities. The words Stephen uttered sounded in their ears as rank blasphemy; and, when that was the case, the Jews seem always to have been ready to stone a man on the spot without any trial. There are several

instances of this in the Gospels, which will readily occur to the reader's recollection. A man taken in the fact might be punished out of hand without trial; and this rule seems to have been popularly extended to blasphemy. So, when Stephen uttered words which seemed to them blasphemous, they may have felt there was no need of any further trial—the case having become one for instant and summary action, vindicable even to the Roman Governor. It certainly appears from the narrative that Stephen was convicted, less on the evidence of the witnesses, than on that declaration of his own, which made them "run upon him with one accord."

It seems, therefore, that there is nothing in the case of Stephen to compel us to abandon our previous conclusion, that the Jewish tribunals had been by the Romans divested of the sovereign power of inflicting capital punishment

Forty-Second Week—First Day.

THE PERSECUTION.—ACTS VIII. 1.

It has always been, that the ground on which the fertilizing blood of a martyr has been shed, has brought forth fruit, thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold. Nations have been slow to learn this, and have been continually making the grand mistake of supposing, that a great truth could be quenched in the blood of those who upheld it. So, in this case, the blood of Stephen cried from the ground with a voice more eloquent and persuasive than the accents of his living tongue had been. By showing that the Christian faith was stronger than death, the last resort of man's oppression, it ensured its triumph; and thenceforth every death, thus nobly and cheerfully endured, where it dismayed one dastard spirit, quickened a hundred noble ones, and made them, or prepared them, to be proselytes. To receive a man's testimony with implicit reliance, it is necessary to be assured that he himself is sincerely convinced of that which he teaches; and to lay down his life for what he deems the truth, is the most certain sign of his sincerity, which it is possible for a man to give. His death thus brings credit upon the doctrines he taught, as proclaimed by surviving teachers.

In this case, the ever active Pharisees were now on the alert; and, enraged to find that the death of Stephen had no effect in suppressing the new religion, the Sanhedrim, now unanimous by the concurrence of the Pharisees with the Sadducees, brought into action all the resources it possessed, in a most rancorous and general persecution of the infant church—the nature of which may be learned from the conduct of Saul of Tarsus, who took a most active and violent part in the proceedings, having, assuredly at his own application, been specially commissioned for this work by the

Sanhedrim, who doubtless regarded with encouraging complacency the ardent zeal for Pharisaism of this promising and already distinguished young man. There is indeed reason to suppose that he himself was at this time a member of the Sanhedrim. Some think that his "consenting" to the death of Stephen, implies that he consented when the martyr was condemned. Whether so or not, it is thought probable that he was at least afterwards elected into the supreme court of judicature, perhaps to recompense the zeal he had shown against the new doctrines on that occasion; for, in referring to the affairs of this time at a later period, he says not only that he exercised his powers by a commission from the high-priest, but also that, when the followers of Christ were put to death, he gave *his vote* against them. He could only have given his vote as one of the Sanhedrim; and it may reasonably be doubted whether the very important commission which he subsequently received, when he went to Damascus, would have been entrusted to any one who was not a member of that body—his introduction into which might be materially promoted by the fact that Gamaliel, whose favourite pupil he seems to have been, was its president.

Out of this arises an important consideration—that to be a parent was a condition of admission to that assembly, because those whose hearts were softened by the paternal relation were supposed to be more humane, more inclined to mercy than others. Besides, among the Jews it was accounted scarcely reputable for a man to remain unmarried after eighteen years of age; and marriages in general were very early. If, therefore, Saul belonged to the Sanhedrim, the probability is that he was at this time married, and the father of a family. But if so, it would seem that his wife and child, or children, did not long survive, for otherwise it is scarcely possible but that some allusion to them would be found in the subsequent narrative, or in the Epistles; and it is clear that, if he ever had a wife, she was not living when he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians. 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8.

In describing the proceedings of this man against the

Lord's disciples, St Luke says: "As for Saul he made havoc of the church." How strong this expression! He ravaged abroad, as a tiger hunting for his prey; "entering into every house, and haling men and women"—separating the parent from the child, distressing the protector and the orphan—"committed them to prison," whence probably, in many cases, death alone delivered them. But it is to be remembered that this strong language is employed by one who was in after years the intimate friend and associate of St Paul, and is but an echo of the terms in which he himself always speaks of this part of his career. In fact, that Saul was quite the foremost acting man in this persecution, is clear from all the incidents which transpire, particularly from the high commission which subsequently acknowledged and rewarded his service against heresy. How widely and prominently his name was connected with this persecution, appears from the circumstance that Ananias of Damascus had "heard by many of this man, how much evil he had done to the saints at Jerusalem." [1]

From the cruelties practised upon them, and from the efforts made to compel them, as Paul afterwards confessed,[2] "to blaspheme" that worthy name whereby they were called, the disciples naturally fled in all directions, probably at the instance of the apostles, who, however, as the governing body, felt it their duty to face the peril of remaining at Jerusalem, that the dispersed disciples might know where to apply for the counsel and aid they might require under their altered circumstances. Their departure, also, would have imparted too desultory a character to the dispersion, and might have tended to render it comparatively unproductive (humanly speaking) of the advantages which resulted from it.

These advantages were great—so great as to open a new and advanced period of Christian history. In its first epoch, over which we have passed, the Christian society consisted of Jews only, who had hitherto remained in the city of Jerusalem. Many, indeed, of those who, on the day of Pentecost,

[1] Acts ix. 13. [2] Acts xxvi. 11.

had come thither from various regions, seem, after their return home, to have imparted to their countrymen some idea, however imperfect, of Christian doctrine; yet its appointed teachers had hitherto remained within the walls of Jerusalem, nor had they taught in any other country. The congregation at Jerusalem was, therefore, numerous. But it had not separated itself from the Jewish communion; for we read that, during the whole of this period, the apostles and the other Christians yielded obedience to the Sanhedrim in all matters not contrary to what they knew to be God's will, and frequented, at the stated hours of prayer, the temple, where the apostles taught. But this persecution had a most salutary widening influence, both externally and internally, upon the church. Instead of confining the benefits of Christianity to the limits of Jerusalem, where its glorious Author had so lately finished his course upon earth, the believers of this faith, trained under the apostles, and disciplined by adversities, went forth prepared and eager to make known the truth in which they believed, and many of them well qualified by natural and acquired endowments, and by the gifts of the Spirit, to labour effectually for its advancement; and hence we shall soon see Christian societies growing up in each of the various regions to which they were dispersed abroad. With this outward expansion there was a corresponding inward expansion. Away from Jerusalem the disciples became more free from the trammels of Judaism, and grew to be increasingly conscious of the independence of their Divine faith, and its intrinsic sufficiency as a doctrine destined, without foreign aid, to impart Divine life and salvation to all men, among all nations without distinction.

These were splendid results from what, at the first view, seemed so threatening as the persecution following the death of Stephen. But if there be any circumstance which particularly displays the supreme majesty of God, and his controlling power over the affairs of men, it is when those events which we ignorantly call *evil*, and which appear to us teeming with destruction, are not only removed without the accumulated

horrors which we dreaded, but actually leave behind them the most beneficial effects. Then are we satisfied that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men;" then do we gratefully acknowledge: "This is thy hand, and Thou, Lord, hast done it."

Forty-Second Week—Second Day.

PHILIP THE EVANGELIST.—ACTS VIII. 5-24.

ALTHOUGH the apostles remained at Jerusalem, the deacons went away. The considerations already suggested concerning them, with the vehemency with which one of their number had been opposed, and brought to his death, render it probable that all of them were special objects of hostile attention on the part of the Jews; and as the dispersion of the church left no room for the exercise of their distinguishing office, there was no paramount duty to detain them at Jerusalem. Whither they went we do not know, except of one only of their number. This was Philip, whose name is second (after that of Stephen) in the list of the deacons, and whose place is also second in the apostolical record—being in fact the only one of the surviving deacons whose name recurs in it, or of whose labours we have any information.

He went to Samaria, where, although near, he was much safer than he would have been in many more distant places—in Damascus, for instance—for the Jews had no synagogues in Samaria, as they had in many heathen lands; nor had the Sanhedrim any influence or power there. Indeed an attempt on their part to exercise authority over one resident in that territory, would have assuredly been deeply resented and resisted by the Samaritans, and might have led to a popular commotion.

It was not, however, from any prominent regard to his greater safety in Samaria than at other places out of Judea,

that Philip made that province the place of his retreat; the hope of being there of service in his Master's cause, was doubtless a prevailing motive with him. The place to which he went is described as "*a* city [not *the* city] of Samaria;" which we take to have been Shechem or Sychar, and not the city of Samaria itself, which had been rebuilt by Herod, and to which he had given the name of Sebaste, the Greek for "Augusta," in compliment to his patron, the emperor Augustus. This was nominally the metropolis of the district, but Shechem was really the more important place, and the chief seat of the Samaritans. Here our Lord had been in person some four years before; and there can be no doubt that there were many among the inhabitants who retained a lively recollection of that visit, by which, as well as by their comparative freedom from the political prejudices of Judaism, they were in a state of some preparedness for the fuller doctrine which Philip was ready to impart. This evangelist, being, as we have presumed, a Hellenist, would also be comparatively free from those angry feelings towards the Samaritans, which might have deterred a native Jew from going among them. He could not but have known of our Lord's teaching in Samaria; and this must have seemed to him a sufficient warrant, for offering the gospel to a people not recognised as within the pale of Judaism; and if he had hesitated, the recollection of our Lord's express order, just before His ascension, for its general diffusion, must have removed his doubts. This, however, was a point on which the apostles themselves did not see their way clearly; and to Philip may be assigned the distinction of being led by the Spirit to anticipate the conclusions, to which they were all eventually led or driven.

The success of Philip among the Samaritans fully equalled, and probably exceeded, any expectations he had formed. Very general attention was paid to him; and very many were so deeply impressed by the doctrine which he taught, and by the signal miracles of beneficence which he wrought in confirmation of it, that they declared their adhesion to

Christ, and received baptism from the hands of the evangelist. Then there was "great joy" in the city; for many of its inhabitants had found that treasure of the soul, for which there was a general craving at that time. Among these converts was a man who had before been held in high reverence by the people of the place. His name was Simon, and he is described as one of those men, partly philosopher and partly charlatan, of whom there were many in that age, who pretended to have, and perhaps deluded themselves into the belief that they actually had, a special intimacy and intercourse with the hidden spiritual world; and who, either by aid of the powers of darkness were enabled to work real wonders in support of their pretensions, or by their acquaintance with secrets of natural science now familiar to us, but then known only to the adepts, were enabled to produce effects which astonished the uninstructed, just as the results of electricity or chemistry do still, in many places, alarm and bewilder the ignorant. This man had been looked up to with awe and reverence by the people, as something more than human, his pretensions being favoured by the circumstances of the time; for the general excitement in the minds of men, and the prevalent longing for something higher—facts to which we have frequently had occasion to refer—led the people but too readily to attach themselves to all persons who affirmed, that they had been favoured with glimpses of the spiritual world. So we see here again the necessity of miracles—of such miracles as could, from their nature, be subject to no misinterpretation. Simon might, for instance, do many wonderful things, but he could not heal the sick and dying, and restore strength to the helpless, as Philip did. He could astonish and perplex; Philip also could astonish, but he could do far more—he could, by the beneficent character of all his acts, reopen the springs of gladness in many a forlorn heart, and send thankfulness and joy to many a troubled home. These were practical realities; and no wonder that Simon soon found himself deserted. He therefore seems to have thought that he might maintain his

influence better by an adhesion to the new cause, than by any hostility to it. He accordingly presented himself to Philip, declaring his belief in Christ, and was in consequence baptized. How far his belief was sincere, or how far simulated, it is not for us to say. We know that he was not spiritually converted; but he may have had an historical belief in all that Philip taught concerning Christ, and may have thought that sufficient. Or it may be that he regarded the works of Philip as the results of an art simply higher than his own, and of secrets to which he had not yet attained; and he expected to be able to gain possession of them by attaching himself to the unsuspicious evangelist.

Now, when the intelligence of Philip's success in Samaria reached Jerusalem, Peter and John went thither to promote and establish this great work.

It is to be borne in mind, that though the ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were shed abroad in the heart of every true convert, the extraordinary gifts, as those of speaking languages not learned, of working miracles, or of discerning spirits, could only be imparted by the apostles, when not spontaneously effused, as on the day of Pentecost, or in the house of Cornelius. These gifts they imparted to such as seemed to them fit to receive them; and in this they could not well be mistaken, as they were endowed with the faculty of "discerning of spirits," that is, of perceiving the real spiritual condition of those to whom their attention was directed. This they did by laying their hands upon the heads of the persons for whom they sought these benefits—such being the universal Eastern practice with those who prayed for or invoked blessings upon another. The free Spirit of God was not, however, bound, even by the apostles' invocation. He dispersed his gifts severally to every man as He would—bestowing upon him that gift, which he was best fitted to receive and exercise for the benefit of the church. Still, unlike the spiritual gifts, with which *all* true converts were enriched, these were manifest and palpable, and, in the eyes of a worldly man like Simon, must have

seemed of immensely greater importance and value than those simply spiritual gifts and graces of the Spirit which, although ostensibly a convert, he had not received, and was incapable of appreciating. Seeing, therefore, the extraordinary endowments which followed the imposition of the apostles' hands, he was greatly astonished. He measured them by his own standard; he regarded them simply as greater adepts than himself, or even Philip, in thaumaturgic arts; and perceiving at a glance how the possession of such a power as that which they exercised, might be made conducive to the objects of his selfish ambition, he thirsted to obtain it. He had not approached near enough to the apostles to understand them thoroughly. Notwithstanding the *eclât* of his conversion, there was something so mutually repellent between their nature and his, that no intimacy had grown up between them. Had there been such intimacy, he would not have had the hardihood, or have committed the serious mistake, of attempting to bribe the apostles by a sum of money—probably a large sum—to impart their own power to him—not simply the power of speaking with tongues, of working miracles, of prophesying, of discerning of spirits—but the power of conferring those gifts by the imposition of his hands. The audacious atrocity and worldliness of this proposal, struck the apostles with amazement and horror; and Peter gave free utterance to his indignant abhorrence: —"Thy money," he said, "perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." He added, with becoming severity, that he now perceived that Simon had "neither part nor lot in the matter," that his "heart was not right in the sight of God," and that he was still, notwithstanding his apparent adhesion to Christ by conversion and baptism, "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Yet, seeing that Simon seemed appalled at his denunciation, he addressed him, less severely —"Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, *if, perhaps*, the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Nothing could more strongly manifest Peter's estimate of

this infamy than the subjunctive form in which he held forth the possibility of pardon. Simon felt this. The proud spirit of the man, the aim of whose life had been to secure the homage of men, stood rebuked before the plain-minded truthfulness of the Galilean fisherman. The philosophy of his life was at fault. Simple high-toned Christian honesty was a phenomenon which he could not well understand; it threw him sharply out of his entire course of thought; and perhaps for that moment he was a better man than he ever had been before, or ever was after. Yet, looking closely, fear seems to have been the paramount impression. He had doubtless heard of the fate of Ananias and Sapphira, and feared that the apostle might inflict on the spot the doom he seemed to denounce; and when relieved from this by the call to repentance, and the reference of his judgment to God, the words he brought himself to utter are less those of contrition for his offence than dread of its punishment:—"Pray for me, that none of those things which ye have spoken come upon me."

The word "simony," formed from this man's name, has perpetuated in the church the infamy of his thought, that "the gift of God may be purchased with money."

Forty-Second Week—Third Day.

SIMON MAGUS.—ACTS VIII. 18-24.

THE Simon who is dismissed from sacred history with the facts which last evening passed under our notice, is taken up by ecclesiastical history and tradition, in which he figures by the name of Simon Magus. According to this source of information, his contact with Christianity, and the acquaintance he had formed with its principles, were turned to account for the advancement of his own objects, by a new system of delusion in which some christian elements were, in a most distorted

shape, incorporated with something of later Judaism, and something of the mythic philosophy of the East.

According to Justin Martyr, Simon was a native of Gitton in Samaria; and this agrees very well with the circumstance of our finding him pursuing his practices among the Samaritans. There is a tradition that he had studied at Alexandria; and those who are acquainted with the dreamy theology of the Alexandrian schools will think this not unlikely, though we have no very certain evidence of the fact. Josephus speaks of a Simon Magus who was high in the confidence of the Roman governor Felix, and the subservient minister of his will. Neander supposes him to have been the same as this Simon; but it is reasonably objected that Josephus makes his Simon a native of Cyprus; whereas Justin, who was himself a native of Shechem in Samaria, and had every opportunity of knowing the native country of Simon, declares him to have been a Samaritan, and could have no possible interest in misrepresenting the truth. Besides, Felix lived too late to allow it to be supposed that Simon Magus could still be actively engaged in those regions where he was procurator; for Simon seems to have early left the East, and to have betaken himself to Rome, the rendezvous for all deceivers of this kind. This Justin affirms; but what he does say, in his First Apology, is so interesting, and has excited so much discussion, that we may give it entire.

"After the return of Christ to heaven, the demons put forth certain men, calling themselves gods, who not only were not persecuted, but honoured by you. Such was Simon, a certain Samaritan, who, during the reign of Claudius Cæsar, having performed magical works, through the art and power of demons, in your imperial city of Rome, was accounted a god, and has been honoured by you with a statue as a god, which statue has been erected by you in an island in the Tiber, between the two bridges, with this inscription in Latin —*Simoni Deo Sancto;* and almost all the Samaritans, and a few also among other nations, acknowledge and worship him as the First God."

Recurring to the subject afterwards, Justin says: "As I have before said, Simon being with you in the imperial city of Rome, during the reign of Claudius Cæsar, he so astonished and deluded the sacred senate and the Roman people as to be accounted a god, and to be honoured with a statue, as the other gods are honoured by you. Whence I beg that you [the emperor, or the emperor and the Cæsars] would make the sacred senate and your people acquainted with this our supplication; so that if any one be entangled in his doctrines, he may learn the truth, and be able to escape from error. And if it be your pleasure, let the statue be destroyed."

This statement has been repeated by several of the fathers; but it has of late been generally supposed that Justin was misled in it by his imperfect acquaintance with the Latin language and mythology, and mistook a statue to the Sabine deity, Semo Sancus, for one to Simon—a conclusion which has been conceived to be much confirmed by a piece of marble having been found in an islet of the Tiber, actually bearing the inscription (possibly, it was thought, the very same that Justin saw), SEMONI SANCO DEO FIDIO SACRUM.

The late learned Dr Burton, however, in his work on the Heresies of the Apostolic Age, urged some reasons against the supposed certainty that Justin had been mistaken; and more lately, Professor Norton of New York has so investigated the subject, as to leave strong grounds for doubt whether Justin's story may not have been too readily set aside. Justin, at the distance of a hundred years, may have been in some error as to the circumstances attending the erection of the statue, and nothing more need be understood than that it was set up with the sanction of the emperor—in whose reign, indeed, it is known that a decree was issued which rendered it impossible that a public statue should be erected without that sanction. It is however, little likely that Justin should have committed a blunder so egregious, as to what he had actually seen; and if he had, it is still less likely that it would have escaped notice, before presentation, by some friend capable of correcting the error, in a public

document like the Apology, in which the whole body of the Christians were interested. Or if it had been presented with this blunder in it, the laughter and derision of the enemies of Christianity, at the ignorance of the apologist, must have made the fact notorious, and would effectually have prevented its being repeated for two hundred years by others, to some of whom it is almost certain that the mistake, if any existed, must have become known. Besides, the inscription on the marble is less likely, than seems at first view, to have been thus mistaken by a man even more ignorant than Justin is, upon this hypothesis, unjustly supposed to have been; for the words cited are followed by others expressing the name (Sextus Pompeius) and titles of the person by whom it was dedicated. It is far from extraordinary that there should be two inscriptions, one to Semo Sancus, and another to Simon in this place. We know that the city swarmed with statues and inscriptions; and Semo Sancus was an ancient well known god, who had a temple on the Quirinal Hill, and to whom there were several inscriptions in the city. Three besides this one have actually been found, and more are probably buried in the soil; and this reduces the singularity of the coincidence that one should be found in the same island of the Tiber where Justin saw the statue of Simon. With regard to the fact of its existence, with which alone we are concerned, there is no difficulty in supposing it to have been erected at Rome by some of Simon's followers; nor is there anything to render it improbable that they had obtained liberty to set up a statue of him in Rome exposed to public view. The deification of contemporaries after death was common in that age. The examples of it in the apotheoses of the Roman emperors, and of those to whom they extended the honour, must be familiar to every one. There is a more affecting illustration of the common conceptions concerning it, in the intention of Cicero to deify his beloved daughter Tullia, and to erect a temple to her memory. Similar honours are said to have been rendered at Parium to Alexander the Paphlagonian, and to Peregrinus Proteus, impostors

of the same class with Simon; and at Troas to a certain Neryllinus, of whom we know nothing except that he was probably of like character. The more noted charlatan Apollonius of Tyana was also regarded as a god, and thought worthy to have temples built for his worship. But it is quite unnecessary to adduce these facts, since there is no reasonable question that Simon was adored as a god, or as God, by his followers, and therefore no reason to doubt that they might have erected a statue to him with the inscription recorded.

Eusebius reports that Simon continued at Rome in the enjoyment of great reputation until the reign of Nero, when his popularity was seriously endangered by the arrival of Peter; and later writers give a wonderful legend of his destruction at the prayer of the apostle, joined to that of Paul, when, in a last violent effort to sustain his drooping credit, he attempted to fly, with the pretence of ascending to heaven as Christ had done. If he attempted this, it scarcely needed any miracle that he should fall to the ground and break both his legs, as he is reported to have done. It is added that he was carried to Brindes, where, being overwhelmed with shame and grief at his defeat and disaster, he committed suicide by casting himself from the roof of the house in which he lodged. This may perhaps be connected with the anecdote which we find in Suetonius of a man who attempted to fly in presence of the emperor Nero, but who fell to the ground with such violence that his blood spurted up to the gallery in which the emperor sat.

As reported to us, the doctrines taught by Simon resembled those of the Gnostics, of which remarkable sect he is indeed described as the founder; and the accounts which are given of his later pretensions, however extravagant they appear, correspond with the intimation of the sacred historian, that even before his acquaintance with Christianity, he "gave himself out to be some great one," and led the Samaritans to regard him as "the great power of God." It appears then, that eventually, when he had digested his views into

something of a system, he claimed to be nothing less than the incarnate God, and as such became an object of worship to his followers. His deity consisted of certain Æons, or persons, all of which, collectively and severally, he declared to be manifested in himself. Hence he professed to appear as the Father in respect to the Samaritans, as the Son in respect to the Jews, and as the Holy Ghost in respect to all other religions; but that it was indifferent to him by which of these names he was called. According to Jerome, he declared of himself: "I am the Word of God; I am the Perfection of God; I am the Comforter; I am the Almighty; I am the whole Essence of God." He taught no doctrine of atonement, and denied the resurrection of the body, but admitted the future existence, if not the immortality, of the soul. He did not require purity of life; but taught that actions were in themselves indifferent, and that the distinction of actions as good or evil was a delusion taught by the angels to bring men into subjection. He carried about with him a beautiful female named Helena, whom he set forth as the first Idea of Deity, and who, in consequence was also worshipped by his followers. These blasphemous and pernicious tenets sufficiently indicate the character of his teaching; but it may be doubtful how much of it is to be literally interpreted, or how much to be viewed in the light of the highly allegorical character of all Eastern teaching in his day—teaching, to which the beautiful simplicity of the Christian system and teaching, presents the most striking and effectual contrast. The only certain thing is, that Simon was a great impostor, although he may also to some extent have been a self-deceiver.

Forty-Second Week—Fourth Day.

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH.—ACTS VIII. 26-40.

When Philip had finished his high work in Samaria, he received a Divine intimation that his services were required elsewhere. The message was, "Arise, and go towards the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, *which is desert.*" This last clause has perplexed inquiry until lately, and various fanciful interpretations have been offered. The difficulty arose from the fact, that although Gaza had been destroyed ninety-six years before Christ, by Alexander Jannæus, it had subsequently been rebuilt, with other cities, by the Roman general, Gabinius, and was again laid in ruins *thirty years after* the present transaction. Thus it is not easy to see how it could well be "desert" at that time. To obviate this difficulty, it has been supposed that "the expression in the book of Acts, which might at first appear to imply that Gaza was then 'desert,' is more probably to be referred to the particular road from Jerusalem to Gaza on which the Evangelist was to find the eunuch, viz., the southern road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza through the 'desert,' a region without villages, as is the case at the present day."[1] All this conjecture has been superseded by one of the most interesting practical discoveries of Dr Keith in Palestine, that the site of old Gaza is at some distance from that of the later Gaza, and lies completely desert—buried in the sand; and by the citations from ancient authors, who make distinct mention of "new Gaza," as distinguished from "desert Gaza."[2]

The object of this mission does not seem to have been

[1] Robinson's *Researches*, ii. 380.

[2] *Evidence of Prophecy*, p. 376, Ed. 36th, 1848. See also *Daily Bible Illustrations*, Evening Series—Twenty-Sixth Week, Fifth Day.

disclosed to Philip, but he immediately departed, knowing that further light would be given him when it should be needed. On his way to the place indicated, or on his arrival there, his attention was attracted by a travelling chariot, in which sat a person who was reading as he rode. The dress and equipage of this traveller, as well as his attendance and escort, indicated him to be a man of high rank and distinction. He was, in fact, no other than "a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship." We need not understand with the painters, that this great lord was a negro. Ethiopia was a term vaguely applied to any countries beyond the range of Southern Egypt and Africa, and even to Southern Arabia. Here we know that it designates the kingdom of Meroe in Upper Egypt, which Pliny informs us was governed by queens who all bore the name of Candace as a title of office. This is a curious and interesting, because an incidental, corroboration of the statement of the sacred writer, while it points both to the locality from which this great officer had come, and to that to which he was returning. It does not follow, from his being "a man of Ethiopia," that he was a native Ethiopian, but simply that he was resident there, and came therefrom. If so, he was "a proselyte of righteousness" to the Jewish religion—easily accounted for by the fact that many Jews spread themselves from Egypt southward into Meroe and beyond, in which quarter, indeed, Judaism had made considerable progress. This fact may even suggest the *probability* at least, that the man was of Jewish descent; for, from their aptitude for affairs, especially money affairs, Jews often rose to high distinction in foreign courts—just as at present in Moslem, and also in Christian countries, the court banker is frequently a Jew. What strengthens this probability is, that the eunuch appears to have been reading the Scriptures in Hebrew—a qualification not possessed by foreign converts to Judaism. He might, indeed, have read the Scriptures in the Greek translation then current, and it is

not altogether certain that he did not; but when it is said, "The *place* of the Scripture which he read," there seems in the original to be an allusion to a division of the Old Testament for public reading, which had been introduced into the Hebrew copies, but not into the Greek translation. Persons who were really eunuchs could not enter into the congregation of the Lord (Deut. xxiii. 1); and as, therefore, this personage had been at Jerusalem to worship, probably at one of the great festivals, the term is doubtless to be understood in its acquired sense—frequent in Scripture—in which it designates any great officer of state.

The probabilities seem, therefore, to be that this "man of Ethiopia" was a descendant of Abraham, who had risen to high employment in Meroe, and who on this occasion had indulged his pious zeal in the, to him, rare satisfaction of a pilgrimage to the holy city at one of the seasons of high festival.

Philip could see that the traveller was reading, but was not near enough to hear what he read. A Divine impulse, however, directed him to draw nearer to the chariot, and then he heard that it was the passage respecting the sufferings of Christ, in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which he was reading. With us it is so adverse to cultivated habits, to read aloud to one's self, that some commentators have imagined that there was a person in the chariot reading *to* the Ethiopian eunuch. But the text expressly and repeatedly states that he himself was reading; and that he gave a loud oral utterance to what he read, is quite in accordance with the existing habits of the Orientals when reading privately for their own edification, and without any particular intention of being heard by others, though certainly without any dislike of being heard by any whom their voice may happen to reach. Mr Jowett well describes this in his *Christian Researches:* "They usually go on reading aloud, with a kind of singing voice, moving their heads and bodies in tune, and making a monotonous cadence at regular intervals—thus giving emphasis, although not such emphasis as

would please an English ear. Very often they seem to read without perceiving the sense; and to be pleased with themselves, because they can go through the mechanical act of reading in any way."

With us a dusty foot-traveller, like Philip, would scarcely think of accosting a grand lord riding past in his chariot, and pre-occupied in reading. But the customs of the East are different; and Philip was not regarded as guilty of any impertinence, when he freely asked the great man if he understood what he was then reading. On the contrary, the grandee, impressed no doubt by the earnestness of tone and manner with which Philip put the question, answered with a real interest and a touching simplicity which, together with the fact of his being thus engaged in reading the Scriptures while upon a journey, give us the most favourable impression of his character—"How can I, except some man should guide me?" Then, perceiving from the responsive look to this candid confession and inquiry, that Philip was able to afford the guidance he desired, he begged him to come up into the chariot and sit with him. Having him there, the treasurer hastened to point out the passage that most perplexed him, and which indeed was the one that Philip had heard him read: —"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." Now, said the eunuch, laying his finger on the place, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" Then Philip proceeded to explain it. He showed him that it was a prophecy respecting the Messiah whom the Jews had expected so long; and that it applied exactly to Jesus of Nazareth, who, in the days of his humiliation, was grievously afflicted, but was eminently meek and patient under all. And so he went on preaching Christ crucified; and as the mystery of man's redemption gradually opened to the astonished view of the eunuch, his heart filled with holy rapture and gratitude, and he longed to enrol himself under the banner of that

King whose realm is not of this world. From Philip's discourse he had gathered that this was to be accomplished by the sign of baptism ; and when, therefore, as they rode along, a stream of water was reached, he cried out with eagerness, "See, here, is water! What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip answered, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." On which the other, with solemn earnestness, declared, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"—not only that Jesus was the Christ, a Messiah, but that He was the Son of God, and as such able to pardon sin, and mighty to subdue it. Philip being satisfied with this avowal, the chariot was stayed, and the two went down together into the water, where the evangelist baptized his illustrious convert; and no sooner was the rite accomplished than the baptizer miraculously disappeared, and the eunuch saw him no more. But this disappearance tended to strengthen, rather than to weaken the convert's faith; and instead, therefore, of attempting to search for or follow the evangelist, he, perceiving it was the will of God that they should be separated, mounted his chariot, and "went on his way rejoicing"—rejoicing in the great light which had shone in upon his darkness—rejoicing in that sweet tranquillity of mind which his increased knowledge of the gospel of Christ's salvation could not fail to impart.

The conversion of a man of the eunuch's high standing was probably attended by some signal results in the country to which he returned; and although history has left no record of such results, the great day of disclosures will doubtless make them known.

Forty-Second Week—Fifth Day.

SAUL OF TARSUS.—ACTS IX. 1.

THE history again turns to Saul of Tarsus, and henceforth is chiefly engaged in the relation of his proceedings

As therefore this personage is the prominent figure in the remainder of this volume, it may be well to look back slightly into the antecedents of his career.

It is clear that the family of Saul were Hellenists, understood as Jews speaking the Greek language; but not Hellenes, or Greeks converted to Judaism. How long the family had been in this position—that is, how long it had been settled in a foreign land, we do not know; but the aggregate impression made by certain facts, separately of slight importance, is, that the family had been for not *less* than two or three generations, absent from Palestine. That, although thus dwelling in a strange land and speaking a strange tongue, the family maintained the purity of its Hebrew descent and of its Hebrew ideas, is clear from the way in which Saul speaks of himself and his ancestors—"Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I."[1] So that, as elsewhere he contends that he was not behind the very chiefest of the apostles, he would show that, although a Hellenist, he was in none of those things of which they boasted behind the chiefest of the Jews. Aware of the importance of taking this position, he fails not, on every proper occasion, to insist upon it. In another passage he declares that he was "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin—*an Hebrew of the Hebrews*."[2] This last was a very proud distinction among the Jews, as it denoted one who was a Hebrew by both parents, and that by a long series of ancestors, without any admixture of foreign or proselyte blood. In the same sense, and with an equal feeling of dignity, the Bedouin at this day will boast that he is "an Arab of the Arabs." Usually, persons of the same nation dwelling in a foreign country, learn to merge the special and sectarian differences maintained in their native land. But Saul informs us it was not so in his family; not only was it in the highest sense Jewish, but it stood upon the principles and practice of the then most orthodox Jewish sect—he was "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee."[3] In standing by birth,

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 22. [2] Phil. iii. 5. [3] Acts xxiii. 6.

he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; in standing by training, he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. The fact that his father was a Pharisee—the sect most suspicious of and most opposed to the influences of Grecian culture, would alone suffice to indicate that his early training was, as far as possible, Jewish; and that the acquaintance he afterwards evinces with Greek literature, Greek customs, and Greek ideas, arose rather from the accidents of his position than from distinct instruction. The knowledge of such matters which we acquire in schools, must have grown into the *living* knowledge of an observant and intelligent youth, to whom Greek was the native tongue, who was born and grew up in a Greek city whose very air was redolent of Greek notions and Greek literature, and who had the habits of Greek life and religion daily before his eyes.

Of Saul's father, we only know that he was a Pharisee, and that he must have enjoyed the privileges of a Roman citizen, seeing that his son held these high privileges in right of his birth, being "free-born." His mother is never mentioned or alluded to, which may suggest the probability that she died soon after his birth. He had, however, a sister—probably older than himself, for her son had grown to manhood when Paul was still of middle age.[1] He names also several of his kindred, male and female—Andronicus and Junia; Herodion, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater[2]—all of them converts to Christ, and converted probably through him. It is interesting to learn that, so far as we know, he had not to encounter the opposition of his kindred, but obtained their concurrence and support. Andronicus and Junia became his "fellow-prisoners;" and the rest were at least converts, if not fellow-labourers.

The fact that Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin, suggests how he came to bear that name. In the first man of that name of whose history we have any knowledge, the small tribe of Benjamin had presented to Israel its first king; and this being the most illustrious fact in the disastrous history

[1] Acts xxiii. 16. [2] Rom. xvi. 7, 11, 21.

of the tribe, rendered the name of Saul popular among its members, who delighted to bestow it on their children. Among the other tribes the name was cherished with less affection, and was of comparatively rare occurrence.

There are no materials which enable us to determine the position in life of Saul's father. In general, the Jews out of Palestine were engaged in trade and commerce. Some were rich through the extent of their transactions, or the direct returns of their capital; but there were comparatively few whose wealth arose from landed estate, as, while Palestine remained a Jewish country, every one who desired that position sought for it there. Egypt may have offered exceptions, and still more the East, as these had been for many generations the real homes of large Jewish populations. Abroad there were few Jews very poor; seeing that those who were so, rarely left their own country, and those who became so after having left, returned to it, as there they found in their want provision which did not exist or could not be enforced elsewhere. The majority of the Jews abroad were dealers and tradesmen of various kinds, and were generally in good and sometimes in affluent circumstances. It is probable that Saul's father was of this class. That he was not poor is shown by the fact that his son had a first rate education, which he was sent to Jerusalem and kept there to finish. Yet, on the other hand, this does not imply that he was rich; for the cost of education was very low, and the objects which Saul's father realized for his son, were not more difficult of attainment than it is now for a humble Scottish or American farmer to give a university education to his son.

The fact that the father was a citizen of Rome, implies nothing as to his condition in life. In regard to this matter, which became of some importance in the subsequent history of Saul, it used to be inferred that Tarsus was one of the cities, all those born in which enjoyed this distinguished privilege. But closer inquiry has shown that Tarsus did not attain *this* position till long after the time of Saul, though it was in his time a *free* city, in the sense of being governed by

its own laws and magistrates, and of being exempt from tribute. Hence we find later in our history—Acts xxii. 29—that the tribune at Jerusalem was not debarred from ordering Saul to be scourged by the knowledge that he was of Tarsus, but desisted when he *further* learned that he was a Roman citizen. It must therefore have been an individual right; but how it was acquired is open to conjecture. As Saul was born to this right, it must have been derived from his father; and if Saul could receive it as a birth-right, his father might so have received it likewise. It may have been acquired—as it often was—from some service rendered to the Romans, or to some eminent Roman, during the civil wars; or, although Saul himself was free-born, his father or remoter ancestor may have purchased the right for some "great price." It is even possible that, although brought up at Tarsus, Saul may have been actually born in some other city, the mere fact of birth in which conveyed the rights of citizenship.

It appears, by the subsequent history, that Saul had learned in his youth the trade of a tent-maker, by which he was able to earn his living. But neither does this throw any light on the position of his father; for it was a very laudable custom among the Jews, even the wealthiest, that all their sons should learn some trade, as a security against want under the vicissitudes of life. Many sayings, enforcing this obligation, are found in the Talmud. Rabbi Judah is there reported as saying—"He who teacheth not his son a trade, doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief." And among the sayings ascribed to Saul's own master—the Rabban Gamaliel—is this—"He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a garden that is fenced." Having thus to choose a trade for his son, it was very natural that the father should select that of tent-making, as this trade was largely carried on at Tarsus. The tents were mostly of goats' hair, and, as in Cilicia, of which Tarsus was the capital, the hair of the goat was remarkably long, it was highly esteemed for the manufacture of the hair-cloth of which such

tents and other articles were made. This cloth indeed took its distinguishing name from the locality which afforded the material, whence also the cloth itself, being woven chiefly in the province, came to be known by the name of *cilicium*. This hair-cloth, being less liable than any other to injury from wet, was used, not only for the coverings of tents, but for the coats of sailors and fishermen; for sacks in which to carry packages on horseback; for bags to hold workmen's tools; for coverings to military engines; and even to lay over the walls o besieged towns, to deaden the force of the battering-rams, and to prevent the wood-work from being set on fire. These circumstances gave great prominence to this branch of manufacture at Tarsus; and as the probability is, that Saul's father was in some kind of business, and as men usually give their sons the trades to which they have easiest access, it may seem not unlikely that he was himself in some way engaged in the traffic with, or the manufacture of, hair-cloth.

Forty-Second Week—Sixth Day.

TARSUS.—ACTS XXI. 39.

ALTHOUGH the early life of Saul is little known to us, and the exact character of his early training, as well as his precise position in life, must be left very much to conjecture, we have at least the satisfaction of knowing the nature of the scenery on which his eyes continually rested, and amid which his early days were spent. Some may despise this source of pleasurable emotion, in contemplating the home and cradle of a great man; but natural sentiment refuses to recognise the indifference which cold philosophy inculcates; and so long as that sentiment impels men to traverse sea and land in order to look upon the scenes of great events, and the

homes and haunts of illustrious men, Tarsus will, for Saul's sake, be a spot of interest to readers of the Bible.

Cilicia, of which Tarsus was the capital, was the province of Asia Minor nearest to Syria, being separated therefrom, on the east, only by the mountains of Amanus. It was a plain, backed to the north by the great mountain range of Taurus, and open on the south to the sea, or rather to the Gulf of Cilicia, which, by a breadth of fifty miles, separated this coast from the island of Cyprus. Tarsus stood in about the midst of this province, nearly two leagues from the mouth of the river Cydnus, which was navigable to the city. This river, now called the Kara Su, or Black Water, then flowed through the midst of the city, but now only passes near to it.

Strabo says that Tarsus was founded by an Argive colony that went with Triptolemus in search of Io. But this is simply absurd; for Io, the daughter of Inachus, must have lived at least eighteen centuries before our era; whereas, according to the Parian marbles, Triptolemus quitted Eleusis only 1409 years before that epoch; and even apart from this anachronism, which brings into connection persons four centuries apart, what credit can be given to a story in which two such fabulous persons as Io and Triptolemus are made to play the principal parts?

The origin of the *name* of Tarsus is, by another Greek writer (Dionysius Periegetes), connected with another fable, and affords no bad specimen of what Sir William Drummond calls "the dauntless effrontery of the Greeks in tracing foreign names to their own language." In that language, *tarsos* signifies the bone of the hand or foot, and may, consequently, be put by synecdoche for either the one or the other. Taking advantage of this figure of speech, Dionysius informs us that Tarsus was so called because there the horse Pegasus left his hoof (his *tarsos*) when Bellerophon fell from him!

Although we are bound to reject the tradition reported by Strabo, it is not to be doubted that a Greek colony had, from very remote times, been established at Tarsus. Grecian learning and philosophy appear to have flourished there.

Strabo mentions some of the distinguished men who were natives of the place, and it was immediately after the time of this geographer that the great apostle of the Gentiles was born at Tarsus.

It has already been stated, that the inhabitants did not possess the general right of Roman citizenship till considerably later than the time of Saul; but that yet there was no reason why a native of Tarsus should not, on other grounds, be a citizen of Rome. It is mentioned by Suetonius that many strangers, professors of the liberal arts, and teachers of the sciences, were made Roman citizens by Cæsar. Now it happens that Tarsus connected itself conspicuously with that great man, and the inhabitants received so many favours from him, and were so greatly attached to him, that they even changed the name of their city, as Dion Cassius assures us, to Juliopolis. This renders it likely that Cæsar bestowed the Roman citizenship on many persons belonging to Tarsus. This rank could, as the Roman lawyers assure us, be conveyed by inheritance, or even by will; and thus Saul, though a Jew by birth, may have inherited the right which he claimed.

It used to be a somewhat favourite notion, that Tarsus was the Tarshish so often mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures; but it is now generally admitted that there is no ground for that conclusion.

Tarsus was a large, populous, and wealthy town, and hence Saul himself justly calls it "no mean city." Acts xxi. 39. It was eminent as a seat not only of learning, but of commerce; and although there are few existing remains to avouch its ancient importance, its extent at least is evinced by the fact that the Cydnus, which flowed through the midst of the ancient city, is, in the nearest part, a full mile from the modern town. The place continued to be of considerable importance so late as the time of Abulfeda, at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries; for this geographer describes it as a large place, surrounded by a double wall, and as being then in the hands of the Armenian Christians. It is now a Turkish town, greatly decayed, but

still of some relative importance, and carrying on a somewhat active commerce. It exports large quantities of cattle to Egypt; it collects the cotton of the district and sells it to the merchants of Smyrna, who export it to Europe. Grain is very plentiful; and in 1845, when there was dearth all over Syria, Tarsus was able to supply its neighbours with many ship-loads of wheat and barley. The modern town contains some very fine buildings and mosques, and is entirely walled in with massive masonry; but both the exterior and interior are filthy in the extreme. The climate is mild and agreeable in winter; but is in summer intensely hot and unwholesome. During one week, so late as the middle of October, the thermometer was never below 80°, and was, in the experience of one traveller, sometimes as high as 93° in the shade. Hence the inhabitants retire during that season to the mountains. There they live in perfect indolence; and the poor man will rather sell anything he may possess than fail to take his family to the mountains during the summer months. This constant shifting of residence prevents the people from building good houses, either in Tarsus or in the *Yaila*, as they call their summer quarters.

The inhabitants—Turks, Greeks, and Armenians, are about 6000 in number, by the latest estimate.

About a mile to the north of the town, the river Cydnus, previously of considerable depth and breadth, falls over a bed of rocks about fifteen feet in height, whence it separates into several small channels, turning mills and watering beautiful gardens; these streams afterwards unite, and so continue to the sea. The plain of Tarsus is bare of trees, but beyond the limits of the cultivated lands, the country is covered with bushes, among which may be observed the myrtle in great abundance and perfection, reaching sometimes to seven or eight feet high, the Vallonia oak, the oleander, the carob, the cassia bush, and many others.

Here, then, whatever of man's works may have altered among the scenes of Saul's childhood, "the plain, the mountains, the river, and the sea still remain to us. The rich har-

vests of corn still grow luxuriantly after the rains in spring. The same tents of goats' hair are still seen covering the plains in the busy harvest. There is the same solitude and silence in the intolerable heat and dust of the summer. Then, as now, the mothers and children of Tarsus went out in the cool evenings, and looked from the gardens around the city, or from their terraced roofs upon the heights of Taurus. The same sunset lingered on the pointed summits. The same shadows gathered in the deep ravines. The river Cydnus has suffered some changes in the course of 1800 years. Instead of rushing, as in the time of Xenophon, like the Rhone at Geneva, in a stream of 200 feet broad through the city, it now flows idly past it on the east. The channel which floated the ships of Antony and Cleopatra is now filled up; and wide unhealthy lagoons occupy the place of the ancient docks. But its upper waters still flow, as formerly, cold and clear from the snows of Taurus; and its waterfalls still break over the same rocks, when the snows are melting, like the Rhine at Schaffhausen. We find a pleasure in thinking that the footsteps of the young apostle often wandered by the side of this stream, and that his eyes often looked on these falls. We can hardly believe that he who spoke to the Lystrians of the 'rain from heaven,' and the 'fruitful seasons,' and of 'the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea,' could have looked with indifference upon beautiful and impressive scenery. Gamaliel was celebrated for his love of nature; and the young Jew, who was destined to be his most famous pupil, spent his early days in the close neighbourhood of much that was well adapted to foster such a taste."[1]

[1] *Life and Epistles of St Paul.* By the Rev. W. J. Conybeare and the Rev. J. S. Howson. London, 1853. Respecting Tarsus, see also Mannert's *Geographie der Gretchen und Römer;* Drummond's *Origines;* Barker's *Lares and Penates;* Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria*, etc; Irby and Mangles' *Travels;* Chesney's *Expedition to the Euphrates;* Neale's *Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor*, etc.

Forty-Second Week—Seventh Day.

SAUL AT SCHOOL.—ACTS XXII. 3.

We closed our last evening's Reading with an extract from a very able and costly production with which our theological literature has lately been adorned. Desirous to follow the authors in their ingenious endeavour to trace the boyhood of Saul, we will commence the present Reading with a further extract from the same work.

"It is usually the case that the features of a strong character display themselves early. His impetuous, fiery disposition would sometimes need control. Flashes of indignation would reveal his impatience and his honesty. The affectionate tenderness of his nature would not be without an object of attachment, if that sister, who was afterwards married,[1] was his playmate at Tarsus. The work of tent-making, rather an amusement than a trade, might sometimes occupy those young hands, which were marked with the toil of years when he held them to the view of the elders at Miletus.[2] His education was conducted at home rather than at school; for, though Tarsus was celebrated for its learning, the Hebrew boy would not lightly be exposed to the influence of Gentile teaching; or, if he went to a school, it was not a Greek school, but rather to some room connected with the synagogue, where a noisy class of Jewish children received the rudiments of instruction, seated on the ground with their teacher, after the manner of Mohammedan children in the East, who may be seen or heard at their lessons near the mosque. At such a school, it may be, he learnt to read and to write, going and returning under the care of some attendant, according to that custom which he afterwards used as an illustration in the Epistle to the Galatians (and perhaps he remembered his own early days while he wrote the passage),

[1] Acts xxiii. 16. [2] Acts xx 34.

when he spoke of the law as the slave who conducts us to the school of Christ.[1] His religious knowledge, as his years advanced, was obtained from hearing the law read in the synagogue, from listening to the arguments and discussions of learned doctors, and from that habit of questioning and answering, which was permitted even to children among the Jews. Familiar with the pathetic history of the Jewish sufferings, he would feel his heart filled with that love to his own people which breaks out in the Epistle to the Romans [ix. 4–6]—a love not then, as it was afterwards, blended with love towards all mankind—but rather united with a bitter hatred to the Gentile children whom he saw around him. His idea of the Messiah, so far as it was distinct, would be the carnal notion of a temporal prince—'a Christ known after the flesh,'—and he looked forward with the hope of a Hebrew to the restoration of 'the kingdom to Israel.' He would be known at Tarsus as a child of promise, and as one likely to uphold the honour of the law against the half-infidel teaching of the day."

We have cited this interesting passage unaltered, concurring generally in its statements. But in some points the distinction between the condition of a Hebrew lad in a Greek city like Tarsus, and what it was or might have been at Jerusalem, is not sufficiently kept in view. It may be doubted whether in the former city the apparatus for public teaching and disputation was so complete as is here supposed; and we may well believe that *hatred* to Gentile children, however likely to be entertained in Palestine, where strangers were few, was not felt so strongly, if at all, among those who had been born and brought up in the cities of the heathen. We take it that there was little positive ill-will, unless in times of excitement; but that there was simply that social separation which always exists among persons of different

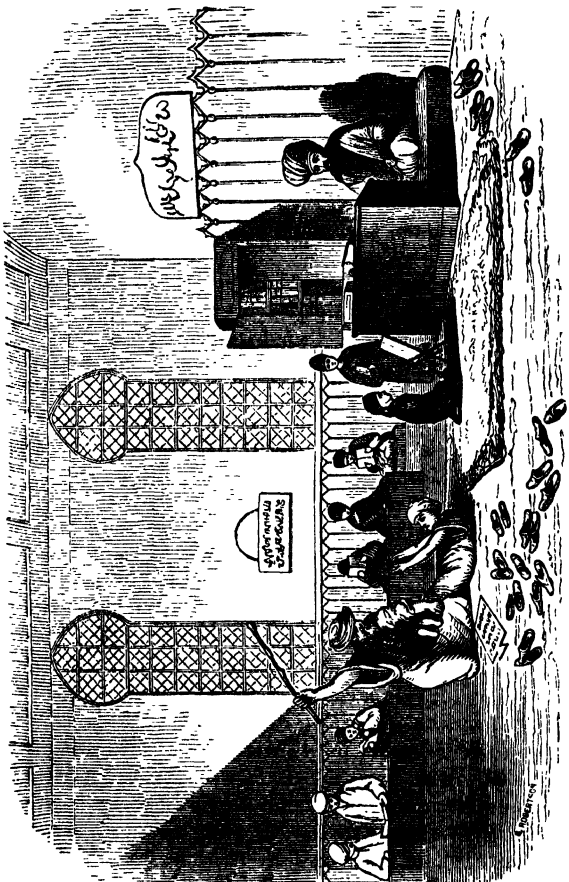
[1] Gal. iii. 24.—This text is much marred in the authorized version, where the "pedagogue" is made a "schoolmaster," as he still is in our common parlance, instead of being, as he really was, the servant who took his master's son to school.

religion and origin, such in fact as may be witnessed every day in our own country. And it is certain that the Jews could never be in social intimacy with any people, their laws respecting food being alone sufficient to secure their isolation.

That the schools, in which the elements of learning were imparted to boys, were similar to those we now see in the East, there is little reason to question. A short account, therefore, of these schools, and the instruction given in them, will furnish the best illustration of the subject. With the substitution of the synagogue for the mosque, and the Bible for the Koran, the analogy is probably as close as need be desired.

The first and earliest object of a parent is to instil into the mind of his son the principles of his religion, and the observances proper to it; and then he endeavours, if possible, to obtain for him the instructions of a schoolmaster, if the small expense can be afforded. Most of the children of the higher classes, and many of the lower, are taught by the schoolmaster to read, and to recite the whole, or certain portions of the Koran by heart. They afterwards learn the common rules of arithmetic.

Schools are sufficiently numerous in every large town, and there is seldom any considerable village without one. In metropolitan cities almost every mosque has a school attached to it, in which children are taught at a very trifling expense. The sum of about a penny paid every Thursday is a very common school fee; and the master of a school attached to a mosque receives in addition, from the endowment, some principal articles of clothing once a year, when the boys also obtain some garments and a little money. The lessons are generally written upon tablets of wood painted white; and when one lesson is learnt, the tablet is washed, and another is written. As a substitute for this, slates have been found very acceptable where introduced by missionaries. The schoolmaster and his pupils sit upon the ground; and each boy has a tablet in his hands, or a copy of the Koran, or one of its thirty sections, on a little rude kind of desk of palm sticks.



All who are learning to read recite their lessons aloud, at the same time rocking their heads and bodies incessantly backward and forward. This is the practice of almost every one who reads the Koran, being supposed to help the memory; but the din which it occasions in a school is more easily imagined than described. Yet in the midst of all this noise, the experienced ear of the master instantly detects an error which any of the boys may fall into, and distinguishes the offender, who is forthwith called to account. The discipline of the school is maintained by

"The good old rule, the simple plan,"

of bodily chastisement. This is inflicted by a palm-stick upon the soles of the naked feet; for in school, as in other places, the heads are covered and the feet bare, and the quantity of shoes near the entrance of the apartment is a strange sight to the inexperienced. Corporal punishment is, however, very rarely inflicted, the real respect with which Eastern children are taught to regard their seniors, being generally quite sufficient to maintain the authority of the schoolmaster and the discipline of the school.

It will be seen that the common schools teach little more than reading and learning by heart; the reading lessons being written on the tablets, not by the boys themselves, but by the master; and one who can read well and recite a good portion of the Koran, is in general held to be quite sufficiently educated. The schoolmasters seldom teach writing; and it is learnt by few boys but those whose destined employment will require it; and they then learn it usually from one of the officers employed in the bazaars. Some parents engage a tutor to teach their sons at home; and those who aspire to a high education can acquire it on easy terms at the Medressehs or colleges attached to the great mosques, answering to the school in which Saul completed his education at Jerusalem. Girls, unless in very rare instances, are not taught to read or write; and we well remember the bewildering amazement, with which the females of a small Eastern town

flocked together, to behold an English lady writing in her journal at our evening encampment. Yet there are schools in which they are taught embroidery and needlework, an art in which they excel. Their religious education is, however, very much disregarded, and scarcely any religious duties are expected from them. Among the Jews, the women were not to this degree neglected; for the females introduced to our notice in the New Testament, are generally well versed in the Scriptures. Among them also, writing seems to have been more frequently a part of common education than it is at present in the East; but with these differences, the parallel seems to run very close.

Forty-Third Week—First Day.

SCRIPTURE READING.—ACTS VIII. 28.

It may be pleasant this evening to turn back to the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, for the sake of some practical considerations which, in the thoughtful mind, connect themselves with it, or arise from it.

Those considerations which pertain to the eunuch's study of the Scriptures are the most important, as well as the most interesting; and they concern us most, for in this eunuch we have before us an example of those dispositions on which God loves to bestow more light, and from which He never eventually withholds it. These dispositions are indeed his gift; and He fails not in due time to honour the gifts of his own bestowing.

It is evident that dim and partial as the eunuch's light was, he read the Scriptures with a real and lively interest, and not as a formal task. If it had been so, he would have discharged that duty before he began the morning journey, or when he reached the evening rest. He would have duly read the allotted portion, and then have laid the sacred roll aside until the set time should again come round. But no; according to his light, he *loved* the word of God. In his measure it had become "his song in the house of his pilgrimage." Its high and weighty matters were of deeper interest to him than are the papers and books, in red, yellow, and green, which our own time offers to those who travel by the way. Therefore he read the Bible in his chariot—and he read it with absorbed attention even in passing through a country, every brook, and hill, and valley in which might be supposed of special interest to a foreign Jew visiting the land. And was this labour all lost, this interest all wasted, this reading all profitless, because, as he confesses, he could not understand what he read? Not so. It is evident that

he read with an earnest desire to learn, and therefore he did learn—that he hoped to find some fruit from it, and therefore it was not barren to him. In confessing his ignorance, he meant not to say that there was no light for him, but only that he found many dark places—the full meaning of which eluded his grasp, and that this was especially the case with the passage which then engaged his attention. But all was not dark. Had it been so, his interest in the study of the sacred book could hardly have been sustained. There are many things in Isaiah which need no interpretation; as when he sets forth the goodness and power of God, inviting the people to faith in Him, or urging them to a godly life. No one, therefore, can be so ignorant but that he may profit considerably by the reading of that book, even though he should scarcely understand more than every fourth verse. And this seems to have been the case of the eunuch; for since, according to his capacity and means, he gathered up those things that served for his edification, his studies in God's word were in that measure profitable to him. And observe that, although he met with many difficulties, and was consciously ignorant of many things of which he read, he was not thereby discouraged, nor did he lose his interest in God's word. He persevered in the search for that light which he knew to be there, though as yet he could scarcely catch but some glimpses of it. Thus must we also read the Scriptures. We must greedily, and with readiness of mind receive those things in which God plainly opens his mind to us; and as for those things that are hid, what have we to do but wait until more light is vouchsafed to us, resting assured that all needful light will, in God's own time, be given, if we faint not? Let us not spoil all by agonizing after the hidden things, before we have fully mastered the plain—moaning after the mysteries, and neglecting the elements. If we study in patient faith, the Scriptures will meanwhile become familiar by continual use; and this is a great gain—preparation of incalculable importance for fuller light. It was so in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch—it was so in the case of Saul of

Tarsus. It has been questioned by some—perhaps by many —in what degree it may be desirable to enforce an intimacy with Scripture in early life, upon the regardless or reluctant mind. But the more reluctant the mind is, the more it needs such replenishment. The mind must be filled with something, and with what on earth so good can the mind be filled? God's word shall never return unto Him void—shall never fail to prosper in the thing whereto He sends it; and how often has not some holy text, some sacred verse, some Scripture example, come down like a conscience upon the soul wandering in the world's ways, or lost in the dens of iniquity, and cast it in dust and ashes at God's feet!

That other disposition, also exemplified by the eunuch, which perseveres in the study of God's word, even under discouragement, and goes on filling the soul's treasury with its gems, although the exact value of each stone may not be known, shall at length find a day of reward and refreshing as he did; and the sooner shall it be found by those whose minds remain as humble and as teachable as his. He certainly knew something; he knew more than many, yet he confesses that he knows nothing—that he is altogether in need of instruction, and that he will rejoice to receive it from any, however low or humble, who may be able to impart it to him. *This* is the disposition which the Lord delighteth to honour. And He often honours it signally; so that he who takes nothing upon himself, and who claims to know nothing but his own insufficiency and ignorance, may quickly, under the Divine teaching, and by the leadings of Providence, obtain more light of understanding than a life's labour would enable him to realize by his own research or intelligence. "So," as Calvin remarks, "the Lord will be unto us a Master, though we be but small, if acknowledging our ignorance, we be not loth to submit ourselves to learn. And as the seed, covered with earth, lieth hid for a time, so the Lord will illuminate us by his Spirit, and will cause that reading, which being barren and void of fruit, causeth nothing but wearisomeness, to have plain light of understanding."

Forty-Third Week—Second Day.

SAUL AT JERUSALEM.—ACTS XXII. 3.

WHATEVER may have been the condition in life of Saul's father, it seems clear that he designed his son for the learned profession, that is, that he should be educated as a Rabbi. For any other employment or pursuit, the education which he was to receive at Jerusalem, so far away from his paternal home, and during a period extending, it would seem, over many years, would not have been deemed necessary. It would, however, be interesting to know at what age he was sent to Jerusalem. On this point, opinions have been various, and no positive conclusion can be reached.

Some have thought that he was not less than thirty years of age when he proceeded to Jerusalem. And in answer to the objection that he is called "a young man," at the time of Stephen's death, it is very well remarked, that the ancients extended the period of youth much farther than we do—too far, in fact; and that we equally transgress the laws of nature in making that period too short. Still, this supposition is untenable, and there is not an iota of evidence that the Jews postponed to so advanced a period of life the commencement of a learned education. The assertion of Strabo, that the inhabitants of Tarsus, were, as a general thing, led by their love of learning, to foreign cities for the completion of their education, may at the first view seem applicable to this case; but for the reasons already given, it could have no proper reference to Saul and his countrymen generally, but only to the Greeks. According to the educational rule among the Jews—set forth, indeed, at a later period, but which was doubtless conformable to earlier usage—the study of the Mishna, or expository traditions of the law, was to be commenced by boys at ten years of age, and at thirteen they became wholly subject to the law. If this appointment

seems to assign too early a period of life for such a study, it must be remembered that the Orientals come to maturity earlier than we do, and that with them the thirteenth year corresponds to at least the fifteenth among ourselves. On this account, the same passage of the Talmud from which this rule is taken, designates the eighteenth year as the age proper for marriage. It has therefore been concluded that Saul went to Jerusalem at some period between his tenth and thirteenth year. Had it been at a much later age, he could hardly have said, as he did on one occasion, that although *born* at Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, he had been "*brought up* in this city [Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel." Acts xxii. 3.

It was probably with his father, or under the care of some friend older than himself, that the young Saul took this, which we may well suppose to have been his first extensive journey. There is every probability that the passage was by water in some Phœnician vessel to Tyre, or perhaps to Cæsarea, and thence by land to Jerusalem. "The first time one leaves the land of his birth to visit a foreign and distant country, is an important epoch in his life. In the case of one who has taken this first journey at an early age, and whose character is enthusiastic, and susceptible of lively impressions from without, this epoch is usually remembered with peculiar distinctness. But, when the country which is thus visited, has furnished the imagery for the dreams of childhood, and is felt to be more truly the young traveller's home than the land he is leaving, then the journey assumes the sacred character of a pilgrimage."[1] The same writer omits not to point out the difference of scenery and cultivation which would meet the eye of one who came from Cilicia. "Not a river, and a wide plain covered with harvests of corn, but a succession of hills and valleys, and terraced vineyards watered by artificial irrigation."

We have now, then, conducted the young Saul to Jerusalem; and it may not be amiss to inquire for a moment

[1] Howson, in *Life and Epistles of St Paul*, i. 56.

into the nature of the education he there received, and to the acquisition of which several years must have been devoted. The instruction of the doctors of the law, of whom Gamaliel was one, consisted almost exclusively in the oral interpretation of Scripture. The object of this interpretation was partly to develop from the inspired word the prescriptions of ecclesiastical law, and partly to connect with Biblical interpretation various kinds of instruction in ethical science. The Biblical interpretation thus conveyed, was not, however, the individual work of the Rabbi who was instructing at the particular time. It consisted rather, for the most part, in the traditions of the past, respecting the opinions and teachings of certain eminent Rabbis, upon the text or subject under discussion. Practically, therefore, the system was one of Scripture exegesis. No book was in use but the Bible; and there was, indeed, a prejudice against the introduction of any other book. Josephus asserts that this Scripture exposition was the only learning prized among his people. "They award the character of a wise man," he says, "only to those who understand the law, and are able to interpret the sacred writings."

Whatever faults and puerilities disgraced the mode of investigation, there can be no question that this concentration of the attention of the students upon one book, and the continual exercise of their ingenuity, if not judgment, in the development of its meaning, or in the application of every possible meaning it could bear, must have given to them a thorough acquaintance with the sacred writings. How far this education availed for giving a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, we may perhaps perceive in the copious and ready use which Paul makes of all parts of the sacred writings, and in the additional fact that he usually quotes from memory. Some inquirers have traced eighty-eight quotations from the Old Testament in his writings, of which, it is thought probable that at least forty-nine are cited from memory—some from the Septuagint version, some from the original Hebrew.

The statement of this mode of instruction suggests the notion of a lecturer or professor propounding his views of the matter in hand, and the students listening to him, and, it may be, taking notes of his discourse. But the real process was very different. The position of the presiding Rabbi was more that of a moderator or chairman than that of a lecturer. He proposed the text or subject, and guided the discussion of it. He questioned, he answered, he proposed difficulties of his own, he solved the difficulties and corrected the errors of others; and in the course of the operation, in which many took part, he managed, by verbal and literal criticism, by illustration, by analogy, by parable, by allegory, by aphorism, by anecdote, and by reporting the sayings of his predecessors, to throw upon the subject all the light which his learning or his genius could supply. The instruction was, in fact, eminently catechetical, for not merely the teacher proposed questions to the scholars, but the scholars proposed them to the teacher, and to one another. And so partial were the Jews to this mode of teaching, that it was not confined to the Rabbinical schools, but extended to the synagogue, where the discourses might be interrupted by questions; or when the discourses were concluded, any hearer might propose difficult inquiries, as is done at this day in the Jewish synagogues.

Of all this a remarkable instance occurs in Scripture in the case of our Lord, who, when a boy, was found in the Temple "among the doctors," both hearing them and asking them questions; but this incident has already engaged our attention in the proper place.[1]

[1] On the subject of this evening's Reading, see in Meuschenii *Oratio de Directoribus Scholarum Hebræorum* in *Nov. Test. ex Talmude et Antiqq. Hebræor. illustratum.* Jost's *History of the Hebrew People.* Tholuck's *Sketch of the Life and Character of St Paul*, in Biblical Cabinet, No. 287. *Cyclop. of Biblical Literature*, art. SCHOOLS; and Howson, in *Life and Epistles of St Paul.*

Forty-Third Week—Third Day.

SAUL'S CONVERSION.—ACTS IX. 1-8; XXII. 5-16; XXVI. 12-18.

We must now return to the even current of Saul's history as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

The authorities at Jerusalem could not fail to become soon acquainted with the fact, that the severe measures they had taken against the Christians in that city, had tended rather to the furtherance than to the suppression of that gospel, against which their power had been exerted. They learned, that through the labours of the fugitives, this new doctrine was making rapid progress, not only in territories immediately beyond the borders of Judea, not only in Samaria, in Galilee, and in Perea, but among the Jewish congregations of cities beyond the limits of Palestine. From the greatness of the city, and from the large number of Jews established there, the news from Damascus was of especial and prominent interest; and the news which did come was, that the gospel had there been received with remarkable favour. In the disappointment and rage which this intelligence excited, none shared more strongly than the furious young zealot who had made himself so active in the home persecution. He grew, as he himself says, "exceedingly mad against them," and "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." The term chosen by the sacred writer, "breathing out," is very emphatic, and occurs in the classical writers to express such deep and agitating emotions as produce rapid and violent breathing, as in extreme wrath and the like.

Saul's anger was not spent in threatenings merely. In his vehement zeal he thirsted for the punishment of the heretical innovators, and conceived the idea of pursuing them even beyond the bounds of Palestine. He therefore applied to the high-priest, and requested to be employed in this ser-

vice. What he desired was, that he should be furnished with a commission, in the form of letters to the synagogue at Damascus, authorizing him to seize all those who were found to be disciples of Jesus, whether men or women, and bring them in chains to Jerusalem for trial and punishment. The desired commission was gladly given to one so well known, and so distinguished for his zeal as Saul had now become, the high-priest being, doubtless, much rejoiced to find so willing and able an instrument for his own purposes. Presently, then, we behold Saul on the road to Damascus, with a suitable retinue, and armed with full powers as chief inquisitor, for the holy work of extirpating heresy. Never, perhaps, was man more elated in the persuasion that he was in the path of high duty, and in the conviction that he was rendering to God a most acceptable service, than was Saul when upon this journey; and, to the eye of human calculation, never was man less likely to become a convert to the truth he sought to destroy, than was Saul of Tarsus in that hour when the fair city of Damascus burst upon his view, seated like a bride amid her gardens, with the rivers of Abana and Pharpar watering her feet. Yet this was the man, and this the hour, chosen for the display of Divine grace. The fierce persecutor was to be struck down in his pride of place, and rendered the docile follower of that Nazarene, at whose name he had formerly ground his teeth, and the most conspicuous upholder of that truth which he had been prepared to lead captive in his chains. The time was now fully come—the fit time—the time fittest for himself, for the church then and in all ages, and for the saints at Damascus, who stood in much want of their Lord's protection from this fierce oppressor. The time was come that the Lord had need of him. And so He called him; and the call was made in a way so effectual as rendered it irresistible to himself, and irresistible for the authentication of the great mission entrusted to him. Of this event—the greatest in the history of the early church since the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost—we have three accounts: The leading

narrative by Saul's own confidential friend and follower, Luke; and two by Saul himself, first in his address to the council at Jerusalem,[1] and again in his speech before King Agrippa at Cæsarea[2]—by comparing which together, we obtain a clearer view of this most extraordinary transaction.

It was not at night, but under the glare of the noontide sun, that Saul approached the city of Damascus. Then suddenly there burst upon the party not merely a light, but a radiance, an excessive brightness, far exceeding that which is felt on looking in the face of the sun in an Eastern sky. So intense was that light, so confounding to the senses, that they all fell to the ground, and lay prostrate there. Then as he lay thus, Saul heard a voice, saying to him in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" The whole of them heard the voice; but none, excepting him to whom it was addressed, was able to distinguish the words it uttered. He himself, confounded and amazed, could only say, "Who art Thou, Lord?"—to which the voice answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." And, resorting even then to that form of parabolic instruction which had during his abode on earth distinguished his utterances, He added, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goads,"—an expression drawn from the act of an unruly ox in resisting the goad by which it is impelled—a resistance not only abortive, but greatly increasing its own distress. As much as to say—Neither the preaching nor the death of Stephen; no miracles, no arguments have prevailed with thee. Now, therefore, I appear to thee in a more express and strange manner, and appoint to thee a great work, to which I call thee, and for which I will qualify thee. All resistance to the power of my grace is as vain as the opposition of the unruly beast to the hand of its master.

The full meaning of every word the voice uttered went to the heart of Saul, and threw into his mind a flood of light, stronger far than that which had rendered his outward vision blind. Completely humbled, he could only answer, "Lord,

[1] Acts xxii. [2] Acts xxvi.

what wilt Thou have me to do?" He thought perhaps that he should be ordered to go back to Jerusalem, and there to put himself under the pupilage of the apostles. Whatever he thought, he becomingly casts himself upon the good pleasure of Him who had now revealed himself to his soul, and, as an obedient convert, submissively awaits His direction. He was probably surprised to hear, that he was to proceed to Damascus, and that there he should learn the will of God concerning him.

He accordingly arose; but when he again opened his eyes, which he had instinctively closed at the sudden access of unearthly brightness, he found that he could not see. He had actually been

"Blinded by excess of light,"

and those who were with him, perceiving his condition, led by the hand into Damascus—feeble as a child, and humble as a condemned offender, the pitiless persecutor whose arrival had, but an hour before, threatened sorrow and ruin to many families in that city. The blindness of Saul was no doubt mercifully intended by Providence to strengthen the powers of his mind, by compelling him to attend without distraction to the great matters which had been placed before him. The fact of this sudden and complete incapacitation, would also naturally prevent his being troubled about the business on which he came, either by those to whom his letters were addressed, or those who had been the companions of his journey. The blindness lasted three days; and the state of his mind may be gathered from the fact that he took no food or drink during that interval. His soul was full of great matters, which left no taste or thought for meaner cares. And versed as he was in the Bible, he could even in his blindness, search the Scriptures, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was enabled clearly to discern the whole scheme of Christian doctrine in its truth and fulness. He repeatedly declares, in after life, that these things were not taught him by man, not by any apostle or disciple, but were imparted to him by the Spirit of truth. He was thus enabled

to speak and teach with the same underived authority and Divine unction as the other apostles. It is important to notice this; because it might seem to some that Ananias, one of the disciples at Damascus, who had in a vision been sent to him, after the three days, had been his instructor; but the attentive reader will see that the terms of this person's commission, and the mode in which he discharged it, give no sanction to this impression.

The commission with which Saul was charged was well known in Damascus, and no suspicion was entertained that any change had come over him. It was probably conceived that his operations were merely suspended, on account of his blindness. When, therefore, Ananias was directed to go to him, and put his hand upon his eyes to remove his blindness, he was greatly astonished, and repeated what he had heard as to the antagonism and fell intentions of this same Saul. But the answer, decisive and full of deep matter, allowed no further remonstrance:—"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 show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*" This is the first mention of his high vocation in the direct narrative; but it appears from the apostle's own account before Agrippa, that this had been very distinctly intimated to himself when our Lord spoke to him from amid the brightness.

Thus encouraged, Ananias proceeded, as he had been directed, to "the street called Straight," and inquired at the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus; and soon he was introduced to the presence of the man who bore that so lately dreadful name. He at once let him know that he came with a message of peace and comfort; and told him that One, now not unknown to him, who had seen and pitied his condition, had sent him that he, Saul, might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Saying this, Ananias laid his hands upon his eyes; and instantly it seemed to him as if the darkening films fell from them, and his sight was completely restored. Saul then lost no time in evincing the new

convictions which had entered his heart. At the word of Ananias, he arose from the posture of humble resignation in which he had lain, and was baptized, calling upon the name of that Lord who had so signally revealed himself to him. Throughout this interview, it is observable that Ananias does not say a word for the instruction of the convert, nor does he ask him any question as to the measure of his knowledge or the state of his mind. He knew already that Saul had been taught of God, and needed no teaching of his. The case reminds one, illustratively, of the practice in Germany, where, if a person who has already obtained the high degree of Doctor in Divinity, desires to undertake the pastoral office, he is ordained without the examinations which all others must undergo.[1]

Forty-Third Week—Fourth Day.

INCIDENTS OF SAUL'S CONVERSION.

ACTS IX. 1-8; XXII. 5-16; XXVI. 12-18.

WE now wish to call attention to some circumstances in the narrative of Saul's conversion, which last evening we did not pause to consider.

That the Jews were as numerous at Damascus as the commission of Saul and its results imply, is not left to mere conjecture, or to deduction from the narrative itself. The fact is attested by Josephus, who declares that, during the

[1] In explanation of what may sound strangely in this statement, the reader may be reminded that degrees are academical, not ecclesiastical, distinctions. Even in the Church of England, "orders" are not essential to degrees;" and in Germany, the degree of Doctor in Divinity is often held by distinguished Biblical scholars and professors, who are not clergymen. Thus, the degree of D.D. was lately conferred on Chevalier Bunsen, the Prussian ambassador to our Court, who had been previously Doctor in Philosophy (Ph. D.), which is equivalent to our Master of Arts. Thus also, Tholuck was Doctor in Divinity, and Professor of Theology, before his ordination to the ministry, which, consequently, took place without the usual examinations.

Jewish war, when the inhabitants of many heathen cities committed barbarous executions upon the Jews residing among them, the Damascenes slew in one hour no less than ten thousand Jews. And he intimates, that they kept the design secret from their wives, lest they should interpose to prevent it, as the women were generally favourable to the Jewish religion. If that was the case, there was, no doubt, a corresponding proportion also favourable to the doctrine of Christ, and in this circumstance we may possibly detect a studied emphasis in the intimation, that not only men but "women" were included in the operation of Saul's commission. But if they were comprehended in the order that the prisoners should be brought "bound" or in chains, to Jerusalem, the fact would strongly show the rabid animosity of the Sanhedrim against the religion of Jesus, for such barbarity to females had long been banished from among all nations. Though the old Assyrians were anything but a humane people, among even their sculptures in which female captives are represented, we do not find any who are in bonds. On another occasion, some time subsequent to the former, 18,000 Jews, with their wives and children, were slain at the same place, apparently on no other ground than their sympathy with their brethren in Judea, who were in arms against the Romans. The interval between these massacres was so short, that we must suppose the numbers to represent contemporary and not successive populations. If, therefore, we take these 28,000 to have been adult males, as appears from women and children being in the latter account distinguished, and add the usual proportion of females and children, we can see that the Jewish population of Damascus was great indeed, especially as there seems no reason to suppose that *all* the Jews in the city were slain on these two occasions.

It seems strange at the first view, that the high-priest and the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem should be able to exercise authority in a foreign city like Damascus. The fact that they did so, according to the tenor of Saul's commission, is asserted over and over again, and is corroborated by Ananias,

who, when spoken to respecting Saul, replies:—"Here (at Damascus) he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name." The fact is that the authority of the high-priest and the Sanhedrim was acknowledged by the Jews wherever they lived; and it was usual for those dispersed in foreign countries to receive orders and instructions by letter from the great council at Jerusalem, which orders they very exactly followed—just as now the authority of the Pope is, as a rule, universally submitted to by Roman Catholics, even though living in Protestant countries. There can, therefore, be no difficulty in conceiving that the rulers of the synagogues at Damascus would readily comply with the import of any letters sent to them from the great council, and would willingly assist its commissioner in apprehending and conveying to Jerusalem the persons designated in his instructions. The only difficulty is, whether the magistrates at Damascus would suffer the Jews to imprison their subjects, and take them to Jerusalem to be punished. It is to be remembered, that with whatever differences of local administration, Damascus and Jerusalem were virtually under the same general government—that of Rome. Now the Romans had granted to the Jews the privilege of living everywhere according to their own laws. This, doubtless, included a permission to scourge and to use other minor punishments in the synagogues; and also to apprehend and send to Jerusalem greater delinquents, who were deemed to deserve more severe correction. We know that it included permission to send annually, from every part of the empire, large sums to Jerusalem, which, in the view of the Romans, was a matter of much greater consequence than their sending now and then a delinquent to be punished. The amount of these collections was so great, that the governors of the provinces were sometimes uneasy respecting it, and ventured to seize the money, and lay an injunction upon the Jews within their jurisdiction to send no more. Cicero, in his oration *pro Flacco*, testifies that Flaccus did this in Asia. Titus, in his speech to the Jews after the taking of

Jerusalem, mentions these indulgences as having been received from the Romans, and dwells with much emphasis upon the last of them:—"But, above all, we suffered you to raise a tribute and collect offerings for the Deity, and neither admonished nor forbade those who offered them, although you, our enemies, thus became richer than ourselves, and armed yourselves against us with our own money." He therefore regards this as a more important mark of Roman indulgence than allowing them the use of their own laws, even in foreign lands, to which he had previously referred.

It would seem that the Jews had a court of their own wherever any considerable number of them resided, to decide all religious controversies, and matters involving the observances and obligations of their law. There are documents in Josephus which show the existence of such courts; and there are decrees of Julius Cæsar, which constitute the Jewish rulers patrons of their people in foreign parts, and which, in all probability, included the privilege of appeal to them from the decisions of the local courts. It is true that these grants were made to Hyrcanus, at that time prince and high-priest of the Jews; but there is a later decree of Augustus, confirming to the Jews all the rights and privileges they enjoyed in the time of Hyrcanus.

It may thus be gathered that the magistrates of Damascus were not likely to offer any opposition to proceedings in their city, which had the authority and sanction of the Jerusalem Sanhedrim.

A question arises as to the blindness with which Saul was afflicted. Was it natural or supernatural? He himself says, in Acts xxii. 11, that it was caused by the light he witnessed: "I could not see for the glory of that light." It was therefore so far natural; but the light which produced it being supernatural, the blindness was therefore, so far, supernatural also. The only difficulty in this view of the matter arises from the fact, that while those who were with him are expressly stated to have seen the light, they were not blinded by it. To this it may be answered, that they could not have

been on exactly the same spot of ground as Saul, and although they *saw* the light, it did not smite them so fully in the face as it smote him—did not take their eyes in such full glare as it did his.

It is certainly possible for an intense sudden light so to affect the optic nerve as to cause blindness. Indeed, every one has in some measure realized this experience, in being conscious of a momentary blindness after having gazed at the sun, or into a furnace, or upon metal at a white heat. A total loss of sight has also often been caused by a sudden flash of lightning, by gazing at the sun during an eclipse, or by looking at it as it set. In all these cases the organ remains to all appearance perfect, though the sight has totally departed. In Persia, where blinding as a punishment used to be frightfully common, it was formerly inflicted by a piece of metal at a white heat being held before the eyes. But it being eventually found that under this process a faint glimmering of light was still perceptible, the mode was exchanged for the total extirpation of the organ.

The blindness of Saul, although a special providence towards him, may thus have been naturally produced in the sense explained. But the cure was certainly miraculous. The blindness so produced is a species of *gutta serena*, and is accounted less curable than almost any other form of that calamity. It was Milton's blindness, though from a different cause—the blindness of which he says:—

> "Thee I revisit safe,
> And feel thy sov'reign vital lamp: but thou
> Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
> To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
> So thick *a drop serene* hath quenched their orbs,
> Or dim suffusion veil'd."
>
> PARADISE LOST, iii. 21-26.

Forty-Third Week—Fifth Day.

EVIDENCE FROM SAUL'S CONVERSION.

ACTS IX. 1-8; XXII. 5-16; XXVI. 12-18.

We should lose much of the advantage which the narrative of Saul's conversion was doubtless intended to convey, if we neglected to notice the conclusive testimony it affords, to the truth and power of the gospel. He himself was so deeply conscious of this, so sensible of the impression it ought to produce, that he uses it as a favourite argument in his preaching; and, without mentioning the repeated allusions to it in his epistles, it forms the main subject of two (Acts xxii., xxvi.) out of the five discourses of his which are preserved in the Acts of the Apostles. He demands of the Jews, he demands of Agrippa, he demands of the churches, he demands of all, the sentiments that ought to be awakened in any truthful heart, by so glorious an interposition on the part of God in favour of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. And he has reason to make this demand, for, as an eloquent writer observes,[1] "Next to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, the gospel history has no testimony which equals the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. It has been felt in all ages; and many a reflective mind, hitherto unmoved, has yielded to the power of this page of the gospel." The author here certainly alludes to Lord Lyttelton, with whose writings he evinces an acquaintance. That nobleman himself became a sincere convert from sceptical or uncertain views, under the influence of the considerations presented to his mind in the attentive study of that page; and in his *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St Paul*, he has left to the world a memorable and ingenuous work in which the proofs for Christianity furnished by this event are

[1] St Paul: Five Discourses. By the Rev. Adolphe Monod. Translated by the Rev. W. G Barrett. London, 1853.

most convincingly produced. The substance of this argument, with some additional considerations interspersed, may be fitly presented to our readers.

It must of necessity be that a person attesting these things of himself was either an impostor or an enthusiast—one who sought to deceive, or who was himself deceived by the fraud of others—or that what he declared did really happen, and therefore that Christianity is a Divine revelation.

That Saul was not an impostor can be shown by proving that he had no rational motives, nor any means, to carry on such an imposture. If he expected to gratify his ambition or advance his temporal interest, he would be mistaken; for the death of Christ had made no impression upon the chief priests and rulers, and these were his masters, from whom alone he must have looked for promotion. Nay, they had begun a severe persecution against the followers of Christ, in which he himself had taken an active part.

It was at this instant of time, and under these circumstances, that he became a convert.

What could be his motive? Was it the hope of increasing his wealth? The certain consequence of taking the part he did, was the loss not only of all he had, but of all hope of acquiring more. Those whom he left were the dispensers of wealth, of dignity, of power, in Judea: those to whom he went were indigent men, oppressed and kept down from all means of improving their fortunes. Therefore, however such expectations may have been connected with the first part of his conduct, they could not have been grounded on the second. Reputation, honour also—all this was on the side that he forsook. The sect that he embraced lay under the greatest and most general contempt of any then in the world. But was it not the love of power that prompted his behaviour? Power over whom? Over a flock of sheep driven to the slaughter, and whose Shepherd had been murdered but a short time before. Besides, he assumed no peculiar pre-eminence in the church. On the contrary, he declared himself the *least of them*, and *less than the least of all saints*. Neither did he

attempt to make any innovations in government or in civil affairs; he meddled not with legislation, he formed no commonwealths, he raised no seditions, he affected no temporal power. Obedience to their rulers was the doctrine he preached to the churches he planted, and what he taught to others he practised himself. The reason why he felt so deep an interest in his converts, he tells them when addressing the Philippians (ii. 15–17), "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Are these the words of an impostor, desiring nothing but temporal power? No, they are evidently written by one who looked beyond the bounds of this life; one "who preached not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord." And all this was done in true humbleness of mind; for though he had the advantage of higher education and superior learning, he made no improper use of these attainments, either by claiming a superiority over the other apostles, or by setting at nought those less learned than himself. "I came not," he says, "with excellency of speech or of wisdom, ... for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, . . . that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

It is clear, therefore, that by the change he made, Saul had nothing to gain, but had everything to lose. He gave up an advancing fortune, and a high reputation. He gave up his friends, his relatives, and his family. He gave up his religion. And in return for these relinquishments for Christ, he had from man everything to fear. Whoever would embrace the gospel under such circumstances, without the clearest conviction of its being a Divine revelation, must have been mad; and if he made others profess it by fraud and deceit, he must have been worse than mad; for no man with the least spark

of humanity in his bosom could subject his fellow-creatures to so many miseries as he knew must inevitably follow, nor could any man in whose mind the smallest ray of reason gleamed, expose himself to share such miseries with those he deceived, in order to advance a religion which he knew to be false.

As Saul had no rational *motive*, so he had no rational *means* of making an imposture successful. He had no associates. Not even the apostles were in any confederacy with him. It is, therefore, not probable, nay, it is impossible, that he should contend singly with the power of the magistrates, the influence of the priests, the prejudices of the people, or the wisdom and pride of the philosophers.

By the same kind of reasoning, it can be shown that Saul was no enthusiast. He had upon him none of the usual marks of such a character. He possessed, indeed, a manifest warmth of temper; but it was at all times under the control of his judgment. Neither melancholy, ignorance, credulity, vanity, nor self-conceit, could be imputed to him. Besides, a mere enthusiast could never perform real miracles, as this man in many instances did.

Still it may be, and it has been, urged, that a man so ardent as Saul, might be very well able, without any very mature deliberation, to pass from one sphere of religious fanaticism to another. But, as M. Monod remarks, this hypothesis cannot be maintained after five minutes' reflection by any one who calls to mind what Saul was. He had quite enough wherewith to satisfy his religious enthusiasm in his Judaic and Pharisaic faith, whilst in becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, he lays all that down, and instead of entering into a new fanaticism, he quarrels with the old one. Strange fanaticism in truth is this, on the part of a man who, on occasions the most exciting, uses language stamped with "truth and soberness;" of a man who undertakes everything with consummate prudence, jealous of all his rights, both social and civil, either when they serve the cause of the gospel, or when they may save him from

needless sorrow; of a man who, when the interests of his ministry require it, goes to the utmost verge of concession that wisdom counsels, or that conscience authorizes; "weak with the weak, a Jew with the Jews, without law to those who are without law;" of a man, in short, who pursues his ministry for thirty years in the same spirit, who is not awakened from his dream even by the prospect of martyrdom, which, like his Master before him, he has taken care to postpone, although willing to undergo it when the hour of God shall have come. 1 Cor. ix. 20-22.

If, then, Saul did not deceive himself, it is still less likely that he should be deceived by others. It was impossible for the disciples of Christ to conceive such a thought as that of turning his persecutor into an apostle, and to do this by a fraud in the very instant of his greatest fury against them and their Lord. If they had even thought of such a conversion, they could not have effected it in this way. They could not have produced a light in the air greater than that of the mid-day sun; they could not first have made him blind, and then restored him to sight; above all, no fraud of others could have enabled him to produce the miracles he performed after his conversion.

It appears, then, as the result of all these arguments, that neither did Saul himself deceive, nor was he deceived by the fraud of others; that he was no impostor nor enthusiast; and then it follows that what he related to be the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it, did really happen, and therefore that the Christian religion is, what it claims to be—a Divine revelation.

Let us add, that the great moral fact—the change, sudden and complete, which made Saul stand up to do the work of an apostle in the same city to which he had so lately come to do the work of a destroyer—becomes unintelligible without the supernatural circumstances with which both Luke and Saul himself have invested it. The fact of the change is certain; and there is no other way of accounting for it than that in which it is accounted for. "If the gospel is true,

if Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and if God has interposed, all is explained. God is not prodigal of miracles; but we can easily understand that He will have recourse to them, in order to furnish such a demonstration of the truth of the gospel, and to accredit such a minister. But if God did not interpose, if Jesus Christ is not his Son, how is this transformation of character to be explained?" [1]

Forty-Third Week—Sixth Day.

DAMASCUS.—ACTS IX. 19.

On a former evening, an allusion was made to the first view of the city of Damascus which a traveller obtains. That view has been celebrated in all ages; and it is one of the few, perhaps the only one, after Constantinople (which is, however, altogether different), that does not disappoint the expectations which the most glowing descriptions excite. Every traveller still speaks of it with rapture, and acknowledges that its beauty

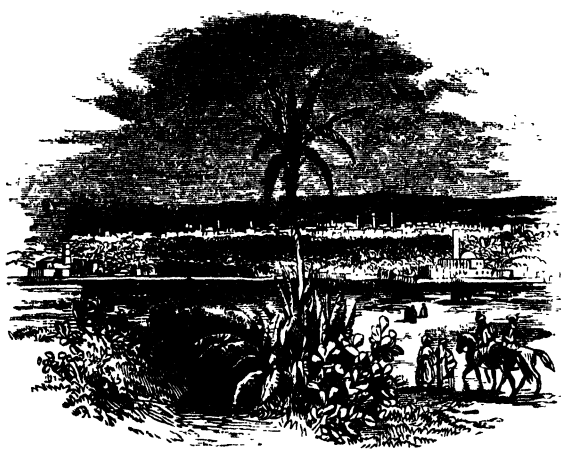
> "Far exceedeth the report
> Of lavish tongues."

The latest description of it is this:—

"A scene of beauty and verdure hung on my view, for which, with all my expectations, I was unprepared. At my feet lay Damascus, embowered in its evergreen forests, as the poet describes it, 'A diamond set round with emeralds.' The morning sun lighted up its white walls, and glanced from its polished domes, and the gilded crescents of its hundred minarets. Gardens and orchards teeming with fruit-trees of almost every species surround the city, and spread far away over the plain. An enchanting variety, too, is given to this panorama of verdure—the foliage of these plantations exhibiting every tint of colour, from the sombre hue of the olive, and the deep green of the cypress and

[1] Monod.

the walnut, to the auburn of the apricot, the reddening shade of the pomegranate, and the white and glistening leaves of the poplar. And the view is as extensive as it is



beautiful. Towards the west, over the low range that bounds the plain, towers the lofty Hermon, the hoary-headed chief of the Eastern hills. An undulating country, watered by the 'Pharpar,' stretches along its base. Southward, the low chain of the Jebl-el-Aswad, and the loftier hills of Mâni'a rise beyond, while far away in the distance may be seen the dim and blue outline of Jebel Haurân. On the south-east there is nothing to arrest the eye, save the dim and quivering haze that hovers over the burning desert. Eastward, the morning sun is reflected from the waters of the Bahr-el-Merj [the Lake of the Meadow] and beyond it is a clump of hills, whose graceful summits rise up with clear outline from the mists that veil their bases. To the north-east runs a long line of hills towards Tadmor in the wilderness.

"The fertility and beauty of this vast plain, and the very existence of the city itself, depend entirely on the waters of

the Barada (Abana). Before entering the plain, four large canals are led off from it at different elevations. These are carried along the precipices on each side of the stream, and are often hewed out and tunnelled in the solid rock. Two others are taken from the river before it enters the city, and many more farther down. These spread the waters over the plain in every direction. Where no water can be had for irrigation, the plain is a desert. The river itself flows in a winding course through orchards and meadows till it enters the city. Within the walls, the banks are shut in by mason-work, and in many places the bed of the river is arched over. It flows along the walls of the ancient castle, within which the mortal remains of the great Saladin were first committed to the tomb. It then continues its course along the *ancient* city wall to the 'gate of peace,' where it emerges from the more modern suburb. Thence it flows through gardens parallel to the city wall, to 'Thomas's Gate,' and afterwards flows due east across the plain."[1]

Another traveller[2] not inaptly compares the distant view of Damascus to that of "a vast fleet anchored far off in a sea of green." The same traveller, an American divine, is naturally most impressed by the Biblical associations of the scene. He says:—"I paused to look upon the scene. Men had dwelt there so long, that it seemed the original home of the human family.[3] It had never been desolate since the first shepherd arrived with his flocks from the Euphrates, and pitched his tents by the two crystal floods of the Abana and Pharpar. Looking upon the transparent waters, they seem to apologise for 'Naaman the leper,' when, mortified and indignant, he turned away from the 'prophet in Samaria,'

[1] Rev. R. L. Porter, "*Rivers of Damascus*," in "Journal of Sacred Literature" for July 1853.

[2] *Observations in the East.* By John P. Durbin, D.D. New York, 1845. The *description* of Damascus contained in this work is perhaps the best that can be found. The modern *history* of the city is given at some length in Mr Addison's *Damascus and Palmyra.*

[3] "Within a day's ride, tradition has placed the house of Abraham, the tombs of Elijah, Moses, Noah, Seth, and Abel, and, I believe, it claims also that Adam was made of the red earth found in the neighbourhood."

who had directed him to 'dip himself seven times in Jordan,' and exclaimed, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters in Israel, may I not wash in them and be clean?' Surely he was right, if a comparison of waters was to decide the question. He knew not the power of God until his servant ventured to say, 'My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather, then, wash and be clean.'

"My eye wandered over the space to the south of the city; and as I gazed over the peaceful plain where the furious Saul was struck down, and looked up into the calm, clear heaven, whence descended the celestial voice of the ascended Saviour, I felt that I, a wanderer from a world then unknown, might be a spiritual child of him who was here made an apostle, and afterwards sent 'far away to the Gentiles.' The mission of Paul commenced at Damascus, which may be called the spiritual mother of Gentile Christianity."

Local tradition professes to be able to point out the precise spot where Saul fell blinded to the earth. It occurs about half a mile from the eastern gate of the town, in the midst of an unenclosed cemetery. The Christians of Damascus have long since marked their veneration for the spot, by making it the place of burial for their dead. The present road is here purposely diverted from the direct course for a few yards, leaving apart the spot which was the alleged scene of Saul's conversion. The spot thus respected is evidently a portion of the ancient road, consisting entirely of firmly embedded pebbles, which, having never been broken up, stands alone, like the fragment of an elevated causeway. The sides have been gradually lowered, by numerous pilgrims, who, from year to year, have taken away the pebbles to preserve as relics. A wide arch-like excavation through the midst of this causeway, produced by the same superstitious industry, bears some resemblance to a dismantled bridge; and it is regarded by the native Christians as an act of devotion to pass through this aperture.

In many Levantine towns there is a street—not always the principal street—traversing the length of the city in a tolerably straight line, and usually called Straight Street—like Strada Stretta in Malta. "The street which is called Straight" still exists in Damascus under the same name. It is the most important and capacious street in Damascus, running from east to west, and has long been one of the busiest scenes of Eastern commerce within the city. The reputed "house of Judas," with whom Saul lodged, is still shown and visited. Like most of the "holy places" in Syria, it is a vault below ground, converted into a small chapel or oratory, now in the possession of the Latins. Even the house in which Ananias lived, and in which he is said to have been buried, is also shown. It lies northward of Straight Street, and the site offers a little half underground chapel, common to all Christians, and exhibiting Latin pictures and Greek crosses. Close at hand is a fountain from which the water used for baptizing the apostle, is alleged to have been brought. It will be seen that these, like other local traditions, involve absurdities not worth exposure. Probably, however, these "houses" are only represented as the substructions or cellars of the respective dwellings of Judas and Ananias.

Some have wondered at the scarcity of ancient remains in Damascus, seeing it is perhaps the oldest inhabited city in the world. But it is probably for the very reason that it has always been a peopled place that so few traces of ancient buildings are found; man being a greater destroyer of old things than time. The oldest standing building is the Byzantine Church of St John, now the chief mosque of the city, and the dome of which figures conspicuously in all the views of Damascus. Of any earlier period there is nothing but portions of wall; and it is possible that the gate at the eastern end of Straight Street, called the gate of the sun-rising, which looks like a Roman work, may have been there in the time of Saul. There is much appearance of dilapidation and of ruined houses in Damascus—a state of things which occurs in most other Oriental cities of importance. But this less

strongly argues decline in an Eastern than in a Western city; the Orientals generally, and the Turks in particular, being averse to the repair of old houses, and more inclined to build new ones for themselves, under the superstitious notion that it is more fortunate to begin life in a new house. There might be some sense in this preference, if, as with us, domestic architecture improved from age to age, and new houses contained adaptations to health and comfort not to be found in those that are old. But the Orientals go on building as their fathers did; and their fancy is not for improved houses, but for new houses—merely as *new*. Notwithstanding the decline of Damascus, of which unthoughtful travellers talk, we are inclined to think that it is now fully as populous as at any former period; and it is enough to the discredit of the East to assume that the population of this great city has *not increased*, while that of Western metropolitan cities has risen from tens to hundreds of thousands, and from hundreds of thousands to millions. The most recent estimate, given by the Rev. R. L. Porter in the "Journal of Sacred Literature," makes the total population "which resides in the district rendered habitable by the waters of the ancient Abana," to be "at the lowest estimate" 150,000, of which 108,579 belong to the city of Damascus. This being a somewhat rigid calculation, probably adequately corresponds to the proverbially loose and vague estimates of the Oriental historians, who in former times ascribed to Damascus a population varying from 150,000 to 200,000.

The streets of Damascus are narrow, crooked, badly paved, and of irregular width. The houses are of unequal height, from two to four stories, built occasionally of stone, but generally of sun-dried mud bricks, and without any windows near the ground. The second story, and sometimes the third, usually extends two or three feet over the street, resting upon the exposed ends of the joists, and supported by braces made of roughly hewn and sometimes unhewn pieces of wood. Any windows in these stories towards the street are of close lattice-work; and as few persons appear in the streets, and there is

no rumbling of carts or rattling of carriages, the silence and inactivity that pervade the city in the parts devoted to private dwellings, surprise a stranger from the West. Although the tenements within these mud-plastered walls are often wretched enough, yet there are many houses, and even palaces, the interior comfort, elegance, and indeed splendour of which, offer a strong contrast to the appearance without. The entrance to some of even the finest houses is by a low, mean-looking door in a great blank wall. But this unpromising entrance admits to a spacious quadrangle paved with marble, in the midst of which a fountain throws up a continual shower, cooling the atmosphere, and refreshing the evergreens and flowering shrubs that are planted around it. An arcade supported by slender columns, runs round this court, to which there is an ascent by a few steps, and into which the various apartments open. These are luxuriously furnished with rich carpets and cushions, and the walls and roof elaborately adorned with painting and gilding, and the cornices enriched with Arabic inscriptions. Here the same strange silence reigns, and the only sounds to be heard are the splashing of the fountain, and the echoing of one's own footsteps over the marble pavement.

But all this is greatly changed, when we approach the part of the city in which its business is concentrated. Here passengers become more frequent, and strings of mules and laden camels begin to obstruct the way. Soon passing from the narrow street, the covered bazaars are entered, and now "the busy hum of men" meets the ear, and the eye is bewildered amid the gay colours of the various articles exposed for sale, and of the groups that are seen passing in every fantastic variety of Eastern dress. On close inspection, however, some disappointment is felt, for instead of the rich manufactures of which old travellers speak—the brocades of gold, the costly silks, and the unrivalled carpets of the East, we meet at every turn the familiar cottons of Manchester and Glasgow, the cloths of Marseilles, and the prints of Paris; and instead of the Damascus blades, barrels, and

jewelled pistols, we find here the gay swords and showy pistols of Birmingham. Oriental goods and arms there are indeed, but the European predominate; and beyond doubt the coin of Syria is flowing fast into Europe, and the power-looms of the Christians are rapidly silencing the hand-looms of the Moslems. This is one change. There has been a still greater change at Damascus. Being one of the Moslem holy cities, it used to be distinguished for the hatred and intolerance of its inhabitants towards Christians. They were compelled to dismount and walk on foot on entering the gate; and any one appearing in European dress was sure to expose himself to gross insult, if not to stoning or beating even to death. But all this is altered now. The condition—at least the social condition, of the native Christian has been greatly ameliorated, in so far that his religion no longer subjects him to insult and wrong. Europeans traverse the city with complete impunity; and the servants and subjects of Christian states enjoy privileges unknown to even the native Moslems. As an American traveller (Dr Durbin) remarks—"The head of a principal Turk may be struck off at any moment, without cause, at the command of a Pasha, while that of a black Indian street porter is safe, because he is a subject of Queen Victoria."

Thus, at Damascus, as elsewhere, the East is opening fast to the enterprise, the principles, and the religion of the West; and, although not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts, it is quite possible that the day is not far off when the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who there made his glory known to Saul of Tarsus, shall be honoured before all other names in this earthly paradise.

Forty-Third Week—Seventh Day.

SAUL IN ARABIA.—ACTS IX. 19-22; GAL. I. 17.

It must have been generally known in Damascus that Saul had been blinded by an extraordinary brightness on his ap-

proach to the city, and had thus been incapacitated, for the time at least, for the work of persecution on which he had been sent. Further than this nothing could be known, unless Saul himself had disclosed the great change which his spirit had undergone. And that he did so is not likely, and seems to be disproved by the fact that, at the end of the three days, Ananias knew nothing of it. We may, however, suppose that the Christians, from what they did know, would be likely to infer that their Lord had interposed in a special and signal manner for their protection, by the sudden prostration of the intended oppressor. Great must have been their surprise and adoring thankfulness, when the result appeared. For no sooner had Saul recovered his sight and been baptized, by which he joined their body and became known to them as a convert, than any distrust which may have lurked in their minds was speedily removed, by the bold and decided measure he took of proceeding at once to the Jewish synagogues, and publicly declaring in them the conviction he had so marvellously realized, that "Jesus is the Son of God." He doubtless stated, as he was apt to do, *what* had brought him to this conviction, and he was now able to employ his rabbinical and Pharisaical learning in upholding the cause he had once laboured to destroy, and in confuting the arguments which had once satisfied his own mind. Blank amazement at the first intimation of this astounding change in such a man, whose doings at Jerusalem, as well as the object of his presence in Damascus, were well known, seems to have been followed by some curiosity to hear how he would account for it. This gained him attention; and not the less as they saw that he was not a man to be put down by idle clamour. But when that curiosity was satisfied, and they saw him prepared to gainsay the whole course of his previous life, and to discard with abhorrence and grief the commission with which he had been entrusted, he became the object of intense hatred, rising into rage with the increasing energy and boldness with which he went on arguing and proving, in the synagogues, with irresistible force, that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

This could not last long. It is evident that the excitement raised among the Jews of Damascus, who must have regarded him as the most faithless of apostates, would place his life in much danger; and nothing could be more likely than the speedy arrival of a new delegate from Jerusalem, empowered to supersede him, and to bring him back for condign punishment. We know from his own account in Gal. i. 17, that he left Damascus; and these considerations render it probable that his first stay was not of long duration. He had put in his testimony for Christ, and left it to do its work.

But whither was he to go?

At the first look, one might think that he would be anxious to go to Jerusalem, to put himself into communication with the apostles, and advise with them as to his future course, if not to receive their instructions. But we seem to see prudential reasons why he should not go to Jerusalem just at that time, when the exasperation there must have been so strong against him; and as we find he did not proceed thither, we may suppose that he was prevented by such considerations. But again, we may hesitate to think that one who had confronted the Jews so boldly in the synagogues of Damascus, would be prevented by his apprehensions from going to Jerusalem; and it may be urged that if he left Damascus to prevent the needless surrender of his life, the same consideration should prevent his going to Jerusalem, where the danger was at least equal, and probably greater.

If any duty had called Saul to Jerusalem, if his Lord had commanded him to go thither, we may be sure that no prospect of danger to himself would have deterred him. But he had really no need to go thither; and his going at that time might have been injurious to his future influence and usefulness, by bringing the original and underived authority of his apostleship into question. From what afterwards happened at Corinth, we can see that advantage would have been taken of this circumstance to insinuate that he had sought, from the apostles at Jerusalem, instruction in doctrine, and the confirmation of his mission. But the Lord, by the whole course

of his action towards him, and probably indeed by direct instruction, had made him to understand how essentially important it was to have the fact made quite manifest, that he derived his gospel directly from Jesus Christ—that He had made him a minister—that He had directly and immediately invested him with plenary apostolic authority, so that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles.[1] The more strongly we are enabled, from the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians, to realize the importance of these considerations, the more clearly Saul's reasons for not going to Jerusalem may appear; and as the Lord knew future results which might not then be apparent to Saul's understanding, it may reasonably be presumed that He directed his movements on this as on other occasions, and forbade his proceeding to Jerusalem.

It is even possible that our knowledge of the circumstances which led to his quitting the same city on a *later* occasion, may have too readily induced us to assign the same cause for his previous departure. We certainly do not read that the violence of the Jews compelled him to go away. There may have been other reasons. Some have suggested a possible regard for his health—which does not seem to have been ever very strong, and may have been much shaken by all he had lately gone through. This may at least have been added to other reasons; for a man is as much bound to consider his health as his life, though his care for neither is to take him away from the path of duty. Although we should not like to rest much upon this, we can produce facts which would make it appear still more probable to those by whom it has been advanced.

The great bane of the delicious environs of Damascus is the insalubrity of the climate. In the summer and autumn, attacks of ophthalmia are frequent; and the intermittent

[1] This matter may be seen fully developed in Dr JOHN BROWN'S *Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians*—a most valuable recent addition to the series of exegetical works with which, within these few years, the author has, far beyond any writer of this age, enriched the theological literature of this country.

Damascene fever is a terrible disease; and when it has once made its attack, it pays annual visits, reducing the patient to a skeleton. This fever and ophthalmia are entirely owing to the extensive irrigation, and consequent exhalation from the ground. Wherever there is water, it is unhealthy in Syria; and where there is no water, there are generally no inhabitants. Hence, such of the inhabitants as can possibly contrive to do so, leave the city for a time, and retire into the neighbouring dry and healthy districts. Saul did this—that is, he went into "Arabia;" but whether for the same reason, wholly or partly, is open to conjecture. It has been thought that certain intimations in the Epistles are best explained by supposing it to have been the Lord's pleasure that, although he recovered his sight, his eyes should remain weak and tender, as a standing memorial of the circumstances under which he had been made blind. If this was the case, it may be conjectured that some indication of an attack of ophthalmia, on the arrival of the unwholesome season at Damascus, contributed to the reasons he had for retiring from the city, at that time. It may also be conceived, that at this early period of his new career, he desired to withdraw for a season into comparative retirement, for the purpose of giving himself up to solemn meditation and communion with his Divine master. Such retirement he could realize in Arabia, but not at Damascus, nor at Jerusalem, nor at Tarsus. It is commonly stated, that he preached the gospel in Arabia, and some ingenious comment has been founded upon that conclusion. It may have been so to the extent that a man like Saul would not be likely to neglect any opportunity of usefulness which circumstances might present; but there is no proof of the fact in the passage in Galatians, where this visit is mentioned, nor any trace of it in the Acts of the Apostles.

And here it may be desirable to remind the reader that the name Arabia is doubtless employed in this passage in a sense different from what it has borne since the second century, when the geographer Ptolemy gave the definition of the limits of

Arabia in its three divisions, which has been generally adopted. Previously the name was very vaguely applied, and in the times of Saul was extended far northward, encroaching largely upon the borders of Syria and Palestine. Towns lying in the region immediately south of Damascus, that is, in the Hauran (Auranitis) are reckoned by the Roman writers as belonging to Arabia. Early Christian writers, such as Justin Martyr and Tertullian, assign even Damascus itself to Arabia; and Pliny the elder extends Arabia in this direction over the mountains of Lebanon to the borders of Cilicia. It is not therefore needful to suppose that Saul buried himself in the deserts of Arabia, or sought the dread solitudes of Sinai. It is sufficient to assume that he withdrew to the same quarters to which the Damascenes themselves retreat from the fever and the ophthalmia which in summer afflict their city.

Forty-Fourth Week—First Day.

GRACE.—1 COR. XV. 8-10.

In the frequent references which occur in Paul's Epistles to the great event of his life, it is not difficult to discover the strongest and most prevailing impression it left upon his own mind. It was that of admiring wonder at the high Grace of God, which had singled him out—even him—to be brought near to that Jesus, whose name he had once abhorred, and to spend and be spent in that cause which he had laboured to destroy.

Observe how remarkably, even to iteration, he, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, makes this grace the leading theme of his allusion to that event:—

"Last of all He [Jesus] was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by *the grace of God* I am what I am; and *His grace*, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but *the grace of God* which was with me." It is all "grace." And this perception of the fulness of that grace could not be realized without the correspondingly deep sense of his own undeservings, which he constantly declares. These two things are inseparable; for no one can adequately value or understand God's grace in saving, who does not know—who does not feel, "in his heart of hearts," that without it he were utterly lost—"utterly;" for as there is no middle condition between living and dying, so is there none between salvation and perdition.

What wonder, then, that with this keen perception of the grace that had been so signally manifested towards himself—grace became the darling theme of his writings and discourses:

and that he is never weary in enforcing, by every kind of argument and illustration, the sovereign freedom and exceeding riches of the Divine grace abounding to sinners in the Great Redeemer. In this only he rejoiced, in this only he exulted. Yet did he not consider his most humble and entire confidence in that grace as superseding the necessity of the most constant watchfulness and self-denial. "I keep under my body," he says, "and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."—1 Cor. ix. 27.

The force of the language in which the apostle expresses his meaning may not be readily seen, unless we recollect that throughout the passage, of which this text is part, the images are derived from the contests, the races, the boxing, the wrestling, of the Olympic and Isthmian games. He had before said, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." In which he alludes to the severe preparatory training of those who intended to offer themselves as competitors in these games—something like which still exists with us among those preparing for pugilistic and pedestrian contests. But among these ancient competitors training lasted twelve months, during which all the wants of nature, and all sensual indulgences, were strictly regulated under an experienced master of the gymnastic arts. Their eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, were determined as to time and quantity by rule; and they were continually exercised in those arts, at the prize for which they intended to aim. "Now they do it," says the apostle, "to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." The crowns of the victors in these games were indeed very corruptible, being simply garlands of laurel, pine leaves, wild olive, or even parsley. The other, "a crown of glory, that fadeth not away."

In the passage before us, however, his allusions are to the pugilistic contests. The apostle intimates the stern reality of the conflict in which he is engaged, by treating the body as the opponent in such an encounter. When he says that *he keeps it under*, he uses a phrase, which, in the original,

signifies to strike one's opponent, in such a conflict, *in the face*, or, more exactly, *under the eyes*, that being the part particularly aimed at in such conflicts, for the purpose of both blinding and disfiguring the antagonist; and here the blow was considered most effective. So, when he says that he strives to "*bring it* [the body] *into subjection*," he seems to pass to an image derived from the practice of wrestlers, who strive to secure the victory by giving a fall to their opponents.

Language like this—so explained and illustrated—is strongly expressive of a mind at once divested of self-confidence, and, at the same time, well guarded against every tendency to pervert the doctrines of grace to a plea for indulgence to the flesh. Paul was far otherwise minded. He considered the discoveries of the gospel, as furnishing the most powerful motives to constant and vigorous exertion in all the duties of practical religion, and as affording the best assistance in them. Thus, again, after having introduced the beautiful allusion to the Olympic games, to which we have just referred, by mention of the fadeless prize-crown which is set before the Christian combatant, he proposes himself as an example in that glorious contest—striving to win this high honour. "I so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Thus he expresses, by figures derived from the same source as the others, that he ran the race set before him, not by a rambling and devious course, but along a determined line to a definite bourne. Just as in the games, the path the racers were to keep was denoted by white lines, or by posts; and he who trespassed beyond these lines, by diverging from the path which they marked out, lost the race, even though he were the first to reach the goal; so also, in his contest with flesh and blood, he fought not with futile and abortive strokes, as one beating the air, but with steady aim and firm stroke, as one resolute in his purposes. In order to acquire the proper dexterity and firmness of muscle, it was usual for the pugilists to exercise themselves with the gauntlets, and to fling their arms about as if engaged with an actual adversary. This was called "beating the air."

and came to be a proverbial expression, applied to those who missed their aim in the actual conflict. This seems to be the allusion intended by the apostle.

In the same spirit he writes to the church at Philippi:—"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."—Phil. iii. 13, 14. Here also the allusions are to the race—allusions so frequent with him, because they were not only highly illustrative, but so familiar and intelligible to those whom he addressed. In the entire passage, which includes these two verses, his first and literal meaning is this—He could not yet exult as one who had attained the goal, and won (though not yet received) the prize; much less as one already "perfect," or crowned with all the honours of victory. No; not yet (and he wrote this towards the close of his career) had he *apprehended*, or taken hold of, the post which marked the goal, and thereby gained the victory. He was yet upon the course, still striving in the race. He lost no time in looking back upon the distance he had passed, or to see how far the other racers were behind; but with his attention wholly fixed upon the space that lay before him—between him and the *mark* or garlanded post that showed the goal, he *pressed* with eagerness towards it for the prize—"the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

He means not that any duty or service was undertaken by him in his own strength. He had once, in his Pharisaic self-esteem, regarded his virtue alone as equal to any labour or suffering; but his more enlightened experience, or rather his Divine Master, had shown him his mistake, and taught him to rely humbly and actively upon Him for assistance and success in every undertaking. Under this conviction he continually sought His aid, and entreated his brethren to strengthen his supplications by their prayers for him:—"I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and

for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."—Rom. xv. 30.

Indeed, to a Divine influence showered upon him, and working in him, he ascribed the honour of every great and good design, every becoming disposition, every honourable and useful action of his life. "By the grace of God I am what I am." And it ought to be remarked here, that amidst a series of the most extensive and important services to the cause of Christ, and the best interests of mankind, he speaks of himself in terms of deep and earnest self-abasement, inventing a superlatively comparative diminutive (ἐλαχιστότερος), by which to express that sense, for which no existing word sufficed —the most humbling sense which he entertained of his own insufficiency and nothingness—"*less than the least* of all saints." Nor was this an unmeaning form of words; he lived the language which he spoke, and exemplified, in all circumstances, the lowly spirit which he recommended and expressed.

Forty-Fourth Week—Second Day.

SAUL'S ESCAPE FROM DAMASCUS.—ACTS IX. 23-25.

THE duration of Saul's stay in Arabia is uncertain. It is stated by himself, in his Epistle to the Galatians, that his return to Jerusalem, to which he repaired after his *final* departure from Damascus, was "three years" subsequent to his conversion. This does not necessarily express three complete years; but may, according to Hebrew usage, denote one entire year, and part of two other years; just as our Lord is said to have lain "three days" in the tomb, though it was in reality but one whole day and part of two other days. In the direct narrative in the Acts, which overlooks the intermediate journey into Arabia, the interval is covered by the general phrase "many days;" and it is a curious coincidence, that in the Old Testament the same phrase of

"many days" is used to denote a space of "three years."[1] Whether the interval was three entire years, or three incomplete years, which may have been as little as a year and a half, there are no data for the distribution of the period between the two visits to Damascus and the intermediate sojourn in Arabia. The general impression, which results from a comparison of the different narratives and intimations, seems, however, in our judgment, to be that the first visit to Damascus was of short duration, the sojourn in Arabia of comparatively considerable length, and the final visit to Damascus much longer than the first, if not so long as that of the retirement into Arabia.

But we cannot proceed without pointing out the very satisfactory manner in which the long interval of "many days," explained as "three years," is thus accounted for. From the direct narrative in the Acts, it might appear difficult to account for the fact that Saul should, under the circumstances, have remained so long at Damascus unmolested by the Jews; but all this is obviated when we find, from the other account, that although the period commenced and ended at Damascus, there was an intermediate residence in Arabia, so that the period of "many days" covers three visits, two to Damascus, and one into Arabia. It is only, therefore, by *comparing* the narratives that we get at the full account, by which all difficulties are obviated, and all discrepancies removed. And in this we find very noticeable evidence of the simple truthfulness and integrity of the sacred writers. Here we have two accounts, neither of which is complete without the other. In the leading narrative in the Acts of the Apostles, Luke has left a chasm which *he* has nowhere else supplied. But that chasm we are enabled to fill up by the apostle himself, in letters written long after, and without any design to complete the history of Luke; for the introduction of this account of the transaction into the Epistle to

[1] 1 Kings ii. 38, 39, "And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem *many days*; and it came to pass at the end of *three years*, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away."

the Galatians, was for a very different purpose—that is, as was two evenings ago explained, to show that he received his commission directly from the Lord Jesus, and in a way independent of the other apostles. The two accounts are therefore like the two parts of a tally; neither is complete without the other, and yet, being put together, they so exactly fit into each other, as to show that the one is precisely adjusted to, and is the counterpart of, the other. And as these two parts are supplied by different persons without the least design of adapting them to each other, they show that the writers have formed no collusion or agreement to impose upon the world; that they are separate and independent witnesses; that they are honest men; and that their statements are true records of what actually occurred. The two narratives, therefore, constitute a strong and very valuable proof of the correctness of the sacred history.

Dr Paley, who has very ably wrought out this species of argument through a variety of illustrations drawn from the comparison of the Acts and the Epistles, observes of the present case: "Beside the difference observable in the terms and general complexion of these two accounts, the journey into Arabia, mentioned in the Epistle, and omitted in the history, affords full proof that there existed no correspondence between these writers. If the narrative in the Acts had been made up from the Epistle, it is impossible that this journey should be passed over in silence. If the Epistle had been composed out of what the writer had read of Paul's history in the Acts, it is unaccountable that it should have been inserted."[1]

If we are led further to ask why Luke should omit this important particular in the Acts, it may be answered that there are many facts and circumstances omitted in all histories from the necessity of the case. This is very broadly stated by one of the sacred historians, with reference to the history of our Lord.—John xxi. 25.

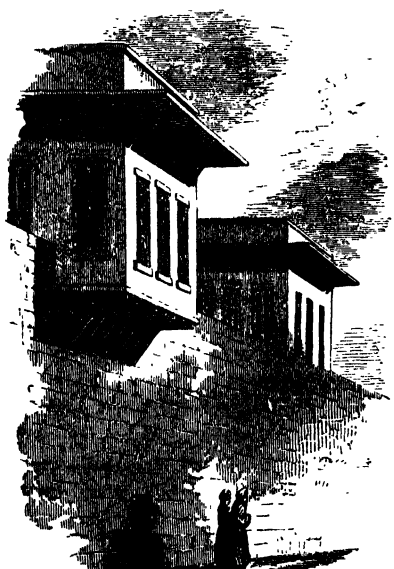
After his return to Damascus, Saul seems to have resumed

[1] *Horæ Paulinæ*, Chap. v., No. 1. Edited by Rev. T. R. Birks. 1850.

his former course, "preaching boldly in the name of Jesus." Being unable to meet him in controversy, the Jews conspired to take his life—not seemingly by any judicial process, but by assassination—a resort for the removal of adversaries which had already become common in that age, and for which hired agents were never wanting. The plot, however, transpired, though we know not in what way. Saul became acquainted with it. It would seem that he then no longer appeared in public, but kept himself in retirement. His enemies, however, felt assured that he had not left the city; and their influence with the governor of Damascus was sufficient to enable them to obtain an order that the gates should be watched for his apprehension, should he attempt to escape. The walls were lofty, and there seemed no other mode of egress than by the gates. But the anxiety of the disciples for the preservation of a life so precious, found a means of deliverance, which the zealous watchfulness of the "liers in wait" had overlooked. It is usual in the East for houses to be built against the inside of the town wall, so that many of the house-tops are nearly, if not quite, on a level with its summit. In some cases, indeed, the upper part of the houses rises considerably above the level of the wall, and then sometimes an upper apartment even overhangs the wall, forming a kiosk, where the master of the house can, in his recreative moments, sit, alone or with his friends, enjoying the view of the open country. We might therefore infer, from the leading narrative alone, that it was from some such house that the apostle was let down in a basket; but his own information, given in 2 Cor. xi. 33, that the basket was let down "through a window," places this beyond question.

Houses built against, upon, or overhanging the wall of the city, are still to be seen at Damascus; some of them near the place, hard by the Jerusalem Gate, where tradition, with its usual determinateness, places the precise spot of Saul's escape. "Passing through the gate of Jerusalem," says Dr Durbin, "I cast my eyes up to the top of the wall, and observed that houses were built upon it; and near one

of them was a walled-up portal and window, through the latter of which Christian tradition says the apostle was let down in a basket when he escaped for his life; and, according to Moslem tradition, the reign of Mohammedanism shall cease whenever a Christian shall enter the gate through the former. Hence it is strongly built up."



Forty-Fourth Week—Third Day.

ARETAS THE KING.—2 COR. XI. 32.

We may this evening give our attention to a curious point in the history of Saul's escape from Damascus, which does

not appear in the regular narrative, nor in the apostle's own reference to it.

We find it in the second of his Epistles to the Corinthians. It is there stated that at the time of his escape, "*the governor under Aretas the king* kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend him." Here the fact that startles us is, that Aretas, a petty king of Arabia Petræa, should be in the exercise of authority, by his officer or ethnarch, in a city not belonging to his proper territory, but under the Roman jurisdiction. Neither Josephus, nor any other writer, speaks of Damascus as ever having been subject to Aretas, and the circumstance seems at the first view unaccountable, and even improbable. That the fact is not mentioned by the only one or two writers likely to have noticed it, is not in itself strange, on the principles of historical evidence; and we cannot pretend to produce any testimony on this point. But, in the absence of such proof, it is something to be able to show from the information we do possess, that it is by no means *improbable* that Aretas should *at this time* have had possession of Damascus.

This Aretas is the same king of Arabia whom Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, had so deeply displeased by divorcing his daughter, in order that he might marry Herodias. The injured princess returned to her father; and he, incensed at the treatment she had received, soon commenced hostilities against Herod, and in the last year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 37), had completely defeated his army. Aretas was, like Herod, tributary to the Romans, though in some degree less dependent, and Herod took care to send such a report of the matter to Rome, that the imperial wrath was roused at the audacity of Aretas in waging war with another "protected" sovereign without the permission or concurrence of the emperor. Tiberius therefore sent orders to Vitellius, the Roman prefect in Syria, to declare war against Aretas, and either take him alive, or send his head to Rome.

But Vitellius cherished a dislike to Herod, and seems to

have moved with little alacrity in what was essentially his cause. Indeed, the knowledge that this order had been procured by *his* representations to the emperor, was alone sufficient to render it distasteful to him.

The reason of his umbrage was this:—

There had been in Parthia, a rebellion against the Romans, and great commotions. After various attempts to settle these disorders, Tiberius ordered Vitellius to go and contract a league with Artabanus, the king of the Parthians. They met accordingly, each with a guard of honour, upon a bridge thrown for that purpose over the Euphrates, where they concluded the articles of agreement. After this they were splendidly entertained by Herod, who was present, in a rich pavilion curiously set in the middle of the stream—but whether upon the bridge itself, or upon a raft secured in the mid-stream, does not exactly appear. Herod then hastened to send to the emperor intelligence of the conclusion of this treaty, about which he knew that Tiberius felt much interest, with a full account of the particulars. His messenger arrived considerably earlier than the one sent by Vitellius with his official account. The emperor therefore replied coldly that his intelligence was stale, for that he had already received all needful information from Herod. Vitellius was much hurt at this; and conceiving that he had been greatly injured in the emperor's favour by the officiousness of the tetrarch, he cherished a secret resentment against that personage—not the less bitter that he was for the present obliged to keep it in his own bosom. For although Herod had lost the favour of the prefect, he had won that of the emperor, which he valued much more; so that it was not long after this that Vitellius received from Tiberius the order we have mentioned —to employ the Roman forces against Aretas, ostensibly to punish a refractory vassal, but really to avenge the quarrel of Herod Antipas.

However slowly and reluctantly, Vitellius was obliged to move in obedience to this order. At first, it was his intention to march his troops through Judea, as the nearest way to

the territory of Aretas; but he was met at Ptolemais by an embassy from the Jews, who implored him to change his plan, as they could not suffer the Roman standards, with their idolatrous images, to be carried through their country. The prefect, who was a man noted for his courtesy, unwilling to give needless offence, sent the troops across the plain of Esdraelon, and went himself to Jerusalem, with Herod and some others who were proceeding thither to offer sacrifices in the temple, at the feast of the Passover, then nigh at hand. Gratified by his ready concession to their religious scruples, Vitellius was received with every possible mark of respect. On the fourth day after his arrival, news arrived of the death of Tiberius, and the accession of Caius Caligula. Upon receiving this intelligence, he required the Jews to take the oath of allegiance to the new emperor; and he eagerly seized the excuse of abandoning or postponing the enterprise against Aretas, alleging the necessity of first obtaining the sanction of the new emperor to the orders received from his predecessor. He therefore himself returned to Antioch, and dismissed his troops into winter quarters. Now, seeing how nearly this event appears, so far as can be ascertained, to coincide with, or slightly to precede, the mention of Aretas in the sacred volume, as master of Damascus, what forbids us to conclude, that in the course of the hostilities between him and Herod, upon the Syrian frontier; or on the withdrawal of Vitellius; or, which is still more likely, as soon as he knew what he had to expect, under the orders which that general had received, to send him dead or alive to Rome, he gained possession of Damascus, which had belonged to his ancestors, and retained it in his possession during all the reign of Caligula? It had become a matter of life or death to him; and when he saw two legions of Roman soldiers, with numerous auxiliaries, marching against him, he had no alternative but to submit, or do all that he could to strengthen his position. To submit were death with ignominy; to resist were, at the worst, death with honour: and when the Romans had declared war against him, and were prepared to hunt him to the death, it

was not a time for him to hesitate about making himself master of any city he was able to win, and the possession of which was desirable to him, merely on the ground that it was immediately under Roman jurisdiction. The new emperor had little regard for Herod, and seems to have justified the precaution of Vitellius, by not ordering the resumption of the expedition against Aretas. How long this prince held Damascus we know not. It is likely that the Romans came to terms with him, rather than incur the expense and trouble of a profitless little war; and that then he either relinquished his occupation of Damascus, or was confirmed in the possession of it by the Romans.

It seems therefore to us, that the Scripture intimation, strange as it may be deemed at the first view, fits very well into the common history of these transactions, and indeed furnishes a hint for the completion of an account of matters, which is left unsettled and imperfect.

The term (ethnarch), applied to the "governor" of Damascus, under King Aretas, may denote either a civil governor or a military commandant—probably he was the latter, or perhaps both, the offices being often united, especially in a recently acquired town.

The influence which the Jews had with him may be explained by considering how much it was his interest to conciliate so important a portion of the Damascene population. Besides, the government of Aretas could hardly fail to be popular with them. They hated the Roman yoke; and in the quarrel between Herod and Aretas, their sympathies were entirely with the latter. As for Herod, in his own dominions he was not much liked, and, beyond them, he was detested.

Forty-Fourth Week—Fourth Day.

VISIT TO JERUSALEM.—ACTS IX. 26-30; GAL. I. 18.

On escaping from Damascus, Saul proceeded to Jerusalem, where he had not yet been since his conversion.

The direct narrative, in the Acts of the Apostles, does not acquaint us with his precise object in at length returning to that city; but Saul supplies the omission in his Epistle to the Galatians, by stating that he went to Jerusalem "to see Peter." This apostle had been so conspicuous in the first proceedings of the disciples, after their Lord had been taken from them, that one who had regarded those proceedings with hostile attention, as Saul had done, must have seen him often, and probably heard him sometimes. What he had thus seen and heard formerly, however adversely it had then impressed him, now interested him deeply, and he longed to form the personal acquaintance of one who seemed a pillar of the rising church, who had been one of the three earliest disciples and closest associates of Jesus, and whose history afforded some points in which he could deeply sympathize; for Peter, after thrice denying his Lord, had been pardoned and restored, and Saul, after being a destroyer of the Christians, had been converted to the faith they held, and placed among their leaders and chiefs. Both had "lien among the pots," yet had risen soaringly from their low estate, as "a dove with wings of silver and feathers of yellow gold." He had also, doubtless, heard of Peter from the disciples in Damascus. He was at least as conspicuous a character in their view as he is in ours; and we, from the Scripture alone, know far more of him than of any of the other original apostles, and understand his character far better. It is to be feared that the unfounded claims on behalf of Peter, which a corrupt church has advanced for the promotion of its own ambitious aims, have created in many minds an indisposition, if not a repugnance, to recognise his actual promi-

nence in the evangelical history, or to acknowledge his really just claims to consideration. We may see this even in the writings of men of high character and fairness, to whom it would be not only wrong but foolish to impute any more than an unconscious bias. We detect a hesitancy in discussing those great facts in Scripture history in which Peter is the prominent figure—a careful choice of limiting words—a secret fear lest too much to his advantage should be admitted. In all this we see the influence of that natural reaction which takes place, to the disadvantage of those in whose behalf exorbitant pretensions have been made, creating a disposition to disparage them and to ignore their rightful claims. It is natural, but it is sadly natural; and it is wrong. Besides it is needless. Take any twelve men acting together as a society, a committee, a board, a jury, and we shall almost always find *one* who, from his position or character, from his readiness of speech, his exact judgment, his talent for business, or from all or any of the qualities which go to make up an influential character, becomes by much the most prominent man in that body—comes more into view than any one among them—and whose name is much more familiar than theirs to the public ear; and yet who himself would be the first to deny that he has any right of authority or dominion over those with whom he acts. Of all the modes of influence, this, arising from character and endowments, is the least obnoxious and the most cheerfully recognised. We see it exercised daily in our town councils, in our parish vestries, and why should we be so anxious to deny or to attenuate it in the case of Peter?

Let us meet the case boldly, and say that on both public and private grounds there was much reason why Saul should desire to form a personal acquaintance with the ardent and zealous apostle, who was then the most conspicuous person in the church; in whose character he now saw so much to respect and admire; and whose brother in the faith and work of the gospel, he had, by Divine appointment, now become. Instruction from Peter, or authority or recognition from him

he needed not. Both of them had been taught by the same Master, both authorized by the same Lord. But we cannot doubt that Saul promised himself much satisfaction in holding converse with one who had been so intimately near the Lord's person while on earth, and who could therefore tell him much that he desired to know.

On his arrival at Jerusalem, however, his reception by the disciples was not such as he expected. He was regarded with distrust and suspicion, and his attempts to unite himself to them were discouraged or repelled. This seems strange to us; but it is not unaccountable. The disciples would naturally retain a more vivid recollection of the suffering this man had formerly caused among them, and the inveteracy of his hatred against them, than of the rumour they might have heard a good while since of his conversion in a distant city, subsequently to which he had for a considerable period disappeared from public view; and it is likely they had not heard of his reappearance at Damascus, and of the more recent proceedings in that city—as the disturbed state of the country, between Aretas on one side, and Herod with the Romans on the other, was unfavourable to communication between the two cities; and although there was ordinarily much intercourse between these places, yet about this time there were circumstances (as we shall presently see) calculated to deter the Christians of Damascus from visiting Jerusalem.

Saul also, from the hurried circumstances of his escape, was probably unprovided with the letters of recommendation with which, in those days, a disciple going to another city was usually furnished by the brethren belonging to the place he had left. It is also possible that, in attempting to disguise the loss they had sustained, the Jewish authorities had spread reports tending to throw discredit upon the reality or sincerity of his conversion, and to damage him in the estimation of those he had joined. At all events, it seems not difficult to understand how the disciples at Jerusalem should have shrunk with instinctive dread and suspicion, from one who had been

so violent a persecutor, whose conversion seemed altogether so improbable, and of whose later proceedings they had no information.

From this trouble Saul was relieved by that good Barnabas of whom we have formerly heard, and who in this case also proved himself a true "son of consolation." It is quite likely that Saul and Barnabas had been previously acquainted at Tarsus, and afterwards at Jerusalem; for Cilicia lay on the part of the Asiatic coast nearest to the island of Cyprus, to which Barnabas belonged, and there was much intercourse between it and the mainland, where Saul's native place was the nearest important city. In this case, or if only because Barnabas was, like himself, not a native Jew, it was natural that he should apply to him for an introduction to the church at Jerusalem. To him he doubtless explained all that had happened to him, and the course he had taken; and Barnabas, convinced of his truthfulness, took him by the hand, and, by giving the sanction of his high authority to the recital of Saul's conversion and recent proceedings, secured for him a most cordial reception from the disciples. He then realized his object; for Peter took him to lodge with him; and for a fortnight the two apostles—the great apostle of the circumcision, and the great apostle of the uncircumcision—remained under the same roof. Happy days for both, doubtless, were these; and one seems to long for further information than has been vouchsafed, respecting the first interview and subsequent intercourse between these truly "great men." For this, and for much that we want to know, we must be content to wait. Perhaps Saul will tell us one day; perhaps Peter will; perhaps we shall know without their telling. But we do know that these days did not last Saul, as usual, burning to be useful, put his hand boldly into the hornets' nest, by preaching Christ crucified in the synagogues of the Hellenists—in the very synagogues in which he had last appeared as the most ardent champion and most promising advocate of Pharisaic Judaism. This was not to be borne, and a conspiracy was now laid against his life. What

was he to do? We know that he was sensitive respecting his recent withdrawal from Damascus. He counts it among his "infirmities," and feared lest it should appear that he had shunned to suffer for Christ's sake. It is likely that, in this state of feeling, he would have remained at Jerusalem, to seal his testimony, as Stephen had done, with his blood. But it was not so to be. The time was not come. There was much for him to do, and much to suffer, before he could obtain that high advancement. He was therefore warned by his Lord in a vision, as he was at prayer in the Temple, that the Jews at Jerusalem would not receive his testimony. This was not *his* vocation. He was to labour far off among the Gentiles, and to them he was accordingly sent. The disciples conducted him down to the port of Cæsarea, and saw him safely embarked for Tarsus, his native city.

Forty-Fourth Week—Fifth Day.

CORROBORATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES.—GAL. I. 18, 19.

It has been before intimated that the narrative of these transactions, which Saul himself gives in the Epistle to the Galatians, is produced argumentatively for the purpose of showing that he derived not his apostolic authority from any human appointment, nor his doctrine from any human teaching. The only fact in his history that could furnish a hold for any contrary conclusion, was this visit of his to Jerusalem. He therefore recites the circumstances of this visit, to show how they agreed with the assertion of his own independence. In doing this, he produces details, which are not furnished by Luke in his general narrative of the events, but which fit exactly into that narrative. He shows that, after his conversion, he had little if any intercourse with the apostles at Jerusalem, or with the churches in Judea. After his conversion he withdrew into Arabia, and it was not until three

years subsequently that he went to Jerusalem, *after* he had already been preaching the gospel boldly, as one fully authorized and qualified to do so. Then, although he did go to Jerusalem, it was only for the purpose of forming a personal acquaintance with Peter; and his stay was short—only fifteen days—during which he saw no other apostle, "save James, the Lord's brother." There he could not have been commissioned or authorized by the college of the apostles, for they were actually not at Jerusalem; or, if they were there, they had not become known to him. It is inferred that all save two had quitted Jerusalem on various evangelical missions; but, as the word translated "to see" often means to form the personal acquaintance of one, he may mean, when he says that he *saw* none of the apostles but Peter and James, that he became personally acquainted only with these two, though more than these may have been at Jerusalem. Then, in another place (Acts xxvi. 17-21), he gives an incidental corroboration of his statements, by showing that he did not depart from Jerusalem under any delegation or appointment from the apostles, but by special command of the Lord himself, who had appeared to him in a vision. Further, he shows that, when he did take his departure, it was by a mode which precluded him from visiting the Christian churches in Palestine, so that he remained "unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: but they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me." He adds that fourteen years elapsed before he again visited Jerusalem. All these are new points which do not appear in Luke's narrative, and it is worth while to look at them separately.

The object of his visit, "to see Peter," has already been sufficiently considered.

From the shortness of the visit, as here stated, an important historical consideration arises, which has been well produced by Dr Paley, in whose words it had best be given. "The direct account of the same journey in Acts ix. 28,

determines nothing concerning the time of his continuance there—'And he was with them (the apostles) coming in and going out at Jerusulem. 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 Cæsarea;'—or rather this account, taken by itself, would lead a reader to suppose that St Paul's abode at Jerusalem had been longer than fifteen days. But turn to the twenty-second chapter of the Acts, and you will find a reference to this visit to Jerusalem, which plainly indicates that Paul's visit to the city had been of short duration,—'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 saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me.' Here we have the general terms of one text so explained by a distant text in the same book, as to bring an indeterminate expression into a close conformity with a specification delivered in another book—a species of consistency not, I think, usually found in fabulous relations."

The same writer points to the distinctive mention of the James, with whom Saul became acquainted at Jerusalem, as "the Lord's brother." "There were at Jerusalem two apostles, or at least two eminent members of the church, of the name of James. This is directly inferred from the Acts of the Apostles, which, in the second verse of the twelfth chapter, relates the death of James, the brother of John; and yet, in the fifteenth chapter, and in a subsequent part of the history, records a speech delivered by 'James,' in the assembly of the apostles and elders. It is also strongly implied by the form of expression used in the Epistle—'Other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother;' that is, to distinguish him from 'James, the brother of John.'" In this matter the Rev. T. R. Birks, in his *Horæ Apostolicæ*, has pointed out a minute trait of historical accuracy which Paley had not observed. The apostle James is named three times in the Epistle to the Galatians, but

only in this first instance with this distinctive title. The history supplies a full key. These several indications of James occur in connection with the mention of Saul's two visits to Jerusalem, one fourteen years after the other. At the time of the first visit, both the apostles called James being alive, and both usually resident at Jerusalem (though one may have been temporarily absent), it became necessary to distinguish the one from the other, to preclude misapprehension. But at the second visit, James, the brother of John, having been long dead, this became needless, and "James" was alone a sufficient specification. "A distinctive addition to the name was thus as natural in the one case as it would have been superfluous, and even suspicious, in the other." The same distinction is observed in the book of the Acts. In the earlier part the two apostles of this name are distinguished—"the brother of John," or "the son of Alpheus." But after the elder James was martyred, the one who remained at Jerusalem is three times called "James" simply, without any addition. "This minute propriety," Mr Birks observes, "is too delicate and refined to be easily accounted for, except by the fact, that Luke and Paul were contemporary with the events they record."

In the incidental intimation, that he saw also "James, the Lord's brother," there is a curiously minute coincidence, which reconciles the previous statement with the history. Saul himself has told us, that he went to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. St Luke tells us that Barnabas took him and introduced him to the *apostles*. Now the statements, if completed here, would scarcely be in agreement. But when we learn that he met with a second apostle, though it were only one, they are brought into coincidence, since the plural form requires more than one apostle to have been present, but cannot with certainty imply any greater number.

If we turn to the direct narrative in the Acts, we shall receive the impression, that on his departure Saul was conducted to the port of Cæsarea, and there took ship for Tarsus. But Saul's own words in the Epistle—"Afterwards I came

into the regions of Syria and Cilicia"—have been thought by some to necessitate the conclusion, that he travelled over land from Jerusalem to Cilicia, and that the Cæsarea in question was not the city of that name upon the coast, but Cæsarea Philippi, near the sources of the Jordan. To this we may object, that if he had followed the route supposed, he could not have been, as he says he was, unknown by face to the churches of Judea, and that when the name Cæsarea occurs simply, it always denotes the great maritime Cæsarea, never Cæsarea Philippi. Some, who admit the latter fact, conclude that the land journey was made from the city on the coast. If so, it was a very inexplicable proceeding. People do not go far out of their way to a port whence they may find easy and quick access by water to the desired place, and then start on a long and tedious overland journey to that place. But although Paley declares the connection to be inexplicable without the supposition of such a journey, yet when the text is closely examined, there will be found no real need for this supposition, nor any want of connection between the passages as they stand. Saul does not seem to refer exclusively or mainly to the few days of his journey, but to the scene of many years' subsequent labour in Syria and Cilicia; and while he was thus engaged, the churches in Judea, though he was personally unknown to them "heard" (rather *kept hearing*, that is, continually, or from time to time) how zealously he "preached the faith he had once destroyed."

Forty-Fourth Week—Sixth Day.

THE BRETHREN OF JESUS.—GAL. I. 19.

We are quite sure that many of those who have perused the last two Readings have paused over the passages, in which Saul is represented as stating that, besides Peter, he became known only to "James, the Lord's brother"—to consider in

what sense this person could have stood in that relation to Christ. The question is in fact both more curious and more difficult than it even appears; and for this reason we may not let it pass unexamined.

The phrase referred to carries our recollection back to the instances in the Gospels, in which our Lord's "brethren," and even his "sisters," are mentioned.[1] Now, at the outset, it is clear, that unless there are very strong and very probable reasons why these terms should *not* be taken in their plain, primary, and natural sense, they ought to be so understood.

Are there any such reasons? Some such have been urged, and it is our task to look into them.

It is alleged, that the term "brother" is too vaguely and comprehensively used in Scripture, to be insisted upon in the literal sense. It does not appear to us, however, to be more largely used than in our own language, especially by the elder writers, and still more by theological writers; and we might easily undertake to parallel every Scripture example by some from English authors. Yet in every instance, we know or judge from the subject or context, in what sense the term is used; and if nothing appears to extend the sense, we have no hesitation to take it in its restricted and proper sense. Most stress, however, is laid on the alleged fact, that the term "brother" is often used to denote *any* near relative. Let us not, in such a case, take anything for granted, but look. We do look and discover that this does not *often* occur, and that then it does not denote *any* near relationship, but only one, that of a nephew. The only cases are those in which Lot, the brother's son of Abraham, is called his "brother,"[2] and in which Laban applies the same term to Jacob, his sister's son,[3]—that is to say, a man designates as "brother" the children of those to whom he is a brother. Again, both these instances occur more than seventeen centuries before the time of Christ, during which, as was natural, great changes in the use of words took place. Both also

[1] Matt. xii. 46; xiii. 55, 56. Mark iii. 31. Luke viii. 19.
[2] Gen. xii. 5; xiv. 16. [3] Gen. xxix. 15.

occur in one book. As, therefore, this employment of the word "brother" does not subsequently occur, we may infer that it had dropped out of use. The words "kinsman" and "kindred" are in quite such frequent use as to show that "brother" and "brethren" need not be employed to denote near relationship for want of more definite terms. It seems, therefore, that although the term "brother" was in patriarchal times used to denote the nearest relation next to a brother, that is a nephew, it was not extended to any remoter relation, and eventually ceased to be applied even to that. David never applies the term to the sons of his sister Zeruiah, although much conversation between them is reported. He calls them "sons of Zeruiah." And in the New Testament itself the same relation as that which subsisted between Laban and Jacob is denoted, not by "brother" but by "sister's son,"—"Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, saluteth you."[1] "Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait."[2] If this near relationship was not denoted by the term "brother," is it likely that any remoter relationship should be denoted by it?

There is, therefore, nothing, we apprehend, *in the use of the language alone*, to warrant us in taking the terms "brother" and "brethren" in any but the natural and obvious sense.

It then remains to ask, whether there be anything in the circumstances of the case to over-rule this consideration, and compel us to receive the term in any other than its obvious meaning. We know not any; and it seems to us very clear that the idea that these terms are to be taken in any other sense, would never have occurred, had not the desire been first felt to throw doubt on the matter, owing to the notions which crept into the church respecting the mother of Jesus—notions which the Roman church still upholds, and which require her to have remained "always a virgin;" and which have lately had their complete development in the formal recognition by that church of the previously private

[1] Col. iv. 10. [2] Acts xxiii. 16.

doctrine, that her own birth was no less miraculous ("immaculate" is their word) than that of her son; and this itself having its origin in views dishonouring to the marriage relation, and exaltive of celibacy, which also came to be entertained, but for which there is no Scripture warrant whatever. But we are not bound by Roman views. We are free to see plainly what Scripture teaches; and in the face of what Scripture does teach or intimate, it can only be owing to some taint of the old Roman leaven—the habit of an ancient time—that many among us shrink from the idea, that Mary may have had other children than Jesus. If we turn to the passages in which the "brethren" of Jesus are mentioned, there seems to be every needful indication of the simply natural sense—they are so associated with his mother as would alone, apart from any theory, suggest that they stood in a filial relation to her. In Matt. xii. 46, we read, "His mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him," or, as Mark (iii. 31) relates it: "There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto Him;" and so the parallel place in Luke viii. 19. And unless those thus designated stood in the *nearest possible* relation to our Lord, the reply He gave to the intimation of their presence, loses much of its force; for in declaring that his mother and his brethren were such as heard the word of God and did it, He plainly means that such were as near and as dear as those who stood in the closest natural relation to Him. Substitute any other word for that of "brethren," and the sense becomes frigid. They appear constantly together as forming one family, in a way scarcely possible among more distant relations. So, in John ii. 12, "After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples." Still more emphatic is the collective recognition of the family by the offended Jews at Nazareth: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" Matt. xiii 55, 56. In this text there are not only brethren, but

"sisters." Now, we say that no one who reads these passages with a free mind, and without being aware of any reasons to the contrary, would take the terms in any other than the primary sense—and who is aware of any such reasons?

Still the term "brethren" does not necessarily imply brothers-german. It is in Scripture applied to children of the same father, but of different mothers;[1] or, *vice versa*, to those born of the same mother, but to different fathers. *Either* circumstance is supposable in the present case. There seems, however, every reason to infer, from the scriptural intimations, that Mary never married again after the death of Joseph. If, therefore, the "brethren" and "sisters" of Jesus were not the children of Joseph and Mary, the probability remains, that they were *his* children by a former marriage—a probability strengthened by the considerations which have generally led to the conclusion, that Joseph had passed his youth when Mary became his wife.

Forty-Fourth Week—Seventh Day.

JAMES THE LORD'S BROTHER.—GAL. I. 19.

If the conclusions which we reached last evening be correct, it seems to follow that "James the Lord's brother," was either the son of Joseph and Mary, or at least the son of Joseph.

But it must not be concealed that there are difficulties standing in the way of this conclusion. This James appears, at least by implication, to have been an apostle; and in the list of the twelve, the two apostles of that name are called the sons of Zebedee and Alpheus respectively. To meet this twofold representation of paternity, it has been suggested that Alpheus was the brother of Joseph, and he having died childless, Joseph, as the law required, espoused the widow, and had by her a child, who was called the son of Alpheus. Thus, "James the Lord's

[1] Gen. xlii. 15; xliii. 3. Judges viii. 19.

brother," and "James the son of Alpheus," would be the same. But this solution will not bear close examination. It is generally assumed that the mother of this latter James was alive during our Lord's ministry, and that she appears in the gospel history under the name of "Mary the mother of James." Therefore, on the supposition stated, this Mary would have been Joseph's wife at the time he espoused Mary the mother of Jesus. But polygamy was not then practised among the Jews, and it is not probable, even though it had been, that a person in Joseph's circumstances would have two wives at the same time. It is very clear, then, that if the two designations are not applicable to the same person, "James the Lord's brother," was *not* one of the twelve. Those, of course, who say that "brother" means merely a near relation, find no difficulty here, considering that James the son of Alpheus, is called the Lord's brother, as being his near relation—his cousin—the son of his mother's sister. But the notion that even this degree of relationship, or *any* relationship, did subsist, rests on a very slender foundation; for it is far from *certain* that the only text cited in proof of it will bear this meaning. It is that in which the names are given of the women who stood around the cross on which our Lord was crucified—"His mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." John xix. 25. Now, although we know from Mark xv. 40, that the mother of James the Less [usually assumed to be James the son of Alpheus], was called Mary, nothing can be built upon a name so common as the text just cited shows "Mary" to have been. Then it is questionable whether "his mother's sister," is to be taken in apposition with "Mary the wife of Cleophas," and does not rather denote a different person. It seems, indeed, very unlikely that two sisters should bear the same name. Then, again, if this Mary were the sister of our Lord's mother, it does not follow that James was her son, for James was the son of Alpheus, and "Mary the mother of James," is never described as the wife of Alpheus, but as "the wife of Cleophas;" and it is not certain that the names

Cleophas and Alpheus denote the same person. There are thus two uncertain assumptions in the theory which makes James the son of Alpheus even a relation of our Lord, or, in the remotest sense, his "brother."

It claims also to be noticed that several of the early Christian writers distinguish James the son of Alpheus, from James the Lord's brother; and there are lists of the apostles extant in which the names of Paul, and James the Lord's brother, are added to those of the twelve.

But we are reminded of the passages in the Gospels which assure us that the brethren of Jesus did not believe in Him —were not his followers or adherents. This is true; and it tells against the identity of James the Lord's brother, with James the son of Alpheus, who was not only a believer but an apostle. But the "brethren" did not always continue in this state of unbelief. After the ascension of Jesus, we find them, with Mary, in the company of the apostles, awaiting the day of Pentecost. Luke, after enumerating the apostles (among whom, as usual, we find "James the son of Alpheus"), goes on to say—"these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, *and with his brethren.*" This passage, besides showing that the brethren had become believers, expressly distinguishes them from the apostles, of whom the son of Alpheus is one—another reason against his identification with the Lord's brother.

In the list of the "brethren" of Jesus, given by the Jews of Nazareth, there is one bearing the name of James. Here, then, is literally a James the Lord's brother, and he was not likely to have had another brother of the same name. What hinders us from regarding this one as that brother of our Lord with whom Paul became acquainted at Jerusalem? It will instantly be replied, he was not an apostle if other than the son of Alpheus. This is more than we can tell. He was not in that case *one of the twelve*, it is certain; but he may, nevertheless, have been an apostle. Paul was not one of the twelve, and yet he was an apostle. Barnabas was

not one of the twelve, and yet he and Paul are called "apostles," in the same book and by the same writer (Acts xiv. 4, 14), whose use of the term in application to "James the Lord's brother," is under consideration. There is, therefore, no argument against his being an apostle from the fact that he was not one of the twelve; nor can there be any from our ignorance of the circumstances under which he was called to the apostolate. The only argument against it that remains to be urged is, the unlikelihood that so recent a convert should so soon be advanced to this high trust. But Paul and Barnabas were still later converts, if, as there is not the least reason to question, James was one of the Lord's "brethren," who remained with the apostles awaiting the day of Pentecost.

We should, not, however, like to impair the force of the other conclusions, by insisting upon the one which cannot be so firmly established—that this James was an apostle in the fullest and most absolute sense of the word. Paul certainly, and Luke (by implication), call him an apostle; but it seems that certain men, standing next to the apostles in consideration and influence, were popularly called "apostles," and were distinguished in ecclesiastical history as "apostolical men." It is possibly in this sense that James is called an apostle, like Barnabas, who was not, as far as we know, officially so.

The results to which all these considerations seem to lead, are—that the persons designated in the Gospels as the "brethren" of Jesus, were really his brothers or half-brothers —most probably the latter; that James, who was one of the twelve, being the son of Alpheus, could not, for that and other reasons, be the same as James the Lord's brother; and that the James thus designated, was probably an apostle, though not one of the twelve.

In pursuing this inquiry, we have regarded the number of those bearing the name of James in the New Testament as *three*, namely, James the son of Zebedee, James the son of Alpheus, and James the Lord's brother. Some find four or

even five, while others reduce them to two, by identifying the son of Alpheus with the Lord's brother. We have shown that there are reasons against that conclusion. The question will perhaps never be divested of all difficulty. The fact that the names of the sons of Alpheus are so nearly correspondent with three of those named as our Lord's "brethren," has seemed to plead for the identification of James the son of Alpheus with James the Lord's brother. Thus the sons of Alpheus are stated to be James and Jude; and elsewhere James and Joses are mentioned as the sons of Mary the wife of Alpheus (if the same as Cleophas). So then it would seem the sons of this family were James, Jude, Joses; and these, with the addition of Simon, are exactly the names of those described as our Lord's brethren. The name of Simon in one group, and not in the other, does, however, create a difference. And considering how exceedingly common these names were, and that it was the custom of kindred to bestow similar names on their children, no particular stress can be laid upon this sort of coincidence; and we have, therefore, not taken it into account. Something of the same perplexity arises in reading Josephus, from the frequent recurrence of the same names. Thus we have twenty-one persons of the name of Simon; seventeen called Joseph or Joses; and ten named Judas or Jude—many of them contemporaries. It is not unusual among ourselves for the children of related families to have the same Christian names, and very often the same names run in families for several generations.

Prior to the careful investigation through which the reader has now been led, we rested in the opinion that "James the son of Alpheus," and "James the Lord's brother," were the same person. That against this prepossession we have now reached a different conclusion, may be regarded as strengthening its claim to attention.

Apart from all these questions, however, it admits of no doubt that the James who alone appears at Jerusalem after the death of James the brother of John, is the one whom Paul designates as "the Lord's brother," and whom else-

where he indicates, with Peter and John, as "pillars" of the church, Gal. ii. 9. If, also, this person—the James whom he personally knew—is, as it is reasonably supposed, the one he always has in view, when he speaks of "James" simply, then we gather from 1 Cor. xv. 7, that the Lord appeared to him alone after his resurrection. We know not the circumstances; but it is reasonable to presume that this mark of distinction shown him, and what was known to the apostles as having transpired on that occasion, not only decided his own views, but contributed materially to the high consideration in which he was afterwards held. The only other scriptural fact concerning him is, that, in the council held at Jerusalem, his decision on the questions considered is the only one recorded, and the conclusions of the council were framed in accordance with it. It is to be noted, also, that he gave his vote last—probably as being president of the council—a station which may have been assigned to him as specially entrusted with the charge of the church in Jerusalem, where the council was held (Acts xv. 12, 13). His decision shows that, although himself a strict observer of the law, and disposed to exact the same observance from Jewish converts, he was not inclined to impose this yoke upon the converts from heathenism.

Such is the amount of our authentic information concerning James. But much more is said of him by early Christian writers, who agree in recognising the James who was bishop at Jerusalem as "James the Lord's brother." Part of the information derived from them, embodying the early traditions of the church, is probable enough, part of it questionable, and part contradictory. The sum of it is this—for we cannot here enter into particulars, or discriminate their claims to consideration:—James was from his childhood brought up as a Nazarite of the strictest sort. He observed this kind of life after he became a conspicuous person at Jerusalem—a fact which, with his strict observance of the law, and his high character, obtained for him great respect, even from the Jews, so that he acquired the surname of "the Just."

The rapid progress of the gospel in the city, however, under his administration, at length aroused the attention of the chief persons among the ruling party, and induced the high-priest, Ananias, to devise his death. He was, therefore, by the contrivance of this personage, suddenly cast down from one of the galleries of the temple. But he died not of the fall; and began like another Stephen, to pray for his murderers, when Ananias directed that stones should be cast at him; and he was at length killed by a blow on the head from a fuller's pole.

It is added that Ananias, in accomplishing his deadly purpose against James, took advantage of the opportunity when there was no Roman governor in the land, Felix having been recalled, and his successor, Albinus, not having yet arrived. But we are told that this atrocious deed was greatly disapproved, and much lamented by the wisest of the Jews, whose complaints to the governor, when he arrived, procured the deposition of Ananias. We are also assured, on the authority of a doubtful passage, cited by Eusebius, from Josephus, that the Jews imputed to the death of this just man the calamities they soon after suffered from the hands of the Romans.

It is generally considered that this James—that is, the James who was bishop of Jerusalem—is the one who wrote the Epistle of James. Its contents have been shown, by Neander and others, to be conformable to the character and position ascribed to him; and commentators have not failed to remark the humbleness with which the writer abstains from denoting his claims as "the Lord's *brother*," and simply superscribes himself—"James, a *servant* of God, and *of the Lord Jesus Christ*."

Forty-Fifth Week—First Day.

THE HEART OF FLESH.—PHILIP. I. 8.

We have more than once directed attention to the great change which was wrought in Paul by his conversion to Christ. This change affected not merely his views and sentiments, but his temper and character, his mind and heart.

In the belief that there are few scriptural topics more edifying than the consideration of this change—than the contemplation of the truly Christian character built up by Divine grace in this illustrious apostle, we shall this evening request attention to another of its aspects.

Let us suppose for a moment that the record of Paul's history ceased with the ninth chapter of the Acts, and that we possessed no autographic intimations in the Epistles of his later temper and conduct—knowing only the general fact, that he became a great apostle, and laboured with extraordinary diligence and success in the Lord's vineyard; what then, with our knowledge of his previous career, with our recollection of its injustice, violence, and cruelty, would be the idea we should not improbably form of his subsequent character? It seems that, with these recollections, and with our knowledge of the fact that great men are not always amiable, that good men are not always kind, that pious men are not always tender-hearted—we should conceive of Paul as one who, in the midst of all his greatness, goodness, and usefulness, was probably a harsh, austere, and exacting man, incapable of much tenderness towards others, or consideration for their infirmities.

Yet the reverse of all this is the fact. The man has not lived who more than Paul, after his conversion, manifested a gentle, loving, and forbearing temper; or who showed more tender consideration for others, more generous pity for their

temporal and spiritual wants. It would be little to say of him, that after his conversion he was no longer illiberal in his reproaches, or severe in his accusations; that he reviled no man; that he wronged no man; that he oppressed no man—nay, that he preserved a conscience void of offence; or even that he adhered strictly to the laws of truth and justice, integrity and faithfulness, in the whole of his deportment. He was far more than all this. He had learned of his Divine Master lessons of meekness and forbearance, gentleness and kindness; and had imbibed much of His lowly and lovely spirit. He exemplified it by his patience, in the midst of severe "afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5. In one word, he had "put on Christ," and in putting Him on had "crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," its natural tendencies and impulses, and stood forth complete in Him—a new creature —a far better, and nobler, and more loving creature. His history and his writings abound in proofs of all that has now been advanced.[1]

In this view of Paul's character after the heart of stone had been exchanged for a heart of flesh, there is nothing more worthy of notice than that consummate knowledge of human nature, no less than that tenderness of heart, which led him to encourage in his young converts every opening promise of goodness. He carefully cultivates each favourable symptom. He is "gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." He does not expect every thing at once; he does not exact that a beginner in the ways of religion should start into instantaneous perfection. He does not think all is lost if an error is committed; he does not abandon hope if some less happy converts are slow in their

[1] The instances in proof of this have been collected by Dr Stephen Addington, in his *Life of Paul the Apostle.* London, 1784; by Miss Hannah More, in her *Essay on the Character and Writings of St Paul;* and by the Rev. A. Monod, in his *Saint Paul.* London, 1853. Little more, therefore, has here been necessary than to reproduce their instances in a combined and condensed shape.

progress. He protects their budding graces; he fences his young plants till they have had time to take root. If he rejoices that the hardy are more flourishing, he is glad that the less vigorous are nevertheless alive.

There is scarcely a more lovely part of his character, though it may be less obvious to unobservant eyes, as being more tender than great, than the gentleness exhibited to the Corinthian converts in his second Epistle to them. He is anxious, before he appears among them again, that every breach may be healed, and every painful feeling done away, which his sharp reproof of an offending individual had excited. He would not have the joy of their meeting overshadowed by any remaining cloud. Want of consideration is an error into which even good men sometimes fall. They do not always enter intimately into the circumstances and character of the persons they address. But Paul writes to his friends like one who felt, because he partook of, the same fallen humanity with them; like one who was familiar with the infirmities of our common nature; who could allow for doubt and distrust, misapprehension and error; who expected inconsistency, and was not deterred by perverseness; who bore with failure where it was not sinful, and who could reprove obduracy without being disappointed at meeting with it. The apostle's tenderness for his converts was, doubtless, increased by the remembrance of his own errors—a remembrance which left a compassionate feeling on his softened heart. It never, however, led him to be guilty of that mischievous compassion of preferring the ease of his friends to their safety. He never soothed where it was his duty to reprove. He knew that integrity was the truest tenderness; that a harsh truth which might tend to save the soul, had more humanity than a palliative which might endanger it.

The intimate feeling of his own imperfections is everywhere visible. It makes him more than once press on his friends the Christian duty of bearing one another's burdens, intimating how necessary this principle of mutual kindness was, as they themselves had so much to call forth the forbearance of

others; and in his usual strain of referring to first principles, he does not forget to remind them that this was fulfilling the law of Christ.

In his most severe animadversions this apostle does not speak of any with hopeless harshness. He seldom treats the bad as irreclaimable, but generally contrives to leave them some degree of credit. He seems to feel that by stripping erring men of every vestige of character, he should strip them also of every glimmering of hope, of every incitement to reformation. Thus, although Timothy is exhorted to have no company with him who obeys not the word of Paul's epistle, the prohibition is only in order "that he may be ashamed;" yet is he not to be accounted an enemy, but admonished as a brother.

His sorrows and joys, both of which were intense, never seem to have arisen from anything which related merely to himself. His own happiness or distress was little influenced by personal considerations. Only the varying condition, the alternate improvement or declension of his converts, could sensibly raise or depress his feelings. With what anguish of spirit does he mourn over some, "of whom," says he, "I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Mark, again, his self-renouncing joy—"We are glad when we are weak and ye are strong." Again, "Let me rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

Self-denial in all things lay at the root of his regenerated character. We find him willing to forego the most innocent and lawful gratifications, rather than grieve or offend the weak. "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth lest I make my brother to offend"—lest I be an occasion either of his offending, or of his being offended, for the original word may perhaps be taken in either of these senses.

It may likewise be remarked, that although he neither courted the smiles, nor shunned the frowns of men by any servile or dishonourable concessions, yet he regarded it as the

part of wisdom and duty, to accommodate himself in everything consistent with truth and a supreme regard to the will of God, to the weaknesses and even the prejudices of those with whom he had to do. But this course was merely to secure opportunities of serving them, manifesting hereby that true philanthropy which is the genuine spirit of the religion of Jesus.

His soul, now become truly Christian, was sufficiently enlarged to comprehend all mankind; and although (or rather *because*) himself a follower of Jesus on principles never to be shaken, he felt most strongly and tenderly for those he had left behind, entangled in the fetters of Jewish prejudices. Language—even his own nervous and comprehensive language—could not express in terms sufficiently strong and tender, the affectionate good wishes of his soul on their behalf. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Rom. x. 1.

But the benevolence of the apostle was not confined within the narrow limits of friends or country. He felt great tenderness and compassion for the unbelieving in general; he poured out his soul in earnest expostulations with them, and in the most earnest prayers to the Father of mercies and God of all grace in their behalf. Truly, concerning such, could Paul say with David, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law;" for in his Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 18) we find this parallel declaration—"Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

While the zeal of the apostle was thus tenderly solicitous for the spiritual welfare of entire communities, it did not absorb his warm attachment to individuals; nor did his ardent regard for their highest interests lead him to overlook their personal concerns.

We might produce in proof of this the large number of brethren and sisters who are mentioned by name at the end of most of his epistles, and are greeted one by one with the

most delicate manifestations of Christian and faithful love. There is a Priscilla and an Aquila, his fellow helpers in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who have exposed their lives for his; there is an Andronicus and a Junia, his relations and companions in prison, who were in Christ before him; there is a Persis, much beloved by him, for she had laboured much in the Lord; and a Rufus, chosen in the Lord, whose mother, he says, is "mine." From this point of view, these chapters of salutations, which are often passed over as of no general interest, offer a study most attracting and instructive, by enabling us to penetrate into the apostle's private life, and into his dearest relationships. But this is not all. Among the numerous Christians who surround him, there are some for whom he reserves a special affection—Luke, the historian, so faithful and affectionate; Barnabas, his fellow labourer, his love for whom had not been cooled by a temporary alienation; Philemon, to whom he writes with a liveliness of affection which the pen of the most loving woman could not surpass; Epaphroditus, whom God had restored to health in answer to his prayers, lest "he should have sorrow upon sorrow;" Epaphras, Tychicus, and above all the others, Timothy and Titus—Timothy, than his second epistle to whom no mother ever wrote a letter to her son more full of tender solicitude—Titus, "his own son in the faith," of whom he writes that when he came to Troas, "I had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus, my brother."

In short, all that Paul said, and all that he did, from the day of his conversion to that of his death, was one striking and beautiful comment upon his own declaration to the Philippians—"God is my witness, how greatly I long after you ALL in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

Forty-Fifth Week—Second Day.

THE REST OF THE CHURCH.—ACTS IX. 31.

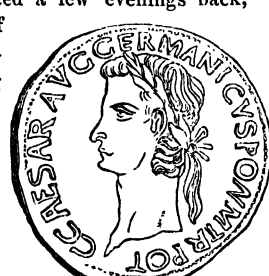
THE history of the Acts of the Apostles now leaves Saul for a time, and Peter again becomes conspicuous.

We are told, first, that then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

That the churches had rest, implies that the Jews had ceased to persecute. One would like to know how this result was produced, seeing that assuredly the offence of the cross had not ceased, and the doctrine of a crucified Messiah had not become less obnoxious to the Jews than it had been before.

History is silent on the subject; but history does record that circumstances about this time occurred, which threw the Jewish mind into a ferment of such passionate excitement, as could leave no thought for other matters.

The considerations advanced a few evenings back,[1] go to show that the condition of affairs which Saul found existing at Damascus, as being then under the power of the Arabian king, Aretas, arose soon after the accession of the Emperor Caligula. Allowing that this state of affairs may have arisen some time prior to his arrival there from Arabia, that he made some stay in Damascus, and that "the rest" is historically placed at some time subsequent to his retirement from Jerusalem, we arrive



[1] Forty-Fourth Week—Third Day.

at a period in Caligula's reign which, as nearly as can be made out in the absence of distinct dates, coincides with the circumstances to which we shall now call attention.

There were frequent differences, on questions of privilege, between the Greek and Jewish inhabitants of Alexandria in Egypt; and at this time the quarrel rose so high, that each party sent three deputies to Rome, to obtain the decision of the emperor. At the head of the Jewish deputation was the celebrated Philo, who has left an account of this affair; and the leader on the other side was the grammarian Apion, a man of great literary reputation in his day, but now chiefly remembered by the answer of Josephus (which we still possess) to a book he wrote against the Jews, whom he intensely hated. Overstepping the proper limits of his commission, Apion unscrupulously endeavoured to excite in the mind of the weak and wicked emperor the same hatred of the Jews which filled his own. To this end he wilily accused the Jews of refusing to the emperor the divine honours which he required, and which all his other subjects rendered to him. Other emperors had claimed the same honours; but in deference to what they regarded as the prejudices of the Jews, they had not insisted upon the reception by them of the images of the deified emperor. But when the matter was thus pointedly brought to the notice of Caligula, he became, as Apion had foreseen, so highly incensed, that he offered nothing but insults to the Jewish delegates, and soon ordered them to return home without attending to their business.

The matter did not end here. Caligula sent Petronius to supersede Vitellius in the government of Syria, and gave him orders to place his statue in the temple of Jerusalem, and, in case of resistance, to compel submission at the point of the sword. On his arrival in Syria, Petronius soon learned that he had no easy task before him; and he therefore assembled such a force as he thought sufficient to deter or put down resistance. With this force he wintered at Ptolemais, and, while there, many thousands of the principal Jews came to him, and implored him to desist from his purpose, declaring

that they would sooner die than see the sanctuary of God thus profaned. Petronius had by this time manifestly acquired a disrelish for his task; but he pleaded the absolute orders of the emperor, which he dared not and could not disobey. To this they retorted, that there was One greater than the emperor, whom they also dared not disobey; and that, confident of His approval, if they suffered in a just cause, they would sooner die than submit to such a violation of their laws.

Petronius began to perceive by this that the mission with which he was charged could not be executed without much bloodshed; and therefore he crossed the country to Tiberias, to learn what the nature of the public feeling was in that quarter. He was not long left in doubt; for multitudes of the Jews repaired to him there also, and still more fervently repeated the same protestations which he had heard at Ptolemais. The governor pointed to the impotency of any warlike resistance on their part against the force under his command. They replied that they by no means purposed to make war with Cæsar; but still they would sooner die than see their sacred laws transgressed; and thereupon they cast themselves on the ground, and stretched forth their throats as if to meet the knife. These proceedings continued forty days, during which the utmost agitation prevailed throughout the country—so that, during the most critical season of the year, the urgent labours of the field were neglected, and the agricultural prospects for that year thereby brought into great peril.

Petronius was even more perplexed by this passive resistance than by the hints which he had elsewhere heard. At this juncture several very eminent Jews arrived at Tiberias, among whom were Hilkias, surnamed the great, and Aristobulus, the brother of King Agrippa, who was then at Rome, and known to be high in the favour of the emperor. These personages urged Petronius to suspend his measures till he obtained further orders from Rome, writing to the emperor an account of the proceedings, representing the firm resolu-

tion of the people, who were, nevertheless, averse to any hostilities with the Roman forces; showing the impolicy of driving them to despair; and pointing out the disturbed state of the country, and the danger to the revenue, which must result from the neglect of tillage. To this step Petronius was at length brought to consent, though fully alive to the danger he incurred.

About this time, however, King Agrippa, at Rome, gave to the emperor a great and costly supper, comprising every thing suited to the imperial tastes, which he had studied well. Caligula was ineffably pleased; and when he had well filled himself with wine, and was in a tipsy good humour, he expressed his high satisfaction at the magnificent testimonial of affection which his old friend had now given; and as it became not the emperor to be outdone in such proofs of regard, whatever might yet be needful to Agrippa's contentment and happiness (for the emperor had already been very bountiful to him) was freely at his service, to the utmost extent of his imperial master's power.

This was the critical moment, and Caligula fully expected that Agrippa would ask for some large country in addition to the territories he had already received, or perhaps for the revenues of some flourishing cities. Agrippa begged to be excused, as having already received from his imperial friend's munificence far more than his ambition had ever craved. This parade of disinterested regard, of course, made the emperor the more eager to serve him; and at length Agrippa ventured—at the manifest peril of all the favour he enjoyed, and even of his life—to say, that nothing could be so acceptable to him, he desired no other reward, but that the emperor should withdraw the orders he had given to Petronius, hinting at the same time, that the face of this indulgence having been obtained through his intercession, would materially promote his own popularity among his future subjects.

Caligula, though taken by surprise, was struck by the disinterestedness of Agrippa, and felt some respect for the public spirit which it indicated. Besides, he could not grace-

fully draw back from his word at such a time. The request was therefore granted, and orders were despatched to Petronius not to persist in establishing the emperor's statue in the temple; but that if he had already done so, he was to let it remain. This despatch crossed that from Petronius; and when the latter arrived Caligula was greatly enraged. He wrote back, accusing Petronius of having been bribed by the Jews, told him to consider himself as labouring under his sovereign's deepest displeasure, and threatening to make him an example to that and future ages, of the punishment due to those who dared to palter with their obedience to the imperial commands.

But before Petronius received this dreadful missive, which would probably have induced him, after the Roman fashion, to become his own executioner, intelligence reached him that the writer was no more.

With the death of Caius Caligúla the whole matter fell to the ground. It will be observed, indeed, that in the midst of his wrath with Petronius, he did not retract the concession he had granted to Agrippa, of whose services to them on this occasion the Jews always afterwards retained the most grateful recollection.

This matter occupied the attention of the Jews for a considerable time, and left them little leisure to bestow on the affairs of the Christians; and when the storm had blown over, the interrupted habit of persecuting was not immediately resumed. Thus the churches found an interval of rest, until the time when that Agrippa, who has just been mentioned, and whom Luke calls "Herod the king," commenced a new persecution.

Forty-Fifth Week—Third Day.

TABITHA.—ACTS IX. 32-43.

During the season of tranquillity which the church now enjoyed—not, as some say, through the diminished hatred of the Jewish rulers to the Christians, but through the abatement of the activity of their opposition, under the influence of still more exciting claims upon their attention—Peter found the opportunity suitable for revisiting the churches which had been established beyond the limits of the home district.

In the course of this journey he came to Lydda, at that time regarded as a village, though equal to many towns in extent and population. In the Old Testament it is called Lod, but is not mentioned in connection with any circumstances of historical interest. It was destroyed some years after this by the Romans, at the commencement of the Jewish war; but it was soon after rebuilt, and became known by the Greek name of Diospolis. The foreign names which the Romans were fond of imposing, very rarely, however, took root in the East, and Lydda subsists to this day under its most ancient name of Lud. It is now a considerable village of small houses, with nothing to distinguish it from other Moslem villages except the ruins of the celebrated old church of St George, the western and least impaired part of which has been built into a large mosque. The St George of this church is *our* St George—that is, the dragon-slaying St George, who is believed to have been born at this place, and whose remains were removed thither from the place of his martyrdom, and this church built over them, by the Emperor Justinian.

On his arrival at Lydda, Peter had his attention called to the case of a man named Æneas. From the name, which is Greek, it is usually supposed that this person was a Hellenist; and Grotius has deduced the probability that his Jewish name was Hillel. Both points may be doubtful; but the turn of

the entire passage, in the original text, seems to make it clear that he was a Christian. He had been bedridden eight years with a paralytic affection. The gospel had therefore been brought to his bedside, had found him on the bed of languishing, and had not met him abroad in the synagogues and the highways. And, doubtless, it had since then made tolerable and sweet to him, as it alone can, the weariness of his sick-bed. On beholding this afflicted saint, Peter, feeling within himself that the Divine power would be exercised for his recovery, said, "Æneas, Jesus, the Messiah, is pleased to heal thee.[1] Arise and make thy bed!" and forthwith he left that bed on which he had so long lain.

Some points in the account of this miracle claim our attention, as compared with similar miracles of our Lord. The characteristic differences between delegated and original authority—the different characters of the servant and the Son, of the creature and the God, are, as Doddridge remarks, everywhere apparent. The same writer (quoting the remarks of Chrysostom indirectly through Clavius), points out, that "no faith on the part of the person healed was required; and the like is observable in many cases, where persons, perhaps ignorant of Christ, were surprised with an unexpected cure. But where persons themselves petitioned for a cure, a declaration of their faith was often required, that none might be encouraged to try experiments out of curiosity, in a manner which would have been very indecent, and tended to many bad consequences."

The analogous miracles of our Lord were performed on persons who were away from their houses in the open air. These he ordered to take up their beds, and carry them home, that the strength and vigour which they manifested in doing this might attest the completeness of their cure. But here Peter heals a man in his own house, and whom he cannot therefore order to take up his bed and walk home with it. He consequently tells him to *make* his bed; but how this could afford the same evidence of recovered strength, has

[1] This is the precise force of the expressions employed.

somewhat perplexed the commentators. A better knowledge of Eastern customs would have solved the difficulty. The Orientals do not leave their beds laid out in the places where they sleep, except when actually in use. By day they are removed and stowed away in places reserved for or appropriated to them. When, therefore, Peter tells Æneas to make his bed, he in effect tells him to clear away his bedding —to fold it up, and take it, together with the bed itself, from the room, to place it in the usual repository. This necessarily involved the lifting and carrying the bed, though for a shorter distance. To understand it of merely readjusting the bed and bedding in the place where it stood, which is what we mean by "making" a bed, deprives the passage of the confirmatory force which properly belongs to it.

Æneas seems to have been a person well known; and this miracle of healing by the apostle excited a strong sensation through all the towns and villages of the fertile plain of Sharon, and was, in the Lord's hand, made effectual for the conversion of many souls to Christ.

While Peter remained at Lydda, the Church at Joppa, six miles off, was plunged into much affliction by the loss of one of its most useful members, in the person of a wealthy lady named Tabitha, "which by interpretation is called Dorcas." That is, Dorcas in Greek is the same as Tabitha in Syriac —both meaning an *antelope*. Names derived from animals were not unusual among the Hebrews.[1] Thus we have Rachel, a lamb; and the particular name of Tabitha was not uncommon in this age. Tabi is the masculine form of it; and the Mishna informs us that Rabban Gamaliel had a man servant called Tabi, and a woman servant called Tabitha; nay, that all his female servants bore the latter name, and all his men servants the former—which, if true, must have been a serious inconvenience.

This lady, who seems to have been a widow, had made her life a blessing to the people; for "she was full of good works and alms deeds which she did." This was particularly shown

[1] See Morning Series—Twenty-third Week, Sixth Day.

in providing clothes for the poor disciples; and she seems to have employed her own hands, and those probably of others in making such articles at her own home—keeping up a store from which those that needed could be supplied. The loss of a woman whose faith in Christ thus beneficently operated in loving solicitude for the poor members of his flock, could not but be severely felt in Joppa; and as it was known that Peter was at Lydda, a message was sent imploring him to hasten over to Joppa. With what object this message was sent, it is not easy to say. Considering that no apostle had yet raised the dead, it has been thought that they could hardly have expected this; and that they merely wished for the comfort of his presence in their affliction. We think it likely, however, that those who sent, did entertain some vague hope that Peter might be enabled to restore their friend to life—especially considering the strong impression which his recent miracle of healing had made upon their minds. Their request that "he would not delay," seems clearly to intimate a wish that he should arrive before the interment, which, in the East, as we know, takes place very soon after death.

Meanwhile the body was prepared for burial. It was washed and removed to an upper chamber. This is the only time that the washing of dead bodies for burial is mentioned in the Scripture. The custom has been a very general one among all nations, ancient and modern; and instead of multiplying examples of that which needs no proof, we may mention how this matter is *now* conducted among the Jews, in conformity with their ancient usages.

The time of interment is fixed by the officers of the synagogue, and must be, if possible, within twenty-four hours after death.

The first care is to provide the needful shrouds or envelopes for the corpse, and these being ready, the body is washed. It is laid upon a board, which is called the "purifying board," with the feet towards the door. A clean sheet is laid over it, while the under linen garment of the deceased, after being rent through from the breast downward, is removed.

The corpse is then washed with *lukewarm* water, the quantity of which must not be less than nine *cabbin*, equal to as many English quarts. The water is poured *upon* the sheet with which the corpse is cleansed, it being forbidden to touch a dead body with the bare hand. The washing must commence with the head, and so downward to the feet. When the whole body has thus been washed, it is laid on its back, and the nails of the hands and feet are properly cleansed with an instrument made for the purpose. During these operations, as well as those that follow, no part of the corpse is left uncovered. The "washing" being thus finished, the corpse has now to pass under the ceremony called *Taharah*, or "purification." The operators first wash their hands with clean water, and then wipe them dry with a towel. Four persons now hold a sheet over the corpse. The wet sheet is then withdrawn, and nine *cabbin* of clean *cold* water are poured upon the bare body, commencing as before from the head downward. Previously to pouring this water of purification, they are to repeat as follows:—"And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him. . . . . Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And ye shall be holy; for I, the Lord your God, am holy.—*Taharah! Taharah! Taharah!*"

The corpse is next well dried with a clean sheet. A cap is then put upon the head, with the words:—"And he put the mitre upon his head;" and when the body is placed in the coffin, the words are uttered:—"May he go to his appointed place in peace!"

The purification board is then carefully cleansed and dried; and the water spilt upon the ground must also be well dried up. It is likewise provided that the water used for the purification shall not be cast where human beings might pass over it, but that it shall be carefully poured out in some secluded place.[1]

[1] See "*The British Jews*," by the Rev. JOHN MILLS. London 1853

These facts are interesting, though it may be hard to say how many of the particular usages, beyond the general practice of washing the dead, equally belong to scriptural times. Perhaps most of them are thus ancient, as there is usually less change from lapse of time in such matters than in any others. In the existing Jewish practices as described, nothing is more worthy of notice than the scrupulous delicacy with which a necessarily unpleasant operation is performed; and, indeed, whatever else may be said of the Jews, it is certain that no nation surpasses, or even comes near them (as a people), in personal modesty, both as it respects the living and the dead.

Peter at once responded to the application made to him, and proceeded to Joppa with the messenger. On his arrival he was taken to the upper chamber in which lay the body of the departed, and here "all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." These widows were doubtless such as had been particularly benefited by her kindness, and they now lamented their lost benefactress. Here we find another corroboration of the prominent attention paid to the wants of *widows* in the ancient church. It may be that these widows showed the clothes they wore at the time, and which they owed to the bounty of Dorcas, rather than the stores of clothing she had prepared for the poor. Peter, however, put them all forth gently from the room, as he had seen his Master do, when He raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. Being thus left alone with the corpse, he kneeled down and prayed—as Elisha had done of old (2 Kings iv. 33), and perhaps because this was a great and strange matter in which he was not yet assured of the mind of God. But he arose from prayer satisfied, and turning to the corpse said, "Tabitha, arise!" At these words she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, whom she had probably known in his former visit to this quarter, she sat up. But her movements being hindered by the habiliments of death, he gave her his hand to help her to her feet; and

then calling in "the saints and widows," who were anxiously awaiting the result, he presented to them alive and well the friend whose loss they had so grievously deplored.

A miracle like this, upon one so well known and so highly esteemed as Dorcas, could not fail to make an impression, even stronger than that which the miracle performed upon Æneas had made, on the minds of the people. It became a theme of common discourse throughout all the region of Joppa; and the immediate result was, that "many believed in the Lord."

Forty-Fifth Week—Fourth Day.

PETER'S VISION.—ACTS X. 9-23.

After the great miracle of raising Tabitha from the dead, Peter did not return to Lydda, but remained at Joppa, his summons to which place had perhaps only slightly anticipated his intention of proceeding thither.

It is probable that among the disciples at Joppa there were persons of good worldly standing and consideration, any of whom would have felt honoured in receiving the apostle under their roof. But he chose to take up his abode with "one Simon a tanner," of whom we subsequently learn that his house was by the sea-side, that is, beyond the town, for the trade of a tanner was one which the Jews would not allow to be exercised within any of their cities. This prohibition arose primarily from a regard to sanitary considerations—which, among this people, always took the form of pronouncing a thing, a trade, a practice, to be "unclean," and which far more effectually realized the objects in view than all the rules of all the "boards of health" in the world. The trade of a tanner was for some reason or other regarded as mean and low among the ancients generally; and by the Jews in particular was held in great contempt. In the Talmud we

read, "Woe unto him whose trade is a tanner!" Being aware of this, we may find some probability in the conjecture of some ancient commentators, that the trade of Peter's host is here so pointedly specified, in order that it might appear that the apostle did not feel himself elevated by the dignity of the late miracle above mean persons and things.

It was during his stay with Simon, at his house by the sea-side, that Peter one day withdrew for secluded devotion to the house top at the noon-tide hour of prayer. He then became exceedingly hungry, and would gladly have taken some food, but the mid-day meal, being the first considerable meal of the day, was not yet ready. While in this state, he fell into a kind of ecstasy or trance, in which, in mental vision, he beheld a vast sheet of open work, probably like a net, let down by the four corners from heaven. Observing this more narrowly, he perceived that it contained all kinds of living creatures—animals tame and wild, birds, and even "creeping things." A voice was then heard: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat!" But to this, with the prompt readiness of one whose mind was still replete with notions derived from the ceremonial law, Peter objected: "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." The call implied that he might use for food any of the creatures presented to his view; and his response expressed his reluctance, his moral inability, to eat that which the law of Moses had pronounced unclean.

To Peter's objection the voice replied—"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This—whether the entire vision, or the voice only, is not certain—was repeated three times, either to impress it the more strongly upon the apostle's mind, or to confirm in the strongest manner the importance and certainty of the truth thus conveyed. The reader will recollect other instances in which certainty is indicated by repetition, and especially by threefold repetition. Thus, in Gen. xli. 32, Pharaoh's dreams are expressly declared to have been repeated, in order to indicate that the Lord would certainly and shortly bring the things to pass.

But *what* things were in this case denoted by the vision? This was the question on which Peter pondered. He seems to have been in doubt whether God meant only to indicate that every distinction of meats was abolished by the Christian religion, and therewith, perhaps, the ceremonial law, of which practically that distinction formed a most prominent part; or whether a yet deeper meaning was not concealed under it —namely, that the Gentiles, who did not observe this distinction of meats, and were on that and other grounds accounted impure by the Jews, were to be so regarded no longer, nor their society to be any longer shunned, but were to have the doctrines of the gospel freely preached to them.

His doubts on this point were soon resolved; and he speedily learned that the vision had been sent to him in order to determine and guide his conduct, under circumstances which might otherwise have perplexed him greatly.

While he was still considering this matter, three strangers, one of them a Roman soldier, appeared at the tanner's gate, inquiring whether "Simon, whose surname is Peter" (to distinguish him from the master of the house, who also bore the name of Simon) "lodged there." The house was probably not high, so that Peter's attention may have been attracted by the knocking and the inquiries at the gate. And then, to free him from doubt, the Spirit deigned to inform him that the men who sought him had been sent by Himself, and that he was to go with them without doubt or fear. On this Peter went down to the strangers, and telling them that he was the man for whom they inquired, asked what they wanted with him.

In reply, they entered into a recital, from which he gathered that they were servants of a centurion named Cornelius, at Cæsarea; and that their master had sent them to request his presence in that city, as he had been "warned from God by a holy angel" to send for him, and to hear words of him. *We* know more of what had passed than is intimated in the language of the messengers; and we understand the record here, not as a concise statement of the his-

torian to avoid a repetition of the full narrative, but rather as presenting just so much as Cornelius had told his messengers to say—not to them entering upon the full explanations which he meant himself to give to the apostle on his arrival.

Cæsarea was fully thirty-five miles from Joppa, and the men, who had travelled for a day and a half, needed some rest and refreshment. Peter therefore did not think of setting out with them at once, but, purposing to go with them the next morning, he meanwhile invited them into the house, and provided them with food and a resting place. The conversation of the strangers during the remainder of the day probably gave ground for the impression, that the occasion was likely to prove one of considerable importance; and Peter himself had good reasons for expecting that it would. It was probably in consequence of such an expectation that, when he departed the next morning, he was accompanied by six of the disciples at Joppa—not only, of their own accord, to do him honour, but possibly at his request, to be his witnesses and vouchers under the new, difficult, and deeply responsible circumstances, in which he could not but already feel that he was likely to be placed when he should reach Cæsarea.

Forty-Fifth Week—Fifth Day.

CORNELIUS.—ACTS X. 1, 2.

CORNELIUS, who had sent to Joppa for Peter, is described as being a "centurion of the band called the Italian band," or cohort.

Considerable doubt exists as to what is here meant by the "Italian band." Some writers refer it to the *Legio Italica*, or *Italica prima*, so often mentioned by Tacitus; but we know from Dion Cassius, that this legion was raised by Nero: and, consequently, that it was not in existence when the events narrated by Luke took place. Nor can it have been

either of the other two Italian legions (*Legiones Italicæ*), as they were raised long after by Marcus Aurelius. We know from Josephus, that the Roman troops serving in Syria and Judea were mainly composed of levies raised on the spot. There were, however, volunteer *Italian* cohorts serving in Syria, as we learn from an inscription in Gruter, cited by Mr Akerman . in his *Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament*, and from which he concludes that the "Italian band" was most probably a cohort serving in Syria, and quartered at Cæsarea, composed of natives of Italy, and called "Italian" to distinguish it from those which consisted of troops raised in Syria. We see then the exact historical propriety with which Luke uses the word which denotes a cohort (σπείρα), instead of that expressing a legion, which would have been improper.

Cornelius was thus, it would seem, an Italian, and doubtless, as his name imports, a Roman. That name would lead us to conclude that he was a member of the great *Cornelia gens*,[1] which was one of the most distinguished among the Romans, and produced a greater number of illustrious men than any other house in Rome. Tradition assigns this Cornelius to one of the patrician branches of this house; and, accordingly, Julian the Apostate names him as one of the few persons of distinction who embraced Christianity. This, however, is not certain; for the Cornelian gens had plebeian branches, and the name eventually became very common, through the step taken by the dictator Sylla, who bestowed the Roman franchise upon 10,000 slaves, and called them all after his own name "Cornelii," that he might always have a large number among the people to support him.

Cornelius is described as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." The character here assigned to him has raised much discussion as to the religious

[1] GENS. Properly a collection of families (the great families patrician, but including usually lesser and plebeian families), answering, as some say, to the English term "House," but better to the Highland "Clan."

position of Cornelius prior to his interview with Peter. From the considerations which it involves, the question is of considerable interest, and is entitled to attentive inquiry.

There are two leading views of this matter: one, that the terms employed are such as can only be properly used with respect to one who was a proselyte to Judaism; the other, that he was still a Gentile; since, as is alleged, the transaction loses all its peculiar meaning and force under any other view of his position.

But it may be proper to explain, that those who take the former view of the case lay down a careful distinction between two descriptions of proselytes, concerning which we learn nothing from the Scriptures, or even from the early Rabbinical authors, though we hear of them in authors of the later class, from the twelfth century downwards. These speak of two species of proselytes—the proselytes of righteousness and the proselytes of the gate. The proselytes of righteousness were those who, having received circumcision, and placed themselves under all the obligations of the law of Moses, had consequently passed over unreservedly into the Jewish church, and had become as completely members of it as those who were not of the seed of Abraham could become. The proselytes of the gate, we are told, were those who, having renounced idolatry, and worshipping only the true God, submitted to the seven (supposed) precepts of Noah, frequented the synagogues, and offered sacrifices in the temple by the hands of the priests; but not having received circumcision, were not reckoned as belonging to the Jews.

It is not supposed, by any writers, that Cornelius could have been a proselyte of righteousness; but that he was a proselyte of the gate is an opinion which has had many and very able advocates.

In support of the opinion that he was such a proselyte, and not a mere Gentile, such considerations have been advanced as we now proceed to state.

In the first place, it is urged that Cornelius is described as "a man fearing God," which is a term applied elsewhere

to proselytes of the gate, and applicable to them only. For proof of this we are referred to the 16th, 26th, and 43d verses of the thirteenth chapter of the Acts. Again, Cornelius offered up his prayers at the hours usual among the Jews (see x. 3, 30); and that he had read the Old Testament (doubtless in the Septuagint version) is plain, seeing that Peter, in demonstrating to him that Jesus was the Messiah, appealed to the prophecies. He had, too, conferred many benefits on the people—that is, the Jewish people.

These reasons seem very strong till the other side is heard; and what the other side alleges is this: That the term on which so much stress is laid, "fearing God," and corresponding terms, are in Scripture applied not merely to proselytes, but to all persons studious of piety and filled with reverence towards God. See examples of this in the 35th verse of this chapter, and in Luke i. 50; xii. 5; Col. iii. 22; Rev. xi. 18.

It is furthermore urged on this side that Cornelius is expressly called by Peter (in verse 28) one of another race or nation, with whom it was not lawful for a Jew, as such, to associate, while there was certainly nothing in the law or in custom which forbade intercourse with proselytes. Nay, the law of Moses permitted to foreigners a perpetual abode among the Jews, on condition that they abandoned practices publicly offensive to the latter, that is to say, that they renounced idolatry, and abstained from whatever had reference thereto; as from meat which had been offered to idols, and from food formed from blood.[1] And further, towards such foreigners the Israelites were enjoined to conduct themselves with friendliness, to treat them as fellow-countrymen, and to love them as themselves.[2] Hence also such persons were permitted free access to the synagogues,[3] and familiar intercourse with the Jews.[4] Now, the alleged proselytes of the gate could not have stood in *a less* near relation to Judaism than such persons; and it seems therefore very certain that Peter

[1] Lev. xvii. 10, 12, 13.
[2] Lev. xix. 33, 34.
[3] Acts xiv. 1.
[4] Luke vii. 3.

could not have described one who was a proselyte of the gate, as belonging to a class with whom it was not lawful for a Jew to associate.

To this it may be added that had Cornelius been already a proselyte, the news of his conversion would not have occasioned such astonishment to the Jewish Christians as it actually did,[1] nor would those who "were of the circumcision" have contended so much with Peter on his account.[2] Moreover, he is expressly classed among Gentiles by James;[3] and also by Peter himself, when claiming the honour of having first preached the gospel to the Gentiles.[4]

On these grounds it is difficult to resist the conviction that Cornelius was not a proselyte to Judaism. We have no reason to suppose that Jewish proselytes had not before this been converted to Christianity; and it is certainly, as being the first fruits of the Gentiles, and as standing distinct from Judaism, that the conversion of Cornelius acquired all its significance and importance.

It is to be observed also that the distinction of proselytes, and the assumption that Cornelius was a proselyte of the gate, rest on no solid foundation. There is no evidence that any such distinction existed, or that "proselytes of the gate" were known in the time of the apostles. It has the aspect of later Judaism; and is not mentioned by any Jewish writer till the 12th century, nor by any Christian writer till the 14th.

Taking, then, Cornelius to have been, not a proselyte to Judaism, but a Gentile, he appears to have belonged to that class of persons who had so far benefited by their contact with the Jewish people, as to become convinced that theirs was the true religion; and who consequently rendered their worship to the true God, were more or less acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and in many instances observed several Jewish customs, as, for example, their hours of prayer, or anything else not involving a special profession. They had abandoned idolatry, and were many of them con-

[1] Acts x. 45. [2] Acts xi. 2. [3] Acts xv. 14. [4] Acts xv. 7

vinced of the sole and universal sovereignty of the Lord, Jehovah; but they had not embraced the Mosaic law, and were consequently never regarded as the adopted children of Judaism, nor is the name of proselytes ever applied to them.

Forty-Fifth Week—Sixth Day.

THE VISION OF CORNELIUS.—ACTS X. 24-33.

When Peter and his companions reached Cæsarea, about the noon of the day after their departure from Joppa, they were at once conducted to the house of the centurion; which the apostle, instructed by the vision with which he had been favoured, did not hesitate to enter, though it was a Gentile's house. As he entered, the centurion, apprized, if only by the presence of his messengers, who it was that had come, cast his body to the earth at the apostle's feet, in token of the profoundest reverence for him. But Peter, with some haste, raised him from the ground, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man."

Why did Cornelius do this—and why did Peter forbid it?

This is not clear at first sight, but is clear enough when it comes to be explained that the word "worshipped," which is applied to the act in our version, does not of itself denote religious homage, to which its actual meaning is now confined, but as often denotes civil reverence. Of this use traces remain in the term "worshipful," applied to magistrates and old corporations; and in the *now* remarkable phrase, "with my body I thee worship," in the marriage service of the Church of England.

In fact, the kind of reverence, homage, or "worship," expressed by the utter prostration of the body to the ground, was a mark of profound respect rendered by

the Jews, as it is still by various Oriental nations, to kings; and not only to them, but to other persons of high dignity. It would therefore seem, at the first view, quite exempt from the significance which our different Western habits would ascribe to it, and which Peter seems to have somewhat feared that it might appear to bear. But although this was a custom of the Jews, it was not a custom of the Romans, who never thus humbled themselves before any human being, but before their gods only. It was on this ground, doubtless, that Peter declined it; either as fearing that Cornelius, being a Roman, really attached something more than the Oriental significance to this act, or as apprehensive that it might, however intended, be misunderstood by those who heard of it, in case he suffered it to pass without remark. Considering the character already given of Cornelius, it is difficult to suppose that he had any intention of rendering to Peter the "worship" due to God only. Nor would it have been much otherwise if, as some imagine, the centurion took the apostle for an angel; for then also it would have been scarcely less improper. Still it is possible, from Peter reminding him that he also was a man, that Cornelius was struck with such reverential awe at the presence of one whom he knew to be a legate sent by God expressly to him, that, in the flurry of his spirits, he could not at the moment remember to preserve the due distinction between the honour to be rendered to the Sender and that which might be offered to him who was sent. It is, however, quite sufficient to suppose, that Cornelius, knowing that the customs of the East allowed of such reverential homage being shown from man to man, adopted it as the most adequate expression of his feelings, and an expression which Peter, as a Jew, would readily understand; while, on the other hand, the apostle very judiciously declined this mark of respect, knowing, as he did, that it was an act of religious worship among the Romans themselves, and that his acceptance of it might lead to evil.

On entering the reception-room, Peter found himself in the presence of a number of the centurion's relatives and

friends, whom, expecting the apostle's visit at this time, he had assembled together, that they might partake of the advantages he expected to derive from it. We may conceive how anxiously the centurion had remained with these friends awaiting this arrival, and how eagerly he started from them to meet Peter at the door, when he heard that he was actually come. Finding himself thus singularly placed in the midst of a Gentile company, Peter thought it proper to explain how it was that, contrary to all Jewish ideas and practices, he thus appeared among them. God, he said, had shown him (in the vision), that he was not to account any man "common or unclean." Under the conviction thus impressed, he had come, without hesitation, when sent for; and now that he was come, he desired to know for what purpose he had been called. He knew this already in a general way; but he wished to be more fully and particularly informed by the person chiefly concerned; and if he knew fully these particulars himself, he might wish his attesting companions to hear an authentic statement from the centurion's own lips.

Cornelius began by saying, "Four days ago, I was fasting until this hour"—that is, until the same hour of the day as that at which he was speaking, namely, the ninth hour (as he presently explains), or three o'clock in the afternoon; and not, as some have fancied, that he had fasted from the time of the vision to the then present hour.

Then, at the ninth hour, being one of the three principal Jewish hours of prayer, he was praying in his house, when suddenly "a man in bright clothing" stood before him, and called him by his name, assuring him that his prayer was heard, and that his "alms were held in remembrance before God." What his prayer was we are not told; but the answer vouchsafed to it clearly shows that its purport must have been to supplicate for more light to his feet—to implore that he might be guided into all truth. Such prayer was never made in vain; and in this case it was most signally answered. The angel himself had no commission to impart that light, for the ministry of the gospel has not been given to angels.

The office of the angel here was to give the authenticating assurance of a message from heaven, to the information, that by sending to Joppa for Peter, and receiving his instructions, the light he so earnestly desired would be obtained. Cornelius added, that it was on this authority he had sent for the apostle; and now that he was come, he himself, and those there present with him, stood ready to receive with attention and respect all things that had been commanded him of God. From this it would seem that Cornelius supposed Peter to have been charged with a special message to deliver to him—an impression likely to be strengthened by the intimation which the apostle had let fall, that he also *had* received instructions from God in connection with this case. It soon, however, appeared that Peter had the same gospel message to deliver to Cornelius and to every other sinner who had been brought to feel his need of a Saviour.

Having now passed through the circumstances of the two visions—that of Peter, and that of Cornelius—it may be well to direct our attention to Paley's excellent remark, that the circumstances of both are such as take them entirely out of the class of momentary miracles, or those that may be accounted for by false perceptions. They belonged to that mixed class in which, although the miracle itself is sudden, some circumstance combined with it is permanent. Paul's conversion is another marked example of this; and of both instances together, Paley observes:—"Of this kind is the history of Saint Paul's conversion. The sudden light and sound, the vision and the voice, upon the road to Damascus, were momentary: but Paul's blindness for three days, in consequence of what had happened; the communication made to Ananias in another place, and by a vision independent of the former; Ananias finding out Paul, in consequence of intelligence so received, and finding him in the condition described; and Paul's recovery of sight on Ananias' laying his hands upon him—are circumstances which take the transaction, and the principal miracle, as included in it, entirely out of the case of momentary miracles, or of such as may be accounted for by

false perceptions. Exactly the same thing may be observed of Peter's vision preparatory to the call of Cornelius, and of its connection with what was imparted in a distant place to Cornelius himself, and with the message despatched by Cornelius to Peter. The vision might be a dream; the message could not. Either communication, taken separately, might be a delusion; the concurrence of the two was impossible to happen without a supernatural cause." [1]

Forty-Fifth Week—Seventh Day.

CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS.—ACTS X. 34-XI. 18.

When Cornelius had finished his recital, Peter, at some length, expressed the conviction, which he had been so slow to realize, and which it had needed a special communication from heaven to impress upon him, that the Gentiles were not any longer to be regarded as unclean, and that the offer of the gospel was open to them, as well as to the Jews. He then proceeded to explain what the gospel was, showing that all things written in the books of the prophets were accomplished in Jesus—of whom Cornelius and his friends had doubtless heard, for the gospel had already been preached by Philip in Cæsarea—"who went about doing good," who died a shameful death upon the cross for man's redemption, who rose again from the dead, and who should hereafter judge the world which He had died to save, and that now peace was preached, now remission of sins was offered, to such as believed in his name.

While Peter was yet speaking, the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and his friends, and the same miraculous evidences of the fact followed as had been witnessed on the great day of Pentecost. Indeed, Peter himself, on a subsequent occasion, in describing to the apostles at Jerusalem this latter event,

[1] *Evidences of Christianity*, Proposition ii., Chap. I.

compared these two manifestations—declaring that the Holy Ghost had descended on this occasion "as *upon us* at the beginning." It has hence not unreasonably been conceived, that there may in this case have been even some appearance of light or flame, as in the former instance. And, indeed, the greatness of the occasion—being the first practical opening of the church to the Gentiles—might both require and explain such a manifestation. It is clear, at all events, that nothing like this had occurred since the great Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit. Many had, since then, received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but none in this manner. Such gifts had been bestowed *after* baptism, and upon the imposition of the apostles' hands. But here it was direct, and signal, and even *before* baptism; as distinct and plenary as on the day of Pentecost.

What course Peter himself might have taken, had not this sign been given, it may be hard to say. We should suppose, from the tenor of his discourse, that he would have admitted them to baptism, on declaring their belief in the Lord Jesus and it is only his subsequent conduct at Antioch, in reference to the general question, that leaves the matter open to any doubt. Our own impression is, that he would have admitted these Gentiles into Christian fellowship; but that he would have been eventually led to regard the case as exceptional, and as affording no precedent without such special previous warrant as he had in this instance received. But although Peter himself might have been prepared to receive them into the bosom of the church, it is doubtful whether the "brethren" who had accompanied Peter from Joppa would, and it is nearly certain that others at a distance would not, have recognised the propriety of such a step, unless this extraordinary sign had been previously given. We may, therefore, conclude that it was given for the purpose of rendering the will of God indisputably manifest, and of showing that the course which Peter took was not only in accordance with it, but absolutely required by it. It was calculated to prevent the brethren then present from offering

any such opposition as might have cast a damp and a doubt over the proceeding; and it was suited to stop the mouths of any who might afterwards call it in question.

Accordingly, no sooner did Peter witness this sign, and hear these Gentiles "speak with tongues and magnify God," than he exclaimed, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"—words, the very cast of which suggests that he was far from certain that the Jewish prejudices of the brethren might not yet be opposed to this step, or, at least, that they could only have been overcome by such a manifestation of the Divine purpose as that which had now been given. But there was not, and could not be, any answer to such an argument. It was not for man to withhold the baptism of water, where God had given the baptism of the Spirit. Peter therefore "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." By this it appears that he did not himself baptize them. Indeed, it seems that the apostles very rarely did baptize with their own hands.[1] This office was, on the present occasion, doubtless, discharged by the brethren who accompanied him; and he might prefer to use their ministry, that the expression of their concurrence might thus be rendered the more explicit.

To express their gratitude to Peter for the great benefits he had been the instrument of imparting to them, as well as that they might be further instructed in the way of life, Cornelius and his friends implored him "to tarry with them certain days." It is not directly stated that he consented, but it appears from the sequel that he did, and was thus involved in the charge afterwards made against him, of "going in to men uncircumcised, and *eating with them*." The latter clause must refer to this subsequent intercourse, for Peter did not *previously* eat with them. By doing so now he showed that, at least under certain circumstances, he considered himself loosed from the obligation of ritual precepts. It does not seem, however, that though living with Gentiles during

[1] 1 Cor. i. 14-17.

this time, he partook of forbidden meats, for of this there is not a word in the charge afterwards made against him, in reference to these transactions; nor, indeed, does it appear that any converted Jews did so till after their final dispersion.

When the tidings reached Jerusalem that the Gentiles had received the word of God, the feeling excited there was *not* generally one of thankfulness. Feeling on this point doubtless varied among different individuals; but there were certainly many who would not bring themselves to think with any complacency, that the gospel was not the exclusive privilege of the Jews, or that it could be reached otherwise than through Judaism. By these Peter was warmly censured for his conduct, when, shortly after, he returned to Jerusalem. Then, in his own vindication, the apostle "rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it in order unto them." At the close of his plain recital of the circumstances, he merely added this cogent and unanswerable remark—"Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?" To the credit of the brethren at Jerusalem, they, on hearing this, not only "held their peace," but "glorified God" for the extension of his mercies to the Gentiles. They doubted so long as it seemed that Peter had acted on his own judgment and discretion; but when he made it plainly appear that the will of God had been clearly manifested, they abandoned their ground of opposition, and cheerfully acquiesced in the conclusion—"then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Forty-Sixth Week—First Day.

A MISTAKE.—ACTS X. 34, 35.

THE apostle Peter, near the close of his second Epistle, has a very interesting allusion to the Epistles of "our beloved brother Paul." In them, he says, there "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, *as they do also the other Scriptures*, to their own destruction." It is open to conjecture whether Peter may not have become aware, at the time he wrote, as we are now aware, that some of his own words—those with which he opened his address to Cornelius—had been thus perversely and ruinously "wrested" from their proper meaning. The words are—"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

It has been urged that these expressions sanction the notion, that there are in every nation men who, "fearing God and working righteousness," are, on such grounds alone, "accepted with Him," or entitled to salvation, and receiving salvation; that any one, ignorant or regardless of the revealed covenants, but believing in a supreme God as the Creator of heaven and earth, and walking righteously according to the measure of his light, needs nothing more for salvation: that, in short,

"He can't be wrong whose life is in the right,"

is the true saving doctrine.

Without pausing further upon this notion than to remark, that for a life to be in the right, not merely correct moral conduct, but correct motives and principles of conduct, are needed, it may be asked: What need was there, then, to Cornelius for the doctrines of the gospel, which Peter came

to teach? It cannot be denied that Cornelius "feared God and wrought righteousness," and he, therefore, stands before us as a most advantageous example of those who are supposed to be thus "accepted," on grounds apart from the plan of redemption which the gospel declares. Yet that even he was not then in the condition of one "accepted," in the sense put upon the text, is clear from all the circumstances. When Peter spoke these words, Cornelius was in the same condition as when the angel had spoken to him—he had not been converted, he had not received the Holy Ghost, he had not been baptized, the gospel had not even been preached to him and offered to his acceptance; and that he was not *then* "accepted," so as to be in a state of salvation, is made manifest by the words of the angel, who, after directing him to send to Joppa for Peter, adds, "who shall tell thee words, *whereby* thou and all thy house *shall be saved.*" He was to be saved, then, not by his previous qualifications—and these were higher than any mere heathen possessed, seeing that the God *he* "feared" was Jehovah, the God of Israel—but by that gospel which Peter was to preach, and which was still unpreached by him, when this greatly misconceived declaration fell from his lips.

These considerations alone suffice to make it evident that Peter's declaration is not thus to be understood. What he did mean, a little reflection on the position in which the apostle himself stood, and on the great matter which had been occupying his own mind, will make sufficiently clear. We have seen how slow he and the other apostles had been to receive the idea that, since the Lord's death, the seed of Abraham no longer possessed exclusive privileges, and that now the gospel of salvation was as open to the Gentiles as to them. It was a fixed belief of the Jews that they alone had any interest in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, which were not to be extended to any other kingdom or people—all mankind but themselves being remedilessly alien from God, and not under his care or protection. When our Lord prohibited his disciples to preach the gospel, while He yet lived, to any

but the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He had appeared to give his sanction to this impression; and, as Jews, the apostles were more likely to dwell on these instances, than upon the intimations of a larger commission which they received after the resurrection. In this view, therefore, God had seemed "a respecter of persons"—as having had special favour and regard for the Jews, out of respect to his covenant with Abraham their father, and to the high purposes for which He had set them apart as a peculiar people among the nations. This view had been shaken in Peter's mind by the vision of the great sheet, and the application of that vision which the message from Cornelius had compelled him to make. There can hardly be any doubt that all the day after the arrival of the messengers, and during all the journey from Joppa to Cæsarea, *this* had been the engrossing subject of his thought. And when, on entering the house of Cornelius, he declared that God had shown him that he was not to regard any persons as common or unclean, his meaning was just the same as in the words before us—uttered *after* he had heard the recital of Cornelius. He was now, at length, enabled to perceive that God was no longer a respecter of persons, as He had aforetime been; and that no man was now beheld with exclusive regard from his being, as Abraham's son, under a peculiar covenant with God, but that the gates of life were now thrown wide open, so that all, whether Jew or Gentile, who "feared God and worked righteousness," might enter in.

But what of these apparent qualifications—"fearing God and working righteousness?" We have seen that they are *not* stated as conditions of, far less as constituting a sufficient claim to salvation. To fear God is to know Him, at least as the God of nature and providence; and to walk in that fear is to acknowledge his practical sovereignty in the moral government of the world. Paul says:—"He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Cornelius had certainly reached this state. He was, therefore, in the condition of one stand-

ing ready to "come" to God through that "DOOR" which was now about to be opened to him. The Lord in his high grace had bestowed upon him all that had brought him thus far—the knowledge and fear of Himself, the thirsting after righteousness, the desire to know Him better and approach Him nearer—the "diligent seeking after Him," which He fails not to "reward" by further disclosures of Himself, as He did in the case of Cornelius. Our Lord has said—"No man can come unto Me, except the Father who hath sent Me draw him." How God *drew* Cornelius we have seen. We see how the door was opened to let the stranger in. But we must consider that the same power which opened the door, also brought him to the door which was to be opened. God honoured his own gifts. And when we see a man thus, according to his light, "diligently seeking" after God, we may be sure that the light by which he seeks is of God's bestowing, that God has purposes of great mercy towards him, that he will in due time be rewarded by fuller disclosures of the Divine glory in Christ, and that he will at length be brought fully into the fold. A man must *go* before he *comes;* and if we see one going the right way, we conclude that he will be carefully guided, will "come" at last, and will not fail of acceptance to salvation when he shall come.

Peter in the case before us plainly means this. He saw that Cornelius had been diligently seeking after God. He had the most certain evidence that he was a subject of the Divine grace; and seeing that there were even among the Gentiles men so favoured, he naturally concluded that it must be acceptable to God that the gospel should be offered to them, which gospel he accordingly proceeded to proclaim and offer.

It appears, therefore, that the text has little or nothing to do with the question which has been fastened upon it—whether the man who walks uprightly, according to the measure of his knowledge, and without any regard to revelation, may or may not be saved.

"But may he?" some will ask. We do not know. It

is not revealed. But we do know that besides the name of Jesus "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;" and that if such a one is saved, it will only be because Christ died. Let us not pry too curiously into these matters. There are things that concern us much more nearly. Remember our Lord's answer when one asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?"—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate!"

Another thing we know—that it would have been ill with Cornelius if, after the gospel of the atonement had been offered to him, he had rejected it, and had chosen rather to rest his hopes upon his own righteousness. This case concerns us more nearly; for it, and not the other, is ours. The gospel is continually preached to us; and if we trample it under foot, or if we set it aside with decent forms of respect, as a thing we do not want and can do very well without, it were better for us that we had never been born. We become then of those servants who knew their Lord's will and did it not, and who therefore shall be "beaten with many stripes."

Forty-Sixth Week—Second Day.

CHRISTIANS.—ACTS XI. 19-26.

As the result of the persecution in which Saul had taken so active a part, we were told that "Therefore they [the converts] that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts viii. 4). The sacred historian having now concluded his account of Saul's conversion and of Peter's labours, goes back to this point, and proceeds to inform us that some of those who were thus scattered abroad, went even so far as Cyrene in one direction, and Cyprus and Antioch in another, but that they nowhere preached the gospel to any but Jews;—that is, to the Jews speaking Greek, or Hellenists, as such are called in Scripture. So this went on, as we conceive is to be understood, until after

the conversion of Cornelius; and having just related that great event, Luke proceeds to state that the fame of it being noised abroad, gave a mighty impulse to the work of conversion in these parts; for some of the Hellenists, converted by the Jerusalem fugitives, no longer hesitated to offer the gospel to the Greeks or Gentiles. And they met with extraordinary success, for "a great number believed, and turned to the Lord."

This seems to us the correct interpretation of the passage before us. But it may be right to explain the presence of a difficulty. Those to whom the gospel was preached in the first instance must have been Hellenists, or Jews living in Greek cities and speaking the Greek language, as distinguished from Hellenes or Gentile Greeks. But in the current texts, those to whom the gospel is preached in the second instance are described as Hellenists, not Hellenes. Yet, if this were the case, the second preaching could not have differed from the first, and the Cyrenian and Cyprian brethren would have done no more than had already been done by the brethren from Jerusalem. It is hence the opinion of the best critics and commentators that the word Hellenes, not Hellenists, is here the right reading, especially as it is to be found in some very ancient manuscripts, versions, and Fathers; and it has accordingly been adopted in most of the recent critical editions of the Greek text. But this being the case, it necessarily follows that some more considerable interval of time than the immediate connection might indicate, occurred between the first preaching and the second, because the second preaching being to the Gentiles, it must have been subsequent to the conversion of Cornelius who was, as we know, the first fruits of the Gentiles.

Indeed, we may conceive that the tidings of this movement at Antioch might not have been received at Jerusalem with much favour, had not the church there been already satisfied as to the duty of preaching to the Gentiles, by the explanations which Peter had given in connection with the centurion's conversion.

Antioch being the metropolis of Syria, and one of the three[1] greatest cities in the civilized world, the intelligence that the gospel had there been preached with signal success to the Gentiles, could not fail to awaken much attention at Jerusalem; and it was felt desirable that the interests of the cause of Christ, in a station so eminent, should be carefully watched, guarded, and reported on, by some persons in whom entire confidence could be placed. It does not seem that the Cyrenian and Cyprian brethren who had here taken the initiative were well known, if at all known, to the church at Jerusalem; and such entire confidence as would leave no room for misgiving as to their proceedings, may not at so great a distance have been entertained. To send an accredited apostolical agent to observe and aid the great work going on at that place, was therefore the wisest course that could be taken. Nor was the choice of the man for this important mission less wise. It was no other than Barnabas —himself a Hellenist, a Cyprian, and in all probability well acquainted with Antioch—and, more than all that, "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Such a man was exactly fitted for the highly responsible mission confided to him.

Barnabas on his arrival found much cause to approve of what the Hellenist brethren had done in preaching to the Gentiles, and he was well satisfied with the manner and spirit in which they had done it, and the results which had flowed from it. It was a good work that had been done; and he rejoiced in it, and laboured diligently to advance it, exhorting them all "that with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord."

The work here was so great and important that Barnabas soon became anxious to secure the co-operation of his friend Saul, whom he supposed to be at his native city of Tarsus. He accordingly proceeded thither in search of him, and having at length found him—whether there or not, is not stated—he brought him back to Antioch, and there they

[1] Rome, Alexandria, Antioch.

continued labouring together in the gospel cause for a whole year.

It was during this year, and at this place, that the believers in Christ came first to be distinguished by the name of "CHRISTIANS."

It has been much questioned by whom and with what views this name was given or assumed.

It does not seem that the name was spontaneously assumed by the disciples themselves. If that had been the case, we should probably have met with it frequently in the remainder of the history, as well as in the writings of the apostles. But we find that after, as before, they continued to be styled among themselves "believers," "brethren," "saints," "disciples." In the Acts the term "Christian" occurs again only once (xxvi. 28), where King Agrippa says: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And in the Epistles it is found only in 1 Peter iv., where, as in the instance just cited, it seems to be implied that the term was used by persons not themselves professing the religion of Jesus. If ye be *reproached* for the *name of Christ*, happy are ye," (verse 14), and, "yet if any man *suffer as a Christian*, let him not be ashamed," (verse 16). This scanty use of the name hardly consists with the notion that it was assumed by the disciples, or even that it was very readily *adopted* by them. Neither was it likely that it was given them by the Jews. "Christ" means the same as "Messiah;" and the main point at issue between the believers and the Jews was that the latter did not recognise Jesus as the Messiah. They were, therefore, less likely to call his followers by *that* name than by almost any other. Any name *they* could give would assuredly be one of contempt; and we know that their despiteful terms for the disciples were "Galileans" (Acts ii. 7), and "Nazarenes" (Acts xxiv. 5). The probability, therefore, remains that the name of "Christian" was first given to the disciples by the Gentiles of Antioch. This becomes the more likely when we consider that through the labours of the two apostles with those of the Hellenist converts, the new religion was

brought much under the notice of the Gentiles of that city, who would soon feel the want of a name by which to indicate its adherents without circumlocution. They would scarcely be able to appreciate the terms used among the believers themselves, being rather appellations than names; and the reproachful terms employed by the Jews, they were still less likely to know or understand. It was hence natural that they should devise a new designation, and what would more easily occur to them than one formed from the name which was so often heard from the lips of the disciples—the name too of Him who was understood to be the founder of the sect, and even the object of its worship?

It seems by no means clear that, as some have conceived, the name was in its origin despiteful, like the names of Lollard, Puritan, Quaker, Methodist, in modern times. But there is no doubt that it eventually became so in the mouths of the Gentiles, when, having been widely spread, it attracted more attention, and caused more alarm, from the manifest hostility of its principles to the prevalent ideas, usages, and systems of heathendom.

The name was, however, a good name, and there was nothing in it to prevent the believers from eventually accepting it as a proper designation of their body.

Forty-Sixth Week—Third Day.

SAUL IN CILICIA.—ACTS XI. 25, 26.

THE course of the Apostolical history having brought us into the region to which Saul had retired, and introduced him again to our notice, we naturally become desirous to know where he had been and what he had been doing since we parted from him last.

He then embarked at Cæsarea for Tarsus; and it is now to Tarsus that Barnabas goes to seek Saul, and it would

seem to be at Tarsus that he found him. This would, at the first view, appear to imply that he had spent all the intervening time in his native city. It is probable that he did make some stay in Tarsus on his first arrival. But we have already gathered from one of his own intimations, rightly understood, that he, during this time, laboured in Cilicia and Syria—doubtless in such parts of Syria, the northern parts, as bordered on Cilicia. It would seem, therefore, that he made Tarsus his headquarters, whence he made missionary excursions in various directions to neighbouring places, and to which he frequently returned. With this agrees the brief intimation of the proceedings of Barnabas. He went to Tarsus not to *fetch* Saul or to *confer* with him, as certain of finding him there, but to *seek* him—as expecting that he should either find him at Tarsus, or learn at that place where he was. So it is not clear that he did find Saul there on his arrival, for it is said "*when* he had found him," implying that there was some delay in finding him, and suggesting that Saul was in fact absent when Barnabas reached Tarsus, but that he there ascertained where he was likely to find him, and either followed him or sent for him.

Still, as thus explained, Tarsus became the principal residence of Saul during this period; and the instructed imagination strives to realize the circumstances of his return to, and sojourn in, his native place—a man greatly changed. Once more we behold him in the home of his childhood—and it is the last time that we are distinctly told of his being there. Now at length, if not before, we may be sure that he would come into active intercourse with the heathen philosophers of the place. During his residence at Tarsus a few years before, he was a Jew, and not only a Jew, but a Pharisee, and he looked on the Gentiles around him as outcasts from the favour of God. Now he was a Christian, and not only a Christian, but conscious of his mission as the apostle of the Gentiles. Therefore he would surely meet the philosophers, and prepare to argue with them on their own ground, as afterwards in the "market" at Athens with the "Epicureans"

and the "Stoics."[1] Many of the Stoics of Tarsus were men of celebrity in the Roman Empire; and now among these eminent sages, some of whom had been tutors of emperors, appeared one whose teaching was destined to survive when the Stoic philosophy should have perished, and whose words still instruct the rulers of every civilized nation. How far Saul's arguments may have had any success in these quarters we cannot even guess; but although certain salutary impressions, eventually productive of good, may have been made, the fact that the first fruits of the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius and his friends had not yet probably been gathered in at Cæsarea, forbids us to suppose that any actual conversions among the Gentiles at Tarsus had been effected during at least the early part of Saul's residence there. And although he may not, until after that great event, have become fully aware of the breadth of his own commission as the apostle of the Gentiles, we cannot doubt that he was, during this time, preparing, whether consciously or not, for its high requirements and weighty duties. Among the Jews at Tarsus—in its synagogues—we cannot suppose that he was silent or unsuccessful. In his own family we may well imagine that some of those Christian "kindred" whose names are handed down to us[2]—possibly his sister, the playmate of his childhood—and his sister's son,[3] who afterwards saved his life—were at this time, by his exertions, gathered into the fold of Christ.

Much of this is necessarily conjectural. But "whatever length of time had elapsed since Saul came from Jerusalem to Tarsus, and however that time had been employed by him —whether he had already founded any of those churches in his native Cilicia, which we read of soon after,[4]—whether he had there undergone any of those manifold labours and sufferings recorded by himself,[5] but omitted by St Luke—whether by active intercourse with the Gentiles, by study of their literature, by travelling, by discoursing with their

[1] Acts xvii. 17, 18. [2] Romans xvi. 7, 11. [3] Acts xxiii. 16-22.
[4] Acts xv. 41. [5] 2 Cor. xi.

philosophers, he had been making himself acquainted with their opinions and prejudices, and so preparing his mind for the work that was before him; or whether he had been waiting in silence for the call of God's providence, praying for guidance from above, reflecting on the condition of the Gentiles, and gazing more and more closely on the plan of the world's redemption—however this may be, it must have been an eventful day when Barnabas, having come across the sea from Seleucia, or round by the defiles of Mount Amanus, suddenly appeared in the streets of Tarsus. The last time the two friends met was in Jerusalem. All that they then hoped, and probably more than they then thought possible, had occurred. God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life.[1] Barnabas had seen 'the grace of God'[2] with his own eyes at Antioch, and under his own teaching, 'a great multitude'[3] had been 'added to the Lord.' But he needed the assistance of one whose wisdom was higher than his own, whose zeal was an example to all, and whose peculiar mission had been miraculously declared."[4]

Saul doubtless accompanied his old friend with great readiness to Antioch; and the result of a year of their joint labour in that city was last evening noticed.

Forty-Sixth Week—Fourth Day.

ANTIOCH.—ACTS XI. 26.

As the first city in which a church gathered directly from the Gentiles was founded, and as the spot where the illustrious name of "CHRISTIAN" was first heard, Antioch has special claims to our regard, and has the right to be looked upon as the mother church of Gentile Christendom.

If the map be consulted, it will be seen that Antioch is situated nearly in the angle where the coast line of Cilicia

[1] Acts xi. 18. [2] Acts xi. 23. [3] Acts xi. 24.
[4] Howson, in *Life and Writings of St Paul*, i. 128.

running eastward, and that of Palestine, extending northward, are brought to an abrupt meeting. It will also be perceived that, more or less parallel to each of these coasts, there is a line of mountains not far from the sea, which are brought into contact with each other near the same angle, the principal breach in the continuity of either of them being the valley of the Orontes, which passes by Antioch. The first of these mountain ranges is the Taurus, so often mentioned by the writers of Greece and Rome; the other is the Lebanon, a name rendered familiar to us by frequent allusions in the Scriptures.

The city established in this spot is not mentioned in the Old Testament, as it was not founded till some time after the close of the Hebrew canon. The Jewish commentators indeed make it to have been the same with the Riblah, which was the headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar at the time that Jerusalem was taken by his generals, and to which Zedekiah was brought as a captive to meet his proud conqueror.[1] If this were so, the place would be of very ancient date, Riblah being named in the time of Moses;[2] but there is no real foundation for this identification of Antioch (by the name of Daphne) with Riblah, and there are some serious objections to it. In the Jewish history, which, in Josephus and in the books of the Maccabees, fills the interval between the Old Testament and the New, Antioch is very frequently mentioned, being the seat of that great power to which the Jews were for a long time more or less subject, and against which they were sometimes in arms for their religious and political rights. That power was the Greek empire in Syria, commonly called that of the Seleucidæ, from its founder, Seleucus, one of the generals who shared among them the empire of Alexander. It was to this personage that Antioch owed its origin, at least as a great metropolitan city; for it was founded by him expressly as the capital of his western Asiatic states, and as such it soon acquired a standing as one of the first among the great cities of the

[1] 2 Kings xxv. 6. [2] Num. xxxiv 11.

earth, which, under various governments, it maintained for nearly a thousand years. Seleucus was a great founder of cities; but he had a weakness for calling them after the names of his own family to a degree of iteration, which stored up some perplexities for geographers of future times. To sixteen cities he gave the name of Antiochia after his father; and of these this Antiochia on the Orontes was destined to become the chief. Seven cities he called after himself, Seleucia, of which the one upon the Tigris—destined, as the capital of his eastern states, to rival old Babylon—became the chief; while another, distinguished as Seleucia Pieria, at the mouth of the Orontes, became the port of Antioch. Five cities he called after his mother, Laodicea; three from the name of his first wife, Apamea; and one from his second wife, Stratoniceia.

Antioch, like London, rose to the extent and populousness which it eventually attained, by the accretion of several townships to the original city. There were four townships in all. The first, built by Seleucus, was peopled chiefly by his removing to it the inhabitants of the neighbouring town of Antigonia, which his unhappy rival, Antigonus, had intended for *his* metropolis; the second grew out of the overgrowth of the first, and was peopled by settlers from it; the third was built, or at least consolidated, about fifty years after the first, by the second Seleucus (Callinicus); and the fourth about forty years after that, by *his* grandson, Antiochus Epiphanes, the notorious persecutor of the Jews. Each of these quarters or townships had its own wall, and all the four were enclosed by a common wall of great strength.

The cities just named, and a prodigious number of others that the first Seleucus founded, owed their origin chiefly to his energy and perseverance, in carrying out the projects of Alexander for the Hellenization of his Asiatic empire, by sowing it with Greek and Macedonian colonies, which might become so many centres of Greek civilization and refinement. And how well this object was realized, is shown in the Acts of the Apostles, by the essentially Grecian character of the

incidents that come under our notice in the visits of Saul to the cities of Asia, as well as by the allusions to Greek usages, customs, and ideas, which pervade such of the Epistles as are addressed to the churches in Asia. The measures of Seleucus and his successors were not, indeed, the sole causes of this result, but they contributed very materially towards it. The great difficulty of Seleucus was to find inhabitants for the cities he founded. Sometimes, as we have seen, he adopted, under mitigating circumstances, the barbarous old Oriental policy of removing the inhabitants of an existing town to his new city. But he was by far too enlightened a man not to discern the essential impolicy of this course; and his more usual plan, and certainly a far better one, was to *attract* inhabitants, by offering premiums to those who were willing to become citizens. This accounts for the extraordinary privileges which the Jews enjoyed in all of these cities—having equal rights, in all respects, with the first class of inhabitants —the Macedonians. Higher privileges than these could not be given; and that their value was well understood in Judea, is evinced by the large bodies of Jews, which, in and before the time of the apostles, formed a prominent part of the civic communities thus collected.

This was particularly the case at Antioch, not only from the wealth and importance of the city, but from the commercial advantages it offered to a people who had already addicted themselves largely to mercantile pursuits. For, by its harbour of Seleucia, Antioch was in communication with all the trade of the Mediterranean; and, through the open country behind the Lebanon, it could be conveniently approached by the caravans of Mesopotamia and Arabia. There was, in fact, everything in the situation and circumstances of the city to render it a place of most miscellaneous concourse; and in the apostolic age, it was an Oriental Rome, in which all the forms of civilized life in the empire found some representative. It was hence well suited to become the centre of apostolical movements for the diffusion of the gospel among the Gentiles—among "all sorts and conditions of men."

The celebrated names of Ignatius and Chrysostom are connected with the Christian history of Antioch:—Ignatius, who is said to have conversed with the apostles, and who, at the beginning of the second century, witnessed a good confession before Trajan, at Antioch, where he was bishop, and whence he was sent to be given to the lions in the amphitheatre at Rome;—Chrysostom, who was a native of this city, and who, in the fourth century, uttered within the walls of its great church those noble orations which had made his name illustrious, even before his removal to Byzantium.

Owing to this felicity of its situation, Antioch continued to flourish long after the apostolic age, and to survive disasters which would have ruined most other cities. Even after Constantinople became the metropolis of the Roman Empire in the East, the glory of Antioch was only gradually eclipsed by that of the imperial city; and in Chrysostom's day, it still numbered 200,000 inhabitants, of whom one-half, or even more, were Christians. And the church there maintained 3000 poor, and afforded occasional relief to many more. It continued to be a great and populous city in the time of the Crusaders, who gained possession of it in 1098, and erected it into a Christian principality. Even down to the year 1268, when it received its final overthrow as a *great* city from the hand of the Sultan Bibars, it was still so populous that it supplied 100,000 persons to captivity, and 17,000 to the sword. Since the date just mentioned, it has never risen to any higher rank than that of a fourth-rate town; and from even this rank it has declined since 1822, when an earthquake destroyed one-fourth of its 20,000 inhabitants. Had the Egyptians retained possession of the country, it might possibly have risen once more, for it was the full purpose of Ibrahim Pasha to make it the capital of Syria. When he took measures for this end in 1835, the population of Antioch was ascertained to be not more than 5600, exclusive of about 6000 Egyptian troops.

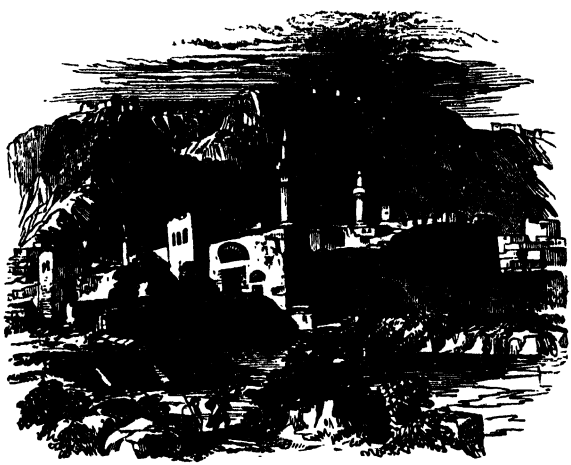
Of the buildings, with which a long line of Syrian kings and Roman emperors delighted to adorn "The Gate of the

East," we may not expect to find that much remains in a city so often ruined by earthquake and by war. The ruins of gates, bridges, castles, towers, and churches, may mostly be traced to the Byzantine and Saracenic periods, and to the age of the Crusades.

In an antiquarian point of view, the walls are the most interesting. Of their immense strength, ample proof exists in their ruins. They encircled the town in every direction, running down from the highest ridges of the mountains till they reached the embankment of the Orontes, where they were carried on in a line parallel with the river, here running nearly due north and south. The gates leading to the bridge by which the river is crossed in proceeding towards Seleucia, are to this day of immense strength, while the bridge itself is one of the finest specimens of architecture in the East. Parts of it have been renewed and patched up, but the arches are of very ancient construction, and still promise to hold out for ages longer against the perpetual warfare they sustain from the rapid waves of the Orontes, which already tell upon the modern portions, though less exposed than the ancient to their action. The old walls, as well as the strong buildings of the Crusaders, were to a great extent blown up with gunpowder by Ibrahim Pasha, for materials wherewith to beautify the modern city. The magnificent barracks, built to accommodate 10,000 men, as well as his beautiful palace upon the banks of the Orontes, were built with such materials; but these are already in a state of tottering dilapidation, while the towers and buttresses built ages ago, are still as strongly held together by their mortar and lime as at the time of their erection.

The walls appear, from the existing remains, to have extended about seven miles. But the modern Antakiyah covers only a small part of the site of the ancient city, the remainder being, for the most part, occupied with mulberry groves, vineyards, and fruit gardens. It contains several baths, two khans, some fountains, a Mohammedan college, and fourteen mosques. The Jews worship in a room in the house of

the chief among them; and the Christians meet for prayer in a cavern dedicated to St John. The inhabitants still cherish the remembrance of Paul's visit to their city; and one of its gates—that leading to Aleppo—is still, among all



classes called by his name. The houses are Turkish as to plan, but of inferior construction, usually of stone, though frequently consisting of a wooden frame filled up with sun-dried bricks, and having a pent roof covered with red tiles. Antakiyah is, in fact, the only town in Syria or Palestine, where tiles are used in roofing the houses; and this singular deviation from ordinary Oriental practice may probably have been introduced from the west by the Crusaders, as a better protection from the frequent and heavy rains of the locality than the Oriental roof can afford. Exterior stone doors lead from a court shaded by orange and pomegranate trees to corridors and balconies; and the doors and windows of the buildings usually face the west, for the sake of the cool breeze coming from that quarter during the greater part of the summer. The houses are seldom more than one storey high,

and each house is entirely enclosed by a wall as high as the house itself. Thus the whole street has the appearance of one continuous stone wall, with entrance doors at intervals of twenty or thirty yards, the tiled roofs being the only indication to people in the streets of habitations within. The streets may be called wide for an Eastern town, and are paved about a yard and a half on either side, with a deep ditch or gutter in the centre. Foot-passengers keep to the pavements, and horsemen and laden animals must confine themselves to the ditch. Like all Turkish towns, Antakiyah would be poisoned with filth, were it not that it is built on a gently rising ground up to the foot of the high hill behind. When a shower occurs, torrents of water come pouring down the ravines and chasms of the mountains, and forcing an exit through the streets of the town, carry away everything moveable before them into the fast-flowing waters of the deep Orontes. The result is, that when the rain is over, the streets have been most effectually purified. It is on these occasions that those antique coins and stones are collected for which the place has long been famous. No sooner have the waters begun to abate, than swarms of children may be observed busily occupied in the numerous gutters, armed with sieves, sticks, and brooms, sweeping and clearing away the mud, and earnestly occupied in hunting for antiques. Seldom is the search fruitless. Some of the young seekers find copper coins, others silver, and some few rejoice in the discovery of gems. Thus do the new generations of Antiochians seek for the memorials of the ancient glories of their city in the very mud of its streets.

Forty-Sixth Week—Fifth Day.

AGABUS AND THE DEARTH.—ACTS XI. 27–30.

In the course of the transactions at Antioch which have lately engaged our attention, probably during the year of

Barnabas' and Saul's joint labour there, certain "prophets" arrived from Jerusalem. One of these, named Agabus, impelled by the Spirit, stood up in the congregation of the believers, and declared "that there should be great dearth throughout all the world." The historian adds that this prediction was accomplished "in the days of Claudius Cæsar." The disciples, having full faith in this intimation, determined that every one of them, according to his means, should send relief to the brethren in Judea. A collection was accordingly made for the purpose, and the amount thus realized was remitted to the elders at Jerusalem, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

This is the plain statement of the facts; but out of it one or two questions arise, which are well entitled to our consideration.

Who were these "prophets," of whom Agabus was one, and the only one to whom any foretellings are ascribed?

The word "prophet" does certainly, in its primary sense, denote one who foretells future events. As, however, such prophets were commonly regarded as public instructors in religion, and as they constantly appear in that capacity in the Old Testament, the more general idea of a public teacher came to be expressed by the word. In this sense it frequently occurs in the New Testament, where there is no apparent reference to the prediction of things future.[1] It therefore seems that the "prophets" of the New Testament were such disciples as applied themselves to public teaching and preaching, and were occasionally enabled, under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, to foretell things to come which it concerned the church to know. We suppose that although to foretell future events was not the primary function or gift of these "prophets," and that, although there were probably many who never did predict things to come; yet, when such predictions were given, they usually came from one of these. Some also appear to have pos-

[1] See Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28; xiii. 2, 8; xiv. 3, 5, 24.

sessed this endowment more signally, or to have been favoured with the Divine intimations of this kind more usually or frequently than others. Thus, the only other notice which we find in Scripture respecting Agabus, is in connection with a similar prediction, for this is the same person who, at a later period, foretold to Paul that he would at Jerusalem be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. Acts xxi. 10, 11.

The other question is respecting the famine thus predicted, and which we are expressly informed took place in the reign of Claudius Cæsar. If such a famine did take place, we should suppose that there ought to be some secular record of it, which it would be satisfactory to produce. Is there any such record? Before proceeding to inquire, it may be well to refer the reader back to the explanation formerly given[1] of the limited sense in which such phrases as "all the world," and "the whole earth," must sometimes be understood. It was then shown that in the same writer, Luke, this large phrase is used to denote no more than the land of Judea. We may, therefore, look for some indication in the text itself, whether in *this* place we are to take the phrase in the wider or the narrower sense; and that we are to receive it in the latter seems to be indicated by the fact that those, to whom the prediction was delivered, clearly understood that the brethren in Judea would be exposed to sufferings from which they themselves would be exempt. And this consideration becomes the more emphatic if, as was probable, the money was not sent till the famine had actually commenced. If the calamity extended to Syria, of which Antioch was the metropolis, the brethren there would have been in as much need of help as those in Judea.

History records that there were not only one, but *four* famines in the reign of Claudius; none of them, however, was general to all the world, nor even to all the Roman empire; and one of them was almost confined to Palestine, or at least was more severely felt there than in other parts.

[1] Evening Series—Twenty-Eighth Week, Fifth Day.

The first of these four dearths was at Rome, in the first and second years of Claudius, and arose from the difficulties of introducing adequate supplies of corn from abroad. These difficulties must have been chiefly local, for the emperor was considered to have taken the proper measures for preventing the recurrence of a dearth from the same causes, by making at a great expense a port at the mouth of the Tiber, and a convenient passage from it up to the city. Before this was done, corn could be brought to Rome in summer only, and was stored in granaries for winter use; and this, we conclude, must have rendered the *last* crop of foreign grain generally unavailable for the service of Rome in winter. This could not have been the dearth predicted by Agabus.

The second scarcity occurred in the ninth year of Claudius, and is mentioned by Eusebius,[1] the sole authority, as afflicting Greece only, where a modius of wheat was sold for six drachms. The cost would thus be 160s. the quarter at the present value of silver; but silver was then of much higher value than it is now. This, therefore, would be a truly famine price, being considerably more than double the present (1853) high price of wheat with us. Archbishop Ussher has endeavoured to show that *this* famine was universal, and therefore the one denoted by Agabus, but the proof fails altogether.

The third dearth was at Rome in the eleventh year of Claudius. It seems to have been of the same nature with the first. From the terms in which it is mentioned by Tacitus, we gather that the granaries had become exhausted, while the ships which might, under ordinary circumstances (if the works of Claudius were then completed), have brought from foreign ports the produce of the last harvest, were kept away by adverse winds and weather. But the calamity was not of long duration; for when the granaries of Rome were nearly empty, "by the goodness of the gods, and the mildness of the winter, ships arrived with sufficient provisions."[2] This there-

[1] *Chronicon*, i. 79.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* xii. 43

fore being merely local and temporary, was not the dearth of Agabus.

The fourth dearth, but the second in time, is that which afflicted Judea towards the end of the fourth year of Claudius. It is mentioned by Josephus, and in terms which would alone suggest that this was the famine which the sacred historian had in view. It is adduced by Josephus somewhat incidentally, in connection with Helena queen of Adiabene. This princess was a proselyte to Judaism, and had brought up her son Izates in the same faith, in which he was more fully confirmed afterwards by a learned Jew called Ananias. Speaking of the arrival of Helena at Jerusalem, the Jewish historian says:—"Her arrival was a great blessing to the people; for the city at that time labouring under a heavy famine, so that a great many perished for want, the queen sent abroad several of her officers; some to Alexandria for the purchase of corn, others to Cyprus to buy up dried figs. These having used the utmost expedition, as soon as they returned, she distributed food to those who were in need. By this liberality she laid a lasting obligation upon our whole nation." Moreover, her son Izates, having heard of the famine, sent a large sum of money to the chief men of Jerusalem."[1] Afterwards he refers to the same famine, in such terms as seem to show that it was not confined to one season, but extended over two or three years.

It is clear from supplies of corn being obtained from abroad, that the dearth was confined to Judea, or was felt with most intensity in that district. That it did not extend to Egypt on the south is clear, and if it had been felt to the north-east, Izates would have wanted his money to feed his own people. In this case we see that Helena and Izates, proselytes to Judaism, do the same thing for the native Jews, which the proselytes to Christianity at Antioch, do for the native Christians. It is well reasoned from this case by Lardner,[2] who has brought together all the information bearing upon the subject, "that the Jews of Judea seem to have ex-

[1] *Antiq* xx 2. 6. [2] *Credibility of the Gospel History*. Part 1, B. 1, Ch. 11.

pected it as due to them, that some particular regard should be shown them by the rest of their countrymen, and by all who came over to the worship of the true God, and were admitted to share in any of the privileges of the Jewish people. Thus St Paul assures us:[1] 'Only they would that we should remember the poor, the same which I also was forward to do.' The very last time that St Paul was at Jerusalem: 'After many years,' says he, 'I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings.'[2] Nor was St Paul's argument a new thought, though expressed by him with a divine temper: 'But 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 that are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily, *and their debtors they are.* For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.'"[3]

Forty-Sixth Week—Sixth Day.

HEROD-AGRIPPA—ACTS XII. 1.

THE twelfth chapter of the Acts opens with an account of the hostile proceedings of "Herod the king" against the church at Jerusalem.

Without information from other sources, we should be considerably perplexed to find Judea again a kingdom, when but lately we saw it a Roman province, governed by a Roman procurator; and we might be somewhat at a loss to distinguish this "Herod the king" from two others of the same name and title mentioned in the Gospels. The first was a real king, Herod the Great; the second was his son Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, called "king" by his own subjects; the third is this Herod—also a real king,

[1] Gal. ii. 10. [2] Acts xxiv. 17. [3] Rom. xv. 25-27.

possessed of all the territories over which the first Herod had reigned. In common history he bears the name of Agrippa, which was his Roman name; and writers now usually add this to his Jewish name of Herod, calling him Herod-Agrippa, for the sake of distinctiveness. The first Herod had early strengthened himself by marrying Mariamne, the granddaughter of the high-priest, Hyrcanus II., the last ruling prince of that noble Maccabæan house which his own had supplanted. By her he had two sons and two daughters. The sons were Alexander and Aristobulus; and they were both in one day put to death by their father, on an unfounded suspicion of conspiring against his power. Aristobulus had espoused Bernice, a daughter of his father's sister Salome; and of this marriage the issue was the present Herod-Agrippa, Aristobulus, Herod (King of Chalcis), and Herodias, the notorious wife of Herod Antipas. Herod-Agrippa himself married his cousin Cypros, daughter of his father's sister Salampsio by her cousin Phasaël; and by this marriage he had five children, three of whom are mentioned in the sequel of the Acts. These three are the "king Agrippa" (Herod-Agrippa II.), before whom Paul pleaded at Cæsarea, after he had appealed to Cæsar; Bernice, who was present on that occasion; and Drusilla, who is named in Acts xxiv. 24, as the wife of the Roman governor Felix. Thus, then, it appears that Herod-Agrippa was grandson of Herod the Great, nephew of Herod Antipas, brother of Herodias, and father of King Agrippa, Bernice, and Drusilla.

The history of this man is remarkable for romantic interest and strange vicissitudes. A full exposition of its diversified incidents might be made the vehicle of much information illustrative of the ideas, and the moral and social condition and usages of the times in which he lived, and of the countries with which he was connected; but a very concise sketch is all that can here be given.

Soon after the death of his father, the young Agrippa was sent to Rome to be brought up at the imperial court. He was well received there, and educated with the younger

Drusus, son of the future emperor Tiberius, while his interests were kindly watched over with maternal solicitude by Antonia, wife of the elder Drusus (brother of Tiberius), and mother of the future emperor Claudius. Antonia was an attached friend to Agrippa's mother Bernice, and for her sake proved a fast friend to her son to the end of her life. Bernice herself had come to Rome soon after the death of Herod the Great, along with her mother Salome, and her half-brother Archelaus, when the latter went to procure from Augustus the confirmation of his father's will. Bernice remained at Rome, in the enjoyment of Antonia's friendship and protection, and watchful of her son's welfare. As long as his mother lived, Agrippa conducted himself very well; but after her death he gave full sway to his natural disposition for dissipation and extravagance, and in a few years had wasted all his substance in riotous living, and in profuse largesses to those whom he supposed able to advance his interests with the emperor. He then began to be in want; and any prospects of relief or restored fortune which he might have founded on the friendship or influence of Drusus, were extinguished by the death of that prince, followed as it was by an order from Tiberius that all the intimate associates of his deceased son should avoid his presence, lest the sight of them should remind him of the loss he had sustained. Sunk into poverty, overwhelmed with debt, and hopeless of the future, Agrippa felt that Rome was no longer a place for him, and he withdrew, with his wife Cypros, into privacy and retirement at Malatha in Idumea. Here he felt quite out of his element; and brooding daily over his wasted life and abortive prospects, he resolved upon self-destruction. His purpose was, however, discovered by his wife, who successfully employed herself to divert him from it. This good wife, having thus found how reckless her husband had become—

> "As one past hope abandoned,
> And by himself given over,"

deemed that the time had arrived for *her* to exert herself

on his behalf. She therefore wrote a letter to his sister Herodias, describing her husband's forlorn condition, and gloomy state of mind, and imploring her to prevail upon Herod the tetrarch to do something for him. On this, Herod sent to invite him to his court; and on his arrival appointed him to reside at Tiberias, as its magistrate, with a house and adequate pension. Here the thriftless Agrippa relapsed into his old habits of extravagance, and soon wearied out the liberality of Herod, who took occasion of a public entertainment at Tyre to taunt him with his poverty, his extravagance, and his entire dependence upon him. Agrippa fired at this; and freely retorting taunt for taunt, he flung back his uncle's favours with disdain, and repaired to Flaccus, who was now the Roman governor of Syria, and with whom he had been intimate at Rome. There he found his own brother, Aristobulus, with whom he was at enmity, and who eventually succeeded in driving Agrippa from the protection of Flaccus, by accusing him of having taken a bribe from the Damascenes to support their cause with the proconsul against the Sidonians. The charge was true; and Agrippa had again to wander forth in search of means to live. He repaired to Ptolemais, and the sight of the shipping at that port probably suggested the idea of embarking for Italy, considering that it could not be worse for him there than elsewhere, and might be better. The great obstacle was the want of money; but this he at length surmounted by procuring from one Peter, who was the freedman of Bernice, the sum of 17,500 drachmæ, upon his bond for 20,000. Thus provided, he took ship, and was ready to depart, when he was intercepted by a body of cavalry sent by Herennius Capito, the imperial procurator in Jamnia, for a debt of 300,000 drachmæ which he had formerly contracted. He soothed his captors by professions and promises, but took advantage of the night to cut his cables and sail away for Alexandria. Here his wife's security, after his own had been refused, availed to procure him a loan of 200,000 drachmæ from Alexander, the alabarch of the Egyptian Jews. This person,

however, knew Agrippa too well to pay down the whole of that large sum, fearing that he would forthwith squander it away; but gave him part of it, and undertook that the rest should be paid after his arrival in Italy. He then sailed for that country, and was well received by Tiberius, who was residing in the island of Capreæ, and whose grief for the loss of Drusus had been abated by lapse of time. But the very next day a letter arrived from Herennius, giving the particulars of his debt and flight; and upon this the emperor forbade him to come into his presence till the debt was paid. From this trouble he was relieved by the kindness of Antonia, who, from regard to his mother, advanced him money enough to satisfy the demand. This restored him to the favour of Tiberius, who directed him to attend upon his grandson, Tiberius Gemellus; but mindful of the sincere friendship of Antonia, to which he had been so often indebted, Agrippa gradually attached himself to her grandson, Caius Caligula, and at length became his constant companion, and acquired great influence with him. This sort of life cost money; but Agrippa had borrowed a million of drachmæ, with which he repaid the loan from Antonia, and spent the rest in paying court to her grandson. Troubles, however, still awaited him. Riding out one day with Caius, he incautiously expressed to the latter a wish that the death of Tiberius might soon raise him to imperial power. This was overheard by the charioteer, who being afterwards detected in a theft, intimated that he had something of importance to communicate to the emperor. Tiberius at first refused to hear the man, but at length granted him an audience at the intercession of Agrippa himself. No sooner was the charge made than Agrippa, though clothed in purple, was laden with chains, and, notwithstanding the exertions of Antonia in his behalf, remained in close custody until the death of the emperor, which happened six months after. But the demise of Tiberius changed his condition from that of a captive to a king. The new emperor speedily called him to his presence. He caused him to be shaved, and made him change his raiment. He then placed

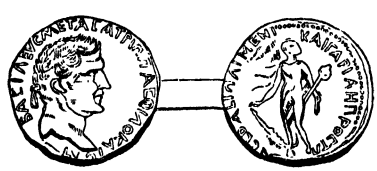
a diadem upon his head, and declared him King of Gaulonitis and Batanea, and gave him besides the tetrarchy of Lysanias; while for the iron chain by which he had been bound to the soldier that kept him, he bestowed on him one of equal weight in gold.

Agrippa was too prudent to manifest much haste to quit Rome. At length in the second year of Caligula he obtained leave to go and settle the affairs of his kingdom. He went by way of Alexandria, where his re-appearance in the character of a king was hailed with mirth, derision, and insult. In Palestine he was gazed at with wonder, and by his own relations was regarded with envy. Herodias, in particular, was exasperated at her brother's triumph, and urged her husband to seek for himself equal honours. Herod Antipas, accompanied by her, went to Rome for that purpose, but Agrippa sent an envoy to resist his claim, and to make certain charges against his uncle; and afterwards went himself to render his opposition more effectual by his personal influence. His success was such that Herod was banished to Lyons in Gaul, whither his wife voluntarily followed him, and where they both died. The forfeited tetrarchy, together with the personal property of his uncle, was bestowed upon Agrippa, forming a material addition to his power, and giving him a footing on this side the Jordan. It was during this residence at Rome that Agrippa found occasion to render that service to the Jews, in respect of the image of the emperor, which we have already commemorated. He was still at Rome when Caligula died, and Claudius succeeded to the empire. With this prince, the son of his best friend, Antonia Agrippa had been educated; and his influence over him being great, he took no unimportant part in the measures which secured for him the imperial purple. Immediately on his accession, Claudius raised his friend to the rank of consul, and added to his dominions Judea, Samaria, Abila, and part of Lebanon—so that Agrippa now possessed the entire kingdom of his grandfather, Herod the Great.

It is in the third year of his reign over all Palestine, and

when he had been about two years in the country, that the Sacred History takes notice of him. On his arrival at Jerusalem in A.D. 42, he presented many thank-offerings upon the altar, and, as a memorial of his deliverance, suspended near the treasury the golden chain he had received from Caligula. He was covetous of popularity among his subjects, and laboured much to gratify them. In this the testimony of Josephus agrees with that of Luke. Some of his undertakings were, however, frustrated by the jealousy of the Romans, as when he undertook to raise and strengthen the walls of Jerusalem.

It happens that this is the only Jewish prince of whom any certain likeness exists. It is found on a coin of great rarity and interest, a representation of which is here introduced.[1]



Forty-Sixth Week—Seventh Day.

JAMES THE BROTHER OF JOHN.—ACTS XII. 2.

It was this man, such as we described him last evening—"Herod the king," as he is called by Luke, "Agrippa the

[1] Copied, with the author's kind permission, from *Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament*, by JOHN YONGE AKERMAN, F.S.A. London, 1846. The obverse bears the head of Agrippa, with the title of Megas—ΒΑCΙΛΕVC ΜΕΓΑC ΑΓΡΙΠΠΑC. ΦΙΛΟΚΑΙCΑΡ—King Agrippa the Great, lover of Cæsar. The reverse—ΚΑΙCΑΡΙΑ Η. ΠΡΟC. ΤΩ, CΕΒΑCΤΩ, ΑΙΜΕΝΙ, i.e. *Cæsarea ad portum Sebastum*, and Fortune standing with her attributes.

Great," as he liked to be designated, who "about that time" —that is, about the time of the visit of Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, "stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church." The Christian church at Jerusalem had become too prominent to escape his notice; and perceiving how deeply that body was hated by the Jews, he expected to win some favour with them by manifesting hostility against its leading members. That this was his primary object is clear from the fact, that after he had "killed James the brother of John with the sword," and perceived that this atrocity "*pleased the Jews*," he caused Peter to be apprehended, with the intention of destroying him also, after the Passover.

The leading principle of Agrippa's life seems to have been to make himself agreeable to all persons whose favour was or might become of any advantage to him. It was now his interest to stand well with the Jews, and he knew that there was no way so conducive to this end, as to affect a zeal for the strict observance of the ancient ritual, though on many occasions he acted contrary to it in order to ingratiate himself with the Gentiles. He was, in fact, a complete man of the world; and, as such, he scrupled not to make the passions of other men, in which he had no share, and their prejudices, which he despised, the instruments of his own greatness. How it was that James was selected for the first victim does not appear; but it may be supposed that he had excited the anger of the Jewish zealots by some particular act or discourse. We must not forget, however, that he was one of the "sons of thunder;" and the qualities which rendered that designation appropriate, would be likely to make him very conspicuous among the apostles at Jerusalem, and render him a mark for the enemies of the gospel. That he was "slain by the sword," would seem to imply that he was sentenced by the king himself, rather than by the usual Jewish court of orthodoxy, which would have condemned him to be stoned; and the "slaying by the sword" is usually, in this case, interpreted to mean beheading; and perhaps rightly so at the period in question, though under the Old Testament we should rather

regard the expression as denoting that a person was *thrust through* with a sword. There is a tradition concerning the death of James which is worthy of attention, though it is not possible to say how far it may be relied on. It is cited by Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, from a lost work by Clement of Alexandria. It is, that the officer who had the apostle in custody during his trial, or, as some say, his accuser, was convinced and converted by his demeanour before the judgment seat, and having confessed Christ, was led out with him to execution. On the way, he entreated pardon of the apostle. The latter thought a little in silence, and then said: "Peace be with thee;" and kissed him. Such was the first martyrdom among the apostles; and thus early, to him, was the prediction fulfilled, that the sons of Zebedee should drink of the same cup with their Lord, and be baptized with the same baptism. There is, however, something touching in the contrast between the two brothers. "One died before the middle of the first Christian century; the other lived to its close. One died just as his Master's kingdom, concerning which he had so eagerly inquired,[1] was beginning to show its real character; he probably never heard the word 'Christian' pronounced. The other remained till the anti-christian enemies of the faith were 'already come,'[2] and was labouring against them when his brother had been fifty years at rest in the Lord."[3] This James was one of the three apostles whom our Lord favoured with his special intimacy and confidence; yet he scarcely appears individually in the evangelical history, and there is hardly any one of the apostles concerning whom we have a less distinct impression. His early death—before any of the original apostles had travelled out of Palestine—would seem to exclude his name from the record of apostolic missionary labour. Yet it has long been the general opinion of the people of Spain that he planted the gospel in that country. He is their St Jago. But the alleged fact seems impossible from *all* the circumstances of the case, and is so

[1] Mark x. 35-45; Acts i. 6. [2] 1 John ii. 18; iv. 3; 2 John 7.
[3] Howson, in *Life of St Paul*, i. 138.

unsupported by the testimony of any ancient writer of credit, that the notion is generally abandoned even by Roman Catholic writers out of Spain.

There is in Jerusalem, upon Mount Zion, within the walls, the Armenian convent of St James the son of Zebedee. It is the largest establishment of the kind in the place, and is capable of affording accommodation to three thousand pilgrims. Here are a fine library, agreeable gardens, the most extensive in the city, and a church larger and more handsome than any other in Jerusalem. The building is supposed to cover the site of St James' martyrdom, and the very spot where he died is pointed out. It was in the eleventh century that a monastery was first built over the spot. But, as Mr Williams remarks, it is difficult to reconcile this tradition, which is not very remote, with the established historical fact, that the executions of the ancients took place without the gates.[1]

[1] *Holy City*, i. suppl. p. 23; ii. 559, 560

Forty-Seventh Week—First Day.

THE PRAYING CHURCH.—ACTS XII. 5.

We have seen that Peter was cast into prison, with the known intention of Herod-Agrippa that he should be taken from it only to his death. We may readily conceive the deep concern of the believers in Jerusalem at this event, and at the threatened addition to the loss they had already sustained. And what did they under these circumstances? Did they not move heaven and earth for his deliverance? They sought to move heaven; and left it to heaven to move the earth. They were of that plain, right-minded people who deemed that both the surest and readiest course of proceeding for the attainment of any object was to go direct, and first of all, to Him who holds all the elements, and all the interests, and hearts, and lives of men in His hands. We therefore read of nothing that they did, but that "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him."

In the first place it might be asked, What possible use could there be of prayer in such a case as this? Here was Peter in a strong and well-guarded prison, chained to soldiers conscious of his slightest movements, and reserved for death by a tyrant not likely to be restrained from his purpose by any influence that could be brought to bear upon him. There was never man in a case, deliverance from which could seem more of a moral and even physical impossibility. Yet the believers, though they knew all this, prayed not the less earnestly and hopefully for him. Prayer, like faith, of which prayer is the expression—

> "Laughs at impossibilities,
> And cries, 'It shall be done!'"

"The first Christians were persuaded that nothing is impossible to him who believes, because nothing is impossible to God. Daniel was preserved in a den of lions, and the three Jewish confessors in the midst of a fiery furnace. God could bend the heart of the tyrant to mercy, or defeat his purpose by his sudden death, or incline the people to intercede for the life of His servant, or deliver him by a miracle. They did not limit the Holy One of Israel, and say, 'How can this thing be?' Reflecting on His power, they overlooked the obstacles to the answer of their prayers, and being strong in faith, gave glory to God."[1]

It may be that the combination of circumstances, which rendered the release of Peter impossible to any human means or influence, was permitted by the Lord with the view that the believers might look entirely to Him for the deliverance of Peter; and that this deliverance, being granted solely by His power and in manifest answer to their prayers, might strengthen their faith, and recover them from any discouragement which the loss of James had occasioned, by assuring them that, although he had been taken from them, their interests were not unwatched, nor their safety unguarded; and that James had not died because his Lord could not have delivered him had He seen fit to do so; but because it was, for good reasons of His own, His will that His servant should be called home. We cannot doubt that the Lord's hand was in that postponement of Peter's execution, which afforded the opportunity for the fervent prayers of the Church to be offered on his behalf, in order that the deliverance, when it came, might be felt as an answer to these prayers. The Lord has to be asked for His mercies, because by asking we evince the fervency of our desires, and acknowledge our dependence upon Him for them. Asking is indeed one of the conditions of receiving. He has not promised to give to those that need, but to those that "ask." He has not promised that those who want shall "find," but those

[1] Dick's *Lectures on the Acts of the Apostles.*

who "seek." He has not undertaken to open the door to those who loiter around it, but to those who "knock."

The prayer which evinces its earnestness by its fervency and perseverance is the only real prayer, and it is the only prayer which God has pledged himself to heed. Such prayer He never refuses, unless He knows that it would be injurious, or not good to grant it. Yet it is so difficult for Him as a Father to pain his children, by refusing such prayers when offered to Him, that He seems often to exclude the opportunity of being asked for that which He does not mean to grant; while, on the other hand, it is so agreeable to Him to grant their requests, that He often provides the opportunity for being asked for that which He designs to bestow. Both considerations seem to have operated here. James seems to have been taken away somewhat suddenly, before the Church could offer its prayers on his behalf; while the doom of Peter was postponed that prayer might be offered for him.

Indeed, as the commentator, Scott, remarks: "When time is given for prayer, and when, as in this case, the opportunity for prayer is given, and great numbers are excited up to join in it, as with one heart and soul, it may be regarded as an indication that God intends to grant their desires."

As the answer to the prayer of the Church was the deliverance of Peter, his deliverance was probably what the Church prayed for. This might not appear absolutely from the expression that they prayed "for him." Nor, doubtless, did they pray for his deliverance alone; but also that the Divine presence might be with him, strengthening him in the prison-house, and that, if not previously delivered, he might "witness a good confession" before Herod's judgment-seat. Even the prayer for his deliverance was assuredly conditional; no effectual prayer can be otherwise, so long as those who ask do not certainly know what is absolutely best, while He who is asked knows it well. Such must be all our own prayers; and God often grants our prayers most effectually by denying us the exact thing we ask—

'What may conduce
To my most healthful use,
Almighty God! me grant;
But that or this
That hurtful is
Deny thy suppliant."—HERRICK.

Forty-Seventh Week—Second Day.

PETER IN PRISON.—ACTS XII. 4-17.

It will be remembered that the apostles had formerly been delivered from prison—probably from the same prison in which Peter was now confined. We may suppose that the remembrance of this by the Jews, and their mention of it to Herod, caused the latter to take extraordinary care in securing the prisoner. He was consigned to the custody of "four quaternions of soldiers," and he was bound with *two* chains. A quaternion was a picket of four soldiers, and four of these made sixteen men. Each picket of four men was to take in turn the duty of watching the apostle, two at the doors, and two chained to him. It was not usual to chain a prisoner to more than one soldier, and thus Herod-Agrippa himself had been chained at Rome, and hereafter we shall see Paul so chained in the same city. When two chains were employed, as in the case before us, one end of a chain was fastened to the right arm of the prisoner, and the other end of it to the left arm of one of the soldiers; and in like manner the other chain was fastened to the left arm of the prisoner and the right arm of the other soldier. It is difficult to see how a prisoner could be more completely secured than Peter thus was, or how his escape could by any means be rendered less possible, shut up as he was in a strong prison, the gates of which were not only locked and barred, but guarded by sentinels, and his person being besides attached to living men, who would hear and feel his slighest movement. But the walls were never built, the chains were never forged, the

guards never breathed, that could hold in bondage him whom God willed to be free. So it proved now.

The Passover week had already ended; and it was the night before the morning in which Peter was to be led to his death that the deliverance was effected. But the prospect that seemed before him troubled not the apostle, and he lay between the two soldiers to whom he was chained, enjoying that sweet sleep which God gives to His beloved. To die in his Lord's cause and for the honour of His name, was not a doom to bring any dismay or unrest to him who, when far less enlightened, and possessed of a far less distinctly realized sense of his Lord's love to him, had declared to Jesus, "I will lay down my life for thy sake." It may be, however, that he entertained a conviction that it would be the Lord's pleasure to interpose in some way, even if at the last moment, for his release. He had grounds for such a conviction: He could not but remember the last words which his risen Lord had addressed to him personally; and these words assured him, that although he was destined to seal with his blood his testimony for Christ, it would not be till he was old, and by a form of death not at *this* time (since it was no longer a Roman province) in use in Judea. "When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, *thou shalt stretch forth thy hands*, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." This clearly points to death by crucifixion. Indeed it was so understood, for the Evangelist who records the circumstance adds: "This spake He, signifying *by what death* he should glorify God." John xxi. 18, 19.

As Peter thus lay in sleep, an angel of the Lord entered the prison, and filled it with the light of his presence. A sudden access of light usually rouses a man from sleep; but the apostle's repose was too sound to be thus disturbed. The angel therefore smote him on the side to arouse him. He then awoke; and before he could recover from his surprise or collect his ideas, and perhaps before he could see distinctly,

the angel's voice bade him "Arise up quickly;" and as the words were uttered, he felt the chains, which bound him to the soldiers, fall from his hands. The Orientals, when they go to rest, do not undress fully as we do; or rather, do not change their dress—they simply loosen their girdle, and lay aside their outer garment. Peter had done this; and the angel seeing him still confused and amazed, directed him to fasten his girdle and put on his cloak, and also to bind on his sandals. The latter direction intimated that he was to leave the place, as the Orientals only use their shoes or sandals when they leave their apartments. Accordingly, when this was done, the angel bade Peter follow him. So they passed on; and when they came to the outermost gate, which was strengthened with iron, it flew open of its own accord, and the two passed into the street. The angel then disappeared. All this took but a few moments, and Peter, still confused, deemed all that was passing to be a vision or a dream. But the brisk night air soon brought him to complete recollection; and he perceived that his deliverance was real. "Now I know of a surety," he said, "that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." As he walked on, considering this matter, he reached the nearest house occupied by a disciple. This disciple was Mary—"the mother of John, whose surname was Mark"—or rather, who was called Mark, for the Jews had no surnames; but many had two names, one by which they were known among the Jews, and the other among the Greeks or Romans. This was very necessary for those who dwelt with or among them, or had any intercourse with them; for they were curiously averse to be troubled with the utterance of Hebrew proper names, whether of place or persons; and it was therefore needful to a Jew, even for his own comfort, that he should adopt some name which they were familiar with and could readily pronounce. In the present instance the John also called Mark, was probably Mark the evangelist; but this is not altogether certain.

Peter paused before the door of Mary's house. In that house there were many believers assembled, late as it was, for prayer—and their prayers were doubtless for him. He was to die the next day; and while he had slept, very many remained awake in prayer to God in his behalf. The case seemed to become more hopeless as the last hour of possible deliverance approached, yet they relaxed not in fervency of prayer; for when hope has, perhaps unconsciously, abated, the trained spiritual mind persists in prayer, because only in that intercourse with God can it find adequate support and relief.

Peter knocked at the door. He knocked with his staff probably; for there are no knockers, far less bells, to Eastern doors. He was heard within; and a girl soon came to the gate. The girl's name was Rhoda, which is Greek for a rose—another instance of the pleasant practice of giving to females the names of flowers. At that late hour Rhoda would not open the door till she knew who it was that applied for admittance; and when she heard that it was Peter, and recognised his well-known voice, the girl, by a natural impulse, rushed in to tell the joyful news without opening the gate. How far expectation had become depressed, is shown by the persistent incredulity with which they received the tidings which Rhoda with so much eager joy imparted. They told her she was mad; and when she still affirmed the fact, they said, "It is his angel." What they meant by that saying is not perfectly clear. Some think that as "angel" means a "messenger," in which sense it is often used both in the Old and New Testaments, they meant to say, that some messenger had come from Peter, and that he had used his name in such a manner as to lead the girl, in her haste, to suppose that it was Peter himself. Others understand, that they fancied it was the apostle's ghost or spirit; from which they might have inferred that he had already been put to death—probably that night in his prison, as John the Baptist had been. But it is more generally conceived that they supposed it to be his *guardian angel*, who had taken the

form and voice of Peter, in order to comfort them for his loss, or supposing that he yet lived, to incite them to renewed fervency of prayer on his behalf. We know that it was the prevalent belief of the Jews that every one has assigned to him at his birth an angel, whose office it is to guard and defend him through life—to incite him to good, and to deter him from evil. How far this notion may be true we need not now inquire; and as it cannot be shown to be true from Scripture, we are not bound to receive it merely because it may appear to have been entertained by persons brought up in Judaism.

However, by this time, Peter had become a little impatient of his detention outside the gate—which also might have been dangerous to him. He, therefore, resumed his knocking. They then ventured to go and open the gate; and when they saw that it was really Peter, their astonishment and joy were both beyond measure great. They were also loudly expressed; but Peter, to whom every moment was precious, held up his hand to beckon for silence. He then recited to them how it was that the Lord had brought him out of prison; and requesting them to report these particulars to the surviving James, and to the brethren at large, he took his departure. "He went to another place," where he might for the time be more safe. *Whither* he went we know not. The Roman Catholics suppose that he went to Rome; but there is no evidence for this opinion, nor does it seem at all likely that he did so then, whatever may have been the case at a later period.

Forty-Seventh Week—Third Day.

DEATH OF HEROD-AGRIPPA.—ACTS XII. 18-24.

THERE was great consternation in the prison the next morning, when it was found that Peter was absent. It would seem as if the guard had been thrown into a deep sleep,

seeing that they had not been awakened by any of the circumstances which occurred; for had they been cognizant of these, but passive through terror, they would not have been so much surprised "as soon as it was day." Herod was in high wrath when he heard that, notwithstanding the precautions he had directed to be taken, the apostle had disappeared. He caused a diligent search to be made for him; and when no trace of him could be found, he examined the soldiers; and finding that they could not, or, as he perhaps supposed, would not, throw any light on the matter, he ordered that they should be put to death. It was in ancient times very generally regarded as a capital offence, for those to whose charge a prisoner was entrusted to suffer him to escape; and it must have seemed clear that in this case the guards had either slept upon their post, or had been consenting parties to his flight. Herod was probably the more induced to enforce this penalty, for the purpose of conveying the impression that the soldiers had aided in the escape of Peter.

Herod then proceeded to Cæsarea, which had become the political metropolis of the country since the completion of the great works and public buildings which his grandfather had founded there. Soon after his arrival, a grand commemoration was held in honour of the emperor. The precise occasion we do not know. Some suppose it was in honour of his birth-day; others that it was to celebrate his return from Britain. There was, on this occasion, a large concourse of the great and noble to Cæsarea; and the theatre, built by the elder Herod, must have presented a splendid appearance when the stone seats, rising tier above tier in the open air, were lined with persons arrayed in the gorgeous vestures of the East. Here the usual games were celebrated, such as gladiatorial combats and the like. Herod-Agrippa had contracted at Rome a taste for these savage sports, and had introduced them into Judea. Josephus mentions, that on one occasion he had, at Berytus, given no fewer than seven hundred pairs of men to fight in mortal combat; thus, as the historian

approvingly remarks, using up his malefactors in such a manner that, by the very act of getting rid of them, he made them subservient to the pleasure of the people. The stricter Jews had a creditable dislike to these sports. But there were many more accommodating in this respect; and in such places as Cæsarea, where a very large proportion, if not a majority, of the inhabitants were Greeks, there was never a want of spectators to fill the theatre.

On the second day Herod appeared in the theatre, attired with extraordinary splendour, as it was his intention, before the games commenced, to give audience to ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon. These anciently renowned and still thriving cities were not in the king's own territory, but enjoyed some share of independence under the Romans. As their domains were small, and all their attention was given to manufactures and commerce, they depended almost entirely upon Herod's territory for the requisite supplies of corn and other agricultural produce, their country being, in fact, as the sacred historian remarks, "nourished by the king's country." It was therefore of the utmost importance to them that they should be on good terms with him. But they had, from some cause or other, incurred his deep displeasure; and to put an end to the evils thus threatened or incurred, they repaired to Cæsarea, where having first of all made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend, doubtless by means of a handsome *douceur*, for that has always been the way in the East, they succeeded in obtaining a public audience, and composing their difference with Herod.

Josephus informs us that the king's dress on this day was of silver tissue, which shone most effulgently in the morning sun. The effulgence was probably heightened by numerous splendid jewels. At this day, as in ancient days, the kings of Persia appoint, for the reception of ambassadors, such an hour as, according to the season of the year or the situation of the intended room of audience, will best enable them to display in full sunshine the dazzling brilliancy of their jewelled dresses; and it is on record, that the title, "He of the re-

splendent raiment," was added to the name of one monarch, because, on some high festival, his regal ornaments, glittering in the sun's rays, so dazzled the eyes of the beholders, that they could scarcely endure the refulgence, and some courtiers professed their inability to distinguish between the person of the monarch and the great luminary of day.

Arrayed in such "royal apparel," Herod took his place upon his high seat in the theatre. He proceeded to make a speech, probably in the matter of the Tyrian embassy; and just as he concluded, the rays of the morning sun played upon his dress, and gave to his person a most dazzling appearance. On this, the heathen courtiers, of whom there were many present, and probably the Tyrian ambassadors prominently, raised a shout, hailing him as a god! This idea was not unfamiliar to the heathen mind. In the Greek mythology we read of many mortals raised to divinities after their death. Among the Greek kingdoms of the East it was also not unusual for a sovereign to cause divine honours to be rendered to his predecessor; and among the Romans nearly all the emperors were thus deified, as well as many of their wives and female relatives. There are medals extant commemorating the names of sixty persons, who received the honours of deification between the times of Julius Cæsar and Constantine the Great, when the custom ceased. There are also sculptures symbolizing the fact of deification, or representing its ceremonies. In the British Museum there is a curious sculptured tablet, representing the apotheosis of Homer. For persons to receive divine honours during life was less common, but not absolutely rare. Very lately we saw Caligula claiming worship as a god; formerly Mark Antony had assumed in Egypt the character of Osiris; Alexander the Great had also affected to be a god; and the Scripture history records the fact, that Darius was prevailed upon to be a god for a month. (Dan. vi. 7-12). Indeed, the manner in which Herod-Agrippa accepted this profane adulation, reminds one of the poet's description of Alexander under the like circumstances—

"'A present deity!' they shout around:
'A present deity!' the vaulted roofs rebound.
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres."

In like manner the king of Judea accepted this homage, or at least did not repel it, though, as a Jew, he ought to have repelled it with horror and indignation. Of all who ever accepted such adulation, none was so guilty as Herod; for he knew the truth—that there is but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth; and that He is a very jealous God, who will not give his glory to another. Of this he was instantly reminded, for "immediately the angel of God smote him, because he gave not God the glory." It may be that the rays of the sun, which by shining upon his raiment, did, in conjunction with the eloquent beneficence of his speech, call forth this blasphemous adulation, were, in the shape of a sun-stroke, made the appropriate instrument of his punishment. He was seized with horrid torments in the intestines; and he who had just been greeted as a god, was borne forth, in all his splendid raiment, amid groans, and cries, and tears, declaring that he had received his death-stroke, and acknowledging the hand of God in his punishment. He survived five days in extreme torture, being "eaten of worms," and then died that horrid and loathsome death, which, as we formerly showed,[1] has so peculiarly been the doom of tyrannous persecutors and blasphemers, as if to manifest what weapons the Lord has reserved with which to bring down into the very dust the loftiness of the most proud.

We have combined, in this account of Herod's death, the statements of Luke and those of Josephus. There is a remarkable agreement between them, although Luke, in his more concise statement, omits some circumstances which Josephus, in his more full account, supplies, and which fit very well into the shorter narrative. Thus they agree that

[1] Evening Series—Thirty-First Week, First Day.

his disease was of the intestines; but Josephus says nothing of the worms, while Luke, as a physician, naturally notices the cause as well as the fact of the tortures Herod endured. They also agree that the real cause of his death was his acceptance of divine honours; for although Josephus was tender of the memory of this king, and gives a more favourable character of him than is warranted by the facts he records, he was too good a Jew to suppress or disguise this circumstance, which, indeed, was acknowledged by Herod's own conscience, and was known to all the people.

Still Herod was not, as times went, a bad ruler; and in the apprehension that a worse condition of affairs might ensue, his demise was deeply lamented by his subjects. The Christians, however, had no cause to deplore it; and it must not escape remark, that the sacred historian, after recording that Herod "gave up the ghost," emphatically adds, "*But* the word of God grew and multiplied."

Forty-Seventh Week—Fourth Day.

BAR-JESUS.—ACTS XII. 25–XIII. 8.

BARNABAS and Saul having fulfilled their commission at Jerusalem, returned to Antioch, taking with them that John, otherwise called Mark, the house of whose mother, Mary, was first visited by Peter on his deliverance from prison. Mark was nephew to Barnabas, and as his father seems to have been dead, the care of him necessarily devolved upon his uncle, who probably wished to introduce the young man into the labours of the gospel under his own eye, with, perhaps, an ulterior intention of making him acquainted with his relations in Cyprus.

It is to be noted that, from this time forward, the sacred historian confines himself almost exclusively to the proceedings of Saul.

Soon after their return, it was intimated to the Church at Antioch by the Spirit, on a day which had been set apart for prayer and fasting, that Saul and Barnabas were to go forth upon a missionary expedition. They were accordingly set apart for this service; and we soon find them, still accompanied by Mark, proceeding down the Orontes, unless they preferred the shorter route by land to Seleucia, which was lately mentioned as the port of Antioch. They went to Seleucia in order to take passage for the island of Cyprus, which, in a clear day, is visible from this place, and with a fair wind might be reached in a few hours. They landed at Salamis, which had formerly, under the Greeks, been the metropolis of the island, and was still its chief port and commercial town, though the seat of government seems to have been removed to Paphos, at its opposite extremity. There, and throughout this journey, it seems that the gospel was only preached in the Jewish synagogues; and indeed it appears to have been the general practice to make to the Jews the *first* offer of its blessings. As a maritime commercial town, the Jews probably formed a large proportion of the population of Salamis.

From Salamis the apostles travelled the whole length of the island to Paphos, a place famous for its splendid temple to Venus, who was worshipped throughout the island; whence her designations of "Cyprian goddess," and "Paphian goddess." Here was the seat of the Roman governor, who at this time was Sergius Paulus, described as "a prudent," or rather, "an intelligent or open-minded man." Notwithstanding this, he had given his confidence to a Jewish impostor named Barjesus, who had taken upon him the Arabian title of Elymas, *magian*, or *wise man*. This title originally, and then still properly, applicable to sages, learned men, and philosophers, was also affected by charlatans and pretenders to occult knowledge, just as, at this day, quacks in medicine call themselves by the goodly names of "doctors" and "professors." The term is hence used in a good, an indifferent, or a bad sense in Scripture, just as, in our own language, "a wise man,"

which is the highest of characters, does also, in a popular acceptation, denote a fortune-teller—one who professes by his arts to be able to disclose hidden things. This latter sense seems to be reflected from that of wizard (wise-ard), a word of similarly equivocal import, the two expressions illustrating well the indefinite sense of the term *magus*, which, in both senses, has exactly the same meaning. The Scriptural sense is usually indicated by the context; and in the present instance the bad sense appears from the fact that Bar-jesus is expressly designated a "false prophet."

But it may well be asked, How could a man of this sort acquire such influence and close connection, as Bar-jesus possessed, with a Roman of the rank and character of Sergius Paulus?

To explain this, it is necessary to point out that such hold upon the Gentile mind, as the old systems of heathen philosophy, and the old customs of heathen belief, may have once possessed, had at this time been broken up, for all practical uses of comfort or confidence, and a general disbelief and unrest pervaded the public thought. Cast adrift from their old stays, which gave way before the pressure of advancing intelligence and cultivation, the minds of men floated listlessly upon the dark waters of scepticism, or sank in sullen despair into their depths. But it was not thus with all. Very many minds, still craving for the rest not to be found at home, sought it among foreign gods, and occult rites, and fertile superstitions; and since the ancient oracles were dumb, they sought light for their feet in the astrologies, the necromancies, the soothsayings, the various strange and marvellous beliefs and systems offered in large profusion by the prolific East, so recently opened up to Western knowledge by the Roman conquests and consolidations. Hence the writings of this period abound in painful disclosures of the most deadening scepticism, and the most lurid superstition—not always separated, but often united in the same individuals; for let men say what they will, and however great may seem the contradiction, scepticism has always been more superstitious

than faith. In this state of things grew up a multitude of impostors and pretenders, of various descriptions and qualities suited to all classes of people, who swarmed in all the chief places of human concourse. The East poured them forth in abundance, avenging its conquest by material arms by enslaving the minds of the conquerors. Palestine claimed its share of the prey. Very many runagate Jews, trading in the reputation of their ancient prophets, came forth as foretellers of things to come, and disclosers of mysteries. And these too were of all sorts—from the grave and scholarly persons who, like Bar-jesus, made emperors and proconsuls their prey; down to the gipsy-like Jewess who whispers in the ear of the Roman lady that she will tell her fortune, for that she, being a high-priest's daughter,[1] is versed in the arcana of the Jewish law, and well able, therefore, to interpret the will of heaven; for this she needs but to have her hand crossed with money, however sparingly, since "the Jews," adds the satirist,[2] to whom we owe the latter description, "will, for the smallest coin, sell you what fortunes you desire."

For the confirmation of these positions, and of the picture which Paul himself gives of the heathen world at the commencement of his Epistle to the Romans, a large collection of positive facts and authentic declarations is given in an able and instructive essay by a German theologian of high name,[3] from which we may condense a few particulars.

Already, before the birth of Christ, the belief in a future state appears to have been lost among the cultivated Romans. According to Sallust, Cæsar used expressions in the senate,

[1] She might make *this* claim—but no Jewess could make that claim which, in true Roman haughty ignorance of Judaism, the satirist ascribes to her, of being "high-priestess of the tree." Conscious of this, Dryden translates—

"A high-priest's daughter she."

But Gifford—

"A priestess she,
An hierarch of the consecrated tree."

[2] Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 541-546.

[3] Professor Tholuck *On the Nature and Moral Influence of Heathenism, especially among the Greeks and Romans, viewed in the light of Christianity.* Translated by Dr Emerson, in the American Biblical Repository for 1832.

which Cato, who followed him, clearly understood to indicate his belief that the traditions of a future state were fabulous, and that beyond the grave neither joy nor sorrow was to be found. Cato said, "Caius Cæsar has just delivered a fine and precomposed speech concerning life and death, believing (as I apprehend) those things to be false which are related of the infernal world, such as that the bad, going a different way from the good, inhabit regions gloomy, desolate, and full of horrors."[1] From this we may gather that although Cato himself agreed with Cæsar in repudiating the popular doctrines, he adhered to those vague philosophic notions of a future state which Cæsar had abandoned.

A still more melancholy declaration of despairing unbelief is given by the elder Pliny, who, after scouting the idea of a providence in human affairs, goes on thus:—"Still, it is of use in human life to believe that God takes care of human things; and that punishments, though sometimes late (since God is so much occupied in his vast cares), will never fail of being inflicted on crimes; and that man is not therefore the most nearly allied by birth to the Deity, in order that he should be next to the brutes in debasement. But it is the special consolation of imperfect human nature, that God cannot indeed do all things. For neither can He call death to his own relief, should He desire it—a noble refuge which He has given to man in the midst of so many evils; nor can He endow man with immortality; by which things the power of nature is doubtless declared, and that is what we call God."[2]

It was impossible that the inferior multitude should remain uninfected by this loosening of all belief. Servius, in a note on Virgil's Æneid, remarks expressly, that "unbelief is equally spread among the high and the low." The lines of Juvenal are well known:—

> "Esse aliquos Manes, et subterranea regna,
> Et contum, et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras,
> Atque unâ transire vadum tot millia cymbâ
> Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum æra lavantur."[3]

[1] Sallustii Bellum Catalin., ch. lii. [2] *Hist. Nat.* Lib. ii. ch. 7.
[3] *Sat.* ii. 149. Thus rendered, or rather paraphrased, by Gifford:—

So Seneca says: "No one is any longer so much a child that he must be shown there is no Cerberus nor Tartarus."

While now on the one hand the educated and the uneducated suffered themselves to be deceived by the infidelity of their times, another and a larger portion—and in some measure the same portion—of the people threw themselves into the arms of the most unbounded superstition, as had already been done by the philosophers. The first effect of this superstition was, that men were not content with their own and the Grecian gods, but brought to Rome the gods of all lands and worshipped them. They gloomily felt the incapacity of their own gods to satisfy them; they fancied they could supply the want by increasing the number; and the more foreign the deity, the more did their excited minds promise themselves from it. To the unhappy heathen, who were running, in the disquietude of their hearts, now to the heathen temple, now to the Jewish synagogue, a touching address was made by Commodianus, a simple and unaffected Christian of Africa: "They must not, in the disquietude of their hearts, seek for rest there; the true and real peace of mind can be imparted to them only through Christ."

Since the number of the gods was in this manner continually increasing, it was natural, too, that the superstitious worship of them, and the multitude of their priests, and temples, and rites, should increase above all measure. Thus in Lucian, Momus is made to say: "Thou Apollo, with thine oracles, art no longer alone celebrated; but every stone and every altar utters responses; every stone, at least, upon which oil has been poured, and which is crowned with a garland and has beside it a juggler, of which there are now so many." The more abominable vice and licentiousness became, on the one hand, the more did men yield themselves up, on the other,

> "That angry justice formed a dreadful hell,
> That ghosts in subterraneous regions dwell,
> That hateful Styx his sable current rolls,
> And Charon ferries o'er unbodied souls,
> Are now as tales or idle fables prized,
> By children questioned, and by men despised."

to superstition, in order to quiet conscience and appease the gods. Indeed, why should we wonder at the mass of superstition among the common people, and in later ages, when such a man as Augustus, the Roman Emperor, could dread to be alone in the night; when he was afraid of thunder and lightning, like a child, and carried about with him magical remedies in order to avert these dangers; and when, too, he was frightened, whenever he happened in the morning, instead of his right shoe, to put on his left shoe first.[1]

Especially pernicious under this state of things was the influence of the enormous multitude of soothsayers, interpreters of signs and of lightning, astrologers, palmisters, and necromancers. These all ministered to the ungovernable passions of the populace, who, tormented by a thousand cares and anxieties for the consequences of their own vices or the wickedness of others, longed to penetrate the darkness of futurity. By this form of superstition, heathenism was particularly distinguished. The Indians, Persians, Egyptians, Gauls, and Germans, had their soothsayers; and the Greeks and Romans carried these arts to such an extent, that a nundred different kinds of divination are enumerated as having been in use among them. The great kept astrologers and soothsayers continually near them in their palaces; and the case before us is, therefore, very far from being a rare instance of the practice.

Forty-Seventh Week—Fifth Day.

SERGIUS PAULUS.—ACTS XIII. 7.

THE dominion which Bar-jesus had acquired over the mind of the Roman governor of Cyprus, was not so absolute as to shut out all desire for further knowledge. The labours of Saul and Barnabas at Paphos were so active, and produced so marked a sensation in that city, that the report of their

[1] Suetonius, *Vita Augusti*. C. 78, 90, 91, 92.

proceedings, and of their extraordinary doctrine, soon reached him; and under the influence of that inquisitiveness, that craving for rest, which was last evening described, he sent for them to hear what they might say.

They declared to him the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ: they told him there was pardon for sin, rest for disquiet, certainty for doubt. Before his relaxed and languid state of mind, they set forth the invigorating realities of the spiritual life—of life with Christ in God.

These were indeed strange things. The governor was visibly impressed by them. Perceiving this, the magian put forth all his strength and subtilty in opposition to the teaching of the apostles, by which he saw that his own influence with Sergius Paulus was sorely imperilled. He spared nothing; and the violence of his invectives, the atrocity of his imputations, and the unscrupulous tortuosity of his arguments, may be judged from the vehemence of indignation which they awakened in the minds of the apostles. It cannot be doubted that he "blasphemed" to the uttermost "that worthy name" through which they had proclaimed salvation; and we know very well that there was nothing which Saul, at least, could less endure than such blasphemy. He felt that further argument was useless with such a man; and that it became him rather to vindicate the power of that Lord whom he had vilified, by invoking His judgment upon one who thus sought the murder of a soul. He felt the Divine Spirit move within him, and warrant the strong utterance to which he was impelled, as, fixing a look, stern and terrible, on the countenance of the impostor, he said, "O full of all subtilty and mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold *the hand of the Lord is upon thee*, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." And instantly the light wavered in his eyes, and a mist, deepening into thick darkness, shut it out altogether; and he became

"Dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon."

He had not a word more to say. Trembling and abashed, he who had the moment before held up so bold a front against Christ and his commissioned servants, now sought only to withdraw to hide in some obscure corner his burden and his shame; and to that end he blindly groped around in search of some pitying hand to lead him forth.

It is probable that Saul's own blinding on the way to Damascus suggested to him this form of judgment; and, as in that case, he limited it to "a season," a merciful restriction which has been too much overlooked, but which suggests the probability that Bar-jesus eventually recovered his sight; and we are not precluded from the hope that this correction may have been salutary to him. It is certain that it confirmed the mind of the Roman governor, who, having witnessed this signal miracle, "believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

Of this personage it remains to notice one curious matter. The title applied to designate the office of Sergius Paulus, in the authorized version, is "deputy," an indefinite term, probably chosen to avoid a difficulty, of which the translators were conscious. In the original Greek, however, the term is the definite one of "proconsul" (ἀνθύπατος), and the accuracy of this designation, as applied to the Roman governor of Cyprus, has been very strongly called in question on historical grounds. But the result of more exact and searching inquiry has only been, as usual, to establish the minute accuracy of the sacred writer, on evidence not to be shaken.

Augustus, in pursuance of his deep policy of quietly concentrating all real power in his own hands, made a division of the provinces between himself and the senate; conceding to the latter the quiet and peaceful ones, and retaining for himself those that required the presence of troops. He thus remained entire master of the army; but although the object of this stroke of policy was transparent, it does not seem to have been in any way opposed or censured. The administration of the senatorial provinces was given *every year*, by the senate, to officers who bore the title of proconsuls; while

Augustus selected the other governors, called proprætors, whom he appointed when and as long as he pleased. Now, we are reminded on the authority of Strabo and Dio Cassius, that in this division of the provinces the island of Cyprus was allotted to the emperor; and it is hence urged that the proper title of Sergius Paulus must have been proprætor, not proconsul, which Luke gives to him. But those who argued thus, forgot that the division first made underwent many changes. Such a change happened with respect to Cyprus. One of the authorities for the former statement (Dio Cassius) reports that subsequently the emperor exchanged Cyprus, together with Gallia Narbonensis, with the senate for Dalmatia which had before been theirs. In this state the province continued, and the proper title of its governor was that of proconsul, as Dio Cassius himself, indeed, in a further allusion to the subject, affirms. But to this it may be objected, that Dion is speaking of several Roman provinces, one of which was certainly governed by a proconsul; and that, in the absence of other authority, it might be concluded that, for the sake of brevity, he used one term for all, whether properly applied or not. But that Cyprus is not to be excepted, and that the title which Dio Cassius, as well as Luke, employed, really did belong to the Roman governor of this island, is now most conclusively established by the inscription on a Greek coin belonging to Cyprus itself, and

of the very age in which Sergius Paulus held the office in question. It was struck in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, whose head and name are on the face of it; and it was

in his reign that Saul and Barnabas visited Cyprus.[1] On this coin the same title of proconsul (ἀνθύπατος) is given to Cominius Proclus which is given by Luke to Sergius Paulus; and the coincidence which it shows is of that description which is sufficient of itself to establish the authenticity of the work in which the coincidence is found.

Forty-Seventh Week—Sixth Day.

"PAUL."—ACTS XIII. 9.

It is in recording the transaction with Bar-jesus that Luke first gives to the apostle of the Gentiles the name of "Paul," which he always afterwards uses. "Then Saul (who also is called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost."

The change of name, at this turning point of the history, which henceforth becomes almost exclusively the record of Paul's proceedings, has excited a good deal of speculation, and the opinions respecting it have been very various. The most prominent ascribes the change to the conversion of

[1] Our engraving is, with the author's permission, copied from *Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament*, by J. Y. AKERMAN, F.S.A. Lond. 1846. Mr Akerman states that it is "taken from an actual specimen, which, though not in the most perfect preservation, retains sufficient of its type and legend to answer our purpose." The same writer points to other monumental evidence bearing on the subject, namely: 1. Coins of Augustus and Livia, in which Aulus Plautius is named as proconsul of Cyprus: 2. An inscription of the time of Caligula, which so designates Aquius Scaura; and 3. An inscription of the reign of Claudius or Nero, in which this title is given to Quadratus. It is not beyond hope that a coin giving this title to Sergius Paulus may yet come to light. LARDNER (*Works*, i. 32-34., edit 1838), seems to have first, in England, called attention to this matter. But he says: "If I have done St Luke justice in this place it is chiefly owing to assistance from Cardinal Noris; and I think myself obliged to make a particular acknowledgment of it." Lardner gives the historical evidence, and he knew of the inscription respecting Aquius Scaura, which is given in Grüter. The subject was afterwards taken up by BISHOP MARSH, in his *Lectures*, Part v. Lect. 26, pp. 85, 86, where the numismatic evidence is indicated.

Sergius *Paulus*, whose name the apostle assumed in commemoration of so important an event. Although this notion has so ancient an upholder as Jerome, and one so recent as Olshausen, Christian feeling seems instinctively to recoil from it, as adverse to the character of Paul, who was not wont to glory after this sort in his spiritual victories. Besides, this would be an inversion of the natural order of things. He that teacheth is greater than he who is taught. In the relation in which they stood to each other, Paul was greater than Sergius Paulus; and although there have been examples of a servant assuming the name of his master, or a disciple that of his teacher, there is none of a teacher taking the name of his pupil. Still more objectionable, even, as it seems to us, to offensive puerility, is the notion of Chrysostom and others, that, seeing Simon Peter had two names, Saul was determined not to be, even in this respect, behind the very chiefest of the apostles. We apprehend that those who have studied the character of this great apostle, as a whole, will not hesitate to reject *both* these explanations with some feeling of disgust. Better in religious feeling, and more in unison with the apostle's character, but scarcely more satisfactory to the instructed judgment, is that which Augustine applies, with much rhetorical effect, in various parts of his writings, where he alludes to the literal meaning of the name Paulus (little), and contrasts Saul, the tall king, the proud, self-confident, persecutor of David, with Paul, the lowly and the penitent, who deliberately wished thus to indicate by his very name that he was "the *least* of the apostles," and "*less than the least* of all saints." This is really a pretty fancy, and the imagination entertains it with some pleasure.

Others, still dwelling on the signification of the name of Paul, imagine that it was bestowed up n him as a sort of nickname by the Gentiles on account of the lowness of his stature. That he was of small stature is a very general tradition in the Church; yet it is quite likely that this tradition itself had no better foundation than the meaning of the name. But not then, any more than now, was every one who bore

the name of Paul necessarily of small stature; for at the time in view, as now among ourselves, current names were applied among the Jews, the Grecks, and the Romans, with little regard to their literal signification. That, however, Paul was of small stature, whether his name had any relation to the fact or not, is thought by some to be indicated in 2 Cor. x. 10, where he speaks of his "bodily presence" as "weak." A better explanation is that which Doddridge gives after Beza, and which has since been fully enforced by Kuinoel. Doddridge says: "I think Beza's account of the matter most easy and probable—that having conversed hitherto chiefly with Jews and Syrians, to whom the name of Saul was familiar, and now coming among Romans and Grecks, they would naturally pronounce his name Paul; as one whose Hebrew name was Jochanan would be called by the Greeks and Latins Johannes, by the French Jean, by the Dutch Hans, and by the English John. Beza thinks that the family of the proconsul might be the first who addressed or spoke to him by the name of Paul."

The analogy between the names Saul and Paul is too remarkable not to suggest that it was adapted to the practice of the Romans of distinguishing foreigners, and especially Orientals, by softened forms of their names, or by names of their own most nearly resembling them in sound. Grotius has brought together several examples, as Jason for Jesus; Pollio for Hillel; Menelaus for Onias; Silvanus for Silas; Alcimus for Jachin, and others. But this practice exists among most nations, and among none more than our own, in proper names both of places and persons, and even in the signs of inns; arising manifestly from the craving of those to whom the original terms are unknown, to reduce them into current or significant forms. The instances that we call to mind, having originated with uneducated persons, are mostly of a ludicrous character, and are therefore somewhat unsuitable here; but we may yet point out a few for illustration:—Abraham Parker for Ibrahim Pasha; Leather Rollin for Ledru Rollin, as recorded in the newspapers some years

ago; Billy Ruffian for Bellerophon; Andrew Mackay for Andromache, and other nautical corruptions of names of ships; nor without significant application to the subject are such instances in the signs of inns, as Bull and Gate and Bull and Mouth, for Boulogne Gate and Boulogne Mouth (mouth of Boulogne harbour); Bag of Nails for Bacchanals; Cat and Wheel, for Catharine Wheel; and the like.[1]

But we return to the extract from Doddridge, to remark that the observation with which it closes, that Paul *first* heard himself so called by the family of Sergius Paulus, is scarcely tenable; for Tarsus where Paul was born and reared, was as much a Gentile city as Paphos, and the same reasons existed at the former place as at the latter for the name being imposed.

We have repeatedly alluded to the fact that the Jews residing in foreign parts had two names, one Jewish, and the other Greek or Roman. Indeed, this was the practice to a considerable extent even in Palestine itself—at least in Galilee, where the population was of a mixed character. It is therefore likely, almost to certainty, that Saul, being a native of Tarsus, from the first had two names. Saul was, as we know, his Hebrew name; and that Paul was the other is rendered probable, not only by the fact of its being the one now brought forward, but by its resemblance to that of Saul, and by the fact that his being a born citizen of Rome would probably be indicated by his Gentile name being Roman rather than Greek. Indeed, that the name of Saul does from this point altogether disappear from history —that the apostle calls himself Paul exclusively throughout his Epistles, and that Peter, in the only place where he mentions him, calls him by the same name—would together strongly intimate that this name was not now first assumed.

We are, upon the whole, then, led to conclude that the apostle had always borne the two names of Saul and Paul.

[1] As respects this species of corruption *in signs*, there is much curious information in BRAND'S *Popular Antiquities*, edited by Sir Henry Ellis, ii. 351-358; Bohn, Lond. 1849.

Hitherto the first name only has been used, as the historian has chiefly had to relate his proceedings in connection with Jews. But now, finding himself called Paul by the people about the proconsular court, and being aware that henceforth his intercourse would mainly be with persons who would distinguish him by that name, he thinks it proper to sink his Jewish designation, and adhere to the one which already belonged to him, by which he would hereafter be best known, and which suited well with the career, as the apostle of the Gentiles, which he had now efficiently commenced.

A recent writer[1] has well remarked, that "the adoption of a Gentile name is so far from being alien to the spirit of a Jewish family, that a similar practice may be traced through all the periods of Hebrew history.

"Beginning with the Persian epoch, we find such names as Nehemiah, Schammai, Belteshazzar, which betray an Oriental origin, and show that Jewish appellatives followed the growth of the living language. In the Greek period we encounter the names of Philip,[2] and his son Alexander,[3] and of Alexander's successors, Antiochus, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, Antipater;[4] the names of Greek philosophers, such as Zeno and Epicurus;[5] even Greek mythological names, such as Jason and Menelaus.[6] Some of these names will be recognised as occurring in the New Testament itself. When we mention Roman names adopted by the Jews, the coincidence is still more striking. Crispus,[7] Justus,[8] Niger,[9] are found in Josephus,[10] as well as in the Acts. Drusilla and Priscilla

[1] Howson, in *Life and Writings of St Paul*, quoting Zunz's *Namen der Juden* (Names of the Jews), Leipsig, 1837, a work we have not ourselves seen.

[2] Matt. x. 3. Acts vi. 5; xxi. 8. Josephus *Antiq.*, xiv. 10, 22.

[3] Acts xix. 33, 34. See 2 Tim. iv. 14.

[4] 1 Macc. xii. 16; xvi. 11. 2 Macc. iv. 29. Joseph. *Antiq.*, xiv. 10.

[5] Zunz adduces these names from the Mishna and the Berenice inscription.

[6] *Jason*, Joseph. *Antiq.*, xii. 10, 6; perhaps Acts xvii. 5-9. Rom. xvi. 21. *Menelaus*, Joseph. *Antiq.*, xii. 5, 1. See 2 Macc. iv. 5.

[7] Acts xviii. 8. [8] Acts i. 23. [9] Acts xiii. 1.

[10] Joseph. *Vit.*, 68, 65; B. J. iv. 6, 1. Compare 1 Cor. i. 14. Acts xviii. 7. Col. iv. 11.

might have been Roman matrons. The Aquila of St Paul is the counterpart of the Apella of Horace.[1] Nor need we end our survey of the Jewish names with the early Roman empire; for, passing by the destruction of Jerusalem, we see Jews in the earlier part of the middle ages calling themselves Basil, Leo, Theodosius, Sophia, and, in the latter part, Albert, Crispin, Denys."

To this we may add, that the same process is still in operation. Among the familiar names of Jews in London, there are numbers which indicate the countries from which the families they belong to came—Spanish and Portuguese, as De Castro, Garcia, Lopes, Mendoza; Italian, as Montefiore; German, as Herschell, Rothschild, Goldsmid; besides a number of Polish names ending in *ski*. English names are as yet few, or, being English, we do not well distinguish them as belonging to Jews. Davis is, however, a very common name among them.

Forty-Seventh Week—Seventh Day.

MARK.—ACTS XV. 37.

The labours of Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus seem to have terminated at Paphos. From that place they embarked for the near coast of Pamphylia, the province lying west of Paul's native Cilicia. On reaching the coast the vessel probably sailed up the river Cestius, and landed its passengers at the city of Perga, seven miles from the coast, to which the river was then navigable. Of Perga little is known, but there was a noted temple to Diana upon an eminence, and the city celebrated a great annual festival in honour of the goddess. The site, which is very beautiful, is now marked only by some Grecian ruins of walls and towers, columns and cornices, a

[1] Hor. 1 *Sat.*, v. 100. Priscilla appears under the abbreviated form of Prisca. 2 Tim. iv. 19.

fine theatre and a stadium, a broken aqueduct, and sundry scattered tombs. The sole inhabitants are the shepherds who encamp with their flocks among the ruins.

The apostolic party made, however, no stay in this place—perhaps waiting just long enough to settle their route, unless this had been previously indicated by Divine authority. Paul had already preached the gospel in Cilicia, and in the districts east thereof. It seems to have been now his desire to make the glad tidings known in the districts west and northwest of Cilicia, as he knew there were in those parts many settlements of Jews in important Gentile cities. It was probably in the consideration of this matter that John Mark declined to go any farther; at all events, it was at Perga that he parted company from his uncle Barnabas and from Paul, and hastened back to Jerusalem. Whether he did this with the consent or approbation of Barnabas is not clear; but it is certain that Paul highly disapproved of the step, and regarded it with considerable displeasure. We may therefore conclude that Mark was in the wrong, or at least, that he had no motive for the separation, which Paul considered adequate. It is quite possible that he entertained some scruple at receiving idolatrous Gentiles into the Christian Church, or was dismayed by the dangers and difficulties of the attempt. Perhaps the dangers of the way, in the proposed inland journey, disheartened a young man who had not before been from home. The lawless and predatory character of the tribes inhabiting the highlands separating the plains of this coast from the interior table land, was notorious in ancient times; and there was no route Paul ever followed which more than this abounded in those "perils of robbers," of which he speaks in one of his epistles. (2 Cor. xi. 26). It may be, however, that this step of Mark was taken from a desire to rejoin Peter, whose convert he probably was, and in whose company he appears to have taken great delight; for he may have heard or supposed that Peter had by this time returned to Jerusalem, it being known that Herod-Agrippa was now dead. As good as any of these suppositions is this

—that the young man was home-sick, and longed sore after his mother's house. It would seem that his mother Mary was a widow, and probably had early become such, so that Mark had been reared up in his own nest, under his mother's wing. Probably he was an only son, even her only child. Now, we all know what kind of character is usually formed under such bringing-up. A mother-bred youth, especially if the only child of that mother, and she a widow, usually receives such hot-house culture, as badly fits him to endure the sharp air and gusty winds of practical life. The *hardening* of such a character is the most distressing moral process to which life is subject. Tender to touch as the mimosa; morbidly sensitive to every influence from without; even the kindness of *men* seems rough, while neglect wounds and unkindness kills. Apt to see offence where love is meant; mortified to be no longer the first object of thought and solicitude to all around; such a young man in his *first* adventure from home, cannot possibly find any society, in which his self-esteem will not be deeply wounded. An earnest craving for home arises, and that absence from it which a hardier character sustains with comparative ease, soon becomes intolerable.

We take this to have been very nearly the case of Mark; and we can conceive that, while in this frame of mind, the society of his earnest seniors, even though one of them was his uncle, became distasteful to him. We cannot well answer respecting Barnabas, but of Paul we know that in the midst of his generous tenderness of heart, he felt it his duty to enforce upon those who were or were to be ministers of the gospel, the necessity to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," a duty which, as practically enforced in daily life upon a young man in this position, was likely to be at first exceedingly unpalatable.

Notwithstanding this weakness, Mark remained sound at the core; and when Paul and Barnabas were about to set out upon their second missionary journey from Antioch, Mark was willing to accompany them. His uncle was quite

ready to take him; but Paul had not the same confidence in his steadiness, and, mindful of the probably serious inconvenience which his previous desertion had occasioned, refused his company. The result was a very painful misunderstanding between him and Barnabas, and the rupture of their plan of co-operative labour. Barnabas chose to part with Paul rather than with his nephew, and took him with himself, leaving Paul to pursue his own course with Silas.

It was probably from his steady and faithful conduct during this journey with his uncle, that Paul, who must have heard of it, restored him to his good opinion, and admitted him to his friendship. It appears that he was with Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome,[1] and, when the Epistle to the Colossians was written, was about to undertake a journey to Colosse for him. He there speaks of Mark as "a fellow-worker unto the kingdom of God," and "a comfort" to himself; and in his latest letter, written not long before his death, he asks Timothy to bring Mark to Rome with him, being, as he says, "profitable to me for the ministry."[2]

Mark seems, however, to have more generally laboured in the society of Peter, who calls him his son.[3] It is clear that he was with Peter when this was written; and the general ecclesiastical tradition is, that he was the companion of his travels and acted as his amanuensis. Indeed, it is generally understood that the Gospel which bears Mark's name was written under Peter's superintendence, and may be essentially regarded as Peter's Gospel.

It is said that Mark was sent by Peter into Egypt, to plant Christianity in that region. Here, having his residence chiefly at Alexandria, he laboured with such diligence and success that a flourishing Christian church was ere long established; and the evangelist then extended his labours into Lybia, and still farther west, returning always to Alexandria. Certain it is that the Christian church in Egypt has always regarded St Mark as its founder.

It is stated by the ecclesiastical historians, that Mark

[1] Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 11. [3] 1 Pet. v. 13.

survived both Peter and Paul until the eighth year of Nero's reign, when the populace, during the excitement of the feast of Serapis, broke into the church during the time of divine worship, and binding Mark's feet with cords, dragged him through the streets, and at night-fall thrust him, still alive, into prison. During the night he was comforted and sustained by a divine vision. But next morning the mob drew him forth, and again dragged him about, till the flesh being torn off his bones, and all the blood in his body spent, he rendered up his soul to God. His remains were then burnt; but the Christians gathered up the ashes and the charred bones, and decently deposited them at the spot where he used to preach.

Mark is, as to his person, described as of a strong and healthful frame, in a body of middle size and stature. His head was bald, but his grey beard ample. His eyes were noted for their gentle and amiable expression, while his reverted eyebrows and lengthened nose gave him a somewhat peculiar aspect. The further intimation that his gait was quick and his movements sudden and rapid, agrees well enough with the kind of temperament which the description of his person indicates.

Forty-Eighth Week—First Day.

PERSECUTIONS.—2 TIM. III. 10-12; 2 COR. XI. 23-29.

WHEN, towards the close of his career, Paul is writing to Timothy, he makes a deeply interesting allusion to the circumstances which now engage our attention. "Thou hast fully known," he says to that beloved disciple, "my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came upon me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra: what persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

Here the apostle alludes to afflictions and persecutions with which the history makes us acquainted; but these, even all that are written, though enough is written for our profit, form but a part of the trials of his entire career, of which Timothy knew more than we shall ever in this world know. We have, however, an abridgment of his life, written by his own hand, and what a record of suffering and trial it is! Some of the particulars to which he refers we can trace, but many of them we do not recognise among the recorded facts of his history. "Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool: I am more. In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are

without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"[1] And this terrible catalogue of sufferings was written, it will be observed, during that long residence at Ephesus, recorded in the nineteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul had hardly completed two-thirds of his course, and he had still ten years to labour—that is, to suffer, in his Master's cause. Thus largely had the Lord fulfilled the promise made at his call to his great work: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."[2]

And was this vocation of suffering peculiar to Paul and to the times in which he lived? Let this question be answered by another: "Then is the offence of the cross ceased?" It is to preclude this idea that the apostle adds, "Yea, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Doubtless, in thus speaking to Timothy, he had a leading reference to the then present time, and meant to impress upon him that he was not to expect exemption from the like sufferings. But that he did not limit his meaning to this application, is clear from the exceedingly general terms in which the declaration is made: "All;" all that do what? Not merely all who, like himself, go forth into the active warfare against "principalities and powers" for Christ's sake, but all who will do what every sincere Christian must do in all ages—"all who will live godly in Christ Jesus." Conformable to this is the intimation which Paul and Barnabas made to the converts generally, as they returned upon their former steps in this very journey: "exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must *through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*"[3] Here again is an object and aim common to all believers in every age. Our Lord's own declarations are entirely to the same purport.

The thing is, indeed, plain and inevitable as a matter of declaration; and if it were not of declaration, it might be made clear by invincible reasoning. We know that "what-

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 23-29. [2] Acts ix. 16. [3] Acts xiv. 22.

ever is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world."[1] These are the things the carnal mind seeks after and rests on. But "the carnal mind is enmity against God;"[2] and necessarily, "the friendship of the world is enmity with God."[3] He, therefore, who takes up his cross to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; he who "will live godly in Christ Jesus," does, by that act and purpose, turn his back upon the world, and renounce that friendship which is at enmity with God. The world will then be affronted, and its hostility roused. In some ages and countries it will be shown after this manner; and in other ages and countries, after that; but shown it will be, in one form or another. If our religion be of that neutral tint that rouses not the enmity of the world; if the world cannot, from our walk and conversation, take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, then indeed we may escape this; but woe unto us, if we *so* escape! And let us look well to ourselves if our religion be of that sort which the world regards with no distaste, which does not provoke its hostility, which is compatible with the retention of its friendship.

In this age and country we have not now to expect the lash, the rack, the faggot, or the sword; but it is not the less true that those who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. There is the alienation of relatives and friends, there is the forfeiture of many social advantages, there is exclusion from the society they are fitted to adorn and improve. There is the quiet neglect, the cold shrug, the contemptuous sneer, the derisive laugh, the unworthy depreciation. There is the distress of witnessing the brightest, or at least most popular intellects of the age, employed in systematically or habitually holding up all really serious religion to contempt and scorn, as so much cant and hypocrisy, swindle, or foolishness.

All this, however, was to be expected. These, and things like these, form the burden of that cross which our Master

[1] 1 John ii. 16. [2] Rom. viii. 7. [3] James iv. 4.

calls us to take up and bear after Him. Indeed, if our religion be of that kind which can bear the eye of man and escape his contumely, it is questionable how far it will bear the eye of God.

There is, no doubt, less of this persecution now than formerly. Religion is a more comfortable thing. The world seems to hate it less intensely, and even, to a large extent, regards it as something decent and creditable. How is this? Has the world become less worldly? Has its enmity to the things of God abated? Or is it that the church has become more worldly? Has it kept out of the world's sight, and even out of its own sight, those holy roughnesses on its fair but earnest face, at which the world took most offence? We tremble to press too closely for an answer, and prefer to offer the words of a wise and eloquent preacher, which bear very distinctly on this question. "If you share the feelings with which St Paul has inspired me, and which continue to grow by the renewed study of his life; if you have been penetrated with veneration, with gratitude, and with love, for the apostle of the Gentiles, I rejoice at this, but only on one condition: it is, that you do not stop there; it is, that you will seek for yourselves that which you praise in him; it is, that you will not dispense with the duty of imitation for the pleasure of admiration; it is, in short, that you will not deceive yourselves by substituting this fine but fruitless word, 'Be *admirers* of me,' for that earnest and fruitful one ventured on by the holy apostle, 'Be ye *followers* of me.' . . . . .

"If, indeed, your tastes are for worldly things, for worldly glory, for worldly fortune, for worldly satisfaction, or even for worldly affections, do not trust yourselves to the example of St Paul and to the application which I make of it. It is not without significance, that while hearing me speak of imitating him, you perceive within yourselves an unseen hand hastening to protect your money, your comforts, your human renown, and your idolatrous attachments. This movement has the promptness of an instinct, but it is also an intelligent one. All this hoard of selfish pleasure, you

risk its loss by engaging to imitate St Paul. The sacrifice was demanded of him, and he made it; it may be required of you also, and it will be the more painful in proportion to that which is sacrificed. Ah! if Jesus Christ were to require you to exchange the general good opinion which you enjoy, for the humiliations of his life and the opprobrium of his death; the riches which abound in your houses, for the abasement and destitution of his poverty—mark that, *his poverty;* that comfortable life, that delicate bringing-up, all those desires gratified as soon as formed, for the privations, the disquietudes, the sufferings of the body; the intense solicitude, or the sweet society of those dearly loved ones, who are the delight of your eyes and the joy of your heart, for separation, bereavement, and bitter solitude. Do you think within yourselves that you would be ready to bear the loss of all things, so that you may win Christ? If you can say with St Peter, 'I am ready to go with thee both to prison and to death,' it only remains that you examine yourselves, lest you should be deceiving yourselves. But if you inwardly answer, 'This is a hard saying, who can bear it?' all is said. I do not here decide whether your soul can be saved such as you are; but it is very certain, such as you are you will not be a follower of St Paul."[1]

Forty-Eighth Week—Second Day.

ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA—ACTS. XIII 14.

From Perga in Pamphylia, Paul and Barnabas proceeded across the mountains to Antioch, in the province of Pisidia, which lay between Pamphylia on the south and Phrygia on the north. Whether, in this journey of eighty-five miles into the interior, Paul met with any of those perilous encounters with robbers, to which he refers in one of his epistles, is not

[1] *St Paul: Five Discourses.* By A. Monod.

stated; but the nature of the road renders it abundantly probable that he did. This Antioch was one of the towns of the same name founded by Seleucus Nicanor, and the name of the province in which it stood was usually added, to distinguish it from the others, and particularly from the great metropolitan Antioch. When it came into the hands of the Romans it was made the seat of a proconsular government, and endowed with the privileges of a *colonia juris Italici*, which included exemption from taxes, and a municipal constitution similar to that of the Italian towns. These privileges were calculated to attract a Jewish population; and, accordingly, Paul and Barnabas find here a synagogue of Jews, and a considerable body of proselytes to Judaism. Until lately, Antioch in Pisidia was supposed to have occupied the site of the present Ak-Shehr, or White City of the Turks; but the researches of the Rev. F. V. J. Arundell in 1833, confirmed by the still more recent observations of Mr Hamilton,[1] have determined its site to the vicinity of the town of Yalobatch. There are here remains of several temples and churches, besides a theatre, and a magnificent aqueduct, twenty-one arches of which still remain entire. Several Latin inscriptions were copied by Mr Hamilton, in one of which the only words not entirely effaced were ANTIOCHIÆ CÆSARI, which is important for the identification of the place, as it is stated by Pliny that Antioch in Pisidia was also called Cæsarea.

On the Sabbath after their arrival, the two apostles "went into the synagogue, and sat down." The latter intimation is emphatic, if, as Lightfoot assures us, their sitting down on entering was sufficient to apprise the elders of the synagogue that the strangers were persons accustomed to teach or preach. Accordingly, "after the reading of the law and the prophets," the rulers of the synagogue courteously caused it to be intimated to them that they might then deliver any "word of exhortation" to the congregation, if they desired to do so.

[1] ARUNDELL, *Discoveries in Asia Minor*, 1834; HAMILTON, *Researches in Asia Minor*, 1842

Here it is well to observe, that they were not asked to *read*, as our Saviour had been asked in the synagogue of Nazareth —it being unusual for any one to be called upon to read in any synagogue but that to which he belonged. Accordingly, although our Lord *taught* in many synagogues, He is not recorded to have *read* in any one but that of Nazareth. The "word of exhortation," or sermon, which the apostles were invited to deliver, must not be confounded with the exposition of Scripture which our Saviour gave on the occasion indicated. It was a distinct matter, after the regular service of the day had been completed. A discourse by some competent person then usually, but not always, or necessarily, followed. There was no regular officer on whom the duty of delivering this discourse devolved, but any qualified person who happened to be present was asked, or offered himself, to address the congregation.

As the Jews resident in foreign parts had less abundant opportunities of obtaining instruction in this shape than those in Judea, they were, doubtless, all the more anxious to take advantage of such occasions as offered. Hence the present application to Paul and Barnabas, who had intimated, by sitting down when they entered, that they were accustomed to teach in the synagogues.

It was Paul, not Barnabas, who responded to the call. He stood up, and after his usual manner by "beckoning with his hand," and by corresponding words, invited attention to his discourse, "Men of Israel, and ye who fear God, give audience." Then followed a well-arranged and convincing discourse—one of the longest reported in the Acts—in which he gradually led his hearers through the Old Testament Scriptures to the promise of a Messiah, which promise he declared to be fulfilled in the person of Jesus, as evinced by the fact that He had been raised from the dead Through Him, he now, therefore, was enabled to preach "the forgiveness of sins; and that by Him *all that believe* are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." This was truly vital doctrine, and it made a

profound impression upon those who now heard it for the first time; and many of them, on leaving the synagogue, pressed around the apostles, and begged them that "these words"—meaning the same matter—might again be preached to them, or rather, more fully opened to them, on the next Sabbath-day. And when the mass of the congregation had dispersed, there were still many, both Jews and proselytes, more strongly than the others smitten by the sword of the Spirit, who walked along with or near the apostles, as if reluctant to part from them, in their hunger for spiritual nourishment. But these were at length kindly dismissed, with the injunction that, till the next meeting, they should sedulously cherish the good impressions they had already received.

Doubtless many of those who had been thus impressed invited Paul and Barnabas to their houses during the ensuing week, and thus enabled them to declare the history and doctrine of Christ more fully to these inquirers and their circles of friends. By these and other means was the intensity of the first excitement deepened. It even extended to the Gentiles, the nature of whose interest in such matters has been lately explained; and many of them were found among the crowd that flocked to the Jewish synagogue on the next Sabbath-day. The stricter Jews beheld this concourse of Gentiles with an evil eye; and the eager curiosity which they manifested, as in a matter with which they had some concern, alarmed their pride and excited their displeasure; the rather when they called to mind that Paul had in fact, on the last Sabbath, opened his commission in very wide terms, and had plainly enough intimated the cessation of their exclusive privileges, and the abolition of their ritual system. Influenced by such feelings, these persons clamorously opposed Paul in his present discourse, "contradicting" his main positions, and "blaspheming" that blessed Name which he declared to be above every name that is named.

The contrast between the blind rage of the Jews and the earnest solicitude of the Gentiles on this occasion, forcibly struck the apostles. They felt that the time for resolute

decision, for openly unfurling the banner of the cross before the eyes of the Gentiles, was fully come. They therefore silenced the clamour with these grave and solemn words: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life—Lo, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES!" Nor would they let it be supposed for an instant that this was a mere caprice or ebullition of wrath on their part. They produce their authority: "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

This bold declaration seems to have struck the Jews dumb with amazement. But the Gentiles were very glad. And they had reason, for from this time forward Paul held forth the gospel freely and openly to Gentile audiences, whenever the opportunity offered or was found, although the Jews engaged a full share of his labours and hopes in the various places to which he came. Now, at Antioch, he and Barnabas ceased to present themselves to the notice of the Jews, but prosecuted their evangelical labours exclusively among the Gentiles, in public places and private houses. Thus some time was occupied; so that the word of the Lord was fully preached with great success throughout all that neighbourhood.

The Jews could not endure this; and therefore "stirred up the devout and honourable women"—probably proselytes, whose husbands were men of consequence in the city—to use their influence with "the chief men," to procure the expulsion of the apostles. They succeeded, and Paul and Barnabas left the city, shaking off the dust of their feet for a testimony against it.

Forty-Eighth Week—Third Day.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA.—ACTS XIV.

From Antioch in Pisidia, the apostolic travellers turned their steps eastward in the direction of Lycaonia, and traversing the barren uplands, at length, after a journey of ninety-three miles, descended into the plain in which Iconium, the capital of that province, stood. Here mountains, whose summits lie in the region of perpetual snow, arise on every side, except towards the east, where a plain as flat as the desert of Arabia extends far beyond the reach of the eye. The town was pleasantly situated, in a delightful climate, and in the midst of luxuriant gardens and fertile fields. Iconium was not, however, a city of great ancient importance, or of any historical renown. It rose to greatness in far later times, when, under the name of Konieh, it became the residence of the Seljukian sultans of Roum, who rebuilt the walls, and enriched it with numerous public buildings—reigning here in great splendour, till their power was broken by the irruptions of Genghiz Khan and his grandson Hulokoo. Since the reign of Bayazid, it has belonged to the Osmanli Turks, and under them it flourished for a long time as the capital of the extensive province of Karamania, and the seat of one of the most powerful pashalics of the empire. But in recent times it has suffered much decline, and shows an aspect of decay and desolation. The city has indeed still an imposing appearance, from the number and size of its mosques, colleges, and other public buildings. But these stately evidences of Seljukian splendour are seen, on the nearer view, to be crumbling into ruins, while the actual dwellings of a large proportion of the inhabitants consist of a number of small buildings of sun-dried bricks, and wretched hovels thatched with reeds. The wall of the city, which is thirty feet high, with a circumference of nearly three miles, has eighty gates, and is strengthened by upwards of a hundred square towers,

which are now, however, suffered to moulder away, without any attempt to arrest their ruin. Although so much declined, Konieh is still one of the most considerable inland cities of Asia Minor, the population rather exceeding 40,000 souls. Of Greek and Roman Iconium there are scarcely any traces, unless in the inscribed stones and fragments of sculptures which are built into the walls.

At Iconium nearly the same course was taken by Paul and Barnabas, and nearly the same incidents occurred, as at Antioch. They began their labours in the Jewish synagogue; and their preaching was so blessed of the Spirit that "a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed." The Jews who did not believe, however, now excited the minds of the Gentiles against the converts; and it was natural enough that attention should be paid to their calumnies, since the Jews might be supposed to know something of the designs and objects of a religion which was connected with and grew out of their own. The result was the formation of two parties in the city, the one for and the other against the apostles and their doctrine. The post had thus become one of danger; but reluctant to quit it, seeing that so much good might be done, and that they were greatly sustained by the miracles which attested the truth of their mission, the apostles lingered for some time, and only retired when they had certain information of a conspiracy being laid to destroy them.

They then proceeded to "Lystra and Derbe"—Lystra first, and Derbe after. The sites of both these places are unknown; but Colonel Leake[1] was inclined to think that "the vestiges of Lystra may be sought for, with the greatest probability of success, at or near Wiran Khatoun, or Khatoun Serai, about thirty miles to the southward of Iconium." Mr Hamilton, however, prefers to find Lystra in a site of extensive ruins, called by the Turks Bin-bir-Kilissek (a thousand and one churches), at the northern base and side of a remarkable insulated mountain called Kara-Dagh (Black Mountain). This is about forty-three miles south-east of Konieh. Some

[1] *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor*, p. 102. London: 1824.

fifteen miles east of this is a site called Devli, and from the resemblance of names, together with the presence of some ruins, Mr Hamilton thinks this may have been Derbe.[1]

Lystra is the first place the apostles visit, at which we hear nothing of resident Jews, or of any synagogue. The transactions are with the heathen, until certain Jews come from Antioch and Iconium, purposely to stir up the people against them. There were probably, however, some Jews, if not many; and it is doubtless because the principal transaction commemorated in this visit was with the Gentiles, that the presence of Jews is not conspicuously denoted.

Here Paul and Barnabas seem to have addressed the people in the places of public resort, or in those open spaces where a fit audience could be found or gathered. On one of these occasions Paul perceived among the auditors a poor cripple listening with eager attention to his discourse. This man had an infirmity of the feet from his birth, and had never walked. Such persons are usually well known in the localities which they inhabit, and anything that happened to him would attract the more attention. Paul, therefore, feeling probably that it was desirable some signal and intelligible miracle should in such a place as this avouch the authority—not of men, nor by men—by which they spoke, and being also moved with compassion for this poor creature's state, looked steadfastly upon him, and perceiving by his own spiritual gifts, or by the answering look of the cripple's eyes, or by both, that "he had faith to be healed," he called to him with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet!" and instantly the man sprung to his feet, and leaped, and walked. This miracle is parallel to those of the same kind wrought by our Lord himself, and to the one wrought by Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate; and the remarks which were offered with respect to them apply equally here.

The prodigy attracted fully as much attention as might have been expected; but the admiration it excited lead to a result upon which the apostles had not calculated. It

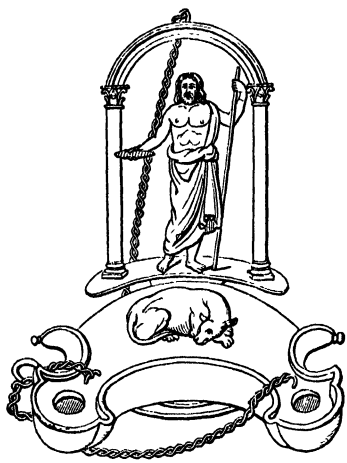
[1] Journal of Geographical Society, viii. pt. ii. 154.

centred in their own persons; and it may be that some little occasion was given for this, by the remarkable fact that Paul, for some reason or other, or, perhaps, without any particular reason, omitted the usual formula, expressive of agency merely, as, "In the name of Jesus;" "Jesus maketh thee whole." If this was an oversight, they were soon painfully reminded of it. For the people, in the first burst of their enthusiasm, took them to be gods visiting the earth in human form: "they lifted up their voices, saying, *in the speech of Lycaonia*, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." By this pointed reference to the speech or dialect of Lycaonia, it seems probable that in these rude outlying districts a kind of low Greek was spoken, greatly changed by pronunciation, and by the intermixture of old native words, from the more correct and polished language of the large cities nearer the coast.

The notion that these wonder-workers were gods—that they were gods who had taken upon them human shape in visiting the earth—was one that would be naturally enough suggested under the older and more credulous forms of Gentile belief, which still held their ground in remote quarters like this, though nearly obsolete in the more refined and sceptical circles of heathendom. That the gods did often visit earth in the likeness of men was a cherished belief, and indeed the popular mythology abounded in instances of such visits, not all of them, nor, indeed, many of them, creditable to the gods themselves.

Taking Paul and Barnabas to be gods, the Lystrians soon settled what gods they were. Jupiter (Zeus) was the tutelary god of their city, and they had a temple, or at least a statue, dedicated to him. It was natural, therefore, to suppose that one of the two was Jupiter, who had come to visit and bless his own place. It might be imagined that since Paul was the more active and prominent person of the two, and since it was at his word the cripple had been healed, they would have selected him for Jupiter. They did, however, fix on Barnabas, perhaps because he was of large athletic person

and venerable presence, answering better than Paul to that idea of "the father of gods and men," which the sculptors had embodied in marble. The curious cut here introduced



represents Zeus under that aspect—as tutelary or guardian deity (*Jupiter Custos*)—in which he was worshipped by the Lystrians. Their image of him, to which they found a resemblance in Barnabas, must have been like this. Having concluded that Barnabas was Jupiter, it was easy to conceive that Paul was "Mercurius," the Hermes of the Greeks. And the reason is, in this instance, given. It is, "Because he was the chief speaker;" and probably, also, because, as Mercury was the messenger of the gods, and particularly of Jupiter, it might be naturally concluded that it was he who now appeared in his company. In fact, notwithstanding the active prominence of his friend, these Lystrians seem throughout to assign the superior place to Barnabas, probably not only on account of Paul's comparatively insignificant bodily presence, but from conceiving that he, as Mercury, was acting and speaking instrumentally for Jupiter, as it was often his voca-

tion to do. Mercury, as every one knows, was, in his higher quality, the god of eloquence; and, in his lower quality, was the frequent companion of Jupiter in his rambles upon the earth. It is in that capacity, as the attendant or messenger of Jove, that he is represented in the fine intaglio from which the cut we introduce is taken.

When the news had spread that Zeus and Hermes had honoured Lystra with their presence, the priest of Jupiter hastened to take his part in the proceedings. Soon he and his attendants appeared, with "oxen and garlands," to lead the sacrificial devotions of the people to the descended gods. The use of the "garlands" has been considered uncertain. From the sculptures, however, it appears that on the occasion of a sacrifice, the party of sacrificers were usually crowned with garlands, and the altar hung with festoons of flowers, and that sometimes the victims also were thus decorated. In the sculpture at Rome, which furnished to Raphael that correct idea of an ancient sacrifice, which he has embodied in his well-known cartoon of the event before us, these particulars are represented, except that, instead of garlands, the victim (or rather, one of the two) has the head decorated with a string of beads or jewels. The garlands were composed of plants supposed to be appropriate or acceptable to the god to whom the sacrifice was made.

No sooner did the apostles perceive the object of these proceedings, than they rent their clothes, and rushed, horror-struck, among the people, imploring them to desist. "Men," said they—or rather Paul, for he was manifestly the speaker —"Men,[1] why do ye these things? We also are men of like

[1] So in the original, which is certainly better than the "Sirs" of the Authorized Version.

passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God," and so on, in a short discourse, which is probably an epitome of a more ample address; although, indeed, on such occasions, a few emphatic sentences are often more cogently impressive than a longer remonstrance. The people were reluctant to abandon a delusion so gratifying to themselves; and it was not without difficulty that Paul and Barnabas at length succeeded in averting the intended sacrifice.

A revulsion of feeling. for which we can readily account, then took place in the Lystrian mind. Men have always been apt to turn vindictively upon those on whose account they find that they have stultified themselves, and to treat as less than men those whom they have been ready to worship as gods.

It had at this time become known, at the Pisidian Antioch and at Iconium, *where* the apostles were to be found; and some Jews went from both places with the express object of stirring up the Lystrians against them. The apostles were, before and after, persecuted often by the Jews in the places to which they came; but this is the first instance of their being followed from one city to another, for the express purpose of persecution.

The disappointed Lystrians were in a frame of mind to listen to the calumnies of these Jews. They readily grasped at the opportunity of recovering their self-esteem by regarding themselves as the innocent victims of impostors. So strongly was their wrath kindled that they stoned Paul on the spot, and, dragging him through the streets, cast him forth, as one dead, beyond the city. The Jews would first have hurried him beyond the walls, and stoned him there, as they did Stephen; but these heathen stoned him in the city tumultuously, and then cast his body forth. These small characteristic differences are well entitled to our notice.

Stoning was not a regular punishment among the Gentiles, as among the Jews, but was sometimes the result of a tumultuary excitement, as it might be among ourselves. It was,

therefore, not performed with those precautions to ensure a fatal result which were observed among the Jews. In this case, it seems that Paul had not been killed, but only rendered insensible by some of the blows he had received. So, as the believers stood lamenting around his apparently dead body, he came to himself, and returned with them into the city. It would, however, have been unwise to make any longer stay in Lystra, and therefore he departed the next day with Barnabas. They proceeded to Derbe; and having preached the gospel there, they returned through all the towns they had visited in the outward journey, till they came to Perga in Pamphylia, where they had landed on their arrival from Cyprus. But now, purposing to return to Syria, they did not proceed down the river Cestrus, but went twelve miles across to Attalia the *seaport* of Perga, where they might reckon upon finding a ship bound for the Syrian coast. Here accordingly Paul and Barnabas embarked, and in due time reached Antioch the Great, thus completing their first grand missionary tour.

Forty-Eighth Week—Fourth Day.

THE COUNCIL.—ACTS XV. 1-29; GAL. II. 3.

It is stated that Paul and Barnabas now abode for a long time at Antioch with the disciples. This "long time" has been variously computed from five to eight years, during which we have no particular account of their proceedings, and which would seem, at the first view, to measure the period of their stay at Antioch. It is however certain that Paul made several journeys of which we have no direct narrative in the New Testament, and it is possible that some of these journeys are to be assigned to this interval. Thus, in his Epistle to the Romans (xv. 19), he states that he had preached the gospel as far as Illyricum; and in 2 Cor xi.

23–27 there is a long list of trials and persecutions, respecting many of which there is no distinct record, and which may possibly have occurred during these years.

Towards the close of this period, whatever its duration, began that contest with the Judaists by which Paul was afterwards so largely occupied. It commenced by the arrival at Antioch of certain christianized Pharisees from the church at Jerusalem. These persons expressed their astonishment and horror at the fact, that the initiatory rite of Judaism had not been imposed upon the Gentile converts, nor the observance of the ritual law exacted from them. They insisted that the observance of the Mosaic law was essential to justification before God, and assured the converts that without it they could not be saved. It might be supposed that the converts were strongly enough built up in the more liberal and more spiritual doctrine which they had received from Paul and Barnabas, to perceive the fallacy and danger of such views, and to refuse the proposed bondage with indignation. No doubt many or most of them did so; but it is clear that the minds of not a few were shaken, and cast into a state of uncertainty and doubt. We can well imagine the arguments they might use; and that they were plausible and seemingly strong, may be inferred from the fact, that at a later date Peter, and even Barnabas himself, gave way for a time to their views. They would argue, that seeing the laws of Moses were certainly from God, they must be in their nature unchangeable. They would maintain, that the religion of the Messiah was only a perfecting completion of Judaism, and was designed to carry out its principles according to the promises, and not to alter or destroy aught that had been divinely instituted; and that, therefore, the laxity in this respect, which Paul and Barnabas had sanctioned, was not only unauthorized but dangerous. The controversy which arose, on these matters, in the church at Antioch, produced such painful dissension, that it was at length deemed advisable that Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by some leading men in that church, should proceed to Jerusalem

in order to obtain a settlement of the matter from the apostles Paul himself tells us, in a memorable passage of his Epistle to the Galatians, that he went "by revelation,"—which seems to mean, that it had been divinely impressed upon him or communicated to him, that an authoritative determination of the question in this way had become essential to the well-being of the church. It remains, however, doubtful, whether the case was, that he had objected to this course until Divine intimation was given, or that the proposal originated with him in consequence of that "revelation." The latter appears the more probable.

In their way, the party from Antioch seem to have been attended and conducted from one place on to the next, by some of the Christian brethren of the towns to which they came, and by whom the tidings of the conversion of the Gentiles was received with "great joy."

Thus passing through Phœnicia and Samaria, they at length reached Jerusalem. James, Peter, and John were there; but whether they are named as being the only apostles then left in the city, or as the most prominent of these, is not clear. The statement that these three "seemed to be pillars," might appear somewhat in favour of the latter interpretation, were it not altogether unlikely that the bulk of the apostles, charged as they were with a mission to preach the gospel through the world, had remained for so long a period together at Jerusalem.

The apostles and brethren from Antioch were received with much Christian friendliness at Jerusalem, and the tidings they brought gave general satisfaction. When, however, the matter in dispute came to be explained, signs of division appeared. There were many still in Jerusalem, of the same class and the same mind with those who had raised so much disturbance at Antioch—and these, as the others had done, persisted that it was indeed needful to circumcise the converts, and to command them to keep the whole law of Moses.

This was the very matter in dispute; and the delegates were thus reminded that they had come to Jerusalem to have

it decided. Therefore "the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." This assembly is usually described in ecclesiastical history as the First "Council" of the Christian Church, held at Jerusalem in the year of our Lord 52.

After some time had passed in inquiry and debate, Peter arose to address the assembly. He spoke entirely in accordance with the views of Paul; and was heard with profound attention, as he appealed to the results of his own experience in the matter of Cornelius. Hence he solemnly recognised the purifying of the Gentiles by faith, confirmed by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and declared that he regarded it as a doubting of God's acts, and indeed a tempting of God, to impose upon them as a condition of salvation, the yoke of the Mosaic law. As no one attempted to reply to Peter's weighty words, Barnabas and Paul, in their turn, arose, and reported the results of their own remarkable experience to the same effect, appealing with great force to the miracles with which God had been pleased to aid and sanction their labours. James then arose; and the members of the assembly most opposed to concession, probably hung with special interest upon his words, in the expectation that from his position and manner of life, his views would be in accordance with their own. But it was far otherwise. He was not disposed to disregard the evidence which had been produced. He acknowledged that the admission of the Gentiles into the blessings and honours of the Messiah's kingdom, was in accordance with the purposes of God as declared by the prophets; and as it behoved them to be careful how they offered any obstruction to a great work which God had so visibly favoured, it did not seem to him expedient that they should impose upon "them who from among the Gentiles had turned to God," the obligations of the Mosaic covenant. It would, in his judgment, suffice to enjoin upon them nothing further than to abstain from "pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." All these were practices abominable to the

Jews, and would oppose an insurmountable barrier to any social approximation between Jewish and Gentile Christians. We are not here to look for any summary of Christian duty and obligation. We hear not of the worship of one God in Christ; of self-denial, of crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts; but, *besides known sins*, simply such practices are specified as would prevent the Jews from coalescing with the uncircumcised Gentiles so as to form one church with them. Thus, the proposals of one so highly respected by the Jews as James was, under the influence of that higher Spirit by which the apostolic counsels were, according to their Lord's promise, animated, were at once accepted by the assembly, and embodied in a decree drawn up in its name, and addressed to "the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia." This remarkable and interesting document seems to bear the mark of James' own hand in the form of salutation, "greeting" (χαίρειν), which occurs no where in the New Testament but here, and in the salutation of his own epistle.—James i. 1.

Another important matter was also brought to a decision. In order that the converted heathen might have a practical proof of their right to have their sanctification recognised without coming under the ceremonial observances, Paul had taken with him to Jerusalem a Gentile convert named Titus who had never been circumcised. The step was crowned with success; the Judaizing teachers at Jerusalem, by strongly insisting that Titus ought to be circumcised, brought the matter under the consideration of the apostles, and compelled them to some distinct decision on the matter. They declined to sanction such an imposition, and, evidently after due deliberation, freed Titus from all obligation to be circumcised.

Forty-Eighth Week—Fifth Day.

THE DECREE.—1 COR. VIII; X. 14-33; 2 COR. VI. 14-18.

We have already indicated the object of the apostolic decree, and we may now give attention to its details.

In this decree or epistle, the "pollutions of idols," are more explicitly indicated as "meat offered to idols." This is explained by the fact, that the Gentiles, after the sacrifices were concluded, and a portion of the consecrated victim had been assigned to the priest, used to hold a sacrificial feast in honour of the god, either in the temple or in private houses, and then ate the residue of the flesh. Some, either from avarice or poverty, salted or laid up the remnant for future use, and some even gave it to the butchers to sell for them in the shambles.

This flesh, as having been offered to idols, was in every form most abhorrent to the Jews; and they considered not only those who were present at such feasts, but those who ate of the flesh which had been offered, even though bought in the market, as infected by the idolatrous contagion. We thus see the foundation of the prohibition advised by James, and adopted by the council. Indeed, apart from any regard to the scruples of the Jews, the reasons why Christians should be forbidden to take any part in the heathen sacrificial feasts were very obvious, seeing that a sacrifice was not merely a ceremony, but a federal rite, by which the sacrifice, and the being to whom it was offered, were (so to speak) closely united.

The *extent* in which this prohibition was to be understood, seems to have been left open to some question. Understood in the strictest sense, it would have imposed on every one the difficult task of ascertaining what meat offered for sale in the open market had, and what had not been sacrificed to idols; for uncertainty on this point would have been

distressing to many tender consciences. Indeed, we know that this very question was brought under the consideration of St Paul, who was always careful to explain that religion consisted not in meats or drinks, and who above all things feared lest any thing besides the finished work of Christ should be taken as a ground of justification before God. He, therefore, taught that seeing an idol was a mere nonentity —"nothing in the world"—the meat or drink had not contracted any property from its consecration to an idolatrous purpose, and that, therefore, considered abstractly, no one was the worse for partaking of such meat or drink, or the better for abstaining. He, therefore, allowed the Corinthians, to whom his advice was directed, to eat freely whatever was sold in the shambles, without being careful to ascertain whether it had been offered to idols or not. In case, however, "a weak brother" should call their attention to the circumstance that it *had* been so offered, then it became their duty, for his sake, to abstain from it; for, whatever might be the question as to the meat itself, there could be no question that they should avoid that which might be a stumbling block to "them that are weak;" or by which the conscience of the weak brother might, on the one hand, be wounded, or, on the other, emboldened to his peril. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." This, it will be seen, is the very principle on which the prohibition was originally issued—the avoidance of grounds of offence between Jewish and Gentile Christians. The Corinthians seem, however, to have misapprehended and abused the liberty thus given. Having been told that an idol was nothing at all, and that the eating of meat offered to an idol was, therefore, in itself a matter of indifference, they chose to infer that all the circumstances which might be connected with such eating were also matter of indifference, and that they were consequently free to visit the heathen temples, which were often scenes of riot and debauchery, and to partake of the offerings, amid the praises which were sung to the heathen god. They

knew that the idol was nothing, and the praises nothing, but that the victuals were good things. This, however, was an actual participation in the idolatry going on; and such persons were of course regarded by the heathen as being themselves idolaters. Paul was, therefore, very careful to caution the Corinthians against idolatry, and to warn them that they could not be "partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils." Whether an act is to be taken as religious or not, depends in some measure on the circumstances of its performance. If one eats a wafer in his own room and alone, it signifies nothing; but if he eats it before a Romish altar, he thereby declares himself a member of the Church of Rome.

The prohibition of *blood* in general, and the Jewish notions relating to it in particular, we have already had sufficient occasion to explain and illustrate. The reasons for the original prohibition of the use of blood were, that in the blood lay the "life" of the animal; and that being, as such, consecrated to God on the altar, and typical of the most precious blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, it was to be kept apart from mean and common uses. The abstinence also served to keep up a distinction between the Jews and Gentiles; for the latter used the blood of animals freely. They ate it with the flesh, or carefully drew it from the part where the incision was made, to convert it into nourishment, either by mingling it with flour and oatmeal, and so drinking it in a liquid state, or by mixing and dressing it with other food, as is done by us in black puddings—which, indeed, were in use among the ancients. Virtually the old prohibition had expired; for blood had ceased to be typically sacred, seeing that sacrificial worship was abolished, and Christ had died. Yet it was for the time revived by this decree; for so long as the Jewish Christians retained their notions as to their continued liability to the ritual law, so long would the use of blood by the Gentile Christians prevent the union of the two, and, indeed, render it impossible that they should eat together. The restriction, doubtless, ceased with this condition of affairs, and there

is consequently no transgression in our own use of blood, whether in black puddings, or in underdone beef-steaks and legs of mutton. Indeed, we lately read in one of the morning papers, a letter from a physician, recommending the use of the blood of animals, in various preparations, as cheap and highly nutritive food, suitable for a time like this[1] when bread and meat are very dear.[2]

The prohibition of "things strangled" grows out of the former interdict. For animals caught in traps, or dying of any form of suffocation, have the blood retained in the carcass, and were, therefore, unfit for food under the previous rule, which allowed no meat to be eaten but such as had been so slaughtered as completely to discharge the blood. Thus if an animal had been taken in hunting, it became unfit for food, unless the hunter could reach it before it died, so as to slaughter it in the proper manner. The ancient Gentiles had, however, no objection to eat the flesh of animals slain without effusion of blood; they even preferred strangulation in some cases, under the notion that it made the flesh more tender. Birds, hares, rabbits, and other game, usually died of suffocation; and it has been shown that it was the practice of some nations not to butcher but strangle the victims.

The last of the interdicts, referring to the avoidance of fornication, has perplexed many, as mentioning a known sin among ceremonial observances, meant to be only temporary, and, perhaps, local. But fornication was scarcely regarded as a sin by the heathen. It was not contrary to any law they had, and was deemed a matter of indifference, and in some cases laudable. Several of their gods were worshipped with impure rites; and the festivals in their temples were celebrated with the most shameful extravagance of sensuality. The details are too shocking to be produced by a Christian

[1] Autumn of 1853.

[2] "Blood is a substance on which it is probable the digestive organs have but little assimilative power to exert in order to render it fit for the purposes of nutrition. Still, blood alone, like all other very concentrated nutrient matters, is very unwholesome."—Davis' *Manual of Hygiene.*

writer; but it is necessary to indicate the fact of this connection between idolatry and impurity, in order to explain the connection of ideas, which caused the prohibition of fornication to be placed beside the interdiction of attendance at the temple festivals of the idolaters. This connection was of old date in the history of idolatry; and had been memorably impressed upon the Jews by one of the most disastrous circumstances in their own history; for it was in order to allure them to fornication that the Midianites invited them to their sacrificial feasts; and the success of this diabolical conspiracy is written in blood in the annals of Israel.[1]

Since therefore fornication was so usual among the Gentiles; since it was accounted lawful, and was materially mixed up with their religion, and sanctioned by the example of the gods they worshipped—for the best of their gods would have been on earth the worst of men; and since such opinions and practices materially increased the abomination and hatred with which the Gentiles were regarded by the Jews, and formed a very great impediment to union with them—it was altogether necessary, on this peculiar and solemn occasion, to enjoin the observance of chastity upon the Gentile converts.

Forty-Eighth Week—Sixth Day.

THE VISIT TO JERUSALEM.—GALATIANS II. 1-10.

St Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, having related his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, and his subsequent labours in Syria and Cilicia, goes on to say: "Then fourteen years after, I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also."

It has been much questioned to which of the visits to

[1] Num. xxv; and Morning Series—Twentieth Week, Second Day.

Jerusalem, recorded in the Acts, this statement may be referred. Some say that it was the visit mentioned in Acts xi. 29, 30, when Paul and Barnabas took the alms of the church at Antioch to the church of Jerusalem. There is this in favour of that conclusion—that it is certainly the second *recorded* visit after the one that followed his conversion, and that he was then also accompanied by Barnabas. This last circumstance tells equally in favour of the visit which has just passed under our notice. The circumstances and objects of the former visit are altogether different from those which Paul ascribes to the one he made "fourteen years after;" and it would be difficult to make out that this visit could have been so late as "fourteen years after" either the first visit, or the conversion of the apostle, from which date some suppose the years to be computed. On the other hand, neither does the business of this visit, as described by Paul himself, appear to be identical with that recorded in Acts xv., and there are other difficulties, presently to be stated, which have seemed to many so insurmountable, that they have felt themselves driven to the expedient of *supposing* that the apostle's statement in the Epistle to the Galatians, refers to some *intermediate* visit not recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. In itself there is no objection to this supposition. We know that all the circumstances of Paul's evangelical history are not reported in the Acts; and the distance between Antioch and Jerusalem was not so great, nor the intercourse between them so unfrequent or difficult, as to render it unlikely that there should have been, in the long interval, one or more visits besides those recorded. We are however satisfied in our own mind, that the visit to which Paul now refers, is that which was taken respecting the affairs of the Gentile converts, and which resulted in the decree we have examined.

Before noticing the grounds upon which this conviction is founded, and endeavouring to remove the obstacles that oppose it, it may be stated, that the chronological intervention of the alms-bearing visit offers no real impediment; it

is passed over simply because nothing on that occasion transpired relating to the subject in hand. Paul says, that on his visit to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, nothing occurred to invalidate his claims to the office of an apostle; and then he adds, that when he was again at Jerusalem, fourteen years after, the apostles with whom he had private and full communications on the subject, distinctly recognised his apostolic claims. He had no occasion to mention the intermediate visit, which had nothing to do with the question in hand; nor, indeed, had he occasion to state any of the business of this visit, however important (as recorded by Luke), but that which bore upon the question in discussion with the Galatians, and which as having been a comparatively *private* matter (as Paul himself expressly states) is not noticed by Luke.

The difficulties which have been urged against this identification of the third visit of the Acts, with the second of the Galatians, are these principally:—

That Luke says Paul and Barnabas were sent by the church at Antioch, after much disputation, whereas Paul states that he went up by revelation. But these particulars are surely compatible. The revelation may either have led to this determination of the church; or have been needed to reconcile Paul to a step to which he was possibly averse.

That after the part which Peter took in the council at Jerusalem, and his concurrence in the resulting decree—he could never have acted in that very matter as he afterwards did at Antioch, and that, consequently, Paul's own recital must apply to a visit anterior to that which Luke records. This we may pass by now, and will look into it when we come to consider that point historically.

The remaining objections make a connected group, and may be disposed of presently in one statement. These are —How comes it that Paul does not, in the epistle in which this statement occurs (nor indeed any where else) make any mention of the important decree of which he had been the bearer to the churches, notwithstanding that it is so evi-

dently applicable to the case, in his rebuke of the Galatians for their Judaizing errors? How comes it that, having to answer the question, as to meats offered in sacrifice to idols, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he makes no mention of the decision already given? And how comes it that his report of the journey to Jerusalem, in the Epistle to the Galatians, seems so different from the narrative in the Acts?

Notwithstanding this, we must assume the two journeys were identical; for, in the face of these difficulties, there are considerations which preclude the possibility of their being different. The visit described by Paul could not have been prior to the one recorded by Luke; because *acts* proving the apostleship of Paul must already have been performed; and the journey recorded in Acts xi. 29, 30, must have been then over. Neither could it have been a subsequent one; because, immediately after the council at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas disagree, whereas here we find them still united. Furthermore, the two accounts correspond in all important points,—the same controversy, the same immediate occasion from the efforts of the Judaists, Peter and James the same chief actors, and the same testimony by Paul and Barnabas to their success among the Gentiles. But while the two statements refer to the same journey, they clearly refer to separate and independent deliberations and results of that journey. At this we have already hinted, and its further development seems to offer a fair solution to every difficulty the subject involves. The narrative in the Acts treats of the public object of the journey, and the public discussion thereon, that is, on the rights and duties of the Gentile Christians. On the other hand, the conference reported to the Galatians had reference solely to Paul's apostleship, the full recognition of which, with the agreement as to the division of labour, being represented to them as the results of this conference; while no allusion is made to the demands on the Gentile converts. The two things are very different. But Paul himself uses a phrase which renders clear the relation between the two transactions: The understanding come to respecting his

apostolic office occurred "*in private*," after, or it may be before, the settlement of the more public matter regarding the Gentile Christians. And why was this? The questions were akin to each other, and yet they were different. It was much more difficult to recognise Paul's apostleship than the rights of the Gentile Christians; and the two questions could well be kept apart. Both Paul and Peter were probably desirous to spare the faithful at large the trial of a question for which they were not prepared, and of which they were not the immediate judges. The matter was therefore brought before those only who, by virtue of their office, were called upon to express an opinion on the point, whether Paul was, in the fullest sense of the term, an apostle or not, and to take a definite position towards him. It appears probable, as a recent writer[1] supposes, "that no one in the Jerusalem church had as yet had a correct view of the new claim to apostleship. James, Peter, and John alone, were enabled, by an admirable self-denial, and by illumination from above, to recognise the wonderful fact that, without their intervention, an apostle in the fullest sense had appeared, invested with the same mission and authority from the risen Lord, for the heathen, as Peter had received from Him while on earth for the Jews;[2] and responsible like Peter to Christ alone."

This being explained, we can the better understand how Paul came to pass over the Jerusalem decree in his epistles, even when engaged upon matters which might seem to suggest a reference to its decisions. He was as independent in his guidance of the churches as Peter was in his; and his independence had been acknowledged by the apostles themselves. He was trammelled by no human authority, and was responsible to none. This he asserted in Galatia and at Corinth. When his epistles to these churches were written,

[1] Dr Henry W. J. Thiersch, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. i., ch. ii. of the English translation by T. Carlyle, Esq., of the Scottish Bar: London, 1852, a work which, although we dissent in some points from the conclusions it arrives at, contains many valuable suggestions; and we are essentially indebted to it in this evening's Reading.

[2] Gal. ii. 7, 8.

the time had come for him to vindicate his apostleship on every hand. He had no need, in correcting errors, to cite the decrees of others. His word as an apostle of Christ to the Gentiles, was decree sufficient for them. At the very time when his authority was questioned by the church which he himself had planted, it would have been a fatal concession had he cited to them another power than his own as their guide.

The unequivocal acknowledgment which Paul received from Peter and others, of his call and authority as an apostle, extended to a distinct recognition of his peculiar qualifications and commission to preach to the Gentiles. They perceived distinctly from his statement of "the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles," that "the gospel of the uncircumcision" had been as fully committed to him, as "the gospel of the circumcision" had been assigned to Peter; that is, as we think with Dr Brown,[1] "they distinctly saw that the Holy Spirit had taught him to preach the gospel, in a way peculiarly calculated for the conversion of the Gentiles, just as He had taught Peter to preach the gospel in a way peculiarly fitted for the conversion of the Jews." And perceiving this, "they readily acknowledged Paul and Barnabas as brethren; they gave them the right hand of fellowship, as a token of agreement in sentiment, an acknowledgment of their possessing the same authority as themselves, and a pledge that they would mutually assist each other in the work in which they were engaged; and at the same time it was agreed that while James, Peter, and John continued to labour chiefly among the Jews, Paul and Barnabas should continue to labour chiefly among the Gentiles. Not that either party was scrupulously to confine their labours within those bounds, but that, generally speaking, they should respectively occupy those fields of labour for which the Holy Spirit had particularly qualified them." This was not, however, an appointment laid upon Paul by his superiors. It

[1] In his *Expository Discourses on Galatians*, where this matter is fully explained. Pp. 76-89.

was a mutual agreement of equals, arising out of their clearly perceiving the will of their common Master. Accordingly, they gave Paul and Barnabas no instructions. They knew that they needed none. The only subject on which they gave anything like advice, was one of a practical, not of a doctrinal kind; and even then it was a friendly hint, not an official command: "Only they would that we should remember the poor:" "the same which," says the apostle, "I also was forward to do."

Forty-Eighth Week—Seventh Day.

PETER'S FAULT.—GAL. II. 11-13.

On the return to Antioch, one of the party was Mark, whom Barnabas had of course found at Jerusalem, and whom, having probably brought him to a sense of his former misconduct, he was induced to reinstate in his confidence, and to take back with him to Antioch. There were also two other persons, leading men in the church at Jerusalem, whose high character among the Jewish Christians would, it was thought, add weight to a decision so favourable to the views of Paul and Barnabas. One of them was "Judas surnamed Barsabas," that is, the son of Sabas. As the name of one of the persons who were nominated to fill the vacant apostleship, was "Joseph called Barsabas,"[1] some have imagined that this was the same person. But there is no analogy between the names of Joseph and Judas; and the identity of the patronymic might merely suggest that Judas was a brother of Joseph—both, that is, sons of Sabas. The other was Silas, whom we shall subsequently meet with as the travelling companion of Paul, and who is believed to be the same person who is often mentioned by him in his epistles, and once by Peter, under the name of "Silvanus."[2] They are both indicated as "pro-

[1] Acts i. 23. [2] 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thes. i. 1; 2 Thes. i. 1; 1 Peter v. 12.

phets,"[1] the application of which term has been already explained.

On arriving at Antioch a meeting of the church was convened, and the epistolary decree delivered. It was received in a most satisfactory manner. The Gentile Christians heartily rejoiced at having this vexed question settled on terms so slightly burdensome to them, and the Jewish Christians seem to have at least *acquiesced* in it as an authoritative decision of the matter. Judas and Silas ably supported these decisions by their discourses and influence, and when the whole business seemed happily concluded, Judas went home to Jerusalem; but he was unaccompanied by Silas, who thought it proper to remain at Antioch. Paul and Barnabas also continued there, apparently for a good while, "teaching and preaching the word of the Lord" with great success.

These happy days could not, however, always last, and we presently come to sad scenes between Paul and Peter, and—oh, grief!—between Paul and Barnabas.

It is to this period that we, with the best authorities, assign that visit of Peter to the metropolis of Gentile Christianity, which is recorded in Paul's interesting Epistle to the Galatians. He came, as far as appears, without any intention of interfering with Paul in his work as the apostle to the Gentiles, and with a purpose to carry out in practice the decree to which he had been an acting party. On his arrival, therefore, he ate freely with the Gentiles in their social entertainments, as well as in the Lord's Supper, and in the Agapæ or love feasts. But soon there came up some members of the Jerusalem church to Antioch, who, influenced by the old leaven of Jewish exclusiveness, evinced no little interest in observing how the apostle of the circumcision would deport himself in such new company; and holding themselves too ready to take offence at his conduct, and to impart their own impressions to the strict Judaists at home. In spite of the decree of the council, these seem to have shrunk from full communion with the Gentiles. And, as a writer, lately cited,

[1] Acts xv. 32.

observes, "It is not so easy to yield to a consequence as to see it."[1] Indeed, as the same author truly remarks, "We need only look to the subsequent divisions of the church (in which the adherents of one confession, while they dare not deny salvation to those of another, or insist on their coming over, still refrain conscientiously from communion with them) in order to find a repetition of the same state of feeling and conduct." Peter separated himself from the society of the Gentiles, and his example was followed by all the members of Jewish descent, even by Barnabas himself. They seem then to have even celebrated their communion, and their Agapæ separately; and Paul was the only Israelite who remained in free intercourse with the Gentiles. Some have questioned whether the division had the extent and significance thus assigned to it. But it is forgotten that the Lord's Supper was at first (as repeatedly intimated in the epistles, and as is known from early Christian writers) partaken, as in its original institution, in connection with a social meal, of ordinary materials, but called from the occasion an *Agape*, usually rendered, love-feast; and this being expressly a feast of brotherhood, it is difficult to see how the Jews could object to take part in the domestic meals of the Gentiles, without still more pointedly objecting to the more public fraternization with the Gentile converts, and thus recognising them as sanctified.

It may well be asked—Is it possible that Peter, who had been the instrument of opening the door of hope to the Gentiles—Peter, who had spoken so generously and wisely in the council at Jerusalem, should thus fall back upon Jewish notions? The question has seemed so strange to many as to lead them to assign the visit now under consideration, to a date earlier than that of the Jerusalem decree. But the circumstances cannot be easily adjusted to this hypothesis; and even if it were admitted, the case of Cornelius would still remain a stumbling-block for those who would uphold the consistency of Peter.

[1] Thirlwall, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 125.

How could Peter reconcile his present scruples with his experience in that case? Closely considered, it will be seen, that the case left many questions unsettled. Where was yet the proof that a mere Gentile might be baptized, without having beforehand visibly received the Spirit? What warrant did it afford to go out and preach to those yet enslaved by idolatry? Where was the authority for Peter to turn his back on the Jews as a nation, especially when another had been raised up as apostle to the heathen? Besides, it is ever to be remembered, that not a word had been yet, nor was until many years after, spoken, as to the obligation of the Jews themselves to relinquish their ceremonial law—which all the Jewish disciples, even Paul himself, continued to observe; and Peter seems to have felt that at the moment when the churches should relinquish the Mosaic ritual, and he should act as Paul had done, all hope of operating upon the Jews *as a body*, was at an end. From all these reasons, it will appear, that the mere baptism of Cornelius, made it no self-evident matter that Peter, and the brethren with him, were no longer called upon to pay any regard to the Jews, and to the doubts of Jewish Christians.

To reconcile his conduct at Antioch, with the part he took in the Jerusalem council, is at the first view more difficult. Yet if we look narrowly into the matter, the error of Peter will appear but too natural, great as was the evil, and dangerous as the consequences might have been. He shrunk at the thought of the stir, and perhaps the division, his conduct might occasion at Jerusalem. He feared the weakening of his own authority in the church, and losing his hold of the Jews. It may be also that, as Dr Brown suggests, his fear of "these men" from Jerusalem, was an apprehension of their being so disgusted at seeing the unreserved intercourse of Jews and Gentiles, a thing so abhorrent to their prejudices, as to be tempted to renounce Christianity, and revert to Judaism.[1]

He might, moreover, doubt if he had done well in coming into a situation where he must take either the one side or

[1] *Expository Discourses on Galatians*, p. 85.

the other. We cannot wonder at his yielding, although he ought to have persisted in the course he had adopted; and although by acting contrary to his own expressed convictions, he justly exposed himself to Paul's charge of "dissimulation." He failed not so grievously, but in the same way, as when he denied Christ. He had, at Antioch, as in the courts of the high-priest, thrown himself uncalled into danger. He was out of his place, and therefore weak. He sacrificed his conscience to his fears.

Paul accuses Peter of "dissimulation" in this matter—a heavy charge, of which the meaning has been somewhat questioned. Some suppose that Peter took alarm immediately on the arrival of the persons from Jerusalem, whose character and temper must have been known to him, withdrew from the society of the Gentile converts, and attempted to conceal the fact of his previously liberal intercourse with them. It seems more likely, however, that by the use of this word, Paul shows his knowledge of the fact that, in proceeding as Peter did, he acted from considerations of expediency in opposition to his real convictions, which remained unchanged; while his conduct could not but lead the Jews to think that his views, and those of Paul, were different, and must have led the Gentiles to conclude, that he had altered his opinions.

So, in speaking of Peter, and of Barnabas after he had been led astray by Peter's example, he says—"I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel." By this we should judge him to mean, that they walked not straight onward in the path of principle and duty, but leaned aside to natural prejudices and compromising expedients, thereby throwing obscurity and doubt on the true gospel, that men are saved entirely "by faith," through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This was a doctrine on which Paul was peculiarly sensitive; in which he saw his way clearly, and which he would not allow to be compromised. It was, doubtless, the perception of the danger of such compromise, that led him to the step he presently took.

Forty-Ninth Week—First Day.

PAUL'S REPROOF.—GAL. II. 14-21.

Now let us see what was the conduct of Paul under the trying circumstances described last evening. It was a matter that concerned him deeply, as involving essential principles which he had entirely at heart; and as the apostle of the Gentiles, it fell particularly within his province, and it behoved him to act with firmness and decision.

He did so.

There seems to have been a meeting of both the parties in this question, perhaps specially convened for its consideration; or it may be that Paul went to a meeting of the Jewish converts, at which Peter was present. Paul's expression "before them all," or "before all," may bear either meaning. At such a meeting, "before them all," Paul says, "I withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed;" and in a temperate, but closely reasoned and convincing speech, he exposed the inconsistency and the dangerous tendency of the error of conduct into which Peter had fallen; ending with the emphatic words: "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Many reasons are conceivable which must have rendered this public reproof of Peter a most trying and painful task, which, if he could have done so consistently with the duties of his supreme allegiance to the truth of the gospel, he would gladly have avoided. But the error had been public; its consequences were of serious public concern, and a merely private remonstrance would no longer meet the grave demands of the case. Then perceiving the obligation that lay upon him of speaking out plainly, "Paul did not keep silent, as if he was afraid of Peter as a superior; he was not awed by the example of so great an apostle, into the silent sanction of what he thought wrong; and he did not

oppose Peter by secret insinuation, by speaking evil of him when he was absent—he avowed to himself his dissatisfaction with his conduct." [1]

The result of this transaction is not recorded; but we scarcely need hesitate to hope that Paul's faithful remonstrance had its full effect upon Peter, and tended to heal this division in the Church at Antioch. It is well remarked by Barnes [2] on this place:—"Excitable as Peter was by nature, there is no evidence that he became angry here, or that he did not receive the admonitions of his brother Paul with perfect good temper, and with an acknowledgment that Paul was right, and he was wrong. Indeed the case was so plain—as it usually is if men would be honest—that he seems to have felt that it was right, and to have received the rebuke as became a Christian. Peter unhappily was accustomed to rebukes; but he was at heart too good a man to be offended, when admonished that he had done wrong. A good man is willing to be reproved when he has erred; and it is usually a proof that there is much that is wrong, when we become excited or irritable if another admonishes us of our faults. It may be added here, that nothing is to be inferred from this with regard to the *inspiration* or apostolic authority of Peter. The fault was not that he taught error of doctrine, but that he sinned *in conduct*. Inspiration, though it kept the apostles from teaching *error*, did not keep them necessarily from sin. A man may always *teach* the truth, and yet be far from perfect in practice. The case here proves that Peter was not perfect—a fact proved by his whole life; it proves that he was sometimes timid, and even, for a period, time-serving; but it does not prove that what he wrote for our guidance is false or erroneous."

It is well to have this point noticed,—for between the fear that this affair might bring Peter's inspired authority, or the authority of inspiration generally, into question, and the desire to relieve from this stain the character of one who came to be looked up to with mistaken reverence as the

[1] Dr Brown—*Expos. Discourses*, p. 83. [2] *Notes, etc.*, on Gal. ii. 14.

prince of the apostles, some curious explanations of the transaction were held by many teachers in the ancient, and especially the Eastern Church. They represented the disagreement between the two apostles as merely apparent, and that the whole affair was got up by mutual agreement,—a sham fight, in short, to serve a purpose,—thus compromising the morality of two apostles to save the character of one. Clement of Alexandria found another resource. "Cephas" instead of "Peter," is, perhaps, the preferable reading in the record of the transaction; and Clement, to meet the exigencies of the case, extemporises another Cephas than Peter, as the antagonist of Paul on this occasion. Some other ancient interpreters, and even some modern ones, gave in their adhesion to this strange notion, so palpably refuted by all the circumstances of the case.

We are unwilling to close the review we have taken of this important and interesting circumstance without producing a passage, in which a recent writer endeavours by the aid of ancient intimations, to realize the scene in the mind of the reader by a description of the personal appearance of the two apostles. "The scene, though slightly mentioned, is one of the most remarkable in sacred history; and the mind naturally labours to picture to itself the appearance of the two men. It is, therefore, at least allowable to mention here that general notion of the forms and features of the two apostles which has been handed down in tradition, and was represented by the early artists. St Paul is set before us as having the strongly marked and prominent features of a Jew, yet not without some of the finer lines indicative of Greek thought. His stature was diminutive, and his body disfigured by some lameness or distortion, which may have provoked the contemptuous expressions of his enemies. His beard was long and thin. His head was bald. The characteristics of his face were a transparent complexion, which visibly betrayed the quick changes of his feelings, a bright grey eye under thickly overhanging united eyebrows, a cheerful and winning expression of countenance, which

invited the approach, and inspired the confidence of strangers. It would be natural to infer from his continual journeys and manual labour, that he was possessed of great strength of constitution. But men of delicate health have often gone through the greatest exertions; and his own words on more than one occasion show that he suffered much from bodily infirmity. St Peter is represented to us as a man of larger and stronger form, as his character was harsher and more abrupt. The quick impulses of his soul revealed themselves in the flashes of a dark eye. The complexion of his face was pale and sallow; and the short hair, which is described as entirely grey at the time of his death, curled black and thick round his temples and his chin, when the two apostles stood together at Antioch, twenty years before their martyrdom."[1]

It should be observed, that in the passage before us Paul, after his direct rebuke of Peter, proceeded to declare the truth of the gospel, which he feared might be obscured by the conduct of that apostle and the rest; and in conclusion, he enforced, by their operation in himself, the views he advocated, and would always maintain. The last passage is very emphatic and striking:—"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 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."

Of these important words a very intelligible and effective interpretation is given by Dr Brown, in the form of a paraphrase, which we are glad to be able to adopt:—"'By the law having had its full course so as to be glorified in the obedience to death of Him *in whom* I am, I am completely delivered from the law. The law has no more to do with me, and I have no more to do with it in the matter of justification. And this freedom from law is at once necessary and effectual to my living a truly holy life—a life devoted to God.' What follows is explanatory of this thought, which was ever present to the mind of the apostle—'I consider my-

[1] CONYBEARE and HOWSON—*Life and Epistles of St Paul*, i. 240, 241.

self as identified with the Lord Jesus Christ;' 'I am crucified with Christ.' I view myself as so connected with Christ, as that when He was crucified I was, as it were, crucified; and I am as much interested in the effects of that crucifixion as if I had undergone it myself. He, in being crucified, endured the curse, and I in Him endured it; so that I am redeemed from the law and its curse, He having become a curse for me. 'Nevertheless I live.' Christ died, and in Him I died; Christ revived, and in Him I revived. I am a dead man with regard to the law, but I am a living man in regard to Christ. The law has killed me, and by doing so, it has set me free from itself. I have no more to do with the law. The life I have now, is not the life of a man under the law, but the life of a man delivered from the law: having died and risen again with Christ Jesus, Christ's righteousness justifies me, Christ's Spirit animates me. *My* relations to God are *his* relations. The influences under which I live are the influences under which He lives. Christ's views are my views; Christ's feelings my feelings. He is the soul of my soul, the life of my life. My state, my sentiments, my feelings, my conduct, are all Christian. '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.' 'The life I live in the flesh' is the life I live in this mortal body, this embodied state. The belief of the truth is the regulating principle of my conduct. It is as it were the soul of a new creature. I no longer think, or feel, or act like a Jew, or like a man born merely after the flesh. All my opinions, sentiments, and habits, are subject to the truth about Him 'who loved me and gave himself for me;' and I *live* devoted *to* Him who *died* devoted *for* me."

Forty-Ninth Week—Second Day.

THE SHARP CONTENTION.—ACTS XV. 36-41.

Not long after the transactions which last engaged our attention, Paul, animated by that keen interest in the spiritual welfare of his converts, which glows through the epistles afterwards written, conceived an earnest desire to revisit the places where the gospel had been preached by him and Barnabas in their former missionary tour. "Let us go again," he said to the other, "and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."

Barnabas was very willing: but it would seem that the band of brotherhood had been somewhat relaxed between them, in the recent affairs wherein Paul had been greatly vexed by the unsteadiness of Barnabas; and the latter had probably been somewhat hurt at being involved, with Peter and others, in the public reproof administered by one whose patron he had in some sort been, but who was already become not only a more prominent Christian teacher than himself, but a more regarded leader in that very church which he himself had founded. We are not bound to overlook these probabilities, which lie in human nature; and we know that these excellent men were, as they declared to the Lystrians, "men of like passions" with ourselves. We know, further,

"How slight a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love,"

when once such uneasiness of feeling has arisen as that which this affair was calculated to excite, and seems to have excited. In such a case an outbreak commonly occurs sooner or later; and is often, if not always, supplied by some very inadequate cause. In the present instance the immediate cause of difference was the declared intention of Barnabas, that Mark should accompany them on the pro-

posed tour. Paul had no ground for interference when the uncle thought proper to bring his nephew from Jerusalem to Antioch; but now when it was proposed to make Mark a third party in the demands and responsibilities of a missionary journey, Paul very strongly objected. Barnabas persisted, and then Paul's objections rose into absolute refusal. Barnabas declared that he would not go without Mark, and Paul protested that he would not go with Mark. In short, there was nothing less than "a sharp contention" between the two, which, as is usual in such cases, probably branched out right and left into matters not immediately connected with the question in hand, producing altogether a sad breach between friends who had together "hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Which of the two was right, or which wrong, we cannot very well say. Probably they were both right and both wrong—right in some points and wrong in others. We incline to suppose that Paul was the more right, judging by *their* knowledge at the time; but that Barnabas is shown to be the more right, by *our* after knowledge. Barnabas had confidence in Mark's present steadiness, and the result shows that this confidence was not misplaced. Having this confidence, it was natural that he should be exceedingly unwilling that one, to whom he stood in an almost paternal relation, should be turned back at the threshold of life, from that career of usefulness in the Lord's vineyard for which he seemed fitted, and which he now earnestly desired to follow, and all for a fault of which he had by this time heartily repented. It seemed too hard. Are faults never to be forgiven? are their consequences to follow us for ever? O Lord, if THOU be extreme to mark our failures of duty—O Lord, who then shall stand!

On the other hand, Paul had not the same grounds as Barnabas for confidence in Mark, nor the same personal reasons for overlooking his error. In a case where he could not judge the heart, and had not acquired confidence in the party concerned, it might seem unsafe to proceed on any

other grounds than those of public duty, and the safety and honour of the work intrusted to him. That work required steady men; and he could hardly be considered as having evinced any particular qualification for it, who had already, with respect to the very same journey, exhibited infirmity of purpose and considerable disregard for his fellow travellers. And such a mission was scarcely one upon which to try experiments with uncertain characters. Indeed, that was a point on which our Lord himself, it would be remembered, had pronounced a strong verdict, when He declared that, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

In this unhappy contention it may seem that Barnabas was the more irascible, or the less placable, of the two; for he was the first to leave Antioch, instead of lingering behind to the last moment, in the hope that some accommodation between himself and Paul might be finally attained. He took Mark with him and went to Cyprus, seemingly taking upon himself that portion of what was to have been the united journey of Paul and himself, for the churches in Cyprus required also to be visited. Thus the cause of the church suffered no loss, but rather gained. There was gain; for Paul having to take a new companion in place of Barnabas, there were thus two couples of travelling labourers, where only one pair had been contemplated.

We hear no more of Barnabas in Scripture. But many have supposed that he is "the brother whose praise is in all the churches," mentioned by Paul in 2 Cor. viii. 18, 19, on which supposition it is concluded that not only were Paul and Barnabas reconciled after this separation, but that they again laboured together. All this, however, rests on the identity of Barnabas with this "brother," which seems to us very doubtful. The absence of any explicit mention, either in the history or the epistles, of so prominent and active a person as Barnabas had been, would rather lead to the inference that he did not long survive the separation. And with this agrees the current traditional account of his subse-

quent history—an account which, although it rests on no satisfactory authority, seems probable enough in its main circumstances. According to it, Barnabas, with Mark, after passing through the whole island of Cyprus, and converting large numbers to the Christian faith, arrived at length at Salamis, where he preached in the synagogue with great success. He was, however, followed thither by some Jews from Syria, whose leader, according to one account, Bar-jesus became. These men succeeded in exciting the minds of the people against Barnabas, who, perceiving that his last hour was at hand, took leave of the brethren after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Having then given his nephew directions respecting his interment, and charged him to return to Paul after his decease, he proceeded to the Jewish synagogue. There he began to preach Christ, as was his custom. But the Jews at once laid hands upon him, and shut him up till night. They then dragged him forth, and, after stoning him, reduced his body to ashes. According to another account, however, the corpse was preserved from the flames, and secretly conveyed away by Mark, and deposited in a cavern about five stadia from the city. Mark then joined Paul at Ephesus, as his uncle had directed, and afterwards accompanied the apostle to Rome.

Mark certainly did join Paul, as we have already seen. If he did so after the death of Barnabas, and by his desire, it was undoubtedly an impressive act of reconcilement; and this is still more emphatically indicated, if Barnabas was alive when Mark went to join Paul. Neither Barnabas nor Mark then cherished any spark of resentment against Paul, nor Paul against either of them. That Mark went to Paul shows that he was the first to move in this matter; and we cannot doubt that, in taking this step, he acted by the counsel of Barnabas whether *at the time* living or dead. And we may suppose he was charged with the expression of his uncle's grief at the remembrance of the "sharp contention" which had formerly taken place between them.

Forty-Ninth Week—Third Day.

TIMOTHY.—ACTS XVI. 1-3.

In contemplating the journey before him, Paul probably felt that the absence of Barnabas would be likely to place him at some disadvantage; for not only had Barnabas been with him as an equal labourer in the previous visit to the same places, but the name of Barnabas was joined in commission with his own in the authoritative promulgation to the churches of the apostolic decree.

The wise providence of God, had, however, provided for this exigency by the fact, that one of the two distinguished persons who had been sent by the council at Jerusalem to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, as vouchers for the decree, in which they are, indeed, expressly named, still remained at Antioch. This was Silas; and it is obvious, even to us, that he was the most suitable person who could be found to accompany Paul on the intended journey, as a substitute for Barnabas. He was a leading man in the church; he was endowed with special gifts; the church at Jerusalem had avouched his character and qualifications; and Paul had been enough in his company to know that he should find in him a valuable coadjutor. Silas readily responded to the call thus made upon him; and the two, having been in united prayer "recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God," set forth on their important journey. That journey, though it included all the places where churches had been founded in the former missionary tour with Barnabas, became much more extensive than had been originally contemplated. It commenced, however, by the visitation of the churches formerly established—only that they were visited in a reverse order—those being first reached which had been established last in the previous journey. Departing from Antioch, Paul and Silas necessarily passed through the

northern part of Syria, and the eastern part of Cilicia, "confirming the churches" in their way. These were, no doubt, churches which had been of earlier establishment. Their names are not given, but we may be allowed to suppose that on this occasion Paul saw once more his native city of Tarsus.

They then passed into Lycaonia, lying to the north of Cilicia, and we find them once more at Derbe; but of the circumstances of this, any more than of the former visit to Derbe, no particulars are given. They now proceeded on their way, and passing the gate before which was the temple or image of Jupiter, stood on the streets of Lystra, where Paul had been first worshipped as a god, and then stoned as an offender. All that is recorded at this place relates to the acquisition of another associate by the missionary party, in the person of a young convert named Timothy. This youth seems to have been a native of Lystra—the son of a Jewish mother, but of a Greek father. He had been very carefully brought up, even from a child, by his grandmother and his mother, in the knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, which had thus become familiar to him; and, under such holy training, he inherited, in full measure, the "unfeigned" Messianic "faith that dwelt first in his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice." The soil being thus prepared, received favourably the good seed which Paul had sown, in his former visit to these parts. His name, indeed, does not occur in the narrative of that journey; but we now see that the young man was already a Christian when Lystra was revisited; and as Paul addresses him as "his own son in the faith"—that is, one converted by himself, it is clear that his conversion must have taken place in the former journey. We lately called attention to a passage in one of Paul's epistles to Timothy, in which he appeals to his intimate knowledge of the persecutions he had endured at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra; and this knowledge was probably personal, at least as regards Lystra, at which place—if that indeed was his ordinary residence—he had doubtless been an eye-witness of the evil treatment the apostle received, and

was probably one of "the brethren" who stood mournfully around him as he lay cast out for dead.

What Timothy had heard from Paul, what he had witnessed of his conduct, the example he had so unostentatiously offered of valour for the truth, could hardly fail to make a very deep and salutary impression upon a mind so youthfully impressible as his. It was *nutritive;* and blessed by the Divine Spirit, it so ministered to his spiritual growth, that by the time Paul came back, he had become a marked person in the esteem of the brethren in this and the neighbouring towns, particularly at Iconium. His love to Christ was so touchingly profound, his faith so invincible, his devotedness so entire, his zeal so fervent, his endowments so manifest, that the local churches cherished the belief that notwithstanding his delicate health and "often infirmities," eminent services in the church of Christ might be expected from him. Paul had heard of this before he again saw him, and the tidings had filled his heart with joy. He gladly yielded to the young man's entreaty to be permitted to attend him on his journey; and very soon the apostle conceived for his young convert that beautiful paternal regard which shines through his epistles to him, and which will to many minds appear one of the most charming things in the history of Paul.

Before, however, Paul took Timothy with him, he thought proper to subject him to the initiatory Jewish rite. This has occasioned some perplexity, seeing that not long ago Paul had very firmly, and with the sanction of the apostles of the circumcision, resisted the attempts made to impose this rite upon Titus. Some of the early Christian writers made much of this difficulty, and could not surmount it but by supposing that a similar concession had subsequently been made in the case of Titus—a most unwarrantable and wholly needless supposition. The cases were altogether different, and sufficient to explain and justify a difference of procedure. Titus was wholly a Greek; and the object in his case was to withstand false teachers, and protect the flock from their requisitions

In the case of Timothy, the object was to procure admission for him into the synagogues in which the gospel had not yet been preached, and with which Paul had to connect his labours, but to which he could not otherwise have had access. Paul testifies of himself that to the Jews he became as a Jew, to win those who would not else be won.[1] Of Timothy he asked no more than this; and he was entitled to ask it; for, according to the Jewish rules, the child should follow the mother, so that the son of a mixed marriage, whose mother was a Jewess, should be circumcised, otherwise (and the Roman Catholic Church now makes similar conditions) the marriage would not have been recognised by the Jewish law. The rule had been neglected in the case of Timothy, probably from the opposition of the father. The Jews of the neighbourhood must have been aware of this omission; and he would not have been received among them, had not Paul taken means to have it supplied.

Forty-Ninth Week—Fourth Day.

THE GALATIANS.—ACTS XVI. 6; GAL. I. 1, 2, IV. 13-15.

FROM Lystra Paul proceeded to Iconium; but as the fact of his visit to this city only incidentally transpires, we are not to infer that he did not proceed to Antioch in Pisidia, merely because it is not mentioned that he did so, and because, in consequence, Iconium, as the last named place, seems to be made the starting point of a new journey. Indeed, the statement, that "they went through the cities," delivering the decree, and that the churches were "established in the faith, and increased in number daily," implies, not only that all the places in which churches had previously been established were visited, but that some time was spent in active missionary labour in these parts.

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 20.

At length, however, it was deemed desirable to enter upon new ground; and therefore Paul, with Silas and Timothy, proceeded northward "throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia." It is usual to describe Phrygia as "a large and populous province of Asia Minor"—and such indeed it had become in the age of Constantine. But at *this time*, and long before and after, the term Phrygia had no political significance. It was merely a geographical expression denoting a debateable country of indeterminate extent, diffused over the frontiers of the provinces of Asia and Galatia, but belonging chiefly to the former.

In Galatia we, for Paul's sake, take a deeper interest, and concerning it there is no lack of information.

This province was inhabited by a singular people of Gaulish origin, from whom it took the name of Galatia. It was, in fact, a Gaulish settlement, and Galatia was the Gaul of the East. Some may wonder to see a Gaulish colony prosperously established in the heart of Lesser Asia, and would be perplexed to guess how it got there.

The Galatians were a stream from that torrent of Gaulish barbarians which poured into Greece in the third century before Christ, and which recoiled in confusion from the cliffs of Delphi. These tribes had previously separated from the main army, and penetrated into Thrace. There they were joined by a number of the fugitives from the broken army. They found no power here which could effectually oppose them; and soon the coast of the Propontis came under tribute to them, and they were masters of its fair towns and cities. Thus they remained a good while; but at length, considering that only a narrow strait separated them in one part from the fertile plains and valleys of Asia, of which they had already received pleasing reports, they conceived an eager desire to pass over and claim a heritage there. They had no ships, however, and could not devise the means of transportation, and in this perplexity they actually sent to Antipater, the governor of the opposite coast, to fetch them across. To this he naturally demurred; and the Gaulish

princes meanwhile quarrelling among themselves, one of them led back the greater part of the forces to Byzantium, whence they had come. The leader of those that remained at the straits soon found the means of crossing to Asia. He seized the vessels in which Antipater had sent an embassy to watch their proceedings, and, by incessantly passing to and fro, night and day, succeeded in transporting all his army. Not long after, the Gauls who had withdrawn in the first instance, went over also, being actively assisted by Nicomedes king of Bithynia, who craved the aid of their good swords in his wars. That aid was very effectual; and when, having performed their work, they marched inland to carve out their own fortunes, the nations on that side the Taurus shrunk in terror before these awful barbarians—though, as Livy affirms, there were but 20,000 of them, and not more than half of these armed. The terror of their name made conquest easy; and in no long time the whole of the peninsula north of the Taurus became tributary to them. The suzerainty and tributes of this region—but not, as some state, its territorial occupation—they divided among their three tribes, the Tectosages, the Trocmi, and the Tolistoboii, remaining themselves seated chiefly on the Halys, that is, in the district which, from their occupation of it, acquired the name of Galatia. Here they lived in great prosperity, increasing rapidly in numbers. They took part in all the wars of the time, hiring themselves out as mercenary troops; and we find them acting as body guards to the kings of Syria and of Egypt. Even Herod the Great had four hundred of them in his pay.

In time, however, the neighbouring monarchs found means to curtail their power, and at length it was confined to what had come to be considered their proper territory. The Romans, who, after the war with Antiochus the Great, had turned their arms against them, as the only power capable of giving any disturbance, left them in nominal independence, and it was only upon the death of their last king Amyntas, in the time of Augustus, that Galatia became a Roman province.

These Gallo-Græcians yielded but slowly, and never entirely, to the softening influence of the Greek civilization by which they were surrounded. Indeed, they seem for a long time to have resisted that influence, and to have maintained, on calculation, that ferocious and formidable aspect by which the original inhabitants had been so greatly terrified. The anomalous aspect of this "fierce and cruel nation," set down in the midst of a very mild and tractable people, struck the attention of the consul Manlius, and is mentioned by him in his speech to the army at the beginning of the campaign. He also gives a curious description of their personal appearance, which is more interesting to us than it could be to those who had already met them in battle, in the army of Antiochus. They were men of tall stature and large person, wearing their yellow hair in long shining locks. They carried immense bucklers, and wielded exceedingly long swords; and they came to battle with songs, whoops, and dances, clashing their swords and targets, and making altogether a horrible noise, wherewith to dismay their opponents.

Before this time, however, they had abandoned their native Druidism, and adopted the worship of Cybele; and as time passed on, and when from the increase of population, and the lapse of power, and the cessation of wars, they ceased to be a wholly military people, many of their specialities melted down; so that by the time Paul appeared among them, they had become pretty well assimilated to their neighbours, although still retaining traces of their national origin. They had then long been familiar with the Greek language and Greek culture. Paul wrote his Epistle to them in Greek, and the contemporary inscriptions of the province are usually in that language. Indeed many of the inhabitants must have been of purely Greek origin; there was also doubtless a material substratum of the early Phrygian population; and there seem to have been considerable numbers of Jews in the principal towns.

But amid changes of language, religion, institutions, and habits of life, we often see that the mysterious thing called

"national character," which seems to flow in the life-blood of a people, remains essentially unaltered through the lapse of ages; and it may not be difficult to recognise in the Galatians, as described in Paul's Epistle, traits of character, which remind us vividly of the Gauls as described to us by ancient historians, and of the Gauls as known to our living experience.

Forty-Ninth Week—Fifth Day.

THE THORN IN THE FLESH.

GALATIANS IV. 13-15; 2 COR. XII. 2-16.

THE Acts of the Apostles merely states the simple fact, that Paul preached the gospel in Galatia—indeed, even that might not seem certain, as literally, it is only said that he "went through" Galatia.

From Paul's own Epistle to the Galatians we derive all the information we possess on the subject.

It is to be observed, that when this epistle was written, the apostle had been *twice* among the Galatians. At the time he wrote, a great change had taken place in the feeling of the Galatian churches towards him, their spiritual father. The change had been the work of Judaizing teachers, who had led this too impulsive and unreflecting people, not only to distrust the soundness of his great doctrine of justification by faith, but to question his apostolic authority. His knowledge of these things induces him now to remind them of the feelings with which they at first received him, and to recall the circumstances of their conversion.

He begins by reminding them—"Ye know how, through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at the first." The infirmity of the flesh, means bodily illness, severe indisposition; and it would seem to be stated, that *in* or under these disqualifying conditions he first preached

the gospel in Galatia. But it has been lately urged, with great ability, by Continental critics, that the preposition (διά) translated *through*, must in this, and some other places, mean *on account of*, or *because of*, implying therefore that the gospel was at first preached to them by reason of Paul's illness—leaving open the inference that it was his intention merely to pass through Galatia (perhaps into Bithynia); but that being arrested and detained among them by indisposition, he became the instrument of introducing Christianity into Galatia sooner than it might otherwise have been. It is, however, difficult to see why Paul should have wished to pass through a district in which the gospel had not yet been preached, without attempting to make the glad tidings known —the more so as he had not previously been in any of the provinces that lay beyond; and the sequel agrees better with the simple statement, that he preached under the disqualifying circumstances of bodily illness. For he goes on to say, that notwithstanding the disadvantages under which he appeared, and the necessary imperfection of his labours, he was treated with affectionate respect, and his message received with gladness. This is the meaning of his words: "My temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." Here, as the same Greek word means "angel" and "messenger," the term "angel of God" may signify messenger of God. At the same time, as Dr Brown remarks—"As the apostle's object is obviously to place in a very strong point of view the high esteem, the warm affection, the Galatians show to him, I am disposed to acquiesce in the version of our translators, especially as this seems to have been a proverbial expression [1]—'an angel of God, nay, Jesus Christ himself, could not have been more respectfully, more affectionately received by you, than I was, with all my infirmities.'" [2] The apostle then goes on—the tenderness of his recollection of that happy time, rising even to vehemence of earnestness—"Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?

[1] 2 Sam. xix. 27. [2] *Expository Discourses on Galatians*, p. 215.

for I bear you record that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." Or, as Dr Brown paraphrases—"Oh, how happy did you think yourselves in having me, though a poor diseased man, for your teacher! So highly did you value me, so much did you prize my labours, that there was nothing you would not have parted with to make me happy!" "This," he rightly adds, "is obviously the true meaning of the phrase, 'plucking out the eyes.'"

This expression has, together with other circumstances, suggested to some commentators, that the indisposition from which Paul suffered, was an affection of the eyes; and that, whether so or not, it was that habitual infirmity to which he often refers in his epistles, and which in one place he emphatically indicates under the expressive metaphor of "a thorn in the flesh," given to him as a chastening discipline.

One thing seems clear, that he had already, for years, been subject to this habitual infirmity, sometimes probably more severely manifested than at other times, as at the date of his visit to the Galatians. In 2 Cor. xii. 7-10, where this particular reference to it occurs, he appears to trace its origin to a period fourteen years anterior to the date of his then writing. Now that epistle is usually supposed to have been written in or about the year 57 A.D.; the visit to the Galatians does not seem to have been more than six years prior to this, and the full fourteen years would take us back to about the close of the period of his labours in Syria and Cilicia, before Barnabas brought him to Antioch. The bodily infirmity, therefore, which the Galatians, as he mentions to their credit, did not permit to influence disadvantageously their reception of him—may well have been his habitual malady—his "thorn in the flesh," perhaps in its most aggravated intensity.

This therefore may seem the proper place to make some inquiry into the nature of that infirmity.

His own account of its origin is that, at the time to which he refers, he was favoured with extraordinary revelations of the Divine glory, producing the most exalting spiritual rap-

ture, which might have been injurious to the sobriety of his mind, had he not at the same time been visited with this infirmity, which, by distressingly realizing to him the sense of his human weakness, kept the balance of his mind in due poise. He did not at first recognise this use of his affliction, and he prayed earnestly for its removal. But his supplication was not granted; and the reason for its refusal was graciously given to him, in the ever-memorable words:—"My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." He might not desire to be freed from that infirmity which not only, by deepening the sense of human weakness, made him more consciously dependent upon that power which was sufficient to sustain him in all trial, and strengthen him in all conflict, but which would, also, through the visible weakness of the instrument, magnify the power that wrought mightily through him, by evincing that it was of God.

Was Paul satisfied with this? He was more than satisfied. He rejoiced; he exulted; and, proceeding to report the matter to those who had heard his "bodily presence" described as "weak, and his speech contemptible," while it was admitted, that "his letters were weighty and powerful"—he goes on to say:—"*Most gladly*, therefore, will I rather glory *in my infirmities*, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." And, proceeding with accumulated intensity of emphasis, he adds—"Therefore I *take pleasure* in infirmities, . . for when I am weak, then am I strong."

We refrain with difficulty from enforcing the reflections which these sublime declarations suggest, to ask, What was the nature of the infirmity so frequently brought under our notice?

The best solution can be but the most probable conjecture. Many are the conjectures which have been offered; but all of them agree in this, that whether or not the infliction involved actual physical pain, it detracted from the dignity of his personal appearance, exposed him to difficulties and humiliations, and might seem calculated to impede his use-

fulness. It does not seem to us, that anything answering to these conditions has been suggested, which has nearly so much internal evidence in its favour, as that it was some affection of the eyes, whereby his vision was much impaired —perhaps more so at one time than at another.

Allusions to the value of sight, and the preciousness of the eyes, are too common to allow much stress to be laid upon the text which has given occasion to these remarks. But certainly, the very forcible expression, "Ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me," would acquire deeper emphasis in the mouth of one whose own vision was imperfect; and it would be interesting to be able to read it with this meaning:—That such was the intensity of regard with which they received him, that, perceiving his infirmity of vision, they would gladly, if it had been possible, have repaired the defect, by giving their own eyes to him.

Again, towards the close of this epistle, the apostle says to the Galatians—"Ye see how *large a letter* I have written with my own hand." The word rendered *letter*, is not that which expresses an *epistle*, but one that denotes *handwriting;* and it is very generally agreed, that it refers to the size, and perhaps comparative rudeness of the characters in which he (contrary to his usual practice) had written his epistle, or at least the closing part of it, with his own hand. Having done so, he would naturally point to the labour it had cost him, as a proof of special interest and regard. The fact of imperfect vision would explain this much better than the usual hypothesis that, being accustomed to write Hebrew, he could not very easily write the Greek, but in large and crude characters—a supposition to which we see very considerable objection. Imperfect vision also explains much more satisfactorily, the undoubted fact that Paul almost invariably wrote his epistles by the hand of others. This practice of his was known to all those whom he addressed, as we should expect in the case of a person labouring under defective vision.

We know that Paul was blind for three days at Damascus; and, as we hinted in considering that event, it may be doubted whether his sight was ever *perfectly* restored. It is true, that he seems to fix the commencement of his infirmity to a date some years later; but it may be merely, that the affection of his eyes then became more intense than it ever had been before; or, still more probably, that this contrasting disqualification became more burdensome to him in his state of spiritual exaltation, and he was then excited to pray for its removal.

It further appears from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, that Paul was almost never alone, and never appears, after the date indicated, to have taken the shortest journey by himself. He seems to have been always in the hands, and under the inspection (if we may so speak) of his friends and followers. We find him continually attended from place to place by parties of his hearers and disciples, and he seems always to count upon and wish for such attendance. All this becomes exceeding natural in the case of a person rendered much dependent upon the kind attention of friends, by bodily infirmities of any kind—but especially by partial blindness.

Taken separately, the circumstances we have mentioned do not perhaps amount to much in the way of proof or evidence; but taken together, the argument they furnish is more than can be advanced in favour of any other suggestion which has been offered.

Forty-Ninth Week—Sixth Day.

LUKE.—ACTS XVI. 11.

The western portion of Asia Minor, confronting the Ægean Sea, was composed of the three provinces of Mysia, Lydia, and Caria. The first was the northernmost of the three,

and the other two were comprised under the designation of "Asia," that is, Asia Proper, or at least popular. This is the "Asia" of the apostolic history, but is not co-extensive with the Roman proconsular province so named, for that included Phrygia and Mysia, which the sacred writer distinguishes from it. As thus limited, "Asia" has the same geographical relation to Asia Minor, which Portugal has to Spain; and Mysia has the same relation to this "Asia," as that portion of western coast belonging to Spain, being the province of Gallicia, has to Portugal, which it overlaps.

This territory comprised at a later period "the seven churches that are in Asia." It was at first the intention of Paul and Silas to turn their steps south-westward into this region, and preach the gospel in its many rich and populous cities. But they learned, perhaps by direct revelation, that it was not the mind of the Spirit that they should as yet labour in this field, probably because other fields were more ripe for the harvest. They therefore turned their faces northward, to go into Bithynia. But here also "the Spirit suffered them not." By this time it must have been guessed, if not distinctly intimated, that Europe was to be their destination; and they therefore proceeded westward through Mysia, and reaching the coast at Troas, awaited there for more distinct intimations of the Divine will. In Troas was preserved the name of old Troy, the site of which lay about fifteen miles to the north; and now, in their march for spiritual conquests, the apostolical party were upon the theatre of a strife which the genius of poetry has made the source of a far-spread and long-enduring education in images of blood, and pride, and passion—very different from those doctrines of peace, and love, and self-negation, which, from this same point, Paul and Silas stand ready to bear away to the nations of the west.

Troas, or more fully Alexandria Troas, was intended as a sort of memorial of ancient Troy, and received its name and origin from the successors of Alexander. It was favoured by the Romans, who liked to trace their origin to the Trojans;

but it had not at this time acquired the importance which it at length attained; and it is probable that few of the ruins which now, embowered in a thick wook of oaks, attest that importance, belong to buildings that had any existence when Paul was there. Still it was a considerable and prosperous place, and had a good harbour, the resort of vessels arriving from or departing for the coasts of Thrace and Macedonia. That Paul went to this place may therefore indicate that he expected that he should have to take a passage here, though he knew not yet precisely for what quarter. This reminds one of the case of Abraham, who went forth not knowing, till after he had set forth, whither he was to go. But the apostle was not long left in any doubt of his destination. In visions of the night he beheld a man whom, from his garb, and perhaps from his dialect, he knew to be a Macedonian, draw near to him, and standing before him in an attitude of entreaty, implore him to come to the aid of his countrymen, in words simple and few, but deeply emphatic in their carnestness—"COME OVER INTO MACEDONIA AND HELP US." Paul knew how to interpret this summons, and we may be sure that it was most promptly obeyed. We cannot doubt that the next morning saw the friends down at the harbour among the shipping, inquiring for the vessel that was soonest to sail for Europe. But before their departure an addition was made to their number in the person of the author of the apostolic history, Luke, "the beloved physician," who at this point indicates his presence with the party, not only by quietly exchanging the third person for the first in his narrative, but by a transition from the historical to the autoptical style of narration, as shown in the much fuller statement of details.

Luke had probably known Paul before at Antioch, of which place he is supposed to have been a native, and where he seems to have been early converted, perhaps by Paul himself. Whether he had come over direct from Gentilism, or had intermediately passed through Judaism as a proselyte, does not appear; but it is clear that he was not a born Jew,

as Paul himself distinguishes him in Col. iv. 14, from disciples of Jewish descent. His name, indeed, indicates not only that he was of Gentile descent, but that he was either a slave or a freedman. That name Lucas is a contraction of Lucanus ; and in this contracted form it frequently occurs as a name given to slaves. The fact that Luke was a physician strengthens the impression derived from his name, respecting his condition as a freedman. The higher ranks of Romans were averse to the practice of medicine, which they left rather to their slaves. Many of these were highly educated, and only such as showed the requisite talent were trained to the liberal arts. In Luke, then, we behold an educated and well-informed Greek, versed in the medical sciences. That he was also a painter there is no evidence to show, and the tradition is disregarded by modern writers, although there are extant three or four pictures ascribed to his pencil. All that we can with any confidence adduce concerning him, therefore, is, that although a Syro-Greek by birth, he had been a slave at Rome, where he acquired and practised for the benefit of his owner the art of medicine ; and that after his services had been rewarded with freedom, he returned to his native city, and continued there the practice of his profession.

Whether Luke joined Paul, Silas, and Timothy, at Troas, by pre-arrangement, or by a providential meeting, or with reference to Paul's delicate health, cannot be said. But it is certain that the friends received him as a valuable associate in addition to their party. His medical skill might be very useful to gain an opening for publishing the gospel among the Gentiles, as we now find it in modern missions to the heathen. Even the gift of healing would not, as Neander observes, render this useless ; since that gift was applicable only in particular cases, where its possessors were prompted to employ it by an immediate Divine impulse or feeling excited in their minds.

We shall be able to trace Luke as the companion of Paul through most of the remaining history, and with Paul that history leaves him at Rome. What became of him after the

apostle's death is not known, and the traditionary accounts are not only of little intrinsic value, but differ in every point —as to the scene of his labours, and as to the place, the time, and the manner of his death. It is, however, generally understood that he was of mature age when he became acquainted with Paul, and that he survived him some years, dying at the age of eighty or eighty-four.

Forty-Ninth Week—Seventh Day.

PHILIPPI.—ACTS XVI. 11, 12.

THE voyagers must have had a fair wind, for the same evening they reached the Island of Samothracia, and seem to have anchored for the night under the shelter of its high shore; and the next evening brought them to Neapolis. Thus they accomplished in two days a voyage, which at a later period, and in the reverse direction, occupied five days.[1] The Neapolis of Macedonia, at which they landed, was the port of Philippi, and is now represented by the small Turkish village of Cavallo. Paul and his party tarried not there, but went on to Philippi, which had thus the distinction of being the first city of Europe in which the gospel was preached by the great apostle of the Gentiles. We use this limiting phrase; because it cannot be supposed that, after so many years, it was the first time that the glad tidings had been heard in any European city. We cannot doubt that ere now the gospel had been preached at least in Rome, by disciples from Jerusalem and Antioch.

The original name of Philippi was Dalhos; but having been repaired and embellished by Philip, the father of Alexander, it acquired from him its later name. Its historical fame is however Roman, rather than Greek; several battles having been fought there, in the civil wars of the Romans—

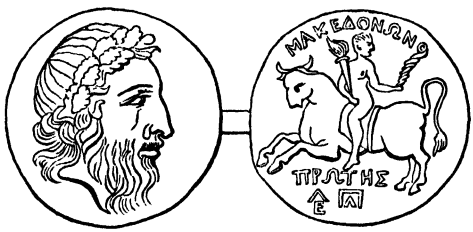
[1] Compare Acts xvi. 11, 12, with xx. 6.

particularly that decisive one between Antony and Brutus; and it was here that, after he had lost that battle, the latter destroyed himself. At this present time it was, the sacred historian informs us, "the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony." Here is an instance of that minute historical accuracy in the author of the Acts, of which we have already pointed out many instances, and which, even apart from its claims to inspiration, affords the means of critically establishing its authority as an historical document. It is indeed disputed whether the text should be understood, as translated above, or to mean "a city of the first part of Macedonia," which might seem preferable, were it not that it exacts a slight change in the original text (πρώτη to πρωτῆς), which no manuscript sanctions. Either way we have two assertions, the truth of which is amply confirmed from history and from coins, that Macedonia was divided into parts, and that Philippi was "a colony;" the altered translation merely makes the part of Macedonia, in which Philippi stood, the first of the "parts" into which it was divided, or Macedonia Prima, and such we know that it was; the fact of its being the "chief city"—though it disappears from this rendering, is conveyed in the fact of its being a "colony"—for a city that was "a colony" must needs have been the chief city (*urbs primaria*) of any "part" of Macedonia in which it stood."

Livy gives a particular account of the division of Macedonia into four parts or regions, by the consul L. Emilius Paulus who, in the year 168 B.C. reduced the country to the yoke of Rome.[1] Accordingly, there are extant coins of all these parts or provinces, except the third; and those of the *first* are remarkably abundant. These coins bear on their obverse the heads of different deities, and on their reverse different symbols, with the inscription—ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ ΠΡΩΤΗΣ —(money) *of the Macedonians of the first province.* A Roman colony was a settlement of Roman—that is Italian—citizens and soldiers, but chiefly soldiers, in some cities of a

[1] Liv. *Hist.* xlv. ch. 29.

conquered country, with the view of maintaining and consolidating within it the Roman authority and influence.



These colonies enjoyed very high municipal privileges and exemptions, and were so many lesser Romes, centres of Latin population in foreign lands. That a town was a colony, was therefore a distinction fit to be mentioned; and that Philippi was such, as Luke states, is proved by the fact, that there are colonial coins of Philippi, from Augustus to Caracalla, which show that the full Roman name of the place was Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis. One of the series is contemporary with the visit of Paul, being of the reign of Claudius, whose head appears on the obverse. On the reverse, which we offer, is the colonial inscription, with the genius of the city placing a garland on the emperor's head. The Latin inscription points to the same fact—those on the coins of other towns, not colonies, in the Eastern Empire of Rome being in Greek.

In these colonies all the insignia of distinctively Roman power, were more conspicuously displayed, than in other towns of the same province; and Paul, as he trod the streets of Philippi, could not fail to call to mind, that he was a Roman citizen. Indeed, by recollecting the predominantly Roman character of the place, some of the incidents that occurred at Philippi will be the better understood.

It appears, from the existing remains, that Philippi occupied a fertile plain between two ridges of mountains. The Acropolis is upon a mount, standing out into this plain, from the north-east, and the city seems to have extended from the base of it, for some distance to the south and south-west. The remains of the fortress, upon the top, consist of three ruined towers, and considerable portions of walls of stone, brick, and very hard mortar. The plain between exhibits nothing but ruins, or heaps of stone and rubbish, overgrown with thorns and briars; nothing is now seen of the numerous busts and statues, and thousands of columns, and vast masses of classic ruins, of which earlier travellers speak. Ruins of private buildings are still discernible; also something of a semicircular shape, probably a forum or market-place—perhaps the one in which Paul and Silas received their undeserved stripes. The most prominent among the ruins are the remains of an ancient palace, the architecture of which is grand, and the materials costly. The pilasters and chapiters are of the finest white marble, and the walls were formerly encased in the same stone, but have gradually been knocked down by the Turks, to furnish materials for their preposterous grave-stones. A large portion of the ruins are said to be covered with stagnant water. We owe these particulars to the journal of the American missionaries, Dwight and Schauffler,[1] who state:—"We stopped about three hours among these interesting remains. What enthusiasm would have seized us if we had discovered the prison of Paul and Silas (if such a thing were possible), and the dwelling of the happy 'δεσμοφύλαξ,' or '*keeper of the prison.*' Gladly would we have given up the privilege of seeing and copying the splendid remains of the palace, and all the old walls and towers of the Acropolis, where Paul never set his foot. But so it is; we could see but little of the whole, and examine still less; and what remains of this cradle of Christianity in

[1] Printed in the American *Missionary Herald*, for September 1836, where two original views are given—one a general view, and the other a rough representation of the so-called "palace."

Europe is exceedingly disfigured." One of these travellers realized what must have been Paul's first view of the city, coming, as he did, by the road from Neapolis. There is a Roman road direct from Neapolis, paved throughout, and cut through the least passable part of a moderate swell of mountains:—"When we arrived at the top of the mountain, the place where Paul must have had the first glance of that plain and city, where he was to open the proclamation of the gospel on European ground, I turned round to see what impression the spectacle might have made upon him, and truly a more inspiring prospect cannot well be fancied. The road is broad enough, and the hill so widening towards the plain, that a very large and rich part of the latter becomes visible at once; and the direction of the road is such, as to throw the hill projecting, with the Acropolis on its summit, and the city of Philippi at its base, right into the centre of the picture. . . . I have no doubt that Paul, and his little missionary band, stopped here with wonder and delight, and looked down into the plain with anticipations of absorbing interest. It may be they sat down upon some of these rocks to rest themselves, after the wearisome mountain was gained, and to strengthen each other in the Lord, by pious conversation, and by the repetition of many a precious promise respecting the conversion of the whole world, and the eventual universality of Christ's kingdom. It may be that they withdrew a little into a solitary place among these woods, to join in prayer for yonder Philippi, for all Macedonia, and for a fallen world."

Fiftieth Week—First Day.

LYDIA.—ACTS XVI. 13-15.

THERE was, of course, a good proportion of Greeks along with the Latin population of Philippi. A military and uncommercial town, however, had little attraction for Jews, and they were consequently few in number there. But they seem to have had, outside the town, among the trees, upon the banks of the river Strymon, a small place for prayer, such as were used in the absence of synagogues, and such as we still find in use among the Moslems. Or it may be, that

the meeting was in the open air, the vicinity of the river being chosen perhaps merely as offering a secluded spot, or possibly from the ideas of purity which the Jews associated with the presence of running water, or even for facilities of ablution, as might at this day happen among the Mohammedans. It is rare at the present time to witness worship, by a number of persons, under such circumstances, as they usually find other means for ablution; but it happened to us, that the *first* acts of Moslem worship we ever witnessed, were thus performed. This was nearly a quarter of a century ago, in the Caucasian Mountains, at a time when many Turkish prisoners of war were kept there by the Russians. Bodies of these were conducted, at the hours of prayer,

under a guard of soldiers, to any open place traversed by a river, near the military stations, and after performing their ablutions at the stream, they prostrated themselves upon the green sward, and went through the several acts of their remarkably demonstrative worship.

Having learned at what place, upon the river's brink, the Jews of Philippi were wont to assemble on the Sabbath-day, Paul and his companions repaired thither on the first Sabbath after their arrival. The congregation was found to be composed chiefly of females, perhaps from the husbands having become remiss in the absence of a synagogue, or, as likely, from many of the women being wives of Gentile husbands—that is, Gentile women who had been proselyted to Judaism, or Jewish women married to Gentiles. The friends sat down here, and Paul proceeded to speak to these women of the things of Christ. There was among them one at least "whose heart the Lord opened;" and being opened, it drank in with eager gladness the tidings of a crucified and risen Saviour, which she then for the first time heard. She was converted; and after she and her household had been baptized, she invited the party to become her guests—overcoming their reluctance, by the cordial urgency of her entreaties. The name of this woman was Lydia. She did not belong to this place, but had come from Thyatira, which afterwards became the seat of one of "the seven churches that are in Asia," to which He "who liveth, but was dead," sent one of the apocalyptic messages. We are told, that she was "a seller of purple;" either dyeing cloths with that highly prized colour, or selling cloths so dyed. And here, once more, we may direct attention to an instance of Luke's minute accuracy, in the fact, that her native Thyatira was a place noted for its dyeing business. An inscription has been found there, which purports to have been originally set up by the guild of dyers, in honour of Antonius Claudius Alphenus, a distinguished man of the reign of Caracalla. It is less known that the city of Thyatira is still thus distinguished. But we are assured of this fact, by Sir Emerson Tennent,

who, in his *Letters from the Ægean*, says—"We learned in answer to inquiries on the subject, that the cloths which are dyed scarlet here,[1] are considered superior to any others furnished by Asia Minor, and that large quantities are sent weekly to Smyrna, for the purposes of commerce."

There are some matters for reflection, which although they lie on the surface of Lydia's history, are not the less entitled to our attention.

We may first observe the very remarkable providence of God, in regard to this woman. She was, as we have seen, a native of, and probably had been long a resident in, a city of that very region in which Paul had been forbidden to preach the gospel. But in the course of worldly business, she is brought to the strange city of Philippi, and there she hears from that same Paul, the word of life. As the providence of God always appoints, so it often removes, the bounds of our habitation, and not seldom makes the change of our outward condition or place of abode, materially subservient to the designs of his grace respecting our salvation.

That the heart of Lydia was "opened," intimates that it had till then been shut. Nor was this any singular or peculiar case. The human heart is naturally shut against gospel truth, by spiritual blindness and carnal affections. The natural mind is incapable of perceiving its excellence, and instinctively recoils from it, because its doctrines are humbling to pride, and its requirements involve the sacrifice of many of man's cherished principles of action, and many objects of his ambition and desire. External means are wholly insufficient to overcome these obstacles to a cordial reception of the gospel. We may with great exactness describe colours to the blind, or define sounds to the deaf; but our information can impart no distinct ideas, for want of the seeing eye or the hearing ear.

The opening of Lydia's heart was the Lord's doing. Whatever is done in Heaven's great work with the soul of man, is the Lord's own work. We do not know that any

[1] The purple of Scripture was a kind of scarlet.

hand but his can even *touch* the heart, and sure we are, that none but He can *open* the heart, and, being opened, can cleanse it, fill it, satisfy it. He opens not only the receptive organ—the heart—but He opens even the perceptive organs —He opens the ear, He opens the eye, He enlightens the understanding, He changes the heart, He makes us willing, He fulfils in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. All is of Him; and every one who has in any age been savingly drawn to Christ, will rejoice to give God the undivided glory of every onward step in that great work—the conversion of a ruined soul. He who *begins* the good work in any of us, is He who will also *perform* it—until the day of Jesus Christ.

But while we see that the opening of Lydia's heart, was not Lydia's own work, nor Paul's work, but the work of the Lord —we feel no surprise that He should distinguish this woman by His blessing. "It is in agreement with His usual ordinance, that they who seek shall find. For observe her conduct, she was but a sojourner in Philippi, come hither as a seller of purple cloth, for which her part of Asia was famous. But she had not, when she left her home, left her religion behind her. She had sought out those who worshipped God, and had gone with them to the place of prayer. Neither was she so engrossed with worldly affairs as to neglect all other things. She was not in Jerusalem or in Judea, where the Sabbath would be observed by all; but she was in a heathen city, where it would be observed by none but Jewish residents. She might therefore have carried on her trade, and sold her purple cloth; but she had been brought to the knowledge of that God, who when He made the world, blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it; and therefore we find her not in the market, nor offering her purple to the passers by; but joining a party which had gone out of the city, by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made."[1]

[1] *Practical Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, by John Bird Sumner, D.D., Lord Bishop of Chester [now Archbishop of Canterbury]. London, 1838.

Fiftieth Week—Second Day.

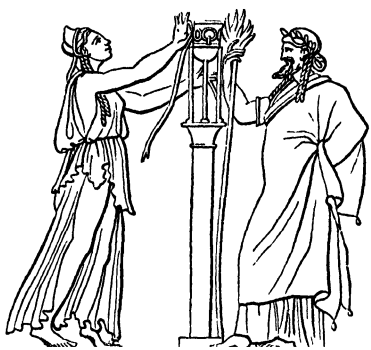
THE PYTHONESS.—ACTS XVI. 16-19.

PAUL and his associates seem, during their stay in Philippi, to have frequented constantly the place of prayer beside the river. On the way thither from Lydia's house, where they lodged, they were followed by "a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination," who, in the excited manner of her sort when under what was regarded as their inspiration, kept crying out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation." But Paul did not like to have attention called to them in this manner, or to receive even a true testimony from a source so suspicious, and on which damaging misconceptions might be founded. He was, besides, wearied out with this continual interruption; and from all these causes, as well as, probably, from compassion for the girl's state, and to show the dominion which *his* Lord exercised over all the powers of darkness, he commanded the spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, to depart from her. The spirit left her immediately; and, being restored to her right mind, she no longer conceived herself possessed of prophetic gifts.

It has been much questioned what was the nature of this "spirit of divination" which possessed her. In the original it is called "a *spirit of Python.*" We shall therefore endeavour to ascertain what this form of possession distinctively was, without entering here into general inquiries as to the nature of possession, or as to forms and species of divination, merely referring to what has been lately stated as to the prevalence of multiplied forms of divination in this age.

Python was a name of Apollo; and as the Pythian Apollo, the chief seat of his worship was at Delphi, and his oracle there was the most famous in the world, and the last that lost its credit. At this place was the famous tripod, seated

on which over an opening to a cavern below, the priestess became inspired, and delivered responses and prophecies. The tripod, when not in use, was elevated upon an altar in the shape of a pillar, as represented in the engraving, where also a priest and priestess of the Pythian Apollo are seen.[1]



The Delphic priestess was the proper *Pythia*, as receiving the inspiration of the Pythian Apollo in its highest and most orthodox form. But the Pythian inspiration was not supposed to be limited to this form, to the Delphic priestesses, or to Delphi. Cassandra was inspired by Apollo apart from any of these conditions; and it occurs to us that it may be far the best course to glance through *her* case, as represented (in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus) in an age in which this species of inspiration was fully credited, in order to learn the nature of this delusive inspiration in an instance which, like the one before us, is not involved in Delphic rites. The peculiarity in the case of Cassandra was not in the aspects of her possession, but in the doom that her true prophecies should not be believed.

Cassandra is not always in this state of elevation, but the

[1] From one of the sculptured faces of an ancient trilateral pedestal; copied from CREUZER'S *Symbolik*, plate lxxv., fig. 280, *a*. The well-known Apollo Belvidere represents the Pythian Apollo.

spirit takes possession of her for a time, and, when the occasion occurs, with painful force and constraining violence, extorting agonizing cries:—

"O! O! hu! hu! alas!
The pains again have seized me! my brain turns!
Hark to the alarum and prophetic cries!
The dizziness of horror swims my head!" [1]

Again:—

"O what a mighty fire comes rolling on me!
Help! help! Lycean Apollo! Ah me! ah me!

The future which she foretells seems to her a visionary present, while yet known to be and declared to be a future. Thus Cassandra sees and proclaims the future coming of Orestes, which did not happen till eight years after her own death:—

"Who's at the gates. a young man, fair and tall,
A stranger, by his garb, from foreign parts;
Or one who long since has been exiled here:
A stripling, murderer of his mother's breast!
Brave youth, avenger of his father's death!
He'll come to build the high-wrought architrave,
Surmounting all the horrors of the dome.
I say, the gods have sworn that he shall come."

In like manner she sees her own death represented to her before it occurs. But besides this, she, as in what is called second sight, or in the alleged visions of the mesmeric trance, beholds and describes, at the time then present, what is transacting elsewhere. Thus she sees and describes, while she is without, the murder taking place within the palace of Agamemnon, through every step of its progress:—

"Alas! ah wretch! ah! what art thou about?
A man's in the bath—beside him there stands
One wrapping him round—the bathing clothes drop,
Like shrouds they appear to me, dabbled in blood!
O for to see what stands there at the end!
Yet 'twill be quick—'tis now upon the stroke!
A hand is stretched out—and another too!
As though it were a-grasping—look, look, look!"

[1] All the extracts are from the translation of the *Agamemnon*, published by Mr Symmons in 1824.

As a prophetess of Apollo, Cassandra wears a distinctive dress, although a slave, that is, a captive of the sword. So when she becomes aware that Clytemnestra is designing her death, she lets us know:—

"She there, that two-legged lioness . . . . .
Will kill me! woeful creature that I am!
. . . . . .
O why then keep this mockery on my head?
Off with ye, laurels, necklaces, and wands!
The crown of the prophetic maiden's gone.
[*Tearing her robes.*
Away, away! die ye, ere yet I die!
I will requite your blessings thus, thus, thus!
Find out some other maiden, dight her rich,
Ay, dight her rich in miseries like me!
And lo! Apollo, himself, tearing off
My vest oracular! Oh, cruel god!
Thou hast beheld me, e'en in these my robes,
Scoff'd at when I was with my kinsmen dear,
And made my enemies' most piteous despite,
And many a bad name had I for thy sake;
A Cybele's mad woman, beggar priestess,
Despised, unheeded, beggared, and in hunger;
And yet I bore it all for thy sweet sake."

The estimation of her to which she thus painfully alludes, indicates the existence, even thus early, of a lower class of soothsaying women, by some deemed crazed, by others regarded as impostors, with whose claims hers were confounded. Indeed, at times she inclines to doubt whether this is not really the case with herself:—

"Or rave I, dreaming of prophetic lies,
Like some poor minstrel knocking at the doors?"

The same estimate, varying somewhat, appears in the remarks of the chorus upon her impassioned utterances:—

"God dwells within her, though she be a slave."

Again:—

"We have heard, O prophetess, of thy great name."

And further on:—

"O sure thou art one of a deep-raging soul,
Driven mad by a god, crying out."

And still more pointed:—

> "'Tis some god who has put that bad sprite in thy mind,
> With the power of a demon, and a strong heavy spell."

Yet afterwards the chorus admits:—

> "To us thy words seem worthy of belief."

We are thus enabled to discern that contemporary opinion was nearly as varied and uncertain with regard to the Pythian inspiration as is our own; and that the explanations of it embraced all the alternatives which different commentators have applied to the case of the Pythoness of Philippi.

She also was a slave, for it is stated that she "brought her masters much gain by sooth-saying." Anciently, and indeed at present in the countries where slavery exists, the money value of a slave was greatly affected by the profession or trade he had acquired, by the accomplishments he had been taught, or by his capacity in any way of earning money for his master. Some possessed such qualities when they fell into slavery (a large proportion of the slaves being prisoners of war), and some acquired them in slavery, the masters being watchful to cultivate for their own profit any special aptitudes their slaves manifested. Hence the ancient Greeks and Romans possessed slaves of all professions—not only men bred to the various mechanic arts, but philosophers, rhetoricians, grammarians, dramatists, physicians. Those also who made a trade of the arts of divination, were watchful after individuals who manifested qualities, aptitudes, or even infirmities, which might prove advantageous to them in their business, and sought to obtain them by purchase or otherwise. Those who, like this damsel, possessed the "spirit of divination," were doubtless rare, and their value correspondingly high. The value of the girl to her owners seems to be shown by the fact that she had a plurality of "masters;" because her price had been either too great to be advanced by a single person, or such as no one person had cared to risk upon the uncertainty of her life.

The deliverance of this damsel by Paul from the spirit

that possessed her, at once divested her of this rare value as a slave, and deprived the masters of the current gains from her services. She was no longer of any more value for sale or service than any other female slave. They were not likely to regard this serious loss, the loss of their gains, with complacency. They were indeed greatly enraged. But as they could not well urge what had been done to their private loss as an offence against the public peace, and as they were doubtless unwilling to call attention to the real nature of the transaction, lest it should have redounded to the credit of the apostle, they found it convenient to assume a wondrous zeal for the public religion; and seizing Paul and Silas, who appeared as the leading persons of the missionary party, they hauled them before the magistrates, then sitting in the court or forum, held in the market-place, as the place of greatest concourse, just as in many of our own old towns the court-house is in or over the market. In a colony like this, the magistrates were chosen by the inhabitants, were necessarily Romans, holding generally military commands, and had a wholly independent jurisdiction, being in no way responsible even to the governor of the province, who could not come into the colony to exercise any authority in it: This peculiarity is, with his usual precision, indicated by Luke, by the use of the peculiar and proper title (στρατηγός) not elsewhere used in Scripture except to denote a military command, being, in fact, the Greek for *prætor*. He uses the plural number, the magistrates being usually two, and hence also frequently called duumviri. Cicero mentions it as an innovation in his time that the duumviri of Capua had assumed the title of prætors, and had lictors going before them, not with sticks or staves, but with fasces, or bundled rods, like the prætors at Rome: and he thought that in a few years they might affect the title of consuls. The example did in fact spread; and these magistrates were everywhere called prætors, and had their fasces borne before them, in nearly all the Roman colonies.

Fiftieth Week—Third Day.

THE JAILER.—ACTS XVI. 20-40.

THE offence of which Paul and Silas were accused before the prætors was that, being Jews, and as such merely tolerated themselves, and thereby bound to be the more guarded in their conduct, they had been there teaching a new religion, contrary to the law. We lately showed that the heathen of that day were very ready to adopt the religion of foreigners. But when they did so, it was merely some new and congenial form of idolatry, with its images and symbols; and this, among the Romans, could only be done with the sanction of the public authorities, without which it remained unlawful to adopt or recommend the worship of any gods but those already acknowledged, or to attempt to detach the people from the worship already established. Therefore this would have seemed unlawful, *whatever* the religion might have been, without a sanction previously obtained; but it was doubly so in the case of Judaism (and the apostles were regarded simply as Jews), seeing that it was known to be *adverse* to all subsisting idolatries, and that it refused to take any place with or beside them. This was the secret of the heathen hostility to Judaism, and to Christianity while regarded as a species of Judaism, and afterwards to Christianity for its own sake, when its principles came to be better understood. In the latter case it was more intense, because, to equal hostility against idolatry, as such, it added dogmas of its own, at which Pagan pride revolted.

The magistrates, very sensitive to whatever might excite public disturbance, as it was insinuated this kind of teaching must do, and perceiving that the mere statement of the charge made a stir among the multitude, sought to allay the ferment by the infliction of summary punishment without the form of

trial. They therefore directed the lictors to beat the apostles with their rods. The clothes of Paul and Silas were hastily pulled off, and their bared backs exposed to this severe infliction. The lictors unbound their fasces, and with

the leathern thongs proceeded to bind the prisoners, to whose backs they then, with a strong hand, applied the rods of elm. This seems to have been reckoned a severer punishment than the scourging with thongs, as used among the Jews. Besides, in that case, the number of strokes was limited by law, not exceeding forty, and therefore in practice thirty-nine; whereas the blows with the rods were only limited by the discretion of the magistrates. This, therefore, was one of the occasions to which Paul refers when he tells the Corinthians, "Thrice was I beaten with rods;" and to which also may be applied the declaration that he had suffered "stripes *above measure*," that is, probably, not limited in number, as among the Jews, from whom he had, he says, "five times received forty stripes save one." [1]

Having been thus chastised, Paul and Silas were sent

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 23–25.

to the town prison, with special injunctions to the jailer to keep them safely. Aware of the responsibility imposed upon him by such a charge, the jailer not only thrust them into the innermost and safest part of the prison, but "made their feet fast in the stocks." The instrument thus designated was ordinarily a wooden, or sometimes iron-bound machine, by which any member, and especially the neck, was so confined that it could not be raised—or into which the feet only were thrust and constrained, as in the present instance; or, finally, it was one in which the person was held—all the members, neck, hands, and feet—by means of five holes. But the painful constraint of the stocks, added to the smart of their torn backs, had no power over the undaunted spirit of the prisoners. The Lord, for whom it was their privilege to suffer, was with them in the low dungeon, and filled their hearts with spiritual gladness, which found expression in holy songs, which they sang together in the night season. The other prisoners heard them, we are told; and doubtless they were much astonished to hear such sounds, instead of the accents of lamentation and the groans of pain. As Paul and Silas were both Hebrews, there can be little doubt that they sang some of the Psalms of David in their native tongue; and Hebrew singing never fails to attract the marked attention of those unused to it, and unacquainted with the language, as was assuredly the case with the other persons in this heathen prison. We can remember to have listened to it with strange fascination in early boyhood, as proceeding from a synagogue close by our abode.

But suddenly the voice of those who sang was stayed, and the attention of those who listened interrupted, by a terrible convulsion which made the walls of that strong prison to totter, all its gates and doors to fly wide open, and the bonds to fall from the limbs of all its captives. This last incident of the *loose* bonds of the prisoners being made to drop off, is important as showing the miraculous nature of the event. It calls to mind the rending of the flowing veil of the temple by the earthquake at our Lord's crucifixion. The keeper

waking suddenly from his sleep, and beholding the prison thus open, made no question that all his prisoners had escaped. He knew that for this his life was forfeited; and to avoid the ignominy of the public death that awaited him on the morrow, he drew forth his sword, at once to anticipate and escape that doom. Suicide was the common resort of Romans under such circumstances, and in their view it had more the nature of a merit and a privilege than of a crime. But Paul, perceiving the poor man's intention, called to him loudly, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!"

If, then, they did not escape, and if they were, after all, at length freed by other means, what was the need of the earthquake? what the use of loosening their bonds? The earthquake was manifestly the act of God, designed for a special end. That end was not the liberation of the captives, but the liberation of their jailer. God had a purpose of high mercy towards him, and to fulfil it had sent Paul and Silas to his prison, had sent the earthquake to shake its walls—that this man's heart might be shaken; that this spirit, so long in bondage to the world and to the powers of darkness, might be set free. The keeper had doubtless heard—even the Pythoness had proclaimed it from day to day in the streets—that his captives had claimed to be divinely commissioned to declare to men the way of salvation unto eternal life. This, which had seemed to him an idle pretence, was now awfully authenticated by their songs in the night; by the earthquake; by the doors marvellously thrown open, as if for their egress; by the prisoners neglecting to do that which would have insured his ruin; and by their solicitude to preserve the life of one who had treated them so roughly. He saw divine acts that made him afraid; he recognised divine principles, which showed him the depravity of his own life and character; and a voice within told him that he was undone, unless a way of salvation were found. All this inner work was the act of a moment. He called for a light, and, hastening into the cell, cast himself at the feet of Paul and Silas, in token of his deep respect. He spoke not then—not enduring to

detain them longer in that dismal place; but having brought them forth into the outer and more commodious part of the prison, he addressed to them the most solemn inquiry man can make: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Their answer was very plain and simple: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Memorable words! written as with a sunbeam over the portals of the Christian church—the record of its liberties and the charter of its hopes. They then proceeded, more at leisure, to pour into his attentive and delighted ears the history of Jesus Christ; to declare His doctrine, and to explain what it was to believe on Him. All his household shared these glad tidings, having been assembled for the purpose, either at his suggestion or at the request of the apostles. The jailer then washed their stiffened stripes; and next he himself and his household were washed with the waters of baptism, and admitted into the church of Christ. After this he introduced them to the ease and comfort of his own apartments, and with kind solicitude set before them such refreshment as by this time they must have greatly needed; his hospitable cares being now and then interrupted by bursts of joy at the unutterable gain to his soul which he had that night made.

It was no sooner day than the lictors made their appearance at the prison. But it was not, as might be expected, to take Paul and Silas again before the prætors for further examination, but with an order for their immediate release. How this change had been produced we know not exactly; but we do know that it was by Him who has the hearts of all men in his hand, and can turn them as He wills. Earthquakes are always awful, and suited to alarm the guilty conscience. Especially were they terrible to the Romans, who regarded them as assured tokens of the anger of the gods; and this may have led them to reflect that they had committed a great iniquity and a culpable infraction of Roman law, for which they might be called to account, in subjecting Paul and Silas to punishment, in deference to popular clamour, without trial and condemnation, and, indeed, without having

heard a word of defence. Paul knew very well how grievously the prætors had committed themselves in this respect; how illegally they had acted; and how seriously their proceedings had, in a Roman colony, compromised the much-vaunted justice and dignity of the Roman law. He therefore firmly refused to depart from the prison, in that underhand way. He declared that he and his friend had been illegally treated. He proclaimed that in their persons the honour of Roman citizens had been outraged, and he demanded that their vindication should be as public as their punishment had been, by the magistrates coming themselves and releasing them in due form. The good jailer, who had supposed that they would have been glad to get away on any terms, was astonished at all this; but still more was he astonished when, with very little delay, the magistrates actually appeared at the prison, as Paul had demanded. They had no doubt been terrified at the intimation that the men they had thus injured were citizens of Rome, whose persons, as such, were inviolable. Indeed it is on record that the simple expression, "I am a Roman citizen" (*Civis Romanus sum*), often sufficed for those who were able to use it, in even the most distant and barbarous countries, to repress all violence against them; for Rome had made it widely known how well she was able, and how fully she was disposed to resent any injury offered to her citizens. But that a Roman citizen should have been scourged at all, much more scourged unheard, in a Roman colony, and by order of Roman magistrates, was an enormity which would have excited astonishment and indignation, wherever heard of, in every Roman breast, and in all probability would have been sternly noticed at Rome. Hence the prætors yielded to the demands of Paul, being probably but too glad to escape so cheaply from the consequences of a fault so serious. They came, therefore, and, apologizing for their mistake, and declaring their conviction of the apostles' innocence, led them forth from the prison—only politely intimating that it might, under the circumstances, be desirable that they should retire from the city at their earliest convenience.

With this hint Paul and Silas thought proper to comply; and after visiting the house of Lydia, and speaking encouragingly to the brethren, they took their departure from Philippi.

It has been asked why Paul and Silas (who, it appears, was also a citizen of Rome) did not urge their civic rights in order to *prevent* their punishment. The best answer seems to be, that the haste and clamour allowed them no opportunity, and would not permit them to be heard.

And if it be asked what use there was in urging this claim *afterwards*, when their liberation was already secured without it, the answer is that there is every reason why a man who has been wrongfully treated should claim his liberation as a right, and refuse to receive it as a pardon or a favour. If Paul had departed secretly, it might have been reported that he had broken from prison, which would have tainted his reputation, and have been injurious to his apostolic authority there and elsewhere. He was, moreover, bound both by civil and natural right to maintain his privileges, which he could not, without damage to others, suffer to be injuriously affected in his person. He had also special regard, as Doddridge observes, to the interests of Christianity in this place; "for such a token of public respect from the magistrates would undoubtedly encourage the new converts, and remove a stumbling-block out of the way of others, who might not have discerned the true value of the characters of Paul and Silas in the midst of so much injury as they had before suffered." It may be added, that the form of acknowledgment which Paul demanded, was not only just in itself, but particularly suitable to the place where it was made; for we learn that it was, especially among the Macedonians, thought a mark of innocence for any one to be publicly set free by the magistrates.

We find magistrates and others, here and elsewhere, readily yielding credence to Paul's assertion of his citizenship. It is possible that he was in possession of some document to substantiate the claim; but if not, the prompt admission of it is explained by the fact, that no one would make such a

claim lightly, as it was a capital offence to make an untrue pretension to the rights of citizenship.

It appears from the epistle which Paul, when at Rome about ten years after, addressed to the church at Philippi, that its members continued to cherish the most affectionate regard for him. Among the modes in which they evinced this regard, was that of sending contributions towards his subsistence—a rare distinction; for there seems to have been no other church from whom he received or would accept, this kind of assistance, as he often chose rather to labour with his own hands than to lay himself open to the slightest suspicion of interested motives.

Fiftieth Week—Fourth Day.

THESSALONIANS AND BEREANS.—ACTS XVII. 1-15.

It appears probable that Luke and Timothy, not having been involved in the late transactions, were, for the benefit of the infant church, left behind at Philippi; or, at least, that they did not attend Paul and Silas from that place. Timothy, however, joined them soon, either at Thessalonica or Berea; but we do not again find Luke the companion of Paul, until four or five years after, when he left Greece on his final recorded visit to Jerusalem. This is inferred from his dropping the first person with chap. xvi. 17, and resuming it in xx. 5, 6. If this sign be good to indicate Luke's presence, the want of it must be no less good to show his absence.

The destination of Paul and Silas was Thessalonica, nearly a hundred miles south-west from Philippi, and the chief city of the *second* part of Macedonia. To this place they pursued the usual course by way of Amphipolis and Apollonia, cities about thirty miles apart, and nearly equidistant between Philippi and Thessalonica. As nothing is recorded of their proceedings, it is probable that they merely passed a night

at each of these places on their way. Amphipolis was then a large commercial city, but both it and Apollonia are now in ruins.

Thessalonica was a far more important place, rich and populous, with a very large proportion of Jews among its inhabitants. These were, as usual, attracted by the commercial advantages of the place; and the same attraction has secured to the city an extraordinarily large Israelitish population down to the present day, when, of its seventy thousand inhabitants, more than one-half are of the Hebrew race. This extent of population renders it the third city of the Ottoman empire in Europe. It still preserves its ancient name, in the contracted form of Salonica; and rising up the slope of a hill upon the shore, presents, from the sea, an imposing appearance, which is not sustained by a nearer examination.

Paul and Silas remained here for three or four weeks, not merely preaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath-day, but also teaching daily from house to house. As was his wont with Jewish congregations, Paul "reasoned with them out of the Scriptures;" proving first that the promised Messiah, whoever He was, must needs have suffered and risen from the dead; and then proceeding to declare that the Jesus whom he preached was that Messiah. The effect upon the different classes of hearers is pointedly indicated. "*Some* of them (the born Hebrews) believed and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks *a great multitude*, and of the chief women *not a few*." It would thus appear, as Paul's own epistles to the Thessalonians intimate, that the basis of the church formed at this place was Gentile. From these epistles we gather some indications of his proceedings, not supplied by the Acts of the Apostles. It was here particularly that Paul manifested a marked carefulness in avoiding all appearance of living upon other men's labours, as if he made a gain of godliness; while he felt and avowed that they who ministered in spiritual things had a right to a subsistence from those who received their ministrations. But, though he pos-

sessed this right, he did not choose to exercise it. By his own hard labour, day and night, upon the rough hair-cloth used in the making of tents, he was enabled to maintain the honest dignity of independence in being chargeable to no one, and to convince those to whom he presented the gospel that he sought not theirs but them—thus maintaining his disinterestedness beyond all suspicion among the rich converts of Thessalonica. He, however, received once and again some aid from the small and therefore poor church at Philippi; for, from their tried love to him, and their established faith, it would have been churlish to refuse the aid which from the untried Thessalonians it would have been unsafe to accept. No man ever knew better than Paul how to show the right distinction at the right place.

The success at Thessalonica soon aroused the opposition of the Jews who believed not, and eventually they gave to their opposition the form which had been found effectual in other places. Fearing among the heathen to impart to their hostility a purely Jewish aspect, knowing that as such it would gain little attention from the heathen magistrates, they stirred up against Paul and Silas, by their vile insinuations and calumnies, the rabid passions of the worthless idlers and ignorant rabble, who have always abounded in the maritime towns of the Mediterranean; and soon gathering a company of these, they rushed with howling clamour, which presently set the town in an uproar, to the house where the apostles lodged. This was the dwelling of one Jason, who, if the same person who is mentioned by that name in Rom. xvi. 21, was a relative of Paul. The apostle and his companion were providentially absent from the house; and being thus baulked of their intended prey, the wild mob, having broken into the house, seized Jason himself, with some of the brethren who happened to be there, and dragged them along with swift violence before "the rulers of the city." Here Jason especially was accused of harbouring those, who, after having "turned the world upside down," had "come hither also," illegally prating to them, the subjects of Cæsar,

about "another king, one Jesus." The Jews had thus adroitly put into the mouths of their "rascal rabblement," that charge of political sedition which has always been found, more than any other, effectual for engaging the attention of the magistracy. Here, however, the persons mainly implicated in the charge were not present, and all the magistrates could do was to take security from Jason and the others, and allow them to depart.

Security, for what?

Not surely, as some suppose, that they would produce the accused the next day, for they would then have forfeited their bail by sending them away the ensuing night; but rather, perhaps, that they pledged themselves for their immediate departure from the city—which, in general, was all that either the magistrates or the Jews in such cases desired. It has been suggested by some, however, that Jason pledged himself no longer to receive them into his house; and by others, that the undertaking was, that the peace of the city should not be disturbed; while yet others have been content to suppose that Jason and his party made themselves responsible for the future good conduct of the accused. But all these latter alternatives seem to involve an admission to the discredit of Paul and Silas, to which, we should suppose, Jason would not have been likely to consent.

What was the form of the security given, we do not know. We always think of pecuniary pledges in such cases. It may have been so. But money was in those times less sufficient for all purposes—less the representative of moral value, than it has since become; and it may be that the only security required from Jason and the others, was their word or signature.

During the following night Paul and Silas, at the instance of their friends, took their departure from the city; and passing fifty miles or more to the south-west, tarried not till they reached Berea.

The Jews at this place were found to be more candid and better disposed than those of Thessalonica; for they searched

the Scriptures diligently, to ascertain whether they, indeed, bore such testimony to the doctrine he taught, as Paul habitually appealed to in declaring the gospel to Jewish hearers. Not but that the truth of the gospel might be, and has been, proved without such reference to the Old Testament. But in reasoning with Jews, it would be impossible, and if possible, unwise, to dispense with the advantage which the Old Testament gives; and all subsequent experience has proved that the old apostolic method is the most effectual for the conversion of the Jews. The results of such an examination of the Scriptures as that which the Bereans instituted, cannot be doubted; and although Paul was soon obliged to leave the place, on account of the persecution raised against him by some Jews who arrived from Thessalonica, the prospects of a good harvest were here so promising, that he left Silas and Timothy behind him to cultivate the field. Timothy had joined them at this place or at Thessalonica, and we may suppose it was not without a pang that Paul parted so soon again from one so beloved.

Conducted by the affectionate disciples at Berea, who were not to leave him till he was beyond the reach of danger, Paul proceeded towards Athens, going down to the sea, and then embarking in a vessel bound for that city. Here his escort left him and returned to Berea, with a message to Silas and Timothy to join him with all convenient speed.

Fiftieth Week—Fifth Day.

ATHENS.—ACTS XVII. 15-21; 1 THESS. II. 17-III. 5.

BEHOLD Paul, then, at Athens!

Before we consider his proceedings there, it may be desirable to notice the then subsisting condition of the renowned city to which he came. The ancient military and political splendour of Athens had departed, and the seat of government

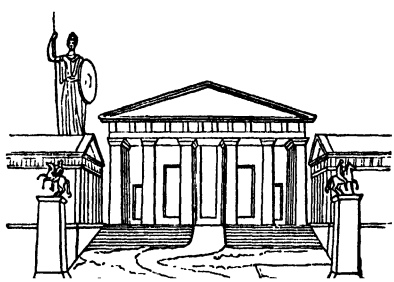
had, since the conquest of Greece by the Romans, been transferred to Corinth. Yet the sun of her glory had not yet set. She was still the centre of Grecian, and indirectly of Roman, refinement. Philosophy and the liberal arts were carefully cultivated; students, in every department, and from every quarter, resorted thither for improvement; and her streets were still crowded by senators and rhetoricians, philosophers and statesmen. The eye of the stranger rested with wonder upon the temples, and porticos, and statues—the masterpieces of art. It may be concluded that the apostle

landed at Phalerus, since this is the nearest Athenian port to one coming from Macedonia, and since the altars of the unknown gods, one of which he declares that he had noticed, were on the way from it to the city. As he stepped on shore at the port, he beheld before him the splendid temple of Ceres, another of Minerva, and another of Jupiter. A little farther on are some altars—and pausing to read the inscriptions, he finds on one of them the dedication, "To the Unknown God." Beyond, he could not fail to notice a temple without doors or roof. It is that of Juno, burnt by Mardonius at the time of the

Persian invasion, and standing in this state as a monument of the event. He enters the city gates: on either hand are painted porticos, with bronze statues of the most illustrious characters the city had produced. On the left is the Pnyx, a small but celebrated hill, where, standing on a block of bare stone, Demosthenes had in times of old sent forth the thunders of his eloquence to the Athenians assembled in front. Advancing onward, the traveller beholds the statues of Conon, and his scarcely less celebrated son Timotheus; and then he reaches another painted portico on whose walls is portrayed the battle of Mantinæa, and in the foreground of it is seen the commanding figure of Epaminondas. His eye then rests on a statue whose kindling features and vehement action bespeak the whirlwind of thought within—this is Demosthenes. Here also are the statues of Harmodius and Aristogiton, of Miltiades and Themistocles. *There* is Philip of Macedon, and near him his mightier son—Alexander the Great. Beyond is the majestic figure of Solon, the Athenian legislator, erected in front of a portico, where in glowing colours is depicted on one side the capture of Troy, and on the other the glorious struggle of the band of patriots against the countless hosts of Persia, on the field of Marathon. Paul would not enter the idol temples by which he was surrounded; but if he could have gone into that of Demus and the Graces hard by, he might have seen a statue in bronze, on which even an Israelite might have looked with some interest—being that of Hyrcanus, the Jewish pontiff-prince, voted by the Athenian people in acknowledgment of the courteous kindness he had often shown to their citizens.[1] On the right the stranger passes the Areopagus or Mars' Hill, ascended by sixteen steps from the forum or market-place on the south-east, and on the platform at the top is the Court of Areopagus, the Senate of Athens—that august assembly, which determined the weightiest matters of policy, and settled the religion of the state. It was at this bar Socrates was arraigned, and it was here Paul himself was soon to plead. In front of him

[1] See a copy of the entire decree in Josephus' *Antiq.* xii. 8, 5.

rises the Acropolis, crowned with the marvel of every age, from Pericles to the present—the Parthenon, formed of white Pentelican marble, and adorned with the finest sculptures from the hand of Phidias. By its side, upon the height, stands the champion of the city, Pallas Promachos, wrought in bronze, and towering so high above the other buildings that the plume of her helmet and the point of her spear were visible on the sea between Sunium and Athens.



But to describe, or even to indicate, all the temples and statues of Athens, were an endless task. There was every conceivable variety of structure and sculpture. There were statues colossal, full-sized, and diminutive; some in bronze, some in marble, others in stone, others in wood, others in pottery; some plain, some painted, others overlaid with ivory, or silver, or gold; some isolated, others projecting in relief from the wall. Well, therefore, might the sacred historian say that Paul's spirit was stirred within him when he scanned a city so "crowded with idols."[1] So signally was this the fact, that it struck the attention of even heathen observers. One[2] describes it as full of temples; another[3] tells us that there were more statues in this city than in all the rest of Greece; while the satirist[4] declares that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens.

It may be doubtful whether Paul had any intention of

[1] This is his expression; or, as in the margin of the authorized version, "full of idols"—better than "wholly given to idolatry."
[2] Cicero. [3] Pausanias. [4] Petronius.

preaching the gospel in Athens when he arrived there. It is possible that he merely sought temporary shelter, beyond the bounds of the Macedonian jurisdiction, until he should be joined by Silas and Timothy, and be able to concert with them the course of operations for the prosecution of the evangelization of Macedonia, which had been interrupted at Thessalonica and Berea. We gather this from the first of the epistles which he wrote not long after to the Thessalonians (ii. 17), in which he states that, when he left their city in such haste, he had anticipated but a very brief absence—"for an hour's time." He had expected that the storm would soon blow over, and that, after preaching the gospel for a time at Berea, he might return to Thessalonica. But new troubles had overtaken him at Berea, and he had fled for his life to a distant city. Yet at Athens he still cherished the hope that, by the time Silas and Timothy joined him, matters would have changed sufficiently for the better to permit their revisiting Thessalonica together.

But while thus awaiting their arrival, one of Paul's earnest and ardent temperament could ill brook to remain an idle spectator, with the grossest superstitions reigning around: "His heart was hot within him, and while he was musing the fire burned; then spake he with his tongue." He therefore entered with zeal upon his usual course of labour, varied in form by the peculiar conditions of the place. On the Sabbath-days he declared the gospel in the synagogues to the Jews and proselytes; and during the week he daily frequented the market-place at the foot of the Acropolis and the Areopagus, opening the truths of religion to the groups of loungers and the casual passers by. What a busy scene was here! Around were porticos fitted up as bazaars, for the sale of a thousand articles of commerce; here and there were circular sheds, one for the sale of slaves, another for the sale of provisions. In one place was the flesh-market, in another the horse-market; here the mart for books, there the stalls of fruits and flowers. Here the mind's eye beholds the apostle, in humble garb, encircled by dealers and chapmen, busy-

bodies and idlers, listening with curiosity to the strange doctrine flowing from a tongue eloquent indeed, but which, to the quick Athenian ear, perhaps betrayed a provincial accent. The stranger was clearly no common man. He appeared to possess high gifts of nature and attainments of human learning; for he could return a quick and pertinent answer to the most astute cavillers; and those who listened caught felicitous allusions to, and quotations from, their own poets. He was sure to lack no audience here; for "all the Athenians and the strangers that were there," says Luke, "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." This character of them is abundantly sustained by ancient writers. Demosthenes observes, in almost the same words: "We Athenians stay at home doing nothing, always delaying, and making decrees, and *asking in the market* if there be anything new." The love of gossiping and news among this mercurial people is shown by the fact, that there were at Athens regular gossiping houses, devoted to the accommodation of persons who met together to hear and tell news. These may have answered in some measure to our coffee-rooms, and it is stated that there were three hundred and sixty of them in Athens. Others resorted for exchange of news to the shops of the surgeons and the barbers.

In such a place, and among such a people, the zeal of the apostle could not fail, sooner or later, to bring him into collision with the prevailing system of idolatry. His strange doctrine, set forth with so much ability, learning, and eloquence, attracted public observation, and even the Epicureans and the Stoics, loitering about in learned leisure, did not deem it beneath their dignity to contend with such a disputant.

Fiftieth Week—Sixth Day.

PAUL ON MARS' HILL.—ACTS XVII. 22-34.

THE Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who encountered Paul in the market-place, seem to have been somewhat disappointed that they could not draw him into the sophistical subtleties of disputation; and that, however tempted into such perilous bye-paths, and tested in the wisdom of words, he adhered mainly to the enforcement and illustration of his great doctrine, that Jesus of Nazareth had come into the world to save sinners; and that His quality and mission had been shown by His resurrection from the dead, whereby He had become the first-fruits of them that slept.

The Epicureans treated this doctrine with scorn, saying to one another, "What would the babbler say?" The Stoics, as if they had caught a glimpse of his meaning, observed to him—"He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods!" This, the sacred historian informs us, was "because he preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection;" meaning, it would seem, that these two words, so frequent from his lips, were taken by them for names of the gods, male and female, Jesus and Anastasis (the resurrection), whose worship he proposed to their acceptance. Not that they were so stupid as to take Anastasis for the proper name of a person, but because the idea was familiar to their minds of erecting altars to qualities and conditions; and we know that there were in Athens, altars to Health, Peace, Fame, Modesty, Impetuosity, Persuasion, Democracy, and the like.

A perilous liability lurked darkly in the imputation that he was a setter forth of strange gods. The principle, lately explained, bearing upon this matter, had its origin in Athens, and was still enforced there. No people were more courteous and accommodating than they to the worship of other nations.

They had, indeed, at this time become anxious to enrol as their own all the gods of good repute upon the face of the earth. But the introduction of a new god was a matter of state privilege, and it was still death for a private person to introduce the worship of any god that had not been publicly recognised. It was under this law that Socrates had been tried and condemned, on the ground that he taught the worship of strange gods.

The tribunal that condemned him was called the Areopagus —from its place of session being upon the hill so named— translated Mars' Hill. This hill was sufficiently noticed last evening. The court was composed of the most distinguished men in Athens; and in public estimation was regarded as the most august tribunal, not only of Athens, but of Greece, if not of the civilized world. The eminent men were now wanting; but the tribunal subsisted, and its members were still persons of weight and dignity. Its ancient functions were also, in the main, preserved; for Athens was allowed after the Roman conquest of Greece, to retain its freedom, with its old laws, and tribunals, and magistrates, though necessarily subject to the imperial edicts. This court had still, therefore, the exclusive jurisdiction of determining what objects of worship should be admitted, and of inflicting punishment upon innovators. The court met for three consecutive days in every month; and when it next met Paul was arrested, and taken up the steps leading to the platform on the Areopagus, where the court was then sitting. It has, indeed, been questioned whether or not the apostle was formally arraigned, as a setter forth of strange gods, before the tribunal seated on the hill. This point must remain doubtful, but the balance inclines to the affirmative; and it is hard to see how such a court as this could entertain the matter at all but in its judicial capacity. It may be discerned also that Paul speaks with a clear consciousness of the results of an adverse issue on the point really involved. Whatever view be taken of this subject, there can be but one opinion as to the oration of the apostle—though, altogether admirable as

it is, the form in which it has reached us seems to be only a compendium or summary of his entire argument.

The delicacy of the opening words is entitled to attention. While Paul is willing to propitiate the good will of the judges, he remembers his own dignity as an apostle, and the gravity of the tribunal before which he stands; and although, on the one hand, careful to avoid any ground of offence, he takes care, on the other, to say nothing which can, by the most distant implication, be supposed to sanction the evil worship of the heathen. Hence with admirable discretion he chooses a form of words that may be taken as a compliment of the highest order, while it may also be understood to convey a delicate reproof of their excessive veneration for many gods. No translation can offer this alternative of sense in the same word. Our translators have chosen the bad sense: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are *too superstitious.*" But modern translators prefer the better sense, seeing that it was the object of the apostle not to irritate his hearers, but to induce them to listen to him, "Ye are exceedingly devout," or, "devout overmuch." He then addresses himself to the charge that he was a setter forth of strange gods. To this he pleads "not guilty." He says, "As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD." It is asserted that there were many altars consecrated to unknown deities at Athens, for when any public calamity was not removed by the invocation of the gods known to the laws, it was customary to let the victims loose into the fields, or along the public ways, and wherever they stopped there to sacrifice them "to the propitious unknown god." It has been urged with great earnestness that among these, or apart from these, there must have been an altar to Jehovah, as the unknown god. It certainly might be so, for the Greeks regarded the god worshipped at Jerusalem as peculiarly hidden, mysterious, and unknown, his very name being a cherished mystery among his worshippers. They were not unlikely to have set up an altar to him at or about the time they gave a statue

to his high-priest; and if they did this, they could hardly describe him otherwise than as the unknown god, for if they had applied for his name it could not have been imparted to them. Still, we do not see the need of this supposition. If the Athenians did receive relief in calamity, it could not have been from their own idols, which were "nothing." It could only have been from the one true God; and the altar they set up to the God who had delivered them, and who was to them an unknown god, was virtually to Him. Paul had, therefore, a perfect right to appropriate all such altars to the Lord. In these altars the state had, however unknowingly, recognised Him. Taken either way, it is plain that, by this one great master-stroke, Paul shows himself clear of the charge of declaring a god not acknowledged by the laws of Athens, or of the empire—"Him whom ye worship as the unknown God, declare I unto you."

Having thus skilfully opened his case, Paul proceeded with his statement; and it is very safe to say that in all the choicest oratory of the heathen world there is nothing to compare with the splendour, dignity, and majesty with which he entered on his explanation; and the felicity is no less admirable than the boldness, with which he refers to the scene by which he was surrounded. The court of the Areopagus was uncovered, and above him was only the canopy of heaven. Around him were plain and mountain, and in the distance was the expanse of ocean. Immediately before him was the Acropolis, with the glorious Parthenon, and the colossal statue of Minerva, and a thousand other images, many of them glittering with silver. How impressively then, but with what peril, must he have uttered these words: "God, that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, *dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands*, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds

of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.' Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, *we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.*"

Many persons in their unacquaintance with ancient facts and ideas, have been apt to consider that the apostle throughout his whole speech, utters truths previously unknown to the polite and learned assembly he addressed. But this would have been the certain ruin of his cause. Although he cites the poets but once or twice, the fact is that there is not one of his statements, separately taken, which might not remind his hearers of analogous declarations by their own philosophers and poets, whose evidence he could have adduced. The charm lies in the consummate skill with which this great master of reasoning interweaves, and binds up these indisputable positions, into a cogent and undeniable introduction to the really new matter he was about to produce.

We cannot here adduce the corroboratory admissions by the heathen writers. But in regard to his quotation from "certain of their own poets," we may mention that he is judged to refer to Aratus, the Cilician, and therefore a countryman of his own, and to Cleanthes, the Stoic of Assos in Troas—for in the *Phenomena* of the former, and in the *Hymn to Jove* of the latter, the corresponding expressions are found. We give them in the translation furnished by Mr Lewin.[1]

> "From Jove begin we—who can touch the string,
> And not harp praise to Heaven's eternal King?
> He animates the mart and crowded way,
> The restless ocean, and the sheltered bay.
> Doth care perplex? Is lowering danger nigh?
> *We are his offspring*, and to Jove we fly."
>
> ARATUS.

[1] *Life and Epistles of St Paul*, i. 284.

"Great Jove! most glorious of the immortal band!
Worshipped by many names, alone in might!
Author of all! Whose word is Nature's law!
Hail! Unto thee may mortals lift their voice,
For we thine offspring are. All things that creep
Are but the echo of the voice Divine.

CLEANTHES.

The words, "for in Him we live, and move, and have our being," are also regarded by some as a quotation, and an old iambic to the same effect is cited by commentators. This, however, may have been by a Christian writer, and founded on Paul's words. But the sentiment is not infrequent in ancient writers, and a large number of parallel quotations might be adduced.

Having thus cleared his way, Paul proceeded to set forth the first elements of the gospel, as a new development of the most ancient faith known to men, and a full explication of the matter charged to him as a crime, when he had before "preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." He informed them that the latter was no goddess, as they had supposed. But what he did mean to teach was—that the times of ignorance in which God, where worshipped at all, was worshipped as an "unknown God" had passed; and now He called upon every man to repent; for all men were to rise from the dead, of which an earnest had been given in the resurrection of that Man whom He had appointed to judge the world in righteousness at the last day.

At this "some mocked." These were probably the Epicureans, who denied a future state altogether, and to whom therefore the doctrine of a resurrection must have seemed absurd. Others were more favourably impressed by what Paul had said, and thought the matter worthy of further inquiry—these may have been partly the Stoics, who to some extent admitted a future life, and still more assuredly the Platonists, of whom there must have been many present, though they are not named in the narrative. The tribunal itself must have comprised these three sects, and it is pro-

bable that its collective decision is embodied in the statement —"Others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." The court was in fact adjourned.

There were some minds upon which Paul's address made a fully suitable impression—some souls whom the Lord allowed him to bear away as his spiritual spoil from Mars' Hill. There were several, but those particularly named are, "Dionysius, the Areopagite"—that is, one of the members of that august court before which he had pleaded; and "a woman named Damaris." His labour, therefore, was not wholly in vain; and it is probable that the persons thus converted formed the nucleus of the church which afterwards existed at Athens, though it does not appear that Paul ever again visited that city. He quitted it soon, probably firm in the conviction that it had not yet become a ripened field of labour, and that, with so many more promising fields around, it was not his duty to linger there—the less as he had not come thither with any express views of missionary work.

He had also ere this been joined by Timothy from Berea. Timothy came alone, for Silas, in the critical state of the Berean church, had not thought it advisable to come away. The intelligence which Timothy brought, and for which Paul had waited, deprived him of the hope he had cherished of being soon enabled to return to Thessalonica. He heard that the Jews there were still exasperated against him, and bent upon his destruction. Being thus prevented from going himself, and yet anxious for the spiritual safety of a flock left among wolves without a shepherd, he deprived himself of Timothy's company, and sent him to Thessalonica. He had no one else to send, Luke being at Philippi, and Silas at Berea; and although he might have desired to send one to whom years and experience would give more weight and authority, he knew that Timothy was not only faithful and true, but also wise and able beyond his years. In the epistle written to this church soon after, he says—"wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, we sent Timothy, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of

Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith." It is from this epistle that we gain the knowledge of these circumstances, which Luke has passed over in the historical narrative.

Fiftieth Week—Seventh Day.

CORINTH.—ACTS XVIII.

THE scene of the apostle's labours now changes to Corinth. This great and prosperous city was at this time the metropolis of Achaia—the name by which all Greece was distinguished from Macedonia. It lay at a distance of forty miles

from Athens, at the southern extremity of the isthmus which joined the Peloponnesus to the mainland, upon an elevated table-land, at the foot, on the northern side, of the Acrocorinthus. This was a mountain nearly half a mile in

perpendicular height, with an ascent of four miles to the top, where there was a fortress surrounded by a wall. The commercial advantages of the situation were incalculable; and the better to realize them, there was a port on each side the isthmus, the eastern one (Cenchrea) being nearly nine miles, and the western (Lechæum) being a mile and a half from the city. From its felicity of situation, Corinth had by this time recovered much of its ancient prosperity, although it had lain in ruins a hundred years, until restored by Julius Cæsar. The activity of commerce, the wealth which such activity produces, and the luxury which abundant wealth engenders, were the main characteristics of Corinth. The luxuriousness was shown in the ornate style of the public edifices, in the expensive mode of living, and in the general self-indulgent looseness of manners. Corinth had the reputation of being the most dissolute city in Greece; and that it deserved this reputation is shown, not only by many of the allusions in the two epistles which Paul wrote to the church in this place from Rome, but from the simple fact that the temple of Venus here boasted of the thousand sacred harlots, who screened their depravity under the cover of religious rites.

A commercial city like Corinth was certain to attract the Jews in large numbers; and at this time their number was unusually great, because many of those who had lately been banished from Rome had come to this place.

The banishment of the Jews from Rome by the emperor Claudius, incidentally alluded to by Luke, is confirmed by Suetonius, who, in his brief summary of the occurrences of the time, says: "The Jews, who were in constant commotion, Chrestus being the leader, he banished from Rome."[1] It is likely that, for Chrestus, Christus is intended—this sort of error, or corruption of proper names, being not uncommon at that time. Christus, "the anointed," had no meaning to one who had never heard of the Messiah; whereas Chrestus

[1] Judæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes Româ expulit.—Suet. *Vit. Claud.* xxv.

(good) had an intelligible significance. A Roman historian might easily mistake the true state of the case; and, while the Jews were contending *about* Christ, he might suppose that it was *under* him, as a leader, that the tumults were excited. Christianity seems to have been very early introduced into Rome, probably by some of the converts on the day of Pentecost, for, "strangers from Rome, Jews and proselytes," are expressly mentioned among Peter's hearers on that great day; and we have repeatedly seen how prone the Jews in foreign cities were to raise commotions against Christians, to the disturbance of the public peace. It was probably on account of *such* disturbances, in which the name of Christus was continually heard, that the emperor issued his proclamation commanding the Jews to depart from Rome. In this the Jewish Christians were of course included; for these were in fact Jews by birth, appearance, and habit of life; and the Romans had as yet no gauge for the difference of opinion and belief between them.

Among those thus expelled from the imperial city was a tentmaker named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who, with his wife Priscilla, was going home by the ordinary maritime route across the isthmus of Corinth, when he was induced, probably by the prospect of a lucrative business in a city of so much opulence, to remain there. He accordingly took a house and workshop, and commenced his tentmaking occupation. It is not stated that he was already a convert to Christianity; but that he was such is extremely probable.

Paul arriving at Corinth, where he was unknown to any, had first to seek a lodging, and then the means of subsistence. He was happy to find both with Aquila, to whom the marks of his trade, and, when he saw him, of his nation, induced him to apply. With Aquila he remained, living in his house, and working with him at his trade—that is, in his employment—during the whole two years of his residence at Corinth. In this intercourse a Christian friendship grew up between them, which ended only with the apostle's life, during which he always evinced the highest regard for Aquila and Priscilla;

and Aquila, on his part, found occasion to render him some essential services.

Being thus settled with these good friends, Paul soon commenced his evangelical labours. He preached Christ every Sabbath-day in the synagogues. During the other days his constant labour considerably abridged his opportunities of preaching, as it hardly even left him the evening leisure; for there was a scarcity at that time through Greece, whereby the price of everything was so much enhanced, that it was needful for him to labour "night and day," to provide for his simple wants; as at this place, during the whole of his stay, he rigidly refused all assistance from those among whom he distributed the word of life. But even his labour at his trade afforded opportunities of spiritual usefulness; for as he spent his days thus among the workmen of Aquila, he could not but speak to them continually of the great matters which filled his own mind, and that under the most advantageous circumstances. The doctrine thus received would spread like leaven among their families and connections; and as no man can be *always* at work, there were precious half hours in which he might visit the acquaintances thus formed, or in which he might impart "the glad tidings" to the friends and visitors of Aquila.

Certain it is, that many among both the Jews and Greeks were converted. The earliest were "the house of Stephanas," which he calls "the first fruits of Achaia."[1] Another convert, and one of considerable note, was Crispus, "the chief ruler of the synagogue;" and a third was Gaius, or Caius, with whom the apostle on a future occasion lodged.[2] All these were baptized by his own hand, contrary to his usual custom—for he avoided this branch of service, lest his enemies should take occasion from it to allege that he had "baptized in his own name," and was establishing a sect of Paulites instead of Christians. The wisdom of the precautions taken by him to protect himself from misconstruction in both the

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 15. [2] Rom. xvi. 23.

respects indicated, must be evident to those who read the Epistles to the Corinthians. 1 Cor. i. 14–17.

In about three months, Paul was joined at Corinth by Silas and Timothy. The latter brought information from Thessalonica, which was, upon the whole, satisfactory. The faith of the converts had remained unshaken by the persecutions to which they had been exposed. They retained "a good remembrance" of him, and longed to see him again. On the other hand, some irregularities had crept in, and some mistaken notions, especially as regarded Christ's second coming, which they conceived to be close at hand. All this induced Paul to send to them his first epistle, the first in time of all his existing epistles; and not long after, a second, to correct some further misconceptions, which, as he understood, had grown out of the first. Both these letters are introduced in the names of "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus."

They also brought a most seasonable supply of money from "the churches in Macedonia," and notably from the considerate and kind-hearted Philippians. This was not only greatly wanted, to supply the insufficiency of his own handwork in a time of such dearth, but probably enabled him to give a little more time to his evangelical labours. His conduct in steadily refusing to accept assistance from the Corinthians, afterwards exposed him to some animadversions, from which he completely vindicates himself in 2 Cor. xi. 7–12. He there refers to the contributions he received from Macedonia, to prove that he had shown himself willing to accept such assistance, when he could do so without compromising his independence, or exposing his disinterestedness to suspicion.

Paul, now strengthened by the presence of Silas and Timothy, pursued his spiritual labours with increased vigour; and as the Sabbath was the only day he could spare from daily toil, it was spent chiefly in proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah to the Jews in their synagogues. This awakened vehement opposition; and at length he was so shocked at the coarse blasphemies they showered upon that honoured

name, that he confronted them sternly, and, shaking his raiment, to signify that he cast off all responsibility for the result, he said: "Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." Then, either to illustrate this determination, or to avoid the rage which the declaration of it excited, he went into a house close by, occupied by a Gentile convert, named Justus. He seems to have been then somewhat discouraged at the prospect before him in Corinth, and to have contemplated a withdrawal from the city. But he was sustained by a vision of the night, in which the Lord said: "Be not afraid; but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: *for I have much people* in this city."

This was quite enough for Paul; and he pursued his course for eighteen months, with great success in the conversion of souls to Christ, and without any material interruption. At length a new proconsul for Achaia arrived at Corinth. This was Gallio, brother of Seneca the philosopher, and of Mela, the father of Lucan, the author of the Pharsalia. He comes down to us with a high character for amiability from his brother Seneca, who speaks of him as faultless—as one "whom every one loved too little, even he who loved him most." On his arrival, the Jews seem to have made an experiment upon the reputed easiness of his temper, and his official inexperience, by endeavouring to extort from him by clamour the punishment of the apostle. They, therefore, seized Paul, and hurried him tumultuously before the judgment seat, where their charge was—"This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law." But Gallio had not unprofitably observed the commotions of this kind which had been excited by the same class at Rome. He seems to have been aware of the nature of the Jewish opposition to Christianity, and it has been guessed that he was not altogether unacquainted with the Christian doctrine. Be this as it may, he did not call upon the apostle to make any answer to the charge, but dismissed the complaint with

some asperity, as a matter with which he, as a civil magistrate, had no concern. "If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters." So saying, he waved them contemptuously away. But as they were slow to move, the mob of Greeks, who hated the Jews, and sided with Paul, if only because he was accused by them, began to handle them roughly. They even seized their mouth-piece, Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and gave him a sound beating before the proconsul's face. This was, doubtless, although not so intended, an affront to the dignity of the court. But as it was a step in accordance with the feeling he himself had manifested, he did not think proper to take any notice of it. Thus "Gallio cared for none of those things,"—neither for the accusation of the Jews, nor for the unauthorized punishment of their leader. And this, rather than as an expression of his indifference to all serious matters, we take to be the meaning of these words.

Fifty-First Week—First Day.

AN IGNORANCE.—ACTS XVIII. 17–XIX. 7.

VERY wonderful often, and very various, are the Lord's dealings with those whom He would bring unto himself. Some He draws gently with the cords of love; some He urges by fright and terror to flee to Him from the wrath to come; some He impels by his scourging judgments; and some He drives with the whips of men. This last seems to have been the case with Sosthenes, that ruler of the synagogue whom we yesterday beheld so active against Paul, and receiving a substantial beating before Gallio's tribunal at the hands of the Corinthian mob. When, however, we next hear of this person, he is not only a convert, but a companion and trusted brother at Ephesus of that Paul whose life he had sought at Corinth. The apostle even unites Sosthenes' name with his own in the inscription of his first epistle to the church in that city, which epistle was probably, indeed, written by his hand at the dictation of Paul, whose manner it was so to write: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth." How strange and marvellous it seems to behold these two men, who had both been persecutors of the church in times and places far apart, now labouring strenuously together to build up that which they had once sought to destroy. As these lines were penned, Paul could not but deeply feel that it was, indeed, "the will of God,"—the same will of God which had made him an apostle of Jesus Christ, which had made Sosthenes a minister of Christ's word. It was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in his eyes. This remarkable analogy in their spiritual history must have imparted to Paul's mind a peculiarly sympathizing interest in behalf of Sosthenes.

His conversion probably took place during Paul's further residence at Corinth, which seems to have been for about a month. He then took his departure, as he intended to be present at the next feast—probably that of Pentecost—at Jerusalem, and not more than sufficient time remained for the journey. On his deliverance from the imminent danger to which he had been exposed, Paul had taken the Nazarite vow, in testimony of his thankfulness. It was usual, as Josephus informs us, for the Jews, on their recovery from severe disease, or deliverance from any great peril, to take the vow binding themselves to abstain from wine, and let their hair grow for thirty days. By the law on the subject, as stated in the book of Numbers, the vow might be of shorter or longer duration; and, at the expiration of the time, the devotee shaved his head, and offered certain appointed sacrifices; but as these could not be offered out of Jerusalem, those who took this vow in foreign parts, made their offerings at their next visit to the holy city. At the eastern port of Cenchrea, where he prepared to embark for Asia, the days of Paul's vow expired, and he shaved his head, but necessarily deferred his offerings till he should reach Jerusalem. Some have seen so much difficulty in this transaction, that they transfer the vow to Aquila. But, besides that the vow was not in itself improper, it might be an object with Paul, now proceeding to Jerusalem, to show, by the offerings which he had by this act rendered himself liable to make there, that he did not, as injuriously reported, despise their law, but was himself, as a Jew, disposed to conform to it on every proper occasion. This could be better evinced by an obligation voluntarily incurred than in any other way. Not only Silas and Timothy, but Aquila and Priscilla, were the apostle's companions, having, it would seem, purposed to settle at Ephesus. On reaching that place, they remained there; but Paul, with Silas and Timothy, hastened on to Cæsarea, and, landing there, reached Jerusalem in time for the feast. No particulars are given of the journey or the visit, except that he went up and "saluted the church," after which he

proceeded to Antioch, from which he had so long been absent. He was probably attended by Timothy; but Silas, of whom we hear no more, seems to have remained at Jerusalem.

After spending some time at Antioch, he prepared to redeem a promise he had made during his hasty call at Ephesus: "I will return again unto you, if God will." He accordingly proceeded thither through the interior of Asia Minor, in order to revisit the churches formerly established in those parts.

On his arrival at Ephesus, Paul of course sought out his old friends Aquila and Priscilla; and he listened with deep interest to the account which they gave him of a certain Alexandrian Jew named Apollos, who had arrived at Ephesus during his absence. Having deeply studied the Old Testament, whence he is described as "mighty in the Scriptures," Apollos had formed correct notions of the Messiah to come; but he did not yet know that He had come, having advanced no further than John's baptism to repentance; and by John he had perhaps been baptized. Being impressed with these views, and being "fervent in the Spirit," he spoke in the synagogues and arrested attention by his powerful and winning eloquence. Aquila and Priscilla, however, perceived the imperfect state of his knowledge, and having sought his acquaintance, and explained to him "the way of God more perfectly," they showed to him that Jesus was the Messiah, and that in Him all the conclusions he himself had been enabled to deduce from the Old Testament had been fulfilled. He received these tidings with gladness; and from that time his eloquent tongue found a nobler and more animating theme. The Christ of God was no longer expected—He had already come. This theme, however, he did not enforce at Ephesus, for it was his purpose to proceed to Achaia. On learning this, the brethren furnished him with letters of introduction to the disciples at Corinth. He was well received there; and his mastery of Scripture enabled him to render great help in dealing with the Jews, showing unanswerably in the synagogues that Jesus was the Messiah.

Paul himself met with about twelve persons in the same position as that which Apollos had been in before his instruction by Aquila. But he seems not at first to have understood that they were not Christian disciples. Thus, among other questions, he asked them if they had yet received the Holy Ghost. They testified some amazement at this question, and said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

This seems a startling declaration. The ignorance thus candidly avowed was excusable in *them*, seeing that, as afterwards appeared, they knew only the baptism of John. *We* have no such excuse. We have all of us heard that there *is* a Holy Ghost; and this is perhaps the sum of the knowledge concerning Him possessed by a large proportion of those who call themselves Christians. He is to them scarcely more than a name, an expression, a form of speech. Yet surely it behoves us to know Him as He is revealed to us in Scripture, and as He stands related to us in the great work of our salvation. "But the subject is mysterious!" It is so in some parts; but it is precisely that in it which is mysterious which we are not required to know, and which is not practically essential to our welfare. We may not be able to explain the precise nature of the Holy Spirit's relation to the other persons in the blessed Trinity. His personality may be hard to understand. Even the nature of his operations upon the soul of man may be inscrutable to our present limited capacity of comprehension. Indeed, this is declared in the memorable words: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. *So is every one that is born of the Spirit.*" Our ignorance in these respects will not be laid to our charge, for God does not require us to know more than He has seen proper to reveal. That which is set forth in these matters, is simply facts for our belief, not problems for our solution. And perhaps the simply earnest mind likes to have mysteries, which it cannot at present grasp, proposed to its belief, beholding in them an earnest of

that heaven where all will be made plain. No, perhaps not "*all*," but all that is now too hard for us; for there may be, and probably are, mysteries in heaven, seeing that there is but One Mind to which "all things are naked and opened."

They who labour most in these high mysteries are not thereby brought nearer to God—

> "These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,
> That give a name to every fixed star,
> Have no more profit of their shining nights,
> Than those that walk, and wot not what they are."

So we shall never be asked—it will never be essential to our well-being, here or hereafter—whether we can explain the mystery of the Holy Ghost, but whether we have *received* Him in all his blessings and influences.

There is much that is very plain which it concerns us greatly to know. The Holy Spirit is not a mere quality or effluence. The acts ascribed to Him are personal acts, and the Scriptures personify Him equally with the Father and the Son, and distinguish Him from both. We are baptized into his name no less than into theirs, and the apostolic benedictions are given in his name as well as in theirs. But He has his special work for us—a work which concerns us most intimately. It is He that "teaches" us; it is He that "comes" to us; it is He that "reproves" us; it is He that "guides" us; it is He that "speaks" to us and in us; and it is He that "comforts" us.[1] He "helps our infirmities;" He "intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[2] Let us therefore take heed that we "tempt" not the Spirit of God; let us be careful that we do not "resist" Him; let us beware lest we "despise" Him; and, above all, let us dread to "blaspheme" his Holy Name, for that is the inexpiable sin, the offence never to be forgiven in this world or in the world to come.[3]

[1] John xiv 26; xvi. 8, 13. [2] Rom. viii. 26
[3] Acts v. 9; vii. 51. Heb. x. 29. Mark iii. 29.

Fifty-First Week—Second Day.

EPHESUS.—ACTS XIX. 1.

EPHESUS now became the centre of Paul's missionary labours, and the chief seat of Christianity in Asia Minor. To this important church, in and for which he had long laboured, Paul afterwards addressed an invaluable epistle, during his imprisonment at Rome. Ephesus was also in later years the scene of John the apostle's labours and last residence, and the chief of "the seven churches in Asia," to which the apocalyptic messages were sent. On these various grounds of Christian interest the city is entitled to particular attention.

Ephesus was the capital of the *province* of Asia, and as such the residence of the proconsul. And it was more than this, being, in fact, the most important city of Asia Minor, and the principal emporium for trade with the East. It was called "the Eye of Asia," or rather one of the eyes, Smyrna being the other; for Ephesus and Smyrna, both of them on the sea coast, and both great commercial marts, at the distance of about forty miles from each other, looked forth like eyes from the projecting forehead of this peninsula. Though Greek in its origin, it was half Oriental in the prevalent worship and the character of its inhabitants; and being constantly visited by ships from all parts of the Mediterranean, and united by great roads with the markets of the interior, it was the common meeting-place of various characters and classes of men.

The city stood at the lower end of the Gulf of Samos, upon a plain about five miles long from east to west, and three miles broad from north to south. On all sides except on the west, which lay open to the sea, this plain was shut in like a stadium or race-course, by the precipices of enclosing mountains. About half way along the southern side of the plain stood, a little forward, the hill of Prion, famous for the quarries

of beautiful marble, which supplied materials for the public buildings of the city; and opposite to it, but rather more to the east, arose out of the middle of the plain a little mount, the seat of the modern village of Ayasaluck—probably a Turkish name, though generally fancied to be a corruption of Greek words signifying "the holy divine," in honour of St John, who passed his last days at Ephesus. This, it will be observed, lies beyond the walls of ancient Ephesus, the site of which is wholly forsaken and desolate, its ruins being buried in rubbish, and overgrown with vegetation.

At its north-east corner, the plain was entered by the river Cayster, which flowed across it diagonally to the south-west corner. As one entered the broad mouth of this river from the sea, after proceeding a little distance, he came to a spacious natural basin, stretching from the river on the right hand towards the south-east. This was Panormus (All-haven), the celebrated port, the busy scene of the commerce of all nations, to which the city was indebted for its wealth —so much so, indeed, that Ephesus owes its extinction to the gradual filling up of this port by the alluvium brought down by the river. Already, at the time of Paul's residence, the apprehension of this result had become a matter of great anxiety to the Ephesians; and a century later, injudicious attempts to avert the impending evil rendered it more speedy and inevitable.

It would not suit our plan to describe the city in detail, after the ancient accounts; nor even to indicate the principal objects of interest within its walls. It will suffice to notice a few matters which are more or less connected with the subject before us.

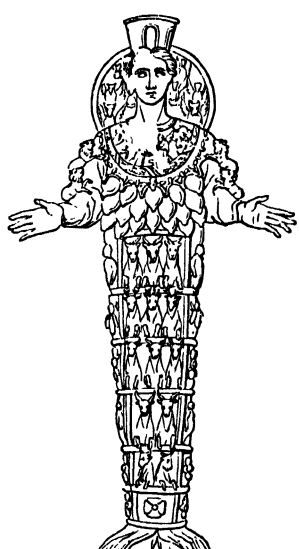
The temple of Diana was not only the most gloriously conspicuous object in the city, but was accounted one of the seven wonders of the world. It was built at the expense of all the Greek cities in Asia, replacing another of great magnificence, which had been set on fire by the fanatic Erato-stratus on the night that Alexander the Great was born.[1]

[1] Reminding one of Martin and the York Minster.

It proceeded slowly, and was not completed in less than 220 years. It stood at the head, that is, at the eastern end, of the port Panormus, and being constructed of the purest marble, is said to have gleamed like a meteor in the astonished eyes of those on board any vessel entering the port. Being built upon marshy ground, the foundations were laid with great care and at large cost, upon well rammed charcoal and wool. Upon these foundations the first superstructure was a basement of considerable height, ascended by a grand flight of steps, which may still be traced; and upon this platform was erected the temple, 425 feet long and 220 broad, surrounded by 120 marble columns, 60 feet high, each the gift of a king, of which 36 were beautifully sculptured, one from the hand of the famous Scopas.

This area is almost double that of St Paul's Cathedral in London, for although *the body* of that church is longer (500 feet), it is not half the width (100 feet). But it must not be imagined that all this vast space was covered in, or that this or other famous temples of antiquity bore any analogy to the churches or cathedrals of Christendom, or other modern structures. Like the temple of Jerusalem they were colonnades, erected as subsidiary decorations around the cell which contained the idol, the greater part of the enclosed space being open to the sky—that is to say, all but the colonnades surrounding the area, and the chapel or cell containing the idol. The representations on coins, usually appealed to for the form of the temple, do not, we apprehend, represent its exterior aspect, but merely that of the chapel in which the idol was enshrined, and through the open doors of which it appeared. For proof of this, we may point to the fact that in some of these representations it is seen to be covered in *with a sloping roof*. The interior of the temple was no less magnificent. The roof was supported by columns of green jasper, eight of which may, at this day, be inspected in the mosque (once church) of St Sophia, at Constantinople, whither they were removed by the Emperor Justinian, after the temple had been destroyed by the Goths. The altar,

richly sculptured, was the work of Praxiteles, and here and there were statues from the chisels of the most eminent sculptors. Against the walls were the finest paintings in the world, the master-pieces of Apelles and Parrhasius, both natives of the city. The sacred precincts of the temple, to the extent of a furlong from the building, offered an inviolable sanctuary to all who sought protection there. Indeed, so high was the sanctity of the place that, in the absence of banks and profitable investments, kings and great persons were glad to deposit their valuables within its walls, whence the treasures it contained were immense beyond conception. In short, there never was perhaps any temple which was at once the object of so much admiration, enthusiasm, and superstition



Meanwhile, the cynosure of the temple—the ultimate object of all this splendour and veneration — was an ugly, old, black image of wood. We must not think of Diana (Artemis) of the Ephesians as the "huntress, chaste and fair," of Grecian poetry and sculpture. There is, in fact, little analogy either in form or in ascribed qualities between them, and it required all the Grecian ingenuity to identify the two. It seems to have been some ancient Asiatic divinity whose worship the Greek colonists found established in these parts, and which they adopted, calling her Artemis, from some fancied resemblance to their own goddess of that name.[1] Her original character as an

[1] We adhere to this opinion, notwithstanding that, in a work issued as

impersonation of nature—the prolific mother of life—is shown by the fact that her image represented her with many breasts. The whole figure had much resemblance to that of a mummy. The head bore a mural crown; and the lower part of her body, which ended in a point, like a pyramid turned upside down, was covered with the forms of various animals. It is remarked, however, that the figure varies considerably in details, in the different representations of it in coins of Ephesus, whence Mr Akerman ingeniously conjectures that "the vulgar were not allowed to approach too near this grotesque but time-honoured figure, and that the artists of antiquity sometimes drew on their fancies for the representation of her."[1] We know, indeed, that the small shrine in which it stood within the temple was concealed by a curtain in front. The example which we give[2] is very interesting, for it represents the idol in her cell or shrine, upon the pediment of which we observe the representation of two figures worshipping at an altar.

It was popularly believed to have fallen from heaven, a pretension advanced in favour of divers other ancient and uncouth images. This might suggest that it was originally an aërolite; but it seems to be established that it was of wood, some say ebony, others vinewood, and it was preserved from decay by resinous gums inserted into cavities made for the purpose.

The great temple of Diana has wholly disappeared, and even its site cannot with any certainty be determined. Its materials were probably carried off for comparatively modern buildings; and the soil of the valley being raised by the alluvium of the river, commonly covers many old substructions. Mr Hamilton, who spent several days at Ephesus,

these sheets are going through the press, we find Niebuhr declaring, "Artemis is a genuine Greek goddess, but her temple at Ephesus was specially revered by the Persians, as eastern nations often showed a partiality towards foreign religions: they altered the ceremonial of the temple and the employment of eunuchs in its service is of Persian origin."—*Lectures on Ancient Ethnography and Geography*, i. 211.

[1] *Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament*, p. 49.

[2] See page 398.

thinks that "the site of the great temple is in some massive structures near the western extremity of the town, which overlook the swamp or marsh where was the ancient harbour. The place is immediately in front of the port, raised upon a base thirty or forty feet high, and approached by a grand flight of steps, the ruins of which are still visible in the centre of the pile."[1] Brick arches, and other works have been raised on various portions of the walls; but these, erroneously taken by some earlier travellers for remains of the ancient substructions, supply no illustration of the antiquity of the arch, being apparently the work of the Christians, who, after the destruction of the temple, and the removal of its columns, built a church upon the ruins.

The "theatre" of Ephesus was the largest structure of the kind ever erected by the Greeks, and was capable of seating fifty thousand persons. It was excavated from the sloping side of Mount Prion, looking towards the west, and was faced with a portico. The exterior diameter was 660 feet. Like all other ancient theatres, it had no roof, but the spectators protected themselves from the sun by head-gear adapted for a screen, or by holding a light parasol in their hand, or sometimes a kind of tarpaulin was drawn across the theatre itself. Here the scenic representations were exhibited, and here were held the assemblies of the people. This theatre is still discoverable by its ruins, which are of immense grandeur. Its interest to us arises from the certainty with which it can be identified as the scene of one of Paul's most perilous conflicts.

The theatre lay a little to the south of the temple, and the road between the two was crossed by a wide street, which traversed the entire length of the city. Upon the south side of this street, about midway between the temple and the eastern wall of the city, and at the northern base of Mount Prion, was the stadium or circus. This was 685 feet long, and 200 wide. The rows of seats on the south were excavated from the hill, and those on the north towards the plain

[1] *Researches in Asia Minor* ii. 24.

were supported on arches. The eastern end was rounded like a theatre, and the entrances were at the opposite end. This was the arena in which the Ephesian population witnessed the foot-races, the wrestling, and the pugilistic combats. These could hardly fail to come under the notice of the apostle, and he may be supposed to have had them in mind when he wrote from this place to the Corinthians the memorable words, which we have already had occasion to illustrate.[1] Here also were enacted the fights of wild beasts with men, either trained combatants, armed, who fought for pay; or condemned criminals, who were allowed no means of defence against the animals. To these, called "the last victims," as usually exposed at the end of the games, Paul, writing in the neighbourhood of the scene, compares himself and other champions of the gospel—"I think that God hath set forth us, the apostles, *last, as men appointed to death;* for we have been made *a spectacle* unto the world, and to angels, and to men."[2] Further on in the same epistle, he says: "If after the manner of men, *I have fought with beasts at Ephesus.*"[3] It has been questioned whether he here speaks figuratively of contests with men savage as wild beasts, or of some real combat with the beasts in the circus. We incline to the latter view, for as a metaphor, it seems awkward, and it has all the manner of a real and not a supposititious case. We see no difficulty in so taking it. He had deliverances as extraordinary as this, and the silence of the historian proves nothing; for we know that he passes over much which Paul himself declares that he had suffered; and as the narrative of a residence of three years is comprised in a few verses, many incidents are necessarily omitted.

[1] Evening Series—Forty-Fourth Week, First Day.
[2] 1 Cor. iv. 9. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 32.

Fifty-First Week—Third Day.

THREE YEARS' LABOUR.—ACTS XIX. 8-22.

As Paul had sought out his friends Aquila and Priscilla on his first arrival at Ephesus; and as the former had, doubtless, by this time established himself in his proper business of tent-making, we may conclude that, as at Corinth, the apostle took up his lodging with him, and sought employment in his workshop. That he thus provided for his own maintenance, on the same principles as in that city, seems to be clearly deducible from his own intimations. Thus in writing from this place to the Corinthians, he says: "Even *unto this present hour*, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; *and labour, working with our own hands.*"[1] And some time afterwards, he reminded the Ephesians—"Yea, ye yourselves know, that *these hands have ministered to my necessities*, and to them that were with me."[2] From this it appears, that here, as at Thessalonica, Corinth, and most other places, he pursued the same course of industry; and as we now learn, the proceeds of his labour were made available not only for his own support, but for that of some of his immediate companions.[3]

On his first brief call at Ephesus, the field of labour among the Jews had seemed very promising, and they manifested some eagerness of desire to hear his doctrine more fully. Hence his conditional promise to return to them; and, as we are thus prepared to expect, we find him engaged during the first three months after his return in reasoning with the Jews in their synagogue, and pressing the gospel upon their acceptance. Many received it; but many were hard-

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12. [2] Acts xx. 34.

[3] It should also be noted that even at the present day, strangers coming to reside for any length of time in an Eastern city are regarded with mistrust, and find their intercourse much limited, if they live without employment, and exhibit no ostensible means of subsistence.

ened; and finding that the latter were going rapidly from passive disbelief into active hostility, and that they began to speak evil of the way of salvation by Jesus which he opened, he felt it his duty to abandon his attendance at the synagogue, and withdraw the converts from the unpleasantness of their abuse, and the influence of their persuasion and example. In those early times, there were no places specially set apart for religious meetings; the disciples met in a suitable room which might be in the house of any one of their number; and if the congregation was too large for such a room, the use of some other suitable place was obtained by interest or hire. In this case, they obtained the use of the large school-room of one Tyrannus, who may, or may not have been himself a convert. If not, it was probably hired—just as the school-room at the corner of the street in which this is written, is very frequently let out for lectures in the evening after school hours. We suppose this was the case here; for Tyrannus would only want his school-room by day; and Paul, although he preached there daily, would only require it in the evening, as both he and the disciples were occupied during the day-time in their various employments.

In this school-room the apostle for two years diligently set forth the truths of the gospel to all who chose to attend, whether Jews or Greeks. In a city like Ephesus, a preacher so eloquent and so cogent in reasoning as Paul, could not be hid; his reputation spread quickly; and soon the room became crowded, not only with Ephesians, but with strangers from all the country round, and indeed from distant parts, who were continually resorting to the city on business or pleasure, and who, like most provincials on visiting a metropolitan city, were more eager than even the residents to see and hear things new. Thus was Paul enabled, through those who heard him, and then returned to their homes, to preach the gospel of Christ far around, without quitting Ephesus. We would not contend, indeed, that during the two or three years of his stay, he never quitted the city. There is some possibility that he made a short trip across the Ægean Sea

to Corinth; but the expressions which he himself uses to the Ephesians at a subsequent period, are unfavourable to the idea that he was frequently, or for any length of time, absent from the city. But although it was possible in such a place as Ephesus that, as declared, "all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus," without his leaving the city at all; and that without this, he might have done what one of his heathen opponents accuses him of—that "not alone at Ephesus, but *almost throughout all Asia*, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands,"—yet, it is hard to suppose that he who was now in that "Asia" which he had been formerly restrained from entering, did not himself, or by his friends, endeavour to extend the gospel to the various cities which lay within easy distance around. The seven celebrated churches in Asia, of which Ephesus was one, were either founded by him or already existed. If founded by him, as this one was, it must have been during this period, unless it be supposed that he visited some of them on his journey to Ephesus, by way of Galatia and Phrygia; or if already founded by others, he could not fail to interest himself in their welfare—and we may be sure that he did this, whether he visited them or not. It is, however, remarkable, that the epistle to this Ephesian church, is the only one addressed by Paul to any of the seven churches; and that in his writings the only recognition he gives of the existence of the other six, is an allusion to that of Laodicea, in Col. iv. 16, which seems to show that he had written to the Laodiceans an epistle no longer extant, unless it be the Epistle to the Ephesians, which by those who take that view is regarded as a sort of circular letter to all the churches in the province, of which Ephesus was the chief city.[1]

[1] That both external and internal evidence are wholly against the notion that "either Laodicea by itself, or Ephesus with a cluster of sister communities, was the designed recipient of this epistle," has been ably shown by the Rev. Professor Eadie, in the Introduction to his admirable *Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, which has reached us while correcting these sheets.

The abundant and signal display of miraculous powers is mentioned, as having been at this place a most effective instrument for the advancement of the gospel. So frequent and so certain were Paul's acts of supernatural healing, that the people came to have such confidence in the power which rested in him, as to conceive that handkerchiefs and aprons, which had been brought in contact with his person, derived from him virtue to heal those to whom they were applied. And Luke assures us that this was no delusion of theirs, for that "diseases departed from them, and evil spirits went out of them." But it does not follow that all who thus received benefit, nor even all who believed that he possessed supernatural powers, became believers in that Jesus whom he preached. Ephesus was the chief seat of the black art at this time, and the popular mind was familiar with the pretension to supernatural gifts and endowments, and by its experience in sorceries and charms, was, in a measure, hardened against the due effect of miracles. Indeed, the incantations in use here were widely celebrated under the name of "the Ephesian charms." The most famous of these sounds marvellously like the gibberish of modern conjurors, "Aski Cataski Lix Tetrax Damnameneus Aision." Nor were those arts merely left to strolling vagabonds, as a means for extracting a few pence from idle women and ignorant men, but they were believed by the educated, and studied as a science by philosophers and men of letters. They wrote many books on these matters, some of which, opening the arcana of the occult arts, were highly valued, and sold for immense sums. It is easy, therefore, to understand that many of those who believed in and availed themselves of Paul's supernatural powers, went away with the impression that he had acquired some superior skill which had not yet been made known in books. One incident, however, occurred to stagger them, and had altogether a very salutary effect.

Jews and Gentiles were equally believers in magical and occult arts. The Jews, however, had one form of procedure peculiar to themselves. This was the exorcism of demons;

and they had various adjurations, ascribed to Solomon, by which these might be effectually cast out. Some itinerant exorcists, the "seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew and chief of the priests," observing the cures wrought by Paul in the name of Jesus, conceived that this name was used by him as a kind of spell, and was in fact his secret. They, therefore, determined to try their skill with it. So in their next experiment, their adjuration was "in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." The evil spirit answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" And on these words the man in whom the evil spirit was, flew at them, and in the fury of such terrible strength as enabled the Gadarene demoniac to rend the chains from his hands, he mastered all the seven, and handled them severely before they could escape, naked and wounded, from his presence. This incident made a prodigious sensation at Ephesus. The report of it spread far and wide; and at the conquering name of that Jesus whom Paul preached, the sorcerers turned pale. Indeed, many of the believers themselves, who had not thought it necessary to abandon the practice of curious arts, or to part with their precious books, now so clearly saw their error, that they produced these books and unreluctantly made a bonfire of them. Some curious person made a calculation of the money they were worth, and found that it amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver, which, if these were drachmæ, would be equal to about L.1700—a large sum to be thus conscientiously sacrificed by persons few of whom were probably of the wealthy class.

Fifty-First Week—Fourth Day.

SILVER SHRINES.—ACTS XIX. 23-41.

THERE was a sacred month at Ephesus—the month of Diana—when a great religious gathering took place to celebrate

the public games in honour of the goddess. It was the pleasant month of May. Trade was brisk then at Ephesus, not only from the large temporary increase of population, by the presence of provincials and strangers from more distant parts, but from the purchases they made in the shops and markets. Among the tradesmen of Ephesus there were none who depended more upon the business of this month than the makers and dealers in such holy trinkets, as in former days, and indeed at the present day, votaries took home as memorials of their visit to sacred places. These were, at Ephesus, chiefly silver models and medallions representing the shrine and image of the goddess. Many of the latter exist in public and private cabinets; and we have caused one of the most striking of them to be copied. In the sacred month of the third year of Paul's stay in Ephesus, the makers of these "silver shrines" found, to their great consternation, that the demand for their commodity had so materially fallen off as most seriously to affect their interests. Upon this, one of the leading men of their guild convened a meeting of the craft, and, in an inflammatory speech, pointed out Paul as the person who, by his preaching that there were "no gods made with hands," had not only produced this crisis in the trade, but had endangered their glorious temple, and imperilled that magnificence which the world admired. Here we witness a curious, but not unparalleled, union of "the great goddess Diana" with the great god Self, whose worship still subsists, though that of Diana is extinct.

The harangue of Demetrius had all the effect intended. It was answered by a shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" and kindling, at the sound of their own voices, into exasperation at the prospect of reduced wages and loss of employment, the crowd of workmen sallied forth into the streets to wreak

their vengeance upon the object of their rage. A city so large and so full of people was soon thrown into excitement by a mob like this, tearing with loud clamours through the streets, and increasing in numbers with every step it took, not only from fellow-workmen interested in every trade matter, but from the idlers, with whom, in the sacred month, Ephesus was filled, and who never fail to join any rushing crowd, in order to see the end of the matter.

The rioters went first to Aquila's house to seek for Paul. They there missed their prey; and it seems that Aquila and Priscilla exposed themselves to the most imminent peril in confronting the raging mob, until Paul, who had probably but just left the house, was supposed by them to have got beyond their reach. It must be something of this sort that Paul refers to, when, speaking of these tried friends in a later year, he says: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have *for my life laid down their own necks*" (Rom. xvi. 3). This, at least, is the most likely occasion that the history enables us to discover. The mob behaved much like that of Thessalonica; for being foiled of their principal aim, they seized two of the apostle's well-known followers, Gaius and Aristarchus, and, well pleased at having secured some tangible objects on which to expend their rage, the living tide rolled on its tumultuous waves to the theatre, and speedily filled it, notwithstanding its vast size—that being the place in which the assemblies of the people (who at Ephesus took much part in public affairs) were usually convened. Here they probably intended to subject the prisoners to some irregular form of trial, and then to put them to death. But when there, nothing of the kind could be done, the crowd being so immense, and the greater part not having been able to learn the real occasion or object of the concourse. They therefore expended their strength in shouting; but even their shouts were not unanimous—"some crying one thing, and some another." Among these cries were some that seem to have threatened danger to the Jews as a body, it being known that they hated idols, and also that

Paul belonged to that nation. This alarmed the Jews who were present, although they were usually glad to stir up any commotion against the Christians. They therefore thrust forward one Alexander, urging him to address the multitude on their behalf. But the crowd would not hear him. They no sooner perceived, by his countenance and accent, that he was a Jew, than they drowned his voice with shouts of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" and having at length found a cry in which they could all unite, they kept it up long and loudly until their breath failed.

Meanwhile, the recorder,[1] a municipal officer of high authority and influence, and the chairman of any assembly lawfully convened in that place, had made his way into the theatre; so also had the Asiarchs [2]—persons of great wealth and distinction, chosen annually to preside over and regulate the public games. Paul himself, who had by this time heard of what was going on, and of the danger to which his friends Gaius and Aristarchus were exposed on his account, would have hastened courageously to the spot, to take the responsibility upon himself, and, perhaps, with some hope of being heard in his own defence. The disciples, however, took a calmer view of the case, and would not suffer him to rush into this danger. Even the Asiarchs, who, as men of high standing and education, had learned to appreciate his character and motives, and were desirous to protect a man so gifted from the popular rage, sent a message to him privately, charging him not to venture into the theatre.

Now that, after two hours, the popular fury had somewhat exhausted itself in abortive clamour, was the time for some person in authority to try to master that multitudinous host. The recorder attempted the task with great ability and success. By taking the chair, as was his official right, he constituted this a regular assembly of the people; and their throats being by this time sore, they were doubtless glad of the excuse of respect to their chief magistrate, to cease their

[1] "Town-clerk" of the Auth. Version.
[2] "The chief of Asia," in the Auth. Version.

clamour, when they perceived that he wished to address them. He assured them that the honour of their great goddess, and the renown of her "image which fell down from Jupiter," were beyond all question. They therefore ought to do nothing rashly against these men who had not been proved guilty of any offence. But if Demetrius, and his company, had any special damage to complain of, the law courts were open to them for justice; or if any public wrong had been committed, there was the assembly of the people, which met on particular days, or which might, by proper authority, be specially convened. But as it was, their present irregular proceedings amounted to a breach of the peace, for which they were liable to be called to severe account by the Roman authorities. He then dismissed the assembly in the usual form; and, under the impression which his words had made, the crowd quietly dispersed.

In the narrative of this transaction, there are many of those specially appropriate intimations which have been so often referred to, as proving the minute accuracy of the historian. To explain all of them fully would need a larger exposition of the Ephesian constitution than would be here suitable, and we can therefore only indicate some principal points.

Luke gives to the magistrate who addressed the crowd in the theatre, his right title, which may properly signify "RECORDER," as during his year of office he had the responsible charge of the public records; but, as the chief representative of the civil municipal authority, his place had more resemblance to that of an English mayor; like whom he was, *ex officio*, the chairman of both the municipal courts which the city possessed—one the council of notable inhabitants and the other the assembly of the people. The importance of his office is shown by the fact, that the year in which he held office was distinguished by his name; and we possess coins bearing the names of various persons by whom it was filled.

So of the "ASIARCH," the office was common to other pro-

vinces of Asia Minor; but in this only was it distinguished by the name here given, the title being in each province formed from its name. Hence we read in books, or on inscriptions and coins, of Bithyniarchs, Galatiarchs, Lyciarchs, and Syriarchs. These officers, clad in magnificent official dresses, with golden crowns on their heads, presided over the public games and festivals celebrated in the cities of the province. The honour was great but it was dearly purchased, for they had to bear all the expenses of the games at their own proper cost. Hence the wealthiest persons in the province were chosen for this distinction. Such, indeed, was the outlay involved in the appointment, that a person having five children was entitled to claim exemption, and no one was *compellable* to serve the office twice.

Where the recorder says in his speech that "the city of the Ephesians is a *worshipper* of the great goddess Diana," he uses a term (*Neōkoros*) which, in its original signification, denotes a *temple-sweeper*. But, in process of time, the officer thus denoted became the custodian or warden of the temple, and the office rose to such importance that persons of the highest quality aspired to it. Whole cities laid claim to the appellation; and as we see from the text, as well as from coins, the chief pride of the Ephesian people was to regard themselves as the *Neōkoroi* of their goddess Diana. Of the coins, the one annexed is a fair specimen, and is curious as representing Diana in her Grecian character, with the dress and attributes of a huntress.

Fifty-First Week—Fifth Day.

EUTYCHUS.—ACTS XX.

At the time when the circumstances recorded last evening took place, Paul had already arranged to leave Ephesus, and had even settled the route he was to take. By comparing the intimations given in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, written shortly before he left Ephesus; in the Second Epistle, written not long after his departure from that city; and in the Epistle to the Romans, written after his arrival at Corinth—we find that he had formed an extensive plan for his future labours, in conformity with his avowed principle of making those places the scene of his operations, where no one had laboured before him. Having, therefore, by this time, laid a sufficient foundation for the extension of the Christian church among the nations using the Greek language, he purposed to visit Rome, the metropolis of the civilized world, where a flourishing church had long been established, on his way to Spain, to commence the publication of the gospel at the extremity of Western Europe (Rom. xv. 24–28). He wished previously, however, to revisit the churches he had formerly established in Macedonia and Achaia, and especially the church at Corinth, the disorders in which had become a subject of great anxiety to him. He had, originally, intended to proceed at once to Corinth, and pass through Macedonia on his return; but being desirous that his epistle should have time to work its due effect, he determined to go first to Macedonia, and pass through that region to Corinth, where he expected to be able to spend the winter—after which he would in the spring visit Jerusalem, and then proceed to Rome. All this he was enabled to accomplish, though his visit to Rome was under far other circumstances, and his stay there much longer, than he had at first contemplated.

The visit to Jerusalem seems an anomalous feature in this plan, seeing how easy it would have been for him to reach Rome from Corinth. But the circuitousness had a definite object closely connected with his journey to Macedonia and Achaia. He was desirous that a collection should be made for the poor saints at Jerusalem, the results of which he proffered himself to take to that city. The Judean converts were, as a body, in very necessitous circumstances, and needed all the help their Christian brethren in the prosperous Gentile cities could afford. Besides this, Paul had much at heart the establishment of cordial sympathies between the Jewish and Gentile converts; and he justly considered that any strong interest manifested by the latter, at the cost of personal sacrifices, in the welfare of the former, would go far to the removal of obstructive prejudices between them. He had, therefore, some time before, proposed this matter to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, with the view that the collections should be ready against his arrival, and that there might be no gatherings after he came. It was partly in order to the furtherance of this business, and partly to bring the Corinthians to a right state of mind against his arrival, that Paul, some time previous to his own departure, despatched Timothy and Erastus before him by the way he meant to take. With Timothy we are already acquainted. Erastus was a no less suitable person for this mission, he himself being a Corinthian, and a man of authority among them, for he was perhaps now, and certainly he was the year after, "the chamberlain of the city" (Rom. xvi. 23).

Paul hoped to receive, before his departure, information from these two brethren to guide his own proceedings. But in this he was disappointed; for Timothy was prevented from getting so far as Corinth, and returned from Macedonia to Ephesus, without any information as to the effect the epistle had produced; and although Erastus did reach Corinth, *his* return had not been expected, and no report from him had yet been received. Under these circumstances, the apostle sent Titus direct to Corinth for the purpose of obtaining in-

formation, and that he might personally operate upon the church there in accordance with the impression made by the epistle. At length Paul took leave of the disciples at Ephesus, and commenced his journey, accompanied by Timothy. In the first instance, he proceeded to Troas, where he proposed, as formerly, to embark for Macedonia. Here he seems to have remained some time, awaiting in vain the return of Titus from Corinth. At length, however, he embarked for Macedonia; and there received the most gratifying evidence that the churches he had planted were advancing in the Christian life. Soon after his arrival in Macedonia, he was met by Titus, who gave him the much-desired intelligence from Corinth. It was of an encouraging nature, and greatly revived his spirit, which he declares to have been much depressed when he first arrived.[1]

He was thus induced to write his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which he sent by the hand of Titus, who was accompanied by the "brother whose praise was in the gospel throughout all the churches"—generally supposed to have been Luke, who may also have joined Paul in Macedonia; and seemingly by another brother who is highly commended, but whose identity is still more uncertain. These had been chosen by the Macedonian churches, to take charge of their contributions, Paul having, with his usual delicacy in money matters, declined to take personal charge of the funds collected.[2]

Paul seems to have spent the summer and autumn of that year in Macedonia, and then proceeded to Greece (Achaia), where he remained during the winter, chiefly at Corinth.

The narrative of Luke is here very rapid, and we have no detailed account of the proceedings.

In the spring, Paul was preparing to embark at the eastern port of Corinth for Asia, when he became aware of a plot to seize him on board the ship, or on the way to it. He therefore directed his destined companions to proceed in the vessel, while he went round by land to Philippi, accompanied only

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 5-10. [2] 2 Cor. viii. 17, 18, 22.

by Luke, and took shipping there. This necessarily lost some of the time which had been intended for the journey to Jerusalem, and imparted a character of haste to all the subsequent movements; for Paul wanted to be there by Pentecost, and the Passover week had already ended before he could quit Philippi. There was a further retardation in the voyage itself, from that city to Troas, for it occupied no less than five days, though he had formerly reached Philippi in two days from Troas. On reaching that port, he found the friends from Corinth awaiting him. There were some whom we have heard of before, and some not—Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, and of the proconsular Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. Luke's presence is indicated by his resuming the first person plural in mentioning the departure of the party from Corinth. "These going before tarried for *us* at Troas;" and "*We* sailed away from Philippi" (Acts xx. 5, 6). This form of expression is maintained to the end of the book.

Paul remained seven days at Troas; and on the first day of the week, he met the brethren there to celebrate the Lord's Supper—one strong piece of evidence to show that the observance of the first day of the week had already become prevalent in the Christian churches. In those days, the Lord's Supper was, as a supper, celebrated in the evening. After they had partaken of it, Paul, being to depart on the morrow, delivered a farewell address to the congregation assembled in an upper chamber. This discourse lasted till day-break; but at midnight it sustained an alarming interruption. A young man named Eutychus was seated in the window, the lattice of which was left open to refresh the air, which would otherwise have become oppressive from the numerous lights that were burning in the chamber. This youth fell into a deep sleep, and sinking back, dropped out into the court-yard below. As this was from the third storey, every one concluded that he was killed. Such seemed to be the case when they hurried down into the court. But

Paul, overcome with tenderness and compassion, and feeling an intense desire to restore him to life, cast himself upon the body, and embraced it. Then, rising, he said, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him." It has been questioned whether Eutychus was really dead, and was restored by Paul to life; or whether he was merely stunned by the fall, so that Paul only discovered and announced this fact. The case is not quite clear from the narrative; but it seems most probable that the youth was killed, and restored to life by miracle. The circumstances and the tone of the narrative favour this conclusion; and, besides, the narrative expressly says, that he was "taken up dead." Paul then returned up stairs, and finished his discourse; and, after taking some refreshment, was ready to set forth on his journey, when the young man who had fallen was brought in alive and well, to the great joy of the people.

From Troas Paul went on foot to Assos, which lies rather more than a day's journey to the south, and there he joined his party, who had gone on before by ship. They then sailed to Mitylene, in the isle of Lesbos, opposite Assos, from which it is separated by a narrow strait. Another day's sail brought them to Chios, an island not far from Smyrna, south-west of the bay. This island, now called Scio, has in our day been rendered memorable by the hideous butchery of the inhabitants by the Turks in 1822.

The next day they touched at the isle of Samos, and at Trogyllium, on the mainland opposite, lay to for the night; for these vessels only sailed by day. The next day they got as far as Miletus, about thirty miles south of Ephesus, and withdrawn a little from the coast upon a stream of water. At that place they landed, and Paul sent a messenger to Ephesus to request the elders of the church to join him there. They came immediately; and Paul took leave of them in a most affecting and impressive address, uttered under the conviction that this was their last meeting on earth. At the close, the apostle kneeled down and prayed with them. "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"

Fifty-First Week—Sixth Day.

FOREWARNINGS.—ACTS XXI. 1-17.

THE vessel in which Paul had embarked touched next at Coos, the largest of several small islands (the Sporades), off the coast of Caria, and the birth-place of Hippocrates the physician. The island of Rhodes, at which they next touched, looks like a portion broken off from the south-west corner of Asia Minor, lying only nine miles from the nearest point of its coast. This island was of remotely ancient renown as a seat of commerce, navigation, literature, and art. The climate was delightful, the soil fertile, the scenery picturesque, and at this time of the year the air was perfumed with the fragrance of its flowers. We have all heard of the huge colossus, 105 feet high, which bestrode the entrance to the harbour of the city of Rhodes. But Paul's vessel did not sail between its legs, as the vast image had been prostrated many years before by an earthquake.[1] Indeed, it is doubtful whether they entered the harbour at all, as there was good anchorage in the roadstead; or even landed, seeing that they appear merely to have lain to there for the night. It is still, however, usual for vessels from and to Caramania, and from or to Syria and Egypt, to touch at Rhodes for pilots or information.

From Rhodes the vessel proceeded to Patara, on the southern coast of Asia Minor, upon a bay into which the river Xanthus flows. It is about ten miles from the city of

[1] "About the end of Olymp. 138, or at the beginning of Olymp. 139, in the reign of Euergetes, it (Rhodes) was almost wholly destroyed by an earthquake, during which the colossus was overthrown, which was never set up again."—NIEBUHR, *Lectures on Ethnography*, i. 201. This date corresponds to about B.C. 225.

that name, upon the same river, whose interesting monuments have been of late years brought to light, and are now preserved in the British Museum. Patara was in some sense the port of Xanthus. The vessel seems to have finished its voyage at this port, or was proceeding to some place farther east on the coast, than suited the design of Paul to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost. He was therefore glad to find in the harbour a vessel just about to sail across the open sea to Phœnicia. They forthwith went on board, and took their departure—perhaps the same evening—as even the timidity of ancient navigation did not refuse, with a fair wind, to pass by night over this safe and unobstructed piece of water. At that rate they might, with a good wind—and the wind is always fair for their course at that time of the year—reach Tyre in two days. Their course was direct for that port, passing the island of Cyprus rapidly on the left. The advantage of finding at Patara a vessel ready to sail at once for Phœnicia, and the quick passage thither, not only relieved Paul from any anxiety as to being in time for the Pentecostal feast at Jerusalem, but left him several surplus days. He determined, therefore, to abide at Tyre, for the edification of the church in that place, during the few days the vessel required to remain there in order to discharge her cargo, and perhaps to take in another, before proceeding to her final destination.

A church had been founded at Tyre soon after the death of Stephen, and it is in every way probable that Paul himself had been there once, if not oftener, before, as it lay in the track of some of his previous journeys by land and sea. In refreshing intercourse with the Christian friends in this city, Paul and his companions remained for a week, during which he so established himself in the affections of the brethren, that, when he departed, they all, with their wives and children, accompanied him out of the city gate down to the seashore. They there knelt upon the beach, and employed in prayer the few last moments they could spend together; and then, with a warm embrace, parted from each other—the tra-

vellers proceeding on board, and the Tyrian brethren slowly and mournfully returning to their homes. They feared that they should meet no more; for some of the brethren who were prophets had announced that Jerusalem would be a scene of great danger to him. This was in accordance with the conviction he himself had expressed at Miletus; but none of these things moved him, for he felt that he was in the path of duty, and could leave the rest to God.

The vessel might, and probably did, reach Ptolemais the same day, the distance being but twenty-eight miles. Here the sea voyage terminated, either because the vessel proceeded no farther, or because Paul preferred to make the rest of the journey by land. There were disciples at this place, and affectionate greetings were exchanged with them; but the stay here was only for one day, as, although there was abundance of time for being at Jerusalem by Pentecost, the apostle wished to spend some days at Cæsarea before proceeding to the holy city. The next day Paul started for Cæsarea, which lay upon the coast, forty-four miles south of Ptolemais, so that it might be reached in two days' easy travel. Here a Christian society had long ago been established by Philip the evangelist (Acts viii. 40), and it still flourished under his auspices, for he had settled there with his family. To his house Paul repaired on his arrival at Cæsarea, and took up his lodging with him; and happy, doubtless, were the days which he was enabled to spend under this roof, with Philip and his four virgin daughters, "which did prophesy," a fact mentioned perhaps to indicate that they were commissioned by the Spirit to intimate to Paul the risk and danger of the path he was pursuing. This was more distinctly declared to him by Agabus, the same prophet who had years before predicted the famine. He was in Judea when the news came that Paul was staying at Cæsarea; but he hastened down to the coast, and went to Philip's house, where, on seeing Paul, he deprived him of his girdle, and binding therewith his own hands and feet, declared—"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!" On this very plain intimation, all the disciples present, both those that came with Paul, and those resident in the place, implored him with tears to abandon his intention. He was not moved by this assured view of peril to himself; but he was affected by the grief they felt on his account, and he cried, with deep emotion, "What mean ye, to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Finding that his resolution was not to be shaken, they ceased to distress him by their entreaties, and said, "The will of the Lord be done."

If we feel some surprise at Paul's persistence in the face of this authoritative intimation, we may reflect that, although warned of danger, he was not forbidden to proceed. Nor can we say that he did wrong, when we consider that although all this came to pass, yet the result was in accordance with his own ulterior views, by transferring his services to Rome, which he had so long been desirous of visiting, and was at this time actually intending to visit.

When Paul arrived at Cæsarea, it was still twelve days to the day of Pentecost, three of which would be required for the journey of seventy-five miles to Jerusalem. Thus there were nine clear days before the feast, which he was at liberty to spend either at Jerusalem or at Cæsarea. He chose the latter, probably from some regard to his safety; for although determined to spend the Pentecost at Jerusalem, he was not the man to expose himself to *needless* danger; and he could not but be aware that every day in Jerusalem would be dangerous to himself and perhaps to others.

At length it was time to proceed. And now the party had become so large that, with its baggage, it formed a little caravan; for it received the addition of brethren of Cæsarea, who went up with them, partly in token of their respect and affection for the apostle and his friends, and partly to provide for their entertainment there, by introducing them to their friend Mnason of Cyprus, an early convert, now resident at

Jerusalem, who, as they knew, had the means of affording them accommodation in his house, and, as they felt sure, or had ascertained by letter, had the will to do so. This was an important matter at that time, when Jerusalem was usually crowded with visitors. To Mnason they accordingly repaired on their arrival, and were most cordially received by him and other brethren, who had perhaps assembled to meet them.

Fifty-First Week—Seventh Day.

THE TOWER.—ACTS XXI. 18–XXII. 29.

THE day after their arrival, Paul and his companions attended at the house of James, the Lord's brother, who had a special charge over the Jerusalem church, and where they found the presbyters or elders already assembled to receive them. When Paul and the delegates to whom the Gentile churches had, at his instance, intrusted their contributions, had delivered up their offerings, Paul reported at length the progress of the gospel in heathen lands, and the trying scenes through which he had passed since their last interview. When they heard these things they "glorified the Lord," by uniting in solemn thanksgiving. In his recital, Paul could not but give some prominence to the opposition he had encountered from Jews and Judaizers; and they were themselves well aware of the odium which rested upon his name among the same parties in Jerusalem. This made them anxious for his safety, and set them to devise such means as they thought best calculated to secure it. They told him it was generally reported and believed in the city, among the thousands of converted Jews who remained zealous for the law, that he taught the Jews in foreign lands that they ought not to circumcise their children, or observe the law of Moses. This, we all know, was a misrepresentation. What

he did teach was, that the Gentile converts were not to have the obligations of the law forced upon them; and that although the Jewish converts might observe the law if they thought fit, it was not to be taken as a ground of justification before God. His teachings in this matter, however, have been so repeatedly explained in the present volume, that it is not needful to develop them more fully here.

This being the case, and seeing it was impossible that the presence of a man so eminent, so much talked of, and so well known to many of the foreign Jews then in Jerusalem, could fail to attract attention, it was thought advisable that he should perform some overt act which might make it obvious that he was himself an observer of the law. The course they proposed was somewhat remarkable. There were four disciples who had taken the Nazarite vow, of which seven days remained unexpired, at the end whereof they would shave their heads and present their offerings. It was suggested that Paul should join himself to them, and present his offering with theirs; or, as some understand, defray the expense for the offerings of the whole party, and announce beforehand to the priest the responsibility he incurred. This would show his approval of, and his concurrence in a peculiarly Jewish rite; nor could such a course be in any way inconsistent in him, or repugnant to his conscience, seeing that he had formerly undertaken a similar vow on his own account. The participation indicated was also quite regular. The offerings were somewhat expensive for a poor man, and therefore it was considered a very graceful thing for any one to help him by taking a share in the offerings or providing them altogether, by which act he was considered to make himself in some sort a party to the vow.

Paul accordingly took the course recommended, but its object was altogether frustrated by the circumstances that took place the day before its completion. Some Jews from Ephesus had observed Paul walking in the streets of the city with Trophimus, whom they knew to be a Gentile. They took invidious notice of this circumstance, and when they

afterwards found Paul, they contended that he had brought Trophimus in with him, though from the crowded state of the temple courts they could not perceive that person. They therefore laid violent hands on Paul; and shouting, "Men of Israel, help!" declared that this was the man who went about everywhere preaching against the temple and the law, and who had even crowned his enormities by bringing Greeks into the holy place. Nothing could be better calculated than this to raise a violent commotion among a Jewish crowd in the temple courts. The living mass was quickly stirred into rage, and the rage as quickly grew furious. Paul would, in all likelihood, have been killed on the spot, but that the assailants were unwilling to pollute the temple with blood. They dragged him down the steps from the court of the women into the outer court, and they had no sooner passed than the Levitical porters shut behind them the Corinthian gates. The mob then began beating Paul, in the want of readier means to take his life; but the delay which had occurred in removing him from the inner court was the means of his preservation. The worship in the temple courts was in fact conducted under the supervision of Roman soldiers. Among the excited multitudes crowding the temple at the great festival, all animated by hatred of the Roman government, the signs of whose power in "the city of the great King" were an abomination in their eyes, outbreaks of popular fury had been so frequent, that it became the custom, on such occasions, to send a strong force into the fortress, called the Tower of Antonia, which stood at the south-west corner of the temple area, with the cloisters of which it communicated by means of a staircase. This fortress stood high enough to overlook the courts of the temple, from one, at least, of the four smaller towers that rose at its angles. The sentinels stationed here could plainly observe all that took place in the temple area, and on the slightest sign of disturbance, might give the alarm to the commandant and to the soldiers, who, being always under arms, were ready at a moment's notice to pour down the staircase into the court.

Thus it was in the present case. At the first alarm the commandant himself, attended by some centurions, and a strong body of troops, hastened down into the temple; and at their appearance, the mob desisted from their murderous violence, and fell back a little. As Paul was obviously the exciting cause of this uproar, the commandant, whose name was Lysias, caused him to be apprehended, and bound, in the Roman fashion, by two chains, to a soldier on each side, wrist to wrist. Lysias then endeavoured to learn who his prisoner was, and what offence he had committed; but finding it impossible to get at the truth in the tumult, he rested in his own conclusion, that he was the Egyptian impostor whom the governor Felix had lately defeated on Mount Olivet, and who had himself escaped, and baffled the search made for him.[1] Being thus still alive, Lysias supposed he might secretly have found his way into the city and temple; nor was the fact that the Jews were beating Paul calculated to undeceive him, seeing that the man's designs had been from the first exceedingly unpopular in Jerusalem.

As the soldiers were removing Paul along the court to the stairs of the fortress, the people pressed after them with yells and execrations, shouting, "Away with him! away with him!" And at the foot of the stairs the pressure became so great, that the soldiers to whom Paul was chained had to take him in their united arms, and carry him up the steps.

At this moment, the apostle, with great resolution and presence of mind, turned to the commandant, who was close to him, and asked him respectfully in Greek, "May I speak unto thee?" Lysias was surprised to be accosted in that

[1] This man (a Jew doubtless) had come from Egypt into Judea, where he gave himself out to be a prophet, and collected in the desert 30,000 men (4000 of whom were organized Sicarii or "murderers"), whom he persuaded to follow him to the Mount of Olives, where, he said, they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall down at his command, so that they might march over the ruins into the city, purposing to take the city by force, seize the Roman garrison, and assume the government of the people. Felix, however, marched out against him, and easily dispersed his host, slaying 400 and taking 200 prisoners; but the adventurer himself escaped with some of his most attached followers.

language by one whom he took for the Egyptian adventurer; and he asked, in return, if he had been mistaken in that supposition. Paul at once explained his familiarity with Greek, and asserted his claim to considerate treatment, by declaring himself to be a native of Tarsus in Cilicia—"a citizen of no mean city;" and then requested that he might be allowed on the spot to address the people. This was rather a strange request; but it was granted by Lysias, probably in the knowledge that the prisoner was now safe from the mob, and in the hope of gathering some information for his own guidance. In this expectation he was, however, disappointed, for Paul, facing round on the stairs where he stood, and making with his chained hands his usual motion to invite attention, began to speak in the Hebrew tongue, of which Lysias understood not a word. Curious to know what so notorious a heretic could have to say, and charmed by the accents of their beloved tongue, a profound stillness was immediately obtained, and not a word Paul uttered was unheard. Indeed, his speech was, up to the point which he purposely reserved to the last, admirably suited to win attention and dispel prejudice, by showing that he was *not*, as his adversaries alleged, a contemner of the Mosaic law, and of the religion of his country, and that he had *not* hastily and rashly, but only for most weighty reasons, embraced the Christian faith. He showed that he was a Jew born, brought up in the strictest principles of their religion, and who had hated, persecuted, and endeavoured to extinguish Christianity. He then recounted the wonderful circumstances by which he had been brought to embrace that faith; and proceeded to mention that he afterwards, while praying in the temple, saw Jesus, and was commanded by Him to leave Jerusalem, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

No sooner had this word passed his lips, than the dead silence which prevailed was suddenly broken by the most horrible outcries of rage and indignation, to which the previous uproar was as nothing. The sea of heads below was broken by hands tossed tumultuously aloft in ungovernable

passion. Many cast dust into the air in frantic expression of their rage, while others tore off their robes, as if to disencumber themselves for instant vengeance, and over all the cry arose in accents of intense hissing hate—"Away with such a fellow from the earth! for it is not fit that he should live!"

Lysias, who had not understood Paul's speech, could only infer from these signs that he must be some notable offender. He, therefore, ordered him to be removed into the castle; and that the truth which, as it seemed, could not be otherwise reached, should be forced from the prisoner himself by the torture of the scourge. According to Roman custom, a centurion was appointed to superintend the punishment, as was the case also at our Lord's crucifixion. But as they were strapping the apostle's hands and feet to the whipping-post, he said quietly to the centurion, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" The centurion so very well knew that it not only was not lawful, but was a highly penal offence against the dignity of Roman citizenship, that, directing the executioner to stay his uplifted hand, he hurried off frightened to the commandant, and said to him, "Take heed what thou doest, for this man is a Roman." On hearing this, Lysias himself hastened to the spot, and asked Paul if it were really true that he was a Roman citizen; and, on his answering affirmatively, remarked somewhat incredulously, that this high privilege had cost himself a large sum of money. We know, in fact, that it was a purchasable privilege, and that its price was very high. And that Lysias had needed so to acquire it, shows, together with his name, that he was a Greek by birth, for every native of Italy was born a citizen of Rome. Paul answered simply: "But I was free born." He was of course instantly released from the whipping-post, and the executioner dismissed. But although he had not actually been scourged, the commandant knew that, in case the prisoner were vindictive, he had exposed himself to disgrace, if not punishment, by having bound him in order to his being scourged like a

slave. All now, therefore, was civility and attention; and although Lysias could not take the responsibility of releasing him, or even of dispensing with the ordinary bonds, Paul had no reason to complain of the treatment he received in the Tower of Antonia.

Fifty-Second Week—First Day.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE.—ACTS XXII. 30-XXIII. 11.

As Lysias saw no other way of obtaining information for the direction of his own proceedings, he determined to produce Paul the next morning before the Sanhedrim, to ascertain what they had to allege against him. He was accordingly released from the chains which had bound him to the soldiers, and was introduced to the council, convened for the purpose by the commandant, who, in the absence of the governor at Cæsarea, seems to have exercised the chief Roman authority at Jerusalem.

When Paul had entered the assembly, and taken his place at the bar, he cast a steadfast and scrutinizing glance around upon its members—noting the changes that had taken place since, now nearly twenty years ago, he had received from it his memorable commission to Damascus—recognising many faces with which he was familiar, though somewhat changed by lapse of years; and gathering, from what he observed, intimations for his own defence. It was but for a moment; and then he began—"Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." At the first view, we, who are acquainted with so much of his course of life, are inclined cordially to endorse this testimony. But, at the second thought, a question arises whether he means this to apply to the whole of his life, or only to the portion of it since his conversion. Some have taken the latter alternative, in order to avoid an apparent difficulty; but the tone of the statement, and the circumstances which surround it, will not permit us to consent to this limitation. The period which his assertion covers must, therefore, include that in which he was one of the greatest enemies of the church of Christ, persecuting it and wasting it "beyond measure" (to

use his own expression), and with unrelenting barbarity and inveterate hate. Does he mean, then, to assert that he lived in as "good conscience toward God" at that period, as at the time he spoke, or any other time of his life? He certainly did not, in the sense usually understood. He could not. It was impossible to one who, so often as he does, laments his guilt, and acknowledges his offence, and sets himself down as the chief of sinners, "because he persecuted the church of Christ." Therefore, although he states that "he did it ignorantly, in unbelief;" and although he alleges that at one time he thought in himself that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," yet, no one knew better than he that he was not thereby excusable; for possessing, as he did beyond most men of his time, the means of knowledge, he was responsible for his *ignorance*, and for the thoughts to which that *ignorance* gave birth. Hence he was not *justified*, *excused*, or *exonerated* because of his ignorance; but PARDONED—"obtained mercy"—as one who had been an offender. Pardon is for the guilty; vindication for the innocent.

Let us not, therefore, think that we may gather from Paul's declaration the perilous doctrine, that we are to be held excused for the wrong we do, if only it be done with a good intention; and that, if a man be but sincere, and mean well at the time, his conduct, if not entitled to praise, is to be pitied rather than blamed, and will not be laid to his account in the chancery of Heaven. This is one of those dangerous maxims which a sickly liberality sanctions with its applause. But it is surely not difficult to see that this principle, if carried out to its fair and legitimate consequences, forms an apology for the atrocities of a Clement or a Ravaillac, or of any infuriate fanatic who might imagine himself an instrument chosen by Providence to avenge the cause of Heaven. Indeed, it may be questioned whether, if the plea of good intentions be admitted, it would not effect a general gaol delivery throughout the world; for there are few of the crimes which men commit, for which a good intention of

some kind or other might not be alleged. Let us understand that we are responsible, not only for our belief, not only for our intentions, but for the use we have made of our means and opportunities of learning whether our intentions would stand "good" before God or not.

Still, the question has not been answered "If Paul means nothing of all this, what then does he mean?" Let it be observed that, of many Greek words expressing divers manners of life, he purposely chooses one which limits his meaning to political conduct—life as a citizen or a member of the community. The charge against him was, as he knew, that he had been an unfaithful and seditious member of the Jewish community (in which the religion and the civil polity were closely connected, if not identical); and by an anticipatory repulsion of this charge he declares that his conscience bare witness that his conduct, as a member of the Hebrew community, had been blameless to that day. It needs but a glance at the text to show that this is the real and only meaning, and translators are not to be blamed because the English language has no one word, which would convey the meaning of the Greek word adequately. It is likely, however, that Paul intended to explain himself more fully had he not been interrupted.

This bold assertion so irritated the acting high priest, Ananias, who then presided in the Sanhedrim, that he ordered those who stood by Paul—the apparitors and ushers of the court—to smite him on the mouth, a well-known sign of abhorrence and rebuke for the words he had uttered. This is still done in the East, and the stroke is usually, at this word of command, inflicted damagingly to the mouth, with the heel of a shoe; hence "Give him the shoe!" "Give him plenty of shoe!" are well understood expressions. Paul's was one of those quick tempers which may be readily kindled, even to some intemperance, under the instant pressure of flagrant wrong. He therefore retorted with some heat, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall! For sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary

to the law?" In calling Ananias a "whited wall," he compared him to those walls composed of mud, dung, and other vile materials, which being plastered and whitewashed made a fair show without. The doom upon Ananias, which Paul thus denounced, was prophetic, and was afterwards fulfilled in the violent death of that personage. Nevertheless, it was delivered with too much warmth, and perhaps vindictive eagerness. He himself, like most quick-tempered persons, was sensible of this the moment after; for when reproved for it by those who stood near, he ingenuously acknowledged his error, and pleaded in excuse that he had not at the moment recollected the dignity of the office which Ananias filled, or he would more guardedly have expressed himself. "The best of men," as Scott remarks on this case, "are liable, when greatly injured and insulted, to be put off their guard; and even that zeal and faithfulness which the Holy Spirit dictates, in warning sinners of approaching ruin, will sometimes be mingled with the remains of our sinful passions, and prompt us to speak unadvisedly with our lips. But whether in reality, or only in appearance, we speak or act inconsistently with the Divine precepts, it is, in general, advisable to decline a strenuous justification of ourselves, and to admit that our conduct was in some respects unfit for imitation."

Another circumstance now occurred, which, together with the one just noticed, proves how imperfect are the best of men, and how wretched would be our state if we had no better righteousness than our own to cover us, since even the holy Paul was more than once tempted to act an inconsistent part. Seeing no other means by which he might escape the determined malice of his judges, he resolved to extricate himself by setting them at strife against each other; and as he knew that some of them were Pharisees, and the others Sadducees, thus differing widely in their ideas of a resurrection, he made his case a party business, by declaring that it was for the hope of the resurrection he was called in question. This had exactly the effect contemplated, for it roused their animosity against each other, the Pharisees siding with him,

and the Sadducees uniting against him; and in consequence of the riot which ensued, his life was in danger of being forfeited to his own contrivance, had not the commandant interposed, and, withdrawing him by force from the council chamber, conducted him back safely to the castle. Many writers conceive that Paul was justified in the course he thus took, and that the Lord's appearance to him afterwards was a tacit approval of his conduct. But it will appear as if Paul himself had some misgiving of conscience concerning it, for he alleged before Felix that the only thing that with any justice the Jews could lay to his charge was his conduct on this occasion.—Acts xxiv. 20, 21.

Still, the Lord did appear to him the ensuing night, comforting him; but with such comfort as a worldly person would gladly have dispensed with. The Lord said—"Be of good cheer, Paul, *for* as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, *so* must thou bear witness also at Rome." This was in substance saying that, as he had suffered much, laboured much, for his Lord's sake, so there was much more suffering and labour for His sake yet to undergo. But this was in fact the most effective comfort to the apostle; for he had no greater joy than the advancement of the gospel, at whatever expense of pain or suffering to himself.

Fifty-Second Week—Second Day.

FELIX.—ACTS XXIII. 12.–XXIV. 26.

JOSEPHUS relates that, in the time of Herod the Great, ten men—whose conduct he plainly regards with no displeasure—bound themselves by solemn oaths to assassinate the king, whom they deemed an apostate; and that, when their plot was discovered, they maintained to the last that the conspiracy they had sworn to was a holy and pious action. In like manner, and probably with like convictions that they

were doing God service, more than forty Hebrew fanatics took a vow that they would neither eat nor drink till they had slain Paul. But how were they to get at him, seeing that he was shut up in a strong fortress?

They repaired to the leading members of the Sanhedrim, whose character they knew well enough to be assured of their complicity and aid, and unreservedly informed them of their purpose, and invited them to provide the opportunity for its execution. It was suggested to them that, at the next meeting of the council, they should send to the commandant a request that he would produce the prisoner before them, as they were desirous of resuming the inquiry which had been so tumultuously interrupted; and the applicants, on their part, promised to await him on the way, and to take special care that he should not reach the council chamber alive. It is likely that at least one of the persons to whom the plot became known felt some interest in Paul's safety, if not abhorrence at the intended crime, and that it was thus for the express purpose of frustration made known to Paul's nephew —his "sister's son"—who seems to have been a resident in Jerusalem. This young man, alarmed for the safety of his beloved uncle, to whom free access of friends was allowed, hastened to the fortress, and imparted to him the intelligence. On hearing this, Paul called one of the centurions, and requested him to conduct the young man to the commandant, to whom he had something to impart. Lysias, who seems to have been in the barrack-yard when the nephew was introduced to him with this intimation, took him kindly by the hand, and leading him aside, cautiously asked what it was that he wished to say. On repeating what he had heard, the commandant saw at once the proper course to be taken; but without disclosing his intention, dismissed the young man with injunctions to secresy. As one accountable not only for the safety of a Roman citizen, in whom he by this time felt some interest, but also for the public peace, which might be seriously endangered by this attempt, he determined to send Paul away that very night, under a strong escort, to Cæsarea,

and leave the matter in the hands of the procurator Felix, who resided there. He directed the needful preparations to be made, and meanwhile wrote to Felix a despatch, which is a fine model of Roman official correspondence. It is a fair and clear statement of the case, except in one point, concerning his own conduct; for he says that he rescued Paul from the mob in the first instance, because he had learned that he was a Roman citizen, whereas in fact he did not learn this till afterwards. We may be sure also that he did not say a word about his purpose of scourging this Roman citizen.

It was nine o'clock in the evening, when Paul, riding on horseback between the horses of the two Roman soldiers, to whom he was chained, was conducted from the city in the midst of a large force composed of nearly five hundred men —that is two hundred legionary soldiers on foot, seventy of the cavalry, and two hundred lancers. Only the horsemen, however, were to proceed all the way; the foot soldiers being to return as soon as they had conducted Paul beyond the reach of danger from Jerusalem, and there was no more to be apprehended from the bands of outlaws, who in that age rendered all travelling dangerous. This point was attained at Antipatris, which, after travelling hard all night, they seem to have reached early in the forenoon. Here they, doubtless, rested, and then separated, the foot soldiers marching back to Jerusalem, and the horsemen proceeding to Cæsarea. Antipatris was a town built by Herod the Great on the plain of the coast, nearly forty-six miles north-north-west from Jerusalem, and twenty-six south-by-east from Cæsarea. The ruins of an ancient Roman road still indicate the route by which Paul was conveyed thither from Jerusalem, and which at that time was, doubtless, the principal line of travel and transport between that city and the Mediterranean coast.

On reaching Cæsarea, the escort proceeded at once to the palace, to yield up their prisoner, and to deliver the despatch from Lysias to the procurator. Felix broke the seal, and having read the letter, looked up, and asked the prisoner to what province he belonged—a question very needful to ask

in an age when disputes were continually arising between the Roman governors about their interprovincial rights. When Felix heard that the prisoner was of Cilicia, the governor of which was a near friend of his own, he said: "I will hear thee when thine accusers are also come"—Lysias having intimated at the close of his despatch that he should direct them to proceed to Cæsarea to make their charge before the governor in person. Meanwhile Paul was committed to the custody of a centurion, who was directed to keep him in the guard-room of Herod's prætorium.[1]

Five days after Paul's arrival at Cæsarea, his accusers made their appearance, headed by the high-priest Ananias, and fortified by the presence of a noted pleader named Tertullus, whose services had been secured for the occasion. There were many persons of this sort versed in the Roman law, and speaking the Latin and Greek tongues, of whose services the natives availed themselves in those cases which they had to bring before the Roman tribunals. It was even usual for the young lawyers of Rome to go into the provinces with the proconsuls and proprætors, that, by managing the causes of the provincials, they might qualify themselves for the more important affairs at Rome.

As soon as the governor had taken his seat upon his raised tribunal in the judgment-hall of the prætorium, the prisoner was sent for; and, on his arrival, Tertullus at once opened the case, which he managed with great dexterity, as far as we can judge from the brief outline of his speech which Luke has given. He began by complimenting the governor. It was difficult to do this without offending his employers; for Felix was both a bad governor and a bad man, and was un-

[1] The word prætorium properly denoted the residence of the Roman provincial governors, at which they administered justice. Hence it came to be applied to the abode of any king or prince, or even to any magnificent palatial building. If here the word prætorium had been alone used, we should have understood that it was the palace which Felix occupied, even though built by Herod; but as it is thus distinctly indicated, it seems rather to denote some other palace built by Herod, and now appropriated to public uses, but not to the residence of the governors. As in our old castles, there were prison chambers in all such buildings.

popular even to hatred among the Jews. He, therefore, rested his compliments upon the only meritorious actions the procurator had ever performed—the clearance of the country from freebooters, and the suppression of seditious fanatics, whereby the land enjoyed comparative quiet. This was also very adroit for the opening of his accusation against Paul, as one of the sort by whom that peace had been disturbed. The accusation itself consisted of three counts—that Paul was a "pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world;" that he was "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes;" and that he had attempted the profanation of the temple. In the end, he ventured to reflect slightly upon the conduct of Lysias, who had, he said, with great violence interposed, and taken the prisoner out of their hands when they had apprehended him, and were about to judge him according to their law.

When Tertullus had done, the governor asked the Jews whether they accepted this as a correct statement of their case; and when they had assented, he nodded to the prisoner to proceed with his defence. In commencing, Paul waived all compliments; but he expressed his satisfaction that his cause would be heard by one, whose unusually long tenure of office in that country had given him so much experience in its affairs, as would enable him to understand the merits of the case. He then gave effective answers to all the points which Tertullus had advanced. As to his being "a mover of sedition among the Jews throughout the world," Felix having no authority in matters beyond his own jurisdiction, Paul confined himself to his conduct at Jerusalem. He had been there but a few days, and during that time he had not opened his mouth in public, and he defied any one to produce evidence that, either by word or deed, he had done aught tending to excite disturbance. As to his being a ringleader of *the sect* of the Nazarenes, he confessed that, after the manner which they called *sectarian*, he worshipped the same God that they did; but he denied that Christianity deserved the stigma of that term. Its doctrines were no new-fangled

things, but were to be found in those sacred books in which he believed as firmly as they did, while he entertained the same hope with them of a resurrection from the dead. As to profanation of the temple, nothing specific on that point had been alleged; and if it had been alleged, the Ephesian Jews who made the accusation ought to have been present as witnesses against him. He had been there as a peaceable stranger, who, after many years of absence in foreign lands, had come in charge of alms for the poor of his own nation.

The case against Paul had so visibly broken down under this answer, and in the absence of all such evidence as both the Roman and the Jewish law required, that Felix ought clearly to have pronounced his acquittal, and to have set him at liberty. But Felix was unwilling to offend the most influential men among the Jews, by deciding against them in a matter in which they had evinced so much interest. It strikes us also that Paul's mention of the money, with which he had so lately been charged, and over which it might be supposed he had still some control, may have roused the notorious cupidity of the governor, and excited the hope that he might get some of it into his hands by detaining Paul as a prisoner. He therefore adjourned the cause, ostensibly, on the ground that he wished to hear Lysias before he came to a decision. Paul was then remanded into custody; the centurion who had charge of him, however, was enjoined not to place him in close confinement, but to allow him as much liberty as consisted with his safe detention, and not to prevent him from seeing his friends and receiving their attentions.

This was a precious boon to him, and helped much to render his protracted confinement cheerful, for there were those at Cæsarea who would count it the highest privilege to minister to his comfort. Philip, the evangelist, resided there with his family; Cornelius, the centurion, if still there, may have been quartered in the barracks of the Prætorium; the beloved Timothy, except when away on some errand to a distant church, was always by his side; and as we find Luke and Aristarchus with him at the time of his embarkation for

Rome, it is supposable that they had been at Cæsarea all the time of his detention.

Soon after Paul's trial, Felix left Cæsarea, and on his return was accompanied by his wife, the beautiful Drusilla, daughter of the late King Herod-Agrippa, and sister of the younger Agrippa, of whom we shall presently hear. This lady, whose beauty is reported as something wonderful, had been seduced away from her husband, Azizus King of Emesa, by the Roman procurator, and was now, in the eighteenth year of her age, living with him as his wife, or rather as his paramour. Soon after their arrival, Paul was sent for to the private apartments of the palace, where he found Felix and Drusilla, who wished to have the Christian doctrine explained to them by one of its greatest and most renowned teachers. This was, perhaps, at the suggestion of Drusilla, who might naturally wish to see and hear a man whose name must have been familiar to her from the time she was a little girl. It would appear from what passed, that the presence of Drusilla awakened in the mind of the apostle a full recollection of all he had known and heard of the governor's public and private profligacy, his oppression, his cruelty, and his injustice; and, doubtless, his heart bled to see *there* that daughter of a royal line, the loveliest of the damsels of Israel, sitting in dishonour beside that unprincipled old man, who had waded through a sea of low vices and high crimes, from the condition of a slave to an equality with kings. Paul knew that this man had his life in his hands, yet was he not deterred from speaking directly to the conscience of the hardened sinner. He spoke of that "justice" in all the relations of life, which Felix had habitually disregarded; he spoke of that "continence," which Felix had so flagrantly violated; and he spoke of that "judgment to come," from which there was no escape, and no appeal. As he spoke of these things, even Felix trembled; and, rising hastily, he put an end to the audience, expressing an intention of sending for him again when he should be able to find convenient time.

In fact, he did send for him from time to time, and conversed with him freely. What was the substance of these conferences, we do not know. But Paul was a man of education and high endowments, who had made extensive observations in different countries, so that his conversation might seem useful and interesting even to mere worldlings like Felix; and we may be sure that Paul lost no opportunity which offered of rendering these interviews profitable; and even if no salutary impression was made upon his heart, something would be gained by supplying a man having so much power in his hands, with correct views respecting the Christians, and their relation to the Jews. But it would seem from a hint given by Luke, that the procurator wished also to ascertain the position, means, and influence of the prisoner, in order to find whether any likelihood existed of a good sum of money being raised for his liberation. He probably intimated to Paul that his deliverance might not in that case be difficult. But the hint was not taken; and when, after two years, Felix was recalled to Rome, he left Paul in prison, as an act of courtesy to the Jewish authorities

Fifty-Second Week—Third Day.

KING AGRIPPA.—ACTS XXV.–XXVI.

THE new governor of Judea, Porcius Festus, though not without faults, was a far better, and more honest man than his predecessor; and with some little abatement, arising from his wish to ingratiate himself with the nation newly come under his rule, his proceedings bore the stamp of straightforwardness and firmness, which became his office well, and which it is refreshing to contemplate after the mean truckling of a Felix.

Three days after his arrival at Cæsarea, he paid the Jews the compliment of going up to Jerusalem. Of course his

first interview was with the high-priest. This person was Ishmael, lately appointed to that office by Agrippa, on whom the emperor had bestowed the administration of ecclesiastical matters and preferments. But although there was a new high-priest, and although two years had elapsed, the case of Paul had lost none of its importance in the eyes of the Jewish authorities, and the high-priest actually brought the matter forward, pressing the governor to give judgment against Paul. But Festus, with all his wish to render himself agreeable, recoiled at the iniquity of this proposition, and answered with some sternness, in words worthy of old Rome: "It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him." On this, the high-priest and chief-priests begged as a favour that the trial might be held at Jerusalem, secretly purposing, as Luke assures us, to get Paul murdered on the way. It does not seem to us that, as some think, their request amounted to an application to have him tried at their own tribunal; for they must have known that in the case of a Roman citizen, Festus would not consent to this; but that he should send for him, and try him during his present visit to Jerusalem. To this also Festus objected, that it was scarcely worth while, as he was about to return immediately to Cæsarea; but he courteously invited such as were interested in the case to go down with him, and accuse the man before him. This course was taken; and the very day after his return, Festus took his seat in judgment, and ordered Paul to be brought in. The accusation was the same as before, and the absence of proof was equally apparent. Paul, in his defence, was content to deny the charges altogether: "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all." The Jews, seeing the failure of their case, seem to have again pressed for his trial being removed to Jerusalem, alleging probably that more effectual evidence could be produced on the spot. Festus being willing to oblige the Jews

as far as he safely might, then asked the prisoner if he would consent to go to Jerusalem to be tried there—"*Before me*," he added; to show that he would not even there have any other judge than at Cæsarea, and thus intimating his willingness to take the trouble of going to Jerusalem on the matter. This put Paul rather in a dilemma. He could not well object to the equity of the proposal; but at the same time, he had credible information, which he could not substantiate there, nor, out of regard to his informant, produce his authority for it, that the course would be his destruction. There was, therefore, but one step open to him, and he took it. This was to stay all further proceedings in the case, either at Cæsarea or Jerusalem, by lodging an appeal to the tribunal of the emperor at Rome. Such an appeal, he as a Roman citizen, had a right to make, and no one could disallow it; and it became the duty of the magistrate with whom it was lodged, to forward the appellant without any avoidable delay to the seat of empire. Accordingly, Festus, after conferring with his assessors in judgment, said, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go." It was, doubtless, with considerable relief and satisfaction that the governor saw himself fairly rid of a business, which was assuming an unpleasant aspect, and by which he began to be perplexed.

Not long after this, King Agrippa, with his sister Bernice, arrived at Cæsarea to pay his compliments to the new governor. He was the son of Herod-Agrippa, by his excellent wife Cypros. He was at Rome with Claudius when his father died; and the emperor, who was fond of him, was minded to bestow on him all his father's kingdom, until his friends pointed out the inexpediency of entrusting so large a realm to one so young. Eventually, however, by successive grants from Claudius and from Nero, he did obtain a large proportion of his father's kingdom; and at this time his dominion comprised a large territory east of the Jordan and Lebanon, with a part of Galilee. Having been brought up at Rome, he was strongly attached to the Romans; and in the troubles which soon arose, he did his best to maintain or restore peace

between them and the Jews; but finding all his endeavours useless, he joined his forces to those of the Romans, and took part with them in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. After that sad event he retired to Rome, and lived there to the age of seventy. Bernice, his sister, whose personal attractions were scarcely inferior to those of her sister Drusilla, had been early married to her uncle Herod, King of Chalcis, and on his death had become the wife of Polemon, King of Pontus; but at this time she had left her husband, and returned to her brother Agrippa, with whom she continued to live in a manner which caused much public scandal, and was very little to the credit of either.

Agrippa had not been long at Cæsarea before Festus mentioned the case of Paul to him, as a matter in which his guest was likely to feel some interest. His recital of what had taken place included his opinion, that nothing of the kind he had been led to expect had appeared at the trial, and all that transpired had been "certain questions about their own superstition," and, as he scoffingly remarked, "about one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." He clearly did not believe Paul in the right as to this; but he as clearly did not see that he was judicially punishable for a crotchet so absurd!

Agrippa was so far interested in this account as to conceive a desire to hear Paul for himself. Accordingly, the next day a high court was held, at which Festus and his two guests appeared in state, attended by their great officers and military commanders.

Paul having been produced, Festus made a brief address, constituting the court one of inquiry—stating that this person, having appealed unto Cæsar, must be sent to Rome; and that he wished, by the help of Agrippa, to ascertain with what offence he might be charged, in the despatch it would be needful to send to the emperor. Agrippa then signified to the prisoner that he was at liberty to speak for himself; and the apostle, after his manner, stretched forth his hand and spoke. He began by expressing his satisfaction at hav-

ing to vindicate himself before one so well versed as Agrippa in "all customs and questions which are among the Jews." He then proceeded nearly as in the speech from the stairs at Jerusalem. He described his manner of bringing up in the strictness of Judaism; he dwelt with particularizing emphasis on his persecution of the believers in Jesus; and related the great incident of his life—the vision on the way to Damascus, which resulted in his conversion. He had then received from Jesus himself a commission to preach to the Gentiles the great truths of which he had been convinced. He had acted in obedience to the commission thus given, from that day to this; and only by so doing he had awakened the hostility of the Jews, who thirsted for his blood, although he had taught "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles." All this speaking seemed to Festus the effect of an excited imagination, increased, perhaps by over-study; for it is likely that Paul had employed himself much in his confinement upon such "books and parchments," as he desired to solace his later detention at Rome,[1] and with which his friends could easily provide him. He, therefore, broke out, in a loud bantering voice, with—"Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad!" The apostle's calmly impressive answer was—"I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." His mode of reasoning had, however, been adapted to the apprehension not of Festus, but of Agrippa—a Jew believing in the Scriptures, and not without some such acquaintance with the belief of the Christians as could be gained from his outer point of view. On *him*, he perceived that he had made some impression; and he, therefore, appealed to him, and to his consciousness that he had not misrepresented the teaching of the prophets. "The king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak

[1] 2 Tim iv. 13.

freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner." "King Agrippa," he said, with startling abruptness of personal appeal, "Believest thou the prophets?" and he answered his own question—"I KNOW that thou believest!" This was virtually an appeal to Agrippa, whether the views he had set forth were not conformable to what the prophets taught. The king was moved by that appeal, and in the excitement of the moment, frankly avowed—"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." On which Paul, lifting up his chained hands, with deep emotion and passionate longing for the salvation of souls, exclaimed: "I would to God that both thou, and also all that hear me this day, were not only *almost*, but ALTOGETHER such as I am—except these bonds!" This is a master-stroke of true eloquence, never equalled by the finest orators of Greece or Rome. The effect was electrical. Agrippa started from his seat, and broke up the court, by departing with the governor and Bernice, as if afraid that he should commit himself further were he to listen any longer.

On talking together afterwards, Festus and Agrippa agreed that Paul had really done nothing worthy of death, or even of confinement; and the latter added that he might have been liberated had not his appeal to Cæsar rendered it necessary that he should be sent to Rome. Had Paul then made a mistake in lodging that appeal? No; for this destination was not only in accordance with his own purpose, but, as he knew, with the Lord's will.

Fifty-Second Week—Fourth Day.

THE VOYAGE.—ACTS XXVII. 1-26.

IT having been determined to send Paul to Rome, a ship was soon found in which he and other prisoners were embarked, under the charge of a centurion of the imperial cohort, named

Julius, whose courteous attention to the apostle on all occasions may seem to intimate, that he had formed his acquaintance during his long detention in the barracks of the Prætorium. The ship was of Adramyttium, and was bound for its own port, having probably touched at Cæsarea on a return voyage from Egypt. A fair wind wafted them by the next day to Sidon, and the ship ran in there, probably to discharge or to take in some portion of its cargo. Understanding that Paul had friends at this place, the centurion kindly allowed him to go on shore "to refresh himself" with them. He was, doubtless, chained by the wrist to one of the soldiers of the guard sent with the prisoners; but in that age the sight of persons going about in this manner was too familiar in all the cities of the Roman empire, to excite much attention.

Loosing from Sidon, the vessel was forced by winds, now become somewhat adverse, to pass under the lee of Cyprus, which is determined on sufficient grounds[1] to have been along the north side of the island, between it and the mainland, but nearer to the mainland than to the isle, in order to catch the favouring influence of the land breeze, and of the current which constantly runs to the westward along the south coast of Asia Minor. With breeze and current thus favourable, they arrived without any recorded incident at Myra of Lycia, then a flourishing seaport, but now a desolate waste.

To proceed much farther in this course would have been out of the way, and Julius was, therefore, glad to find at Myra, as he had expected, a ship bound for Rome, to which he might transfer his prisoners and the soldiers who guarded them. This ship was, as we afterwards learn, laden with corn, and bound from Alexandria to Rome, of which

[1] By James Smith, Esq. of Jordanhill, to whose kindness we are indebted for the designs for the frontispiece and vignette of this volume, and from whose admirable work on the *Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*, London, 1848, the contents of this and the following paper are mainly drawn; this work having, to a great degree, superseded the results of the writer's personal acquaintance with Malta (acquired during nearly two years' residence in the island), and with so much of the sea track of this voyage as lies between it and Crete.

Egypt was one of the granaries. The habit, in ancient navigation, necessitated by the want of the compass, of sailing as much as possible within sight of the coast, explains the seemingly strange fact of our finding in a port of Asia Minor a ship bound from Egypt to Rome—a ship, the name of which (and ancient ships had names) we do not know, but which, even without a name, will be for ever memorable. These ships were large—equal, in fact, to the largest merchantmen of modern times—and we need not, therefore, be surprised at the number of persons (276) embarked, as we afterwards find, in this one—as in another of the same sort, which eventually took them to Italy—in addition to her own crew.

Their progress in the Alexandrian ship, after leaving Myra, was exceedingly slow, either from calms or contrary winds, for "many days" elapsed before they came "over against Cnidus," at the entrance of the Ægean Sea, which with a fair wind might be accomplished in a single day. Here the advantage of the land breeze and the current, which had enabled them to work on thus far, though slowly, altogether ceased, and they were exposed at once to the full force of the Etesian wind. Finding it impossible to make head against it, their only plan, as many other navigators in these seas have found, was to abandon their direct course by the north of Crete, and, steering southward, run under the lee of that island. After working up along its southern coast, they reached Fair Havens, which is the farthest point that an ancient ship navigating under the lee of Crete, could reach with north-west winds; for beyond Cape Matala, six miles farther on, the coast sweeps round to the north-west, and against the prevailing blasts no vessel could double that promontory. They therefore waited in the anchorage of the Fair Havens for a change of wind, but none occurred until the advanced state of the season rendered the prospects of navigation dangerous. The time is denoted by the fact that "the fast," or great day of Expiation, which was celebrated about the time of the autumnal equinox, was already past.

All hope of completing the voyage during the present season was therefore abandoned, and the only question was, whether the vessel should remain in the Fair Havens, or should risk the danger of doubling Cape Matala, in order to reach the safer harbour of Phenice, which lay about forty miles to the west. A consultation was held on this point, at which Paul assisted, and strongly urged that they should winter in the Fair Havens, predicting great danger in the attempt contemplated: "Sirs, I perceive this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." The officers of the ship were, however, of a different opinion; and the centurion, having a serious responsibility upon him, naturally preferred the judgment of experienced seamen to that of the apostle, notwithstanding his general respect for him.

It was still needful to wait for a change in the wind. This long desired event at length occurred. A gentle breeze from the south having sprung up, they immediately took advantage of it to weigh anchor, and set sail with every prospect of being enabled to reach Phenice in a few hours. Having doubled the Cape, their course lay across the great southern bight to the west thereof. They had not proceeded far, however, when a sudden change in the weather took place. The ship was caught in a typhoon from the north-east (not unusual at that season, and called Euroclydon), which blew with such violence that they could not face it, but were forced, in the first instance, to scud before it to the south-west for twenty-three miles, when they neared the little island of Clauda (now called Gozzo), and rounding its eastern end, ran under the lee of the shore. Here they busied themselves in preparing the vessel to resist the fury of the storm. They now got in the boat, which they had not done at first, because the weather had been moderate, and the distance they had to sail was short. This was a work of no small labour, as the boat had been completely swamped from being dragged so far through a tempestuous sea. They then "undergirded the ship," by passing a strong cable several times round her hull

to keep her timbers together, which must have been greatly strained by the leverage of a single mast, with a ponderous yard at the upper end. Their next care was to make the ship "snug," by lowering the sail, and bringing down upon deck her spars and rigging.

It next became a serious question in what course they should endeavour to keep. They could not scud before the wind, not only from the danger of a heavy sea beating upon the vessel and rendering steering difficult, but because twenty-four hours' drift, in the direction of the storm, would have borne them to certain destruction upon the great Srytis or sandbank of the African coast. They must therefore have "hove to." They could not have hove to on the port tack—that is, with the left side of the vessel to the wind (which blew from the east-north-east), for then it must have drifted upon the coast of Libya, which lay at no great distance, and would, moreover, have been driven quite out of their course. The only remaining alternative was to heave to on the star-board tack, or to the right, in a north-westerly direction. Thus, with the boat secured, the ship undergirded and made snug, and storm-sails set to keep the vessel steady, they proceeded, steering as close to the wind as the gale would permit. On the following day, the gale continuing unabated, they threw overboard the heaviest and least valuable part of the cargo. "Every step hitherto taken," says Mr Smith, "indicates skilful seamanship. In an old French work on maritime law, I find every one of these precautions pointed out as proper to be taken by able mariners under similar circumstances."

On the third day they threw overboard the tackling of the ship. Luke says, "We cast it out with our own hands." It is probable that the mainyard is denoted or included, this being an immense spar, possibly as long as the ship, and which it would require the united strength of passengers and crew to launch overboard. The relief would be equivalent to that which a modern ship receives from the throwing over-board of her guns.

A dismal interval of several days now ensued, during which the storm continued with unabated violence, so that at length the poor voyagers lost all hope of being saved. The leakage could not be kept down, and it became clear that the vessel must founder at sea unless the land were soon made. But as ancient ships had no compass, and as the clouded sky had for many days prevented any observation of the sun or stars, the reckoning was lost, and the mariners knew not where they were, nor in what direction to steer for the nearest land. It was for this reason that they lost hope, for, apart from their uncertainty, the mere continuance of the storm might have been as likely to drive them into safety as into danger. All on board had hitherto borne up nobly, and their present despair must in part have been the result of the continued labour and want of rest inevitable under such circumstances, as well as of the abstinence constrained by the loss or spoiling of provisions, and by the impossibility of dressing any food.

Then it was, on the fourteenth day of the voyage, that Paul, the prisoner, stood forth with words of encouragement and hope. He gently reminded them that all this harm and loss had ensued from their previous neglect of his advice. But now he assured them that not one of their lives should be lost, though the vessel in which they were could not be saved. The ground of his assurance was that the angel of the God whom he served had appeared to him that night, and had told him that he was yet to appear before Cæsar, and that God had given to him the lives of all who sailed with him. "Howbeit," he added, "we must be cast upon a certain island;" but this prospect was a gladness to those who were out at sea, storm-driven, in a sinking ship.

Fifty-Second Week—Fifth Day.

THE SHIPWRECK.—ACTS XXVII. 27-XXVIII. 10.

PERSONS upon a tempestuous sea, in a vessel slowly sinking under them, are not wont to turn a deaf ear to the voice that gives assurance of hope. The voice that was disregarded in the calm safety of the Fair Havens, is heeded well amid the dreads of the stormy and dark day. The former utterance is now recalled with distinctness; and its exact fulfilment causes Paul to be looked to as a prophet whose words fall not to the ground. The effect of the confidence in him thus established may be traced in all that follows, and from this time the apostle becomes the virtual commander of the ship. The promise of land caused the mariners to keep a sharp look-out ahead; and on the midnight of the fourteenth day after their departure from Fair Havens, their practised senses discovered through the gloom the sound or the white surge of breakers, which apprised them that land was near. Awful at sea as is the cry of "Breakers ahead!" it afforded in this desperate case a chance at least of safety. They can now adopt the last resource for a sinking ship, and run her ashore; but to do this before daylight, upon an unknown shore, and in a dark and boisterous night, would have been certain destruction. They must bring the ship to anchor, and hold on, if possible, until the morning, when they may perhaps discover some creek with a beach into which they may be able "to thrust the ship." The breakers soon became distinctly visible; and as the soundings showed that the vessel was rapidly nearing the shore, no time was lost in casting out four anchors at the stern. Ancient vessels were usually supplied with several anchors, as they had none singly of so great weight as those we use in large vessels. They ordinarily anchored by the bow, as we do; but anchoring by the stern was best for this emergency. The ship's course would be thus more easily arrested, and she would be in a better posi-

tion for being run ashore in the morning. The anchors held fast; and the storm-sail having been lowered, and the two heavy paddles by which (one on each side) the ancients steered their vessels, being lifted up out of the water and made fast, nothing remained but to wait patiently for day. These were, however, anxious hours. The vessel might founder before dawn, the cables might part, and it was by no means certain that the morning light would show any beach where they could land with safety. Aware of these perils, the sailors determined to take to the boat; and they lowered it under the pretence of laying out anchors from the bow, and thereby of steadying the ship, which was pitching violently in the sea. Had this dastardly attempt been successful, the peril to the landsmen left on board would have been great; for how were they to work so large a vessel when the morning light appeared? The design of the sailors was, however, penetrated by Paul, on whose declaration to the centurion and the guard of soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved," they at once cut the hawser, by which the boat was being lowered over the side of the ship, and let it drop into the sea. Considering that this boat might, under conceivable circumstances, become the only means of escape from a sinking vessel, the sacrifice of it is a remarkable instance of the wonderful ascendancy which the apostle had by this time acquired over the minds of his companions on board.

It now wanted but little to daybreak, when every one would be called on for the best exercise of his mental and physical powers. Therefore Paul, who alone seems to have remained in a calmly collected state of mind, pressed upon them the importance of recruiting their exhausted frames by some food, solacing his advice by the assurance that not a hair should fall from the head of any one of them. He then set the example himself; and, having given thanks to God, took a piece of bread, and, breaking it before them, began to eat. Encouraged by his example and his words, all of them partook together of the only approach to a full and regular

meal they had enjoyed since the commencement of the gale. Thus strengthened, a final effort was made to lighten the ship, so as to be able to run her on shore more easily; and as the wheat with which she was laden could be of no further use, they cast as much of it as they could into the sea.

The earnestly-desired day at length dawned, and revealed to them a coast, of which none of them had any knowledge. But they perceived before them a bay, within which was a creek, with a practicable beach, which they judged suited to the object they had in view of running the vessel ashore. They, therefore, cut their cables, leaving the anchors in the sea; and, having hoisted their foresail and loosed the lashings of their rudders to let them drop into the sea, they steered for the creek. But a little in advance of the beach was a bank or bottom of tenacious clay (produced by the disintegration of a peculiar rock), and on this the fore part of the vessel stuck fast, while, from having fallen into "a place where two seas met," the hind part began to break up under the action of the waves. It was clear that the vessel must go to pieces in a few minutes. Under these circumstances, the soldiers in charge of the prisoners, and responsible for their custody, were afraid that some of them might swim off and escape, to prevent which they, with true Roman disregard of human life or suffering, purposed to put them all to death. But the centurion, determined to save Paul, opposed the motion sternly for his sake, taking all the responsibility upon himself. He, at the same time, ordered such as could swim to cast themselves first into the sea. They did so, and reached the shore; and as the ship went to pieces, the rest, some on boards, and others on broken pieces of the ship, made their way through the surf, and all escaped safely to land.

They soon learned from the people that they had been cast on the island of Melita. This has been usually identified with Malta; and the identification, which we have never doubted, seems to us to have been established beyond all further question by Mr Smith, in the valuable work which

we have named. He has also sustained the local tradition which points to the western coast of St Paul's Bay, as the immediate scene of the transaction. All the local incidents of the coast, and the creek, and the two seas meeting, and the breakers—not to mention the distance and course of the drifting voyage, agree entirely with the narrative of Luke, and cast light upon it. We have, therefore, in digesting the narrative of Mr Smith, with collateral aids, expressed these as established facts, without going into the evidence, having many years ago, in reading the 27th chapter of Acts upon the spot, received this conviction, although the subject was one on which some doubts had been previously entertained.

We observed also that the bay, with the sea beyond, is, to the naked eye, visible from Citta Vecchia, which, at the distance of five miles inland, represents what was the metropolis of the island at the time of the wreck. It is likely, therefore, that many of the citizens hurried down to the shore when they observed a large vessel entering the bay under the circumstances described, which clearly indicated that she was in great distress. Certain it is that the people of the island received them with much kindness, and hastened to afford all possible relief to their wants. Relief was much needed; for the weather was cold, the rain fell heavily, and the clothing of such as had any was drenched with sea water. A large fire soon blazed in a sheltered nook, and comforted them until the governor of the island, named Publius, who had a marine villa near the place of the wreck, could arrange for the accommodation of the shipwrecked strangers. Paul, always helpful to any useful labour that might be in hand, employed himself in gathering a bundle of sticks; but when he had cast it upon the fire, a viper came forth, and fastened upon his hand. At this extraordinary incident, the islanders concluded in their minds, that this was some murderer whom, though he had escaped the danger of the sea, Divine justice suffered not to live. Paul, however, quietly shook off the venomous creature; and when, after observing him narrowly a long while for the usual symptoms of this mortal bite, his

body did not swell, nor did he fall down suddenly dead, they changed their minds, and looked upon him as a descended god.

The island was inhabited by people mostly of Phœnician origin; hence Luke designates them as "barbarians," a term then applied to all who were not of Greek or Roman descent, however civilized. It was at this time a dependency of Rome, and attached to the government of Sicily. It had, however, a local governor, in the person of Publius, bearing the title, as attested by subsisting inscriptions, of (*prōtos*) primate, or first, or chief, which Luke assigns to him. This title must have been official, and not derived from his rank or wealth in the island, for his father was living; but he lay ill of fever and dysentery, and by healing him miraculously, Paul had the satisfaction of recompensing the hospitable attentions of Publius, who for three days supplied the wants of the party, and seems to have received some of them (including Paul and his friends) into his own house. After this they went to the town, and local tradition, with much likelihood, ascribes to him a residence in a grotto hewn in the soft rock under that city, in which we have seen a fine statue of him, and an altar dedicated to him. The fame of the miraculous cure having spread abroad, others who were afflicted with diseases repaired to the apostle, and were healed—the Lord thus enabling him, without silver or gold, to repay the abundant kindness which these good islanders had shown to the strangers. They considered this as a new debt of gratitude, which they repaid by rendering to Paul and his party every possible honour; and when they embarked again, loaded them with such things as they might be likely to want, or as might be agreeable to them, among which, if we may judge from our own experience, oranges would not at that time of the year be forgotten.

Fifty-Second Week—Sixth Day.

MELITA TO ROME.—ACTS XXVIII. 11-31.

THREE months spent in Melita brought round the time when the ancients considered the navigation of the seas practicable, and Julius secured for his soldiers and prisoners a passage to Italy in another corn-ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the island, and which was called the Castor and Pollux, twin demigods, who were regarded as the special patrons of sailors. With a fair wind, Syracuse, in Sicily, was but a day's sail from Melita; and on reaching that famous port and emporium, a stay of three days was made, probably for the purposes of trade. Whether or not Paul went ashore here, we cannot tell. Doubtless the courteous centurion would have allowed him to do so, had this been his wish; but after three months on land people do not care much for going ashore after merely a day's voyage, unless they have friends in the place to which they come, and it is not likely that the apostle had any at Syracuse.

From this port they proceeded by an indirect course, the weather not being at first favourable, to Rhegium, at the entrance of the Straits of Messina, and put into the harbour there, the wind not allowing them to pass through the straits. But after one day it became fair, they set sail, and the next day reached Puteoli, in the Bay of Naples. The harbour of Puteoli was then, as it is now, the most sheltered port of the Bay of Naples. It was the principal port of the south of Italy, and, in particular, it was the great emporium for the Alexandrian corn-ships. The advance of such ships, as distinguished from others, was always known as soon as they hove in sight, from the fact that they alone were allowed to enter the bay with their topsail set; and by the time the vessel reached the pier, it was always sure to be crowded with observers and idlers, to witness the debarkation of passengers. It was through such a crowd, and under the escort

of the soldiers, that the centurion conducted the apostle and his fellow-prisoners. As they were to remain a week in this place, probably to await orders from Rome, Julius allowed Paul to spend the time among the Christian brethren he found there.

At the end of that time the party commenced the march to Rome, distant one hundred and fifty miles. And when they had proceeded thirty-one miles, they found themselves upon the famous Appian Way, the track of which still remains. The foundation of this road, which was thirteen or fourteen feet broad, was of concrete or cemented rubble work, and the surface was laid with large polygonal blocks of the hardest stone, so nicely fitted to each other that the whole seemed the work rather of nature than of art. The distances were marked by mile-stones; and at intervals of twenty miles were mansions or post-stations, where vehicles, horses, and mules were provided for the convenience of travellers, and the transmission of government despatches.

It was usual among the Romans, as it still is in the East, for persons apprised of the approach of friends, or of those whom they delighted to honour, to go forth to meet them on the road they must travel, the honour being proportioned to the distance. The Christians at Rome were numerous, and many of them persons of consideration. They had heard from Puteoli of Paul's expected approach; and when he arrived at the Appii Forum, he found a large party of them who had come to the unusual distance of *fifty-one miles*, to honour the great apostle of the Gentiles, and to testify the sense they entertained of his services and sufferings in the cause of Christ. When Paul saw them, "he thanked God, and took courage." He was deeply moved by such affectionate zeal, and was encouraged by finding that the Roman brethren were not ashamed of his chain, but were rather stimulated thus publicly to avow their fellowship with him in the bonds of the gospel. From Appii Forum the company of Roman Christians proceeded with Paul's party eighteen miles, to the Three Taverns, a well-known stage upon this

road. Here another large party of Christian brethren was found, composed probably of persons of maturer age, or whose departure from Rome had been too late for farther progress. The united parties must have rendered the attendance from this point very considerable; and the approach of Paul to the metropolis of the world, was more like a triumphal procession than the forced march of a prisoner.

On arriving at Rome, the centurion completed the responsible task he had so ably and discreetly performed, by resigning the charge of the prisoners into the hands of the prætorian prefect, a dignity which was at this time held by Burrhus, one of the most influential as well as most sagacious of Nero's advisers. It was in all probability the favourable mention of Paul made to him by Julius, together with the tone of the letter which he brought from Festus to the emperor, that procured for him very considerate treatment, and as much freedom as consisted with his safe detention. Instead of being confined to the barracks of the prætorium, he was allowed to take up his abode in a hired house, which, we must suppose, was near enough to facilitate the military inspection under which he lived, and for the convenience of the "soldier that kept him," and to whom he was chained when he went abroad, if not within doors.[1] Much of a prisoner's comfort depended upon the character of the men with whom he was brought into such close connection; and therefore pains were taken, and influence used to obtain select and well-behaved soldiers for this office. Thus, when Herod-Agrippa was in like custody at Rome, the empress Antonia influenced Marco, the then prætorian prefect, to see that the centurion who had charge

[1] The cut, from the arch of Severus, shows a Roman soldier about to fasten to his own arm the chain by which a prisoner is bound.

of the prisoner, and the soldiers who interchangeably kept him, should be men of mild and easy nature, and that he might have leave to bathe himself daily, and that his friends and servants should have free access to him. There seems every indication that, through the spontaneous kindness of Burrhus, or the influence of Paul's friends with him, similar means were taken to make his confinement easy.

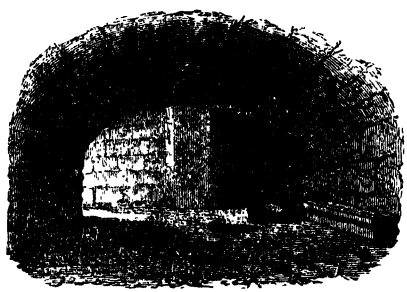
Paul had been only three days at Rome when he began to bestir himself in the cause he had most at heart. He sent first for the leading men among the Jews, who were very numerous at Rome, and sought to remove any impression unfavourable to him, that they might have derived from his appearance in the imperial city as a prisoner from Judea. They assured him, in reply, that they had not yet received from Judea any information to his disadvantage. They only knew generally that he was a leading man of the Nazarenes, who were "everywhere spoken against," but they were very willing to hear him on that subject. There was something promising in this; but when, on the day appointed, they came to his lodging to hear him further, the great truths of the Christian doctrine, which he set forth with much fulness, were not found acceptable to more than a few of their number. Observing their disagreement with him, and their distaste to his teaching, he sent them away with a rebuke for the hardness of their hearts, and with the intimation: "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." Accordingly, Paul remained for two years in his hired house, preaching the gospel with eminent success to all who came to hear him. Nor was preaching all his labour, for to this period we are to ascribe his Epistle to the Ephesians, the Epistles to the Philippians and the Colossians, the Epistle to Philemon, and perhaps the Epistle to the Hebrews, of which he is generally supposed to have been the writer. To these we must add the Second Epistle to Timothy, if there was but one imprisonment at Rome. Here also was written, at the close of this period, the Acts of the Apostles by Luke; for he brings his history

no further than this, leaving Paul still a prisoner, after two years' captivity at Rome. The Gospel of the same evangelist had been previously written, probably at an earlier date in this captivity, for he makes a distinct allusion to it in his introduction to the Acts.

The subsequent history of Paul, after Luke closes the record which we have hitherto followed with so much interest, is involved in great uncertainty and doubt. Whether he was liberated from this confinement, or closed it by martyrdom; if liberated, by what means it was accomplished; the course, extent, and duration of his subsequent travels; and even the time and manner of his death—are points of which nothing can be positively affirmed. The somewhat muddy current of tradition is, however, in favour of his liberation from this imprisonment; after which he revisited the churches he had established, and executed the intention he had formerly announced of journeying through the western parts of the Roman empire, unto Spain,[1] and, as some have fancied, even to the British isles. He then returned to Rome, whether freely or as a prisoner, tradition does not pretend to settle. There he became involved in the results of the persecution which was raised against the Christians on account of the burning of Rome, falsely ascribed to them, and in consequence of which the fullest measure of Roman cruelty was expended upon them. The apostle was kept for some time in confinement; and it is alleged that in this second imprisonment, he was not allowed the comparatively easy custody of the "soldier that kept him," but was committed to prison. The Mamertine prison, which still exists, is indeed particularly indicated as that in which he was detained; and we are inclined to attach some credit to this indication, from finding it frequently mentioned in old martyrologies as the place in which many of the early martyrs were confined, as well as from our knowledge that it was adapted to and used for such purposes in Nero's day. The Mamertine prison dates from the earliest times of Rome. It consists of two extensive

[1] Rom. xv. 24, 28.

apartments, built with large uncemented stones, and lying one over the other. The upper one has no entrance but through a hole in the top, and there is access to the lower chamber only through an aperture in the floor of the upper one. The lower dungeon, called the Tullianum (from the King Servius Tullius, to whom it was ascribed), is that in



which Paul is supposed to have been confined. A more horrible abode for the detention of a human being could not well be conceived; and Sallust, who described it when still in use, says that from darkness, uncleanness, and foul air, it was altogether a loathsome and frightful place. From this dungeon we are told that Paul was dragged to Aquæ Salvia, the Tyburn of Rome, situated about two miles beyond the present limits of the city, and there bowed to the stroke which laid his venerable head in the dust.

Fifty-Second Week—Seventh Day.

THE CATACOMBS.—HEB. XI. 38.

ALTHOUGH we possess no very satisfactory information respecting St Paul's career subsequent to the close of the

"Acts of the Apostles," we are not in want of information of peculiar interest respecting the early condition of that church—the church in the imperial city—which, as its importance demanded, occupied a large place in his thoughts and his prayers, and which long continued to bear the impress of his labours. The cursory reader of Scripture may be apt to underrate the extent of these labours, seeing that the record of them is embraced in a few verses at the close of the last historical book of Scripture. But a man like Paul could not labour for upwards of two years in a city like Rome, without leaving, upon a soil already broken up to his hands, the most manifest signs of his culture. Then, there is the probability of a second visit of some duration, in which far more effectually than by oral teaching, he with his blood matured "God's husbandry" in that place. And besides, there is the great epistle which he wrote to the Christians in that city before they had seen his face, and which was well calculated, with the Spirit's blessing, to build up the church to which it was addressed, as it has since built up other churches—strong in doctrine and in faith. Verily, it was not milk for babes that he gave to them; but strong nourishing food, that they might grow thereby. And they did grow.

Deep beneath the soil of Rome, and winding off into labyrinths of unknown extent, excavations were made before the time of the birth of Christ for a species of earth or sand, now called *pozzonala*, from which was made the durable cement used by the Romans. As the material ran in narrow veins, rising, dipping, and bending irregularly, it was worked out in galleries of only sufficient size for the operation of procuring it, and when exhausted in one place, the excavation was left to neglect, and was forgotten. These galleries are about six feet in height, and three in width. They have been traced for many miles, and there are several entrances to them. As they are not lighted by any holes or openings, and are very devious and confused in their windings, many persons have perished in them, so that most of the entrances

have been closed.[1] The principal access to them now is beneath the Church of St Sebastian, outside the walls. At intervals are larger spaces, chambers originally made by the workmen for their own convenience; but which afterwards served for chapels to the early Roman Christians, and for dwellings when persecution compelled them to worship in some retreat, or to seek refuge for their lives.

Under the name *arenariæ*, the catacombs are mentioned by Cicero and by Suetonius. It has been a matter of much controversy whether or not the pagan Romans used these dark and gloomy recesses for the purposes of sepulture. The Romans did not, however, usually bury the bodies of their

[1] This is the case also in the catacombs at Malta. They are supposed to extend as far as St Paul's Bay, and to the sea. Many accidents had occurred in them; but the one which led to the passages being built up at certain distances from the entrance, was the loss in them of a schoolmaster and his pupils, who went too far into these passages, and were never found or heard of more.

dead, but consumed them by fire, and preserved the ashes in urns, a practice which became abhorrent to the Christians, under the hope they entertained of the resurrection of the body. From the fact that sepulchres in the catacombs are adapted for the reception of entire bodies, the skeletons or the dust of which are found in them, the probability is, that the Christians were the first to put them to this service. Indeed, the exclusively Christian character of the inscriptions is a sufficient testimony to that effect.

Along the sides of the galleries, excavated under the circumstances described, rising in tiers above each other, are horizontal recesses of the size of the human body, fronted with slabs of marble. On these may be read the first Christian inscriptions; and within, the dust or bones, sometimes entire skeletons of the early martyrs and disciples of the Christian faith, are enclosed. Many of the slabs remain in the catacombs, but a large number have been removed to the galleries of the Vatican, where they are embedded in the walls. There can be no deception or mistake in the touching mementoes of these rude inscriptions. There may be seen in Rome thousands of cinerary urns and tombs, which enclose pagan dust. These are inscribed to many gods, to the deities of the shades, and are ornamented with beautiful but vain symbols, the evidence of darkened minds and hopeless sorrows; and offering in all respects a marked contrast with the first rude sculptures of a vigorous and hopeful Christian faith over the ashes of those who had lived in it, or died or suffered for it. The slabs of marble over the Christian tombs discard the pomp of epitaphs. They more generally give the name of the deceased, the length of his earthly pilgrimage, the prayer that the sleeper may "rest in peace," and generally with a monogram[1] formed by the letters P. X., meaning *in* or *for Christ*, the X being the initial letter of the Greek name of Christ, just as writers even now use it as a contraction for that sacred name by itself, and in such

[1] See page 460.

words as Xmas, Xian, etc. Some, however, allege that the monograms merely express the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. Sometimes are added rude representations of a cluster of grapes, a palm-branch, a fish, a bow of promise, a dove, an anchor, a ship, or the letters A. Ω., in reference to the well-known passages in the Book of the Revelation,[1] in which our Lord describes himself as "the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the First and the Last." The following are a few specimens of the more simple of the inscriptions:—"O Donilius! mayest thou rest in peace. Leo did this." "Apthona! mayest thou live in God." "Farewell, O Sabrina! She lived eight years, eight months, twenty-two days. Mayest thou live sweet in God." "Irene, in peace. Her mother Agape set up this. In Christ." "Zoticus, may you live. Trust in the Lord." "Nicephorus, a sweet soul, in the place of refreshment." "Laurence, to his sweetest son Severus, borne away by angels on the seventh Ides of January." "Here lies Damalis. So God wills." Expressions of tenderness and character occur in paternal and conjugal inscriptions; and it is in such epitaphs that we begin to discover a tendency to that complimentary form of pagan epitaph, which, as also the dismal funereal symbols of paganism—the urn, the inverted torch, the broken column, and the like—has been adopted by the moderns, in preference to the simple and more truly Christian style of monumental inscription. "To Claudius, the well-deserving and affectionate, who loved me. He lived twenty-five years, more or less. In peace." "Cecilius the husband, to Cecilia Placidina, my wife, of excellent memory, with whom I lived well ten years, without any quarrel. In Christ." "To Adsertor, our son, dear, sweet, most innocent, and incomparable; who lived seventeen years, six months, and eight days. His father and mother set up this." Sometimes the age is expressed with still greater exactness: "In Christ. Died on the Kalends of September, Pompeianus the innocent, aged six years,

[1] Rev. i. 8; xxi. 6; xxii. 13.

nine months, eight days, and four hours. He sleeps in peace."

In regard to the symbols employed; the fish was chosen because its name in Greek, contains the initial letters of the Greek for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour;[1] the dove (with or without olive branch, and with laurels in mouth or claws), with reference to the dove returning to the ark, and as hence a sign of safety and peace; the palm of victory and the anchor, as the close of a holy life; the ship, as an emblem of the church in her heavenward voyage, etc.

Sometimes sundry implements are represented on the slabs, and were at one time thought to denote the instruments of martyrdom or torture; but they are now conceived to express, in agreement with subsisting Oriental usage, the trade or employment of the deceased, as exhibited by the principal tool or tools of his craft.

Another set of symbols found upon these monuments express phonetically the name of the deceased, the intention of these representations being shown by the accompanying inscription. Thus the tomb of Dracontius exhibits a dragon; that of Onager, an ass; that of Leo, a lion; that of Navira, a ship; that of Porcella (little pig), a hog, etc.

We are inclined to concur in the suggestion of Dr Maitland,[2] that the cause which most powerfully contributed to the adoption of Christian symbols, was perhaps the ignorance of reading and writing then prevalent. Books and even inscriptions were for the learned; unlettered survivors were by no means consoled by the epitaph of the deceased, or enlightened by the figures expressing his age and the day of his death. In some cases the most absurd mistakes of the stone-cutter have passed unaltered. Even where the sculp-

[1] ΙΧΘΥΣ=Ιησους Χριστος Θεου Υιος Σωτηρ.

[2] *Church in the Catacombs*, London 1846, which, together with some of the works therein cited as authorities, with various books on the Antiquities of Rome, and an article entitled *Local Vestiges of the Early Propagation of Christianity in the City of Rome*, in an American periodical—from which we made extracts some years ago, but the title and date of which are lost—supplies most of the information digested in this Evening's Reading.

tor has done his part unexceptionably, the orthography of some epitaphs is so faulty as almost to frustrate their intention, by rendering them scarcely intelligible to those who can read. For persons capable of making or permitting such errors, another mode of representation became necessary, and the symbols, however imperfectly they supplied the deficiency, were the only substitutes known. This view seems forced upon us by the existence of the phonetic signs just noticed, such as the ass on the tomb of Onager, and the lion on that of Leo—an idea so strange, and to our taste so bordering upon caricature, that it is only to be explained by the necessity of some characteristic mark, intelligible to unlettered relations. When those employed in seeking the grave of their departed friend, saw the lion, the ass, the pig, or the ship, by pronouncing the name of the object thus carved outside, they expressed that of the occupant within.

The fact that the catacombs not only furnished sepulchres for dead believers, but retreats for the living in times of persecution, rests upon good evidence, notwithstanding the objections that may be advanced from the narrowness of the passages, the difficulty of supporting life, and the risk of discovery in asylums so well known. But these objections scarcely apply to a temporary residence below ground in times of danger, and it is not pretended that the catacombs were used as habitations under other circumstances. The asylum would doubtless have been insecure had the passages been well known to the heathen authorities, or the entrances limited in number to two or three; but the openings into them were numberless, scattered for miles over the Campagna, and the labyrinthian passages below were so occupied by the Christians, and so blocked up in various places by them, that pursuit must have been hopeless. Besides this, the discovery of wells and springs in various parts of the corridors, assists us in understanding how life could be supported in those dismal regions, though there is no evidence that the wells were sunk for this purpose. Moreover, we are not to suppose

that the entire Christian population of Rome resorted to these retreats. When a persecution arose, it would strike first at the elders of the church, the heads of families, and others specially obnoxious to the pagans; and warned by the signs of approaching danger, these more prominent Christians might easily betake themselves to the catacombs, where they could be supported by those whose obscure condition left them at liberty—particularly by the humble sand-diggers who claimed a sort of property in the place, and among whom the Christian faith had early made great progress, judging from the number of inscriptions in which they are indicated.

That worship was held in these caverns may also be shown on good testimony.[1] But this must be understood with much the same limitations as residence in them. It is known that before the time of Constantine, there were in Rome many rooms or halls employed for divine worship, though, perhaps, not any edifices built expressly for the purpose. Besides this, the extreme smallness of the catacomb chapels, and their distance from the usual dwellings of the Christians, offer serious objections to the supposition of their being used for regular meetings. Their use in that respect must, therefore, be limited to times of persecution; but that, even when not under the pressure of such necessity, the catacombs were occasionally resorted to for devotional purposes by pious individuals, and by bodies of Christians for special solemnities, is shown by the testimony of ancient writers, by some

[1] The evidence afforded by a long monumental inscription in the Vatican Museum, found in the cemetery of Callistus, is very important and interesting. It refers to the fifth persecution of the Christians, which began in 161, A.D. "In Christ. Alexander is not dead, but lives beyond the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He lived under the Emperor Antonine, who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good; for, while on his knees, and about to sacrifice to the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times! in which sacred rites and prayers, even in caverns, afford no protection to us. What can be more wretched than such a life? and what than such a death? when they could not be buried by friends and relations—at length they sparkle in heaven. He has scarcely lived who has lived in Christian times."—MAITLAND p. 33.

of the inscriptions themselves, and even by the probabilities of the case. The discovery of chapels, altars, fonts, and episcopal chairs, would show the existence of a subterranean worship at some time or other; but it would be difficult to prove that these belong to the early period under consideration.

There can, upon the whole, then, be no manner of doubt as to the traditions which fill up the history of the simple inscriptions in the catacombs, and assert that in these dark chambers the first Roman Christians worshipped, and that in these neglected galleries were laid the mangled remains of the martyrs, and the bodies of early believers. St Jerome, about the middle of the fourth century, speaks of the catacombs as a place of sacred and solemn interest to him, which, while a youth pursuing his studies at Rome, he used to visit on Sundays, in company with other young men like-minded. A few years later, a Spaniard named Prudentius visited Rome; and he has not only informed us that while there he loved to wander amid those solemn testimonials contained in the catacombs, but has left evidence of the fact in his beautiful hymns upon them, and upon the men and scenes associated with them.

What most impresses the reflecting mind is, that Rome, who has so grievously departed from the faith of Christ, should bear within her own bosom, "graven with an iron pen, in the rock for ever," evidence against her own corruptions, in the memorials of a pure, apostolic, Pauline faith, from which no one has been able to gather a shadow of evidence in favour of any of those bastard dogmas which she in later years devised, and has to this day strenuously upheld. We find here no trace of Petrine or papal supremacy, no celibacy of the clergy, no worship of the Virgin, no invocation of saints, no purgatory, no prayers for the dead, no representations of the Deity in sculpture or painting; and against many of those things we have not only the indirect, though impressive, evidence of silence, but the plain indication of

contrary practices and ideas. In these solemn recesses we meet with "none but Christ." It is the unobscured light of his countenance, as of the sun shining in its strength, that irradiates the gloom of these solitudes. He is the Alpha, the Omega, of all around. All is of Him—

"HIM FIRST, HIM LAST, HIM MIDST, HIM WITHOUT END."

In the following INDEX, the Volumes of the MORNING and EVENING SERIES are numbered consecutively from I. to VIII.—

VOL. I. THE ANTEDILUVIANS AND PATRIARCHS.

VOL. II. MOSES AND THE JUDGES.

VOL. III. SAMUEL, SAUL, AND DAVID.

VOL. IV. SOLOMON AND THE KINGS.

VOL. V. JOB AND THE POETICAL BOOKS.

VOL. VI. ISAIAH AND THE PROPHETS.

VOL. VII. THE LIFE AND DEATH OF OUR LORD.

VOL. VIII. THE APOSTLES AND THE EARLY CHURCH.

INDEX.

I. SUBJECTS.

II. AUTHORS QUOTED OR REFERRED TO.

III. SCRIPTURE TEXTS ILLUSTRATED

I. SUBJECTS.

Aaron: His rod turned into a serpent, ii. 49; sin in making the golden calf, 138; death of his sons, 149; jealousy of Moses, 170; sin at Meribah, 195; death, 199; and tomb, 201.

Abel: A keeper of sheep, i. 82; meaning of the name, 82; his offering—ground of its acceptance, 88; death, 92; traditions as to it, 93; burial, 94.

Abihu: His sin, ii. 148; death, 149.

Abijam, King of Judah, iv. 171; wars with Jeroboam, 173; the first great action, 173.

Abimelech, King of Gerar: His treatment of Sarah, i. 249.

Abimelech, son of Gideon: His ambition, ii. 385; death, 387.

Abner: Opposes David, iii. 319; revolts to him, 324; Joab's revenge upon, 328.

Abraham: The friend of God, i. 177; traditions regarding, 180, 184; equivocation, 184, 250; wealth, 190; rescues Lot, 202; God's covenant with, 208; slaves, 213; saving faith, 219; intercedes for Sodom, 233; trial of his faith, 262; offers Isaac, 263; contrasted with Agamemnon, 266; bargain with Ephron, 271; death, 292.

Absalom: His revenge on Amnon, iii. 402; beauty, 404; weight of his hair, 406; filial ingratitude, 414, 419; death, 422.

Accursed Thing, The, ii. 279.

Achan: His sin, ii. 281.

Achish, King of Gath: His reception of David, iii. 288.

Adam: In Eden, i. 47; extent of his knowledge, 48; names the living creatures, 51; knowledge of them supernatural, 52; the deep sleep, 54; state after the Fall, 76.

Adonibezek: His cruelty, its retribution, ii. 317; motive of his policy, 318.

Adonijah: His scheme for securing the crown, iii. 439; death, iv. 17.

Adonis: Legend of, vi. 308; feast of, 309; the river, 311.

Agabus predicts a famine, viii. 227; and Paul's imprisonment, 410.

Agamemnon contrasted with Abraham, i. 266.

Agrippa, King: His audience of Paul, viii. 433.

Ahab: Idolatry prevalent in his reign, iv. 203; his character, 205; interviews with Elijah, 213, 231; insolence of Benhadad, 258; victories over him, 262, 265; mistaken clemency, 267; Naboth's vineyard, 268; death, 272; Jehu's vengeance on his house, 338, 340, 344.

Ahasuerus, King of Persia, iv. 438; banquet, 439; its duration, 440.

Ahaz: Defeated by Rezin and Pekah, iv. 379; seeks help from Assyria, 380; wholly given to idolatry, 380; the sign from God, iv 385, vi. 59; his life prolonged, iv. 398; his dial, 398

Ahaziah, King of Israel: Falls from the house-top, iv. 272; inquires of Beelzebub as to his recovery, 273; judgment on, 274.

Ahaziah, King of Judah: His death, iv. 339.

Ahijah: Prophesies concerning Jeroboam, iv. 134; the rent mantle, 136; interview with Jeroboam's wife, 157.

Ahimelech: His kindness to David, iii. 261; Saul's revenge upon, 262.

Ahithophel: His defection from David, iii. 417; death, 420.

Ahriman: The lord of evil, vi. 139; contrasted with Satan, 140.

Alabaster Box, vii. 302.

Alexander the Great destroys Tyre, vi. 335, 337.

Algum Trees, iv. 106.

"All the World": Meaning of the phrase, vii. 51.

Altars: Stone, i. 302, 321; altar of the Reubenites, ii. 308; of Elijah at Carmel, iv. 242; to the "Unknown God," viii. 369.

Amalekites: Their attacks on Israel, ii. 115, 362; lasting enmity, iii. 195; doom accomplished, 197.
Amasa: Joab's treachery to, iii. 428.
Amaziah, King of Judah: His military resources, iv. 368; conquers Edom, 369; an idolater, 370; defeated by Jehoash, 371; his death, 372.
Ambassadors, Indignities offered to David's, iii. 384
Ammonites, The: Besiege Jabesh-Gilead, iii. 159; are defeated by Saul, 171; conspire against David, 387; his treatment of them retributive, 397.
Amnon: His passion for Tamar, iii. 399; Absalom's revenge on, 402.
Amorites, The: Origin of, ii. 207.
Amos: His prophetic mission, vi. 395; allusions to rural life, 396.
Amulets, i. 333.
Anakim, The: Their stature, ii. 184.
Ananias and Sapphira: Their crime and punishment, viii. 38.
Ananias of Damascus, his interview with Saul, viii. 120.
Ananias the high priest, his treatment of Paul, viii. 421,
Anatomy: Oriental ignorance of, vi. 31.
Andrew: His call to the apostleship, vii. 251.
Angels: Appearance to Abraham, i. 232; to Balaam, ii. 225; to Gideon, 367; to Zacharias, vii. 22; to Mary, 30; to the shepherds, 65; at the Pool of Bethesda, 277; to John, viii. 47; to Peter, 47, 246; Apocryphal names, vii. 23; names not significant, 24; mode of their appearance, 31; Jewish opinions regarding, 278; guardian angels, viii. 248.
Animals: Creation of, i. 33, 36; used as food after the flood, 45; dispersion from a common centre, 52.
Anna, the prophetess, vii. 111.
Annas: Why called "the High Priest," vii. 420.
Annunciation, The, vii. 30.
Anointing: Of Saul, iii. 142; kings and priests consecrated by, iv. 359; of our Lord, vii. 302, 406.
Antediluvians, The: Their food, i. 44; civilization, 120; names significant, 127; longevity and rapid increase, 132; their years not lunar months, 135; traditions as to their longevity, 135; giants, 136.
Antioch: Mission of Barnabas to, viii. 215; its commercial advantages, 223; celebrity, 224; modern city, 225.
Antioch in Pisidia, viii. 278; Paul and Barnabas at, 279; Paul's discourse, 280.
Antonia, Tower of, vii. 427; viii. 414.
Ants: Their habits, v. 344; white, 348.
Apocryphal Gospels, The, vii. 156.
Apollos: An eloquent man, viii. 383; instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, 383.
Apostles, The: Appointment of the twelve, vii. 285; former occupations, 289; descent of the Holy Ghost, viii. 9, 18; choice of Matthias, 12; qualifications of an apostle, 14; name not confined to the twelve, 172.
Appeal to Cæsar, Roman right of, viii. 432.
Appian Way, The, viii. 447.
Appii Forum, viii. 447.
"Apples of gold in pictures of silver," v. 337.
Aquila and Priscilla, viii. 376; instruct Apollos, 383; kindness to Paul, 399.
Arabia: Paul's visit to, viii. 138; the country so named, 142.
Arabs: Their habits, i. 227; Bedouin exactions, ii. 364; vii. 59; Elijah fed by, iv. 221; expeditions in search of grass, 232; costume, vi. 38.
Ararat: Resting-place of the ark, i. 155; appearance, 170; height, 171; ascent by Professor Parrot, 172; the scene of a great earthquake, 173.
Archelaus, King of Judea, vii. 152; his unscrupulous character, 153; banishment, 155.
Architecture: Naval, prior to the ark, i. 141; ignorance of the Israelites, iii. 353; Phenician, vi. 313.
Areopagus, The, Tribunal of, viii. 368.
Aretas: His possession of Damascus, viii. 152.
Ark, Noah's, i. 141; dimensions, 142; shape, 143; experiment of Peter Jansen, 143.
Ark of God, The: Taken by the Philistines, iii. 84, 89; restored, 96; removal from Kirjath-jearim, 343
Armies, Eastern: Their want of vigilance, iii. 168; the first great action, iv. 173.
Armour: Goliath's, iii. 222; Assyrian, vi. 72, 94.
Arrows, Divination by, vi. 317.
Artisans, Eastern: Their intelligence, vii. 290

Arts: Inventions by the family of Cain, i. 104; before the flood, 118; naval architecture prior to the ark, 140; art of writing, iv. 29.
Asa: His religious zeal, iv. 180, 181; Cushite invasion in his reign, 182; repels the invasion, 185; confederacy with Benhadad, 187; diseased in his feet, 193.
Asahel: His death, iii. 321.
Ashes, Sitting among, an act of repentance, v. 89.
Ashpenaz, chief of the eunuchs, vi. 359.
Asia, the country so named, viii. 332.
Asiarchs, viii. 400.
Asses: Riding on white, a mark of distinction, ii. 222, 345; Saul's search for his father's, iii. 133; employed in war by the Persians, vi. 193; ideas of peace connected with, vii. 390.
Assyrians, The: Luxury of their apparel, ii. 283, vi. 320; invade Judea, iv. 387; policy towards conquered nations, 388, 391, vi. 80; used the bow, 62; cavalry, 69; skill of the Kurds in horsemanship, 70; Armour of horsemen, 72; chariots of war, 73; harness, 75; title of "the great king," 77; mode of forming a treaty, 78; fertility of Assyria, 80; fortresses, 82; treatment of captives, 84, 241, 259; mode of conducting a siege, 89; religion, 95, 100; destroy the idols of the vanquished, 98; warriors, 320; head-dress, 322; mode of sepulture, 341; Israel tributary to, 386. (See Chaldeans.)
Astrologers: Philistine, iii. 91; fame of Apollonius Tyaneus, 92.
Astrology: Practised by the ancients, iii. 91; telesms against scorpions, 93; applied to the building of cities, 342; movements of the Persian court regulated by, iv. 445.
Astronomy: Calculations as to the time of Job, v. 32; God's power and wisdom in creation, 126; Nebular hypothesis disproved, 129; star in the East, vii. 115.
Athaliah: Murders the seed royal, iv. 354; a patron of Baalite worship, 355; reigns in Judah, 355, 357; her death, 358.
Athens: Described, viii. 361, 367; full of idols, 364.

Baal: Israel's homage to, ii. 232, 370; meaning of the word, ii. 373; iv. 208; the Phenician, 209; figures of, 211; defeat of priests at Carmel, 239; the God of Ekron, 273.
Baal-berith, The House of, ii. 386.
Baal-perazim: The scene of David's victory over the Philistines, iii. 358.
Babel, Tower of, i. 176.
Babylon: Its capture by Cyrus, vi. 176, 181, 194; prophecies regarding, 187.
Babylonish Garment: Its value, ii. 283.
Bacchus, Rites of, i. 66.
Baghdad, Inundation at, vi. 420.
Baker, The Chief: His office one of dignity, i. 359; his dream, 369; mode of carrying dressed meats, 370; his execution, 375.
Baking: Eastern mode of, ii. 113; with dried dung, vi. 294.
Balaam: His knowledge of the true God, ii. 215; character, 218; covetousness, 220, 228; his ass speaks, 224; vision of the angel explained, 225.
Baldness, a token of mourning, vi. 249.
Bamboo, used in making tents, i. 195.
Barak, his deliverance of Israel, ii. 354.
Barbarians: Meaning of the term, viii. 445.
Barbers, Eastern: Their skill, ii. 435; act as surgeons, vi. 33.
Bar-jesus: A Jewish impostor, viii. 254, struck with blindness, 261.
Barley: Its importance in Egypt, ii 67.
Barnabas: First mention of, viii. 38; recognition of Paul, 160; labours at Antioch, 215; at Cyprus, 254, 260; in Pisidia, 279; at Iconium, 283; at Lystra and Derbe, 284; his mission to Jerusalem, 291; contends with Paul, 315; tradition concerning his death, 318.
Bar-timeus: His cure, vii. 384.
Bartholomew, another name for Nathanael, vii. 266.
Barzillai: His meeting with David, iii. 430.
Baskets, Egyptian, i. 370.
Bathsheba: Her lineage, iii. 392.
Battering-ram, The, used in ancient warfare, vi. 89.
Beacons, ancient war-signals, iii. 166.
Beard, The: Shaven in Egypt, i. 387; Hebrew mode of trimming, ii. 152; what meant by the "corner," 152; reverence for, iii. 385.
"Beasts of the Earth": Their habits before the Fall, i. 37.

Beating freely practised in Egypt, ii. 41; and by the Romans, viii. 351.
Beds: King Og's, ii. 209; iron bedsteads, 210; Solomon's, v. 426; the paralytic's, vii. 267; the dinner-bed, 300; Eastern mode of making beds, viii. 189.
Bees: Their hiving in dried carcases, ii. 407; wild in the East, iii. 193; an emblem of Assyrian power, vi. 63; their sting compared to a quiver, 63; the spread-bee an emblem of Napoleon I., 64.
Beetles: Plague of, ii. 58; Egyptian reverence for, 59.
Beggar, The Lame: Cured by Peter and John, viii. 27; why stationed at the Temple Gate, 27.
Beheading: Common in the East, iv. 345; examples, 345, vii. 326; heads gathered into heaps, iv. 346.
Behemoth: Curious fact connected with the name, v. 239; identified partly with the hippopotamus, and partly with the elephant, 240.
Benhadad: His insulting message to Ahab, iv. 258; defeated by him, 262, 265; consults Elisha as to his recovery, 331; his death, 333.
Benjamin: His birth, i. 327; Joseph's favour for, 415.
Berea, Paul's visit to, viii. 360.
Bethany, The family of: The reproof to Martha, vii. 363; resurrection of Lazarus, 366.
Bethel: Jacob's vision, i. 301; his vow, 303; mockery of Elisha by the Bethelites, iv. 281; the altar desecrated by Josiah, 403; inscription on one of the tombs, 404.
Bethesda, Pool of, vii. 275; reason of the name, 277; cure of the impotent man, 280.
Bethlehem: Samuel's visit to, iii. 201; the town, vii. 56; the environs, 58; character of the inhabitants, 58; dress of the women, 58; sale of relics at, 59; Mary's sojourn in, 60; the caravanserai, 61; convent of the nativity, 70; visit of the Magi, a chronological question, 112, 119, 124; the massacre by Herod, 129, 134.
Bethsaida, Cure of a blind man at, vii. 336.
Bethshemites, The: Their presumption, iii. 99; and punishment, 101.
Bethuel, i. 279.
Betrothal, equivalent to marriage among the Jews, vii. 43.
Bezaleel, employed in building Solomon's Temple, iv. 32.
Bible, The: Its literary beauties, iii. 79; iv. 336; v. 100, 124, 221; vi. 21, 188, 301, 424; viii. 435.
Bildad the Shuhite: Visits Job, v. 98; his character, 106, reply to Job, its harshness, 137; second speech, 171.
Birds: Creation of, i. 33; rapid increase, 35; rapacity of kites, 373; birds of song, v. 424; of prey, vi. 246; trained to attack men, 247.
Birth of our Lord: The year and day uncertain, vii. 94, 97.
Birthday, Egyptian King's, observed with great pomp, i. 374.
Birthright, The: Jacob's purchase of, i. 288; privileges pertaining to, 290.
Blasphemy: Its punishment under the law, ii. 162; ceremonies observed, 163; our Lord accused of, vii. 271, 281.
Blind and lame on the walls of Jerusalem, iii. 340.
Blood: Used in Egypt for culinary purposes, i. 411; forbidden to the Israelites, 411; the Nile turned into, ii. 52; Jewish aversion to, iii. 194; its circulation unknown to the ancients, v. 395; decree as to eating, viii. 297.
Blood-revenge: Law of, iii. 330; exacted by the Arabs, 332; by the Gibeonites, 435.
Boaz: His kindness to Ruth, iii. 29 the Levirate law, 41.
Boils: Their severity, v. 84; the Aleppo button, 85.
Book-City, The, ii. 300.
Bottles, Leathern, ii. 286.
Bow, The: Song of, iii. 305; meaning of the word, 308; used in Assyrian and Persian warfare, vi. 62, 91, 197.
Bracelet, The: An Eastern symbol of royalty, iii. 306; a part of female attire, vi. 45.
Bramble, The, Jotham's Parable of, ii. 389.
Brass: Its high value, iii. 371.
Brazen Serpent, The, ii. 205.
Bricks: Making, in Egypt, ii. 15; stamped in Babylon, vi. 377.
Brethren, Our Lord's, viii. 165, 169.
Brother: Meaning of the word, viii. 166.
Budhism: Its teaching on the subject of incarnation, vii. 85, 87.
Buffaloes, Egyptian: Their habits, i. 383.
Building: Materials first employed in, i. 106.
Burglary: Eastern mode of, v. 183; Indian, 197.

Burial: Embalming, i. 429; solemn mournings in Egypt, 431; Ethiopian crystal sarcophagi, iv. 78; Jewish cemeteries, 366; sepulchres of the kings, 366; "desolate places," v. 118; rock sepulchres in Persia, 120, vi. 344; Pyramids of Egypt, v. 120; family gatherings, 120; burying in public places, 189; funeral feasts, vi. 250; the "days of weeping," 251; Assyrian urns, 342; Caucasian mounds, 348; Phenician sepulchres, 349; visits to the grave, vii. 371; coffins unknown in the East, viii. 41; washing the dead, 190.
Bush, The Burning, ii. 35.
Butler, The chief: His office one of great dignity, i. 359; forgets Joseph, 363; his dream, 366.
Butter, The feet anointed with, v. 202.
Butter and Honey, vi. 59.

Cabinet council, The first, iii. 420.
Cain: His birth, i. 80; meaning of the name, 81; occupation, 82; his offering, wherefore rejected, 88; murders Abel, 92; banishment, 97; traditions regarding, 100; useful inventions confined to his family, 104; builds the first city, 105.
Calamities, not always judicial, v. 76.
Caleb: One of the twelve spies, ii. 177; his piety, 296; its reward, 298.
Calf, The golden, ii. 135; mode of its formation, 139; its destruction, 145; calves at Bethel and Dan, iv. 148.
Camels: Described, i. 276; intractable, 277; their furniture, 319; swiftness, iii. 165; employed in war, vi. 192.
Cana of Galilee: Miracles at, vii. 206, 241; its present condition, 207.
Canaan, The land of: Abraham removes to, i. 178; its fertility, ii. 177; Hebrew right to, 251, 255; scientific survey of, 305; the woman of, her faith, vii. 333.
Capernaum: Its site, vii. 248; our Lord in the synagogue, 254; miracles at, 257, 264, 268, 292.
Captain of the guard, an Egyptian officer: His duties, i. 346.
Captives: Different grades, iv. 411; treatment in eastern countries, vi. 241, 244, 255, 258; the chiefs treated with severity, vi. 259.
Captivity: Of the ten tribes, iv. 378; of Judah, 411; meaning of the word, vi. 254; mode and miseries of deportation, 259, 261.
Caravanserai, an Eastern, described, vii. 62.
Carmel: Its beauty, iv. 236; gathering of Israel to, 236; contest of Elijah, 237, 239; its remarkable incidents, 244.
Carts, used in Palestine, vi. 397.
Cassia, much used in the East, v. 261.
Catacombs: Roman, viii. 452; Maltese, 453; used as sepulchres for the dead, 454; and retreats for the living, 457; Christian inscriptions on, 454; used for worship, 458; a witness against Papal corruption, 459.
"Cattle": What included under the term, i. 37.
Cavalry: Forbidden to Jewish kings, iii. 156.
Cedars of Lebanon: Described, iv. 35; the cedar grove, 36.
Census, The Roman: Decreed by Augustus, vii. 47; executed under Cyrenius, 48; cause of the delay, 50; its extent, 51, 54; silence of history regarding, 51; Jewish and Roman forms of registration, 54.
Centurion: Roman, vii. 292; of Capernaum, 292; Cornelius, viii. 196, 201, 205.
Cæsarea: Abode of the Roman governor of Judea, vii. 427; Paul's visit to, viii. 410.
Chains: An Egyptian mark of distinction, i. 400; Paul's chain, viii. 448.
Chaldeans, The: Their conquest of Judea, iv. 408; their origin, v. 70; spoliation of Job, 70; habits of the early, 71; mode of conducting a siege, vi. 230; cruelty to captives, 241, 244; writing on tiles, 289; divination by arrows, 317; painted chambers, 321; change of names, 352; men of learning, 365; governors of provinces, 371; worshippers of Bel, 371. (See Assyrians.)
Chambers of imagery, vi. 304.
Chaos, i. 18.
Chariots: Egyptian, i. 401; war-chariots, ii. 94; of iron, 352; used in Assyrian warfare, vi. 73.
Cherith, The Brook: Elijah's retreat, iv. 215; dried up, 223.
Cherubim: The Temple, iv. 83; their form, 85; analogous figures in Egypt, and other countries, 88; symbolic meaning, 93.
Children: Strictness of parental discipline, iii. 375; application of the word in Scripture, iv. 284; liable to seizure by creditors, 310; right of sale by parents, 311; in-

cluded in their parents' doom, 367.
Child-sacrifice: Its early prevalence, i. 265.
China: Mentioned in Scripture, vi. 207; identified with the land of Sinim, 207; probably known to the Hebrews, 211.
Chios, Massacre at, viii. 407.
Christianity: Paul's conversion a proof of its divine origin, viii. 126.
Christians: Their sun-like course, ii. 358; the first, vii. 205; liberality in the Apostolic age, viii. 33; murmuring of the Hebrew, 57; dispersion on the death of Stephen, 74; persecution by the Sanhedrim, 74; rest from persecution, 182; first use of the name, 216; persecuted by Herod Agrippa, 238; persecution their lot in all ages, 274; Roman, 451.
Cilicia, Paul's labours in, viii. 217.
Circumcision: Reason of our Lord's submitting to, vii. 101; dispute at Antioch regarding, viii. 290.
Citron, The, v. 338.
City: The first, built by Cain, i. 105; desolate cities, v. 160.
Civilization, not uniformly progressive, i. 119.
Clay, Houses of, v. 161, 195; Cottages of Devon and Cornwall, 196.
Clean hands: Meaning of the figure, v. 167.
Cleanliness: Egyptians famed for, i. 386.
Climate: Before the flood, i. 52; of Palestine, iv. 250, v. 363, 431, vi. 227.
Cloth, The wet, iv. 330.
Coat of mail, Goliath's, iii. 224.
Cob-walls: A mode of building, probably Phenician, vi. 313; traces of, in England, 313; described, 314.
Coins: Apamean medal, i. 164; Aradus, iv. 273; Cyprus, v. 259, viii. 263; Persian Daric, vi. 186; Didrachmon, vii. 346; Caius Caligula, viii. 182; Herod Agrippa, 238; Philippi, 337; Ephesus, 402.
Colours: Scarlet, an emblem of dignity, vi. 35; how obtained, 36; crimson, 36; purple, viii. 341.
Community of goods, practised in the early Christian church, viii. 33.
Concubine, The: Her position and rights, i. 316; ii. 453.
Coney, The, v. 350.
Consideration, Religious, vi. 267.
Copper: Early use of, i. 115; Tubal Cain's improvements in the working of, 116; abundant in ancient times, ii. 437.
Corinth: Its situation, viii. 374; Paul's labours at, 377; his treatment by the Jews, and by Gallio, 379.
Corn: Joseph's policy, i. 402; Eastern mode of threshing, ii. 366; of grinding, 440; of parching, iii. 34; the threshing-floor, 37; threshing instruments, 38; process of winnowing, 39.
Cornelius: Peter's mission to, viii. 195, 196, 201, 205; his religion, 197; not a proselyte to Judaism, 200; his vision, 201; conversion, 205.
Costume: Luxury of the Assyrian, ii. 283; vi. 320; Eastern, iv. 114; war-dress of the Hittites, 114; Female, vi. 37, 40, 51; Arabian, 38.
Couching: First performed by Chesselden, vii. 360.
Council: The first cabinet, iii. 420; the first Christian, viii. 290; its decree, 295.
Couriers, Eastern: Their mode of travelling, v. 145.
Covenants: God's covenant with Abraham, i. 208; mode of ratifying, i. 211, 321; David's with Jonathan, iii. 274; Covenants of brotherhood common in the East, 274.
Creation: A doctrine unknown to the heathen, i. 16; knowledge of, preserved by the Hebrew polity, 17; ascribed to Jesus Christ, 17; the six days, natural days, 20; true theory of, 21; modern view supported by the Fathers, 21; sun not visible till the fourth day, 25; theory of indefinite periods refuted, 29; the living creatures named by Adam, 50; interval between it and the flood, 133.
"Creeping Thing," meaning of the expression, i. 39.
Crœsus: Prophecies regarding, vi. 157, 166; his defeat by Cyrus, 170.
Cripple, The, cured by Peter and John, viii. 27.
Crispus, a Corinthian convert, viii. 377.
Crocodile, The: The leviathan of Scripture, v. 245; modes of capture, 247; capable of being tamed, 250.
Cromlech, The, described, i. 167.
Cross, The: Carried by the criminal, vii. 435; described, 437.
Crowns, Regal: Their great value, iii. 394; Eastern, a kind of turban, iv. 361.

Crucifixion, Our Lord's, vii. 434.
Cruelties, Ancient: Impalement, i. 376, vi. 93, 260; blinding, 241; flaying, 242; hewing in pieces, 244; casting into a fiery furnace, 244, 373; hanging by the hands, 245; throwing to lions, 379; fighting with beasts, viii. 392.
Cubit, Length of a, i. 142.
Cup bearer, The King's: A high office, iv. 429, vi. 66.
Cups: Divining by, i. 423; of Jemsheed, 425; of Nestor, 426.
Cursing God, v. 51, 94.
Cush: David falsely accused by, iii. 282; application of the name, iv. 183; the country of, 184.
Cushite invasion of Judea, iv. 182.
Cutting the flesh: An act of mourning, ii. 153, iv. 246. vi. 249; Eastern devotees, iv. 246.
Cyprus, visited by Paul and Barnabas, viii. 254, 260.
Cyrus: His knowledge of the true God, iv. 420, vi. 128; God's providence in his birth, 110; and early life, 115; account of, by Herodotus, 111, 115; called by name, 122; import of the name, 125; his religion, 131; conquests, 156; siege of Sardis and victory over Crœsus, 170; capture of Babylon, 176, 181, 187, 194; indifference to spoil, 181; his tomb, 344.

Dagon: God of the Philistines, ii. 442, iii. 84; meaning of the word, 86; destruction of the idol, 86.
Damaris, converted by Paul, viii. 373.
Damascus: Paul's first visit, viii. 116, 121; Jewish residents in, 121; authority of Sanhedrim in, 122; description of, 131; "the street called Straight," 135; population, 136; unhealthy climate, 141; Paul's second visit, 149; escape from, 151; the Jerusalem gate, 151; possession by Aretas, 152.
Dancing, The East famed for solo, vii. 324.
Daniel: An exile to Babylon, vi. 349; his education, 350; his wisdom, 354; scruples regarding food, 357; examination, 361; Nebuchadnezzar's dream, 368; promotion, 369; the fiery furnace, 373; the den of lions, 379; his tomb, 381.
Darkness, The Plague of, ii. 73.
David: Chosen to be king, iii, 203; personal appearance, 205; accomplishments, 206; poetic genius, 207; courage, 209; combat with Goliath, 228; homage paid to, 235; persecuted by Saul, 236, 242, 275 slays two hundred Philistines, 240; Jonathan's affection for, 254; distrust of God, 258; hypocrisy at Nob, 260; flight to Gath, 263; feigned madness, 265; in the wilderness, 267; covenant with Jonathan, 274; magnanimity, 275; falsely accused by Cush, 282; second visit to the Philistines, 286; crooked policy at Ziklag, 290; his valiant men, 299; order of knighthood, 301; lament for Saul and Jonathan, 307; abode in Hebron, 310; the turning-point in his history, 316; Abner's opposition, 319; Abner's revolt to, 324; adhesion of the twelve tribes, 338; defied by the Jebusites, 340; removal of the ark, 347; entrance song, 349; war with the Philistines, 356; establishment of his throne, 360; zeal for God, 360; treatment of the Moabites, 364; war with Hadadezer, 368; conquest of Edom, 372; kindness to Mephibosheth, 380; indignities offered to his ambassadors, 384; his great transgression, 389; treatment of the Ammonites, 395; affection for Absalom, 404; treatment by Absalom, 414, 419; an exile from his throne, 417; Ahithophel's defection, 417; treatment of Shimei, 418, 430; Hushai's loyalty, 420; defeats Absalom, 422; restored to the throne, 423; interview with Barzillai, 430; Mephibosheth's loyalty, 431; numbers Israel, 438; last days, 439; farewell address to Israel, 444; denounces Joab, iv. 12, 13; and Shimei, 19; bequest for the temple, 63.
Deacons, First appointment of, viii. 59.
Dead Sea, The: Difficulties regarding, i. 243; removed by the American Expedition, 246; Chart of, 247.
Death, First example of, in man, i 92.
Debir, probably a seat of learning, ii. 303.
Deborah, nurse to Rebekah, i. 335.
Deborah the Prophetess: Her song of triumph, ii. 342; its beauty, 349; palm-tree of Deborah, 350.
Debts, Hebrew law concerning, iv. 308.
Dedication, Feast of the, vii. 364.
Delhi: Its treatment by Nadir Shah, iv. 259.
Delilah entices Samson, ii. 430.
Delphos, The oracle of, viii. 344.
Deluge, The: God's long-suffering

prior to, i. 144; its gradual progress, 146; universal, 147; traditions of, 149, 154; Deucalion's deluge, 157; monuments of, 162.
Demetrius the Silversmith, viii. 398.
Demoniacal Possessions: Paroxysms attending, vii. 310; their reality, 313; Jewish mode of exorcism, viii. 396.
Demoniacs: The man possessed by an unclean spirit, vii. 257; the man blind and dumb, 304; the Gadarene, 309; the Syro-Phenician woman's daughter, 333; the deaf and dumb lunatic, 342; the Pythoness, viii. 344.
Desolate Cities: Described by Eliphaz, v. 160; a resort for robbers and caravans, 161.
"Desolate Places:" meaning of the expression, v. 116.
Dew, copious in Palestine, v. 431.
Dial of Ahaz: The first in history, iv. 398; miracle upon, 400; great dial near Delhi, 400.
Dialect of Galilee, viii. 22.
Diana: Her temple at Ephesus, viii. 387; image of the goddess, 389; medallions of, 398.
Didrachmon, The: Its value, vii. 346.
Dionysius, The Areopagite, viii. 373.
Dispersion of mankind after the Deluge, i. 173.
Divination: Cups used for, in Egypt, i. 423, and in the South Seas, 427; in Persia, iv. 445; common among the ancients, vi. 316; by arrows, 317; Chaldean priestly diviners, 367; a "spirit of Python," viii. 344.
Divorce common among the Jews, vii. 45, 229.
Doctor in Divinity, an academical distinction, viii. 121.
Doctors of the Law, Jewish: Mode of teaching, vii. 169; our Lord's conversation with, 169; their night studies, 221; kind of instruction imparted by, viii. 114.
Doeg, the Edomite: His character, iii. 261.
Dogs: Hebrew aversion to, iii, 377; their savage nature in the East, iv. 343; Syrian street dog, 343.
Door-keepers, Female, vii. 421, viii. 248.
Dorcas: Her deeds of charity, viii. 189; preparations for her interment, 190; restored to life, 192.
Doves' dung, a kind of pulse, iv. 325.
Dreams: Joseph's, i. 336; their significance, 337; a remarkable instance, 339; importance in the East, 340; the chief butler's, 364; the chief baker's, 369; Pharaoh's, 378, 382; Nebuchadnezzar's, vi. 365.
Dress and Ornaments of Ladies: Nose-ring, i. 282; bracelets, 283, vi. 45; ear-rings, i. 333; the horn, v. 165; rows of jewels, 420; attire, vi. 37; anklets, 40; cauls, 41; tires like the moon, 43; pendants, 44; mufflers, 45; step-chains, 46; headbands, 46; tablets, 46; bonnets, 46; amulets, 51; suits of apparel, 52; the mantle, 53; wimples, 53; crisping-pins, 55; mirrors, 56; hoods, 57; veils, 58; braided hair, 58.
Dress: Egyptian, i. 399; Tyrian, vi. 33; of the women of Bethlehem, vii. 58; Oriental sleeping, viii. 247.
Dromedary, The; Its powers of endurance, v. 145; speed, 145; postal services, 145.
Drunkenness, Proneness of the Easterns to, v. 333.
Drusilla: Her character, viii. 429.
Dung: Doves', iv. 325; used for fuel in the East, vi. 294.
Dust, Sprinkling, on the head, v. 99.
Dyes, Tyrian: Their fame, iv. 32.

Early Rising, Practice of, v. 360.
Ear-rings, used as amulets, i. 333.
Earth, Eastern reverence for sacred, iv. 322.
Earth, The: ancient theory of its structure, iii. 61.
Earthquakes: at Ararat, i. 173; in the reign of Uzziah, vi. 430; frequent in Palestine, 431; earthquake in 1837, 432.
Ebenezer, Samuel's memorial of thankfulness, iii. 110.
Ecclesiastes, Book of: Its author, v. 365; design, 369; testimonies to its value, 370; argument, 373.
Eden, The Land of: The seat of Paradise, i. 47; site doubtful, 47; Adam placed in, 47; a vast zoological garden, 54; God's presence in, 97.
Edom: Moses' request to the king of, ii. 198; David's conquest of, iii. 372; Amaziah's conquest of, iv. 369; prophecies concerning, vi. 436; discovery of Petra, 438.
Eglon: His personal appearance, ii. 330; slain by Ehud, 332.
Egypt: Lentils used for food, i. 288; a great mart for slaves, 342; crimes and punishments, 347, 353; privileges of women, 352; polygamy not practised, 353; prisons, 355; vines, 366; mode of making wine, 367; basket-work, 370; ravenous birds, 373; king's birthday, 374;

grass, 393; cattle, 383; wheat, 384; court interpreters, 385; mode of dressing the beard, 387; the head shaven, 388; cleanliness, 389; vestures of fine linen, 398; dress of persons of rank, 399; state chariots, 401; government absolute, 403; Joseph's corn policy, 406; oppression of the peasantry, 408; entertainments, 410; mode of dressing meat, 411; tables, 413; posture at meals, 414; practice of divination, 423; physicians, 428; mummies, 429; solemn mournings, 431; bondage of the Israelites, ii. 13; memorials of their servitude, 14; the plagues, 47; departure of the Israelites, 87; military resources, 95; regal custom regarding children, iii. 374; trade with Solomon, iv. 110; the resort of political refugees, 137; sculptures at Karnak, 170; sojourn of Joseph and Mary, vii. 138, 145; the Egyptian Jerusalem, 147.
Ehud, slays Eglon, ii. 332.
Elephant, The, thought to be the Behemoth of Scripture, v. 240.
Elephantiasis: Origin of the name, v. 86.
Eli: His two-fold office, iii. 56; profligacy of his sons, 67; his resignation, 74; the doom of his house, 75; death, 78.
Eliezer, Abraham's steward, i. 209; sent to Mesopotamia, 275.
Elihu: His genealogy, v. 213; opinions regarding, 214; an umpire betwixt Job and his friends, 217; his argument, 217.
Elijah: His fearless character, iv. 213; interviews with Ahab, 213, 231; his retreat, 215; fed not by ravens, 216; but by Arabs, 221; visits Zarephath, 224; raises the widow's son, 230; the contest at Carmel, 236, 239, 244; slays the priests of Baal, 243; prays for rain, 248; flees from the wrath of Jezebel, 252; at Horeb, 256; his mantle, 273; judgment on Ahaziah, 274; attended by Elisha, 274; bequest to him, 278; ascends to heaven, 279; supposed to visit the earth, 280; Jewish opinions regarding his advent, vii. 12; thought to be present at circumcisions, 14.
Elim: Its site, ii. 105.
Elimelech: His removal to the land of Moab, ii. 364.
Eliphaz the Temanite: Visits Job, v. 98; his character, 105; reply to Job, 122; his vision, its reality, 123; and sublimity, 124; views of creation, 126; second discourse, 159; description of desolate cities, 161.
Elisabeth, Mary's visit to, vii. 34.
Elisha: A follower of Elijah, iv. 274; Elijah's bequest to him, 278; miracle at Jericho, 281; judgment on the youths of Bethel, 283; interview with three kings, 293; multiplies the widow's oil, 308; his staff, 312; cures Naaman, 316, 319; interview with Hazael, 331; not accessory to the murder of Benhadad, 334; anoints Jehu, 335.
Elkanah: A polygamist, iii. 51; discord in his family, 53.
Elymas, the sorcerer, struck with blindness, viii. 254.
Embalming: Practised in Egypt, i. 428; an ancient custom, 429; natron used in, 430.
Emerods, a judgment on the Philistines, iii. 90.
Endor, The Witch of, iii. 294.
Engedi, David's abode in, iii. 267.
Enoch: His character, i. 124; meaning of the name, 129
Entertainments: Arabian, i. 229; Egyptian, 410; marriage, ii. 408; separation of the sexes, v. 46; guests invited by women, 331; Assyrian banqueting scene, vi. 179; funeral feasts, 250; freedom of access to Jewish, vii. 301.
Ephesus: Paul's visits to, viii. 383, 386, 393, 397; Temple of Diana, 387; the theatre, 391; signal miracles at, 396; practice of the occult sciences at, 396; "the Ephesian charms," 396; silver shrines of Diana, 398; uproar in the theatre, 399; the recorder, 400, 401; Asiarchs, 400, 401; temple-sweepers, 402.
Ephraim, son of Joseph, i. 394.
Ephron the Hittite: His bargain with Abraham, i. 271.
Esau: His character, i. 287; sale of birthright, 288; appearance, 298; prosperity, 322; friendly meeting with Jacob, 326.
Eshcol, Grapes of, ii. 177.
Esther: Her promotion, iv. 442
Esther, Book of, Name of God not mentioned in, iv. 445.
Ethiopia: Moses marries a woman of, ii. 172; the Eunuch of, viii. 59; the country so named, 90.
Eunuch, Ethiopian: Interview with Philip, viii. 89; his study of the Scriptures. 109.
Eunuchs: Their high rank, vi. 67.
Euphrates, The River, vi. 179; di-

verted from its course by Cyrus, 180.
Euroclydon, The wind, viii. 438.
Eutychus, Miracle wrought on, viii. 406.
Eve: Her creation, i. 54; Scripture account not an allegory, 56; a symbol of the union between Christ and his church, 57.
Executions: Egyptian, i. 347; mode of the chief baker's, 375.
Exorcism, practised by the Jews, viii. 396.
"Eye of a needle," meaning of the expression, vii. 380.
Eyes, The, Custom of painting, iv. 340.
Ezekiel: An exile in Babylon, vi. 284; his tomb, 287; portraiture of Jerusalem, 288; symbolical siege of Jerusalem, 292; style of his prophecies, 299; chambers of imagery, 304; death of his wife, 325; prophecy against Rabbah, 329; against Tyre, 332.
Ezion-geber, iv. 100.
Ezra: Measures of reform, iv. 426; a general divorce, 427; reading of the law, 436.

Falconry, common in Persia. v. 352.
Fall of Man, The, i. 58; traditions of, 61, 71.
Famines: In the reign of David, iii. 435; in Samaria. iv. 324; in Egypt, 326; in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, viii. 229.
Fasting: Long periods of, vii. 187; our Lord's, miraculous, 187.
Felix: His character, viii. 426, 429; Paul accused before, 426; Paul's discourse to, 429.
Festivals in honour of the earth, v. 80.
Festivals, Jewish: Attended by whole families, iii. 53; Feast of Tabernacles, iv. 156; of Purim, 445; of the Passover, vii. 161; of the Dedication, its origin, 364; of Pentecost, viii. 16.
Festus, Porcius, Governor of Judea: His character, viii. 430; examines Paul, 431.
Fetters of brass, Samson bound with, ii. 437.
Fig-trees, Varieties of, vii. 394.
Fingers: Eating with the, v. 332; hiding the hand in the dish, 332; teaching with the, 353; mutes in the Turkish seraglio, 355; finger numeration, 356.
Fire: Its discovery, i. 101; traditions, 101; unknown to various nations, 104; the strange, ii. 148; from the Lord, 165; Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, vi. 370.
Firmament, The: Its formation, i. 25; meaning of the word in Hebrew, 25; in Greek and English, 26; divides the waters, 26.
First-born, The, Death of, ii. 74.
Fish, The great, vi. 401
Fishermen of Galilee: Their call to the apostleship, vii. 251.
Fishes: Creation of, i. 33; their rapid increase, 34.
Flaying alive, vi. 241.
Flesh, Excess in the use of, v. 343.
Flies, Plague of, ii. 58.
Food: Of primeval man, i. 44; animal food denied, 44; sanctioned after the flood, 45; compared with vegetable, 46; seldom used in the East, 229, 411; chiefly on festive occasions, 230; lentils, 288; quails, ii. 110, 169; cracknels, 289; bread a general term for provisions, iii. 31; Jewish aversion to blood, 194; doves' dung a kind of pulse, iv. 325; vegetable diet common in the East, v. 341; Daniel's scruples, vi. 357.
Footmen, Eastern: Their speed, iii. 166, iv. 249.
Forests, Value of the Syrian, iv. 43.
Fornication common among the heathen, viii. 298
Fortresses, Ancient: How protected, vi. 82.
Fountain of Moses, ii. 101.
Foxes, Samson's employment of, ii. 415.
Frogs: Plague of, ii. 54; abundant in Egypt, 54; Egyptian reverence for, 55.
Fuel, Eastern, vi. 294.

Gabriel: Notices of, in Scripture, vii. 22; and the Koran, 25.
Gad, the seer, iii. 269
Gadara: Demoniac of the tombs, vii. 309; punishment of the Gadarenes, 312.
Gaius, a Corinthian convert, viii. 377.
Galatians, The: Their origin, viii. 323; history, 324; religion, 325; national character, 326; feelings towards Paul, 326.
Gallio: His character, viii. 379.
Gamaliel: A member of the Sanhedrim, viii. 45; his counsel, 49; not a Christian, 50; his reputation, 51.
Games, The Olympic, viii. 145.
Gates: Of towns the place of business and judicial proceedings, i. 269, iii. 44, v. 202; closing of, in

the East, ii. 244; of Gaza, 423; "eye of a needle," vii. 380; the temple, viii. 23; the Beautiful Gate, 26; St Stephen's, at Jerusalem, 69.
Gath, David's flight to, iii. 263.
"Gathered to his people," explained, i. 294.
Garments: The Babylonish, ii. 283; Eastern, 289; parting of our Lord's, vii. 438.
Gaza: Samson's exploit at, ii. 423; prophecies concerning, vi. 426; former site discovered by Dr Keith, 429; why called "desert," viii. 89.
Geba, iii. 189.
Gedaliah: His murder by Ishmael, vi. 280.
Genealogy: Our Lord's, vii. 76; accounts of Matthew and Luke reconciled, 79.
Geology: Discoveries of, i. 19; in harmony with Revelation, 20; conclusions regarding the existence of light, 24.
Gerar, Sarah's sojourn in, i. 249.
Gerizim, Mount, Samaritan temple on, vii. 235.
Gethsemane, Our Lord's agony in, vii. 415.
Giants: Antediluvian, i. 136; the race of, ii. 183; their stature, 209; Goliath, iii. 219.
Gibeathites, The: Their vile conduct, ii. 456.
Gibeonites, The: Their craft, ii. 285; wrongs inflicted by Saul, iii. 433; their blood-revenge, 435.
Gideon: An angel appears to, ii. 367; his zeal, 371; the sign from God, 375; his stratagem, 379; destruction of Penuel, 382; revenge on Succoth, 382; patriotism, 384.
Gifts, an Eastern mark of respect, iii. 136, vii. 124.
Gilboa, Battle of, iii. 305, 312.
Gilgal, Quarries of, ii .333.
Gittith, a musical instrument, v 295.
Glass: Its probable antiquity, iv. 77; first mention of in history, 79; a molten looking-glass, 80; crystal floor before the king's throne, 121.
Gleaning: A legal provision for the poor, iii. 24; decision as to the right in England, 25.
Goat, The Mountain, iii. 276.
God: The Creator, i. 15; voice of, 68; remembers Noah, 151; his purpose controls man's devices, 187; care of his people, ii. 261; his repentance explained, 325; faithfulness, iii. 49; holiness, 116; the Searcher of hearts, 216; what implied in tempting, iv. 382; his providence, 443; power and wisdom in creation, v. 126; his secrets, 204; a present help in trouble, vi. 86; a God of judgment, 297; no respecter of persons, viii. 209; the Unknown, 369.
Gold: Its abundance in ancient times, iv. 63.
Golden Image, Nebuchadnezzar's, vi. 370.
Golgotha: Reason of the name, vii. 435.
Goliath: His stature, ii. 184; armour, iii. 219; combat with David, 228; insulting threats, 231.
Good Tidings, Angelic proclamation of, vii. 65.
Gospels, The Apocryphal, vii. 156.
Gourd, Jonah's, vi. 412.
Government, Hebrew form of, ii. 319.
Gracule, its vast numbers, i. 35.
Grapes of Eshcol, ii. 177; largeness of the clusters, 178.
Grass, Egyptian, i. 383.
Greaves, Goliath's, iii. 226.
Grecians, The, Murmuring of, viii. 57.
Grinding, Eastern mode of, ii. 440.
Groves: Used for the worship of God, i. 258; idolatrous use of, 259; worship in, forbidden to the Israelites, 259, iv. 160.

Habakkuk: Character of his prophecy, vi. 423.
Hadad: His history, iii 373; alliance with Rezon, iv. 132.
Hadadezer: David's war with, iii. 368.
Hagar: A female slave, i. 223; her treatment by Sarah, 225; God's appearance to, 254.
Hail: Plague of, ii. 66; great size, 292.
Hair: Weight of Absalom's, iii. 406; braided, vi. 58.
Haman: His plot, iv. 443.
Hananiah: His presumption, vi. 265; his doom, 265.
Hannah: Her grief, iii. 55; vow, 55; interview with Eli, 57.
Hanun; His treatment of David's ambassadors, iii. 394.
Haram, The: An appurtenance of the crown, iv. 18; an index of rank, 125; its gradual disappearance in Judea, 176; mutes in the Turkish, v. 355.
Haran, Jacob at, i. 304.
Harp, The ancient, i. 112, iii. 208.

Harvest: Time of barley, iii. 24; fare, 29.
Hazael: His wickedness, iv. 330; interview with Elisha, 331; confusion, 349.
Head, Lifting up the, i. 376.
Heads, Barbarous practice of exposing, iv. 345.
Heart-Reading, iv. 349.
Heathen, The: Their gods local, ii. 39, iv. 263; possibility of salvation without the gospel? viii. 209; prevalence of scepticism, 256; worship of unknown gods, 369.
Hebrew Language: Power of the points, iv. 219; changed after the captivity, 436; peculiarities, v. 51, 239.
"Hebrew of the Hebrews," viii. 94.
Hebrews, The: Their right to Canaan, ii. 251, 255.
Hebron, David's abode in, iii. 310.
Helmet, Goliath's, iii. 223.
Herbs: Their formation, i. 28; bitter, ii. 79.
Hercules, Legend of, i. 64.
Heresy, Burning a very ancient punishment of, vi. 372.
Herod Agrippa: History, viii. 232; persecutes the Christians, 238; likeness on a Jewish coin, 238; regal splendour, 251; divine homage paid to, 252; eaten of worms, 253.
Herod Antipas: Character, vii. 228; imprisons John the Baptist, 229; marriage with Herodias, why unlawful, 230; celebration of his birth-day, 321; jealousy of Jesus, 375.
Herod the Great: Murder of the Innocents, vii. 129, 134; character, 131, 151; a type of religious bigotry, 134; death, 149; the temple rebuilt by, 216.
Herodians, The, partisans of Herod, vii. 399.
Herodias: Her character, vii. 228; revenge on the Baptist, 325.
Herodotus: Character as a historian, vi. 111; account of the early history of Cyrus, 111, 115.
Hezekiah, King of Judah; His alarm, iv. 393; deliverance from Sennacherib, 394; sickness, 397; promise of life, 398.
Hiding Stores in the fields, vi. 283.
High Places: Worship in, forbidden to the Israelites, iv. 160; much frequented by them, 164; superseded by synagogues, 165.
Hills, God of the, iv. 263.
Hindoos: Their cosmogony, iii. 63; teaching on incarnation, vii. 81.
Hippopotamus, The, v. 240.
Hiram: Correspondence with Solomon, iv. 29; reverence for the true God, 30.
Hittites, The: Solomon's trade with, iv. 112; their civil costume, 113; war dress, 114.
Hobab: Moses' invitation to, ii. 155; his faith in God, 155.
Holy Ghost, The: Pentecostal effusion of, viii. 9, 18; his extraordinary gifts, 81; saving influences, 384.
Honey: Abundant in Palestine, iii. 193; frequent mention of, iv. 111; mixed with butter, vi. 59.
Hor, Mount: Aaron's death on, ii. 199; scenery around, 200; Aaron's tomb, 201.
Horeb: The rock smitten by Moses, ii. 121.
Horn, The: A symbol of honour, v. 163; the figure taken from animals, 163; worn by chiefs in Abyssinia, 164; and by the women of Lebanon, 164.
Horses: Kept for war in early times, i. 193; beauty of Egyptian, iv. 112, v 417; war horse described 231; Arabian description, 233; the king's mare, 416; Eastern fondness for, 417; used in Assyrian warfare, vi. 69; armour of Assyrian horsemen, 72.
Hospitality: Eastern, i. 228, ii. 32, 455, vii. 60; a reputation for, much prized, i. 231; attendance of the host on his guests, 232.
Houses: Clay and mud the first building materials, i. 106; the kitchen, 373; flat roofed, ii. 243; summer parlour, 335; wind conductor, 336; mode of fixing doors, 424; supported by pillars, 444; latticed windows, iv. 81, vii. 265, viii. 406; built of clay, v. 161, 195; mode of burglary, 195; of Nineveh, vi. 407; general description, vii. 265; access to the roof, 267; moveable roof, 268; on walls, viii. 152.
Human Frame, The, compared to a house, v. 391.
Hushai: His fidelity to David, iii. 420.
Hydraulics: Animal, v. 394; Persian wheel, 398.
Hypocrite, The, compared to a tree, v. 137.

Ichabod, Origin of the name, iii. 82.
Iconium: Its history, viii. 283; Paul and Barnabas at, 284.
Idolatry: Teraphim, i. 319, iii. 242;

the golden calf, ii. 134; worship of Baal, 370, iv. 207, 241; of Ashtaroth, ii. 374; of Dagon, iii. 84; idols of the Jebusites, 341; of Solomon, iv. 126; worship in high places, 162; gods of the hills, 264; Sabæism the most ancient form, v. 32, vi. 101, 144; worship of Nisroch, 100; stone pillar worship, 218; Egyptian, 304; Thammuz, 308; Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, 372; worship of Jupiter and Mercury, viii. 286; of unknown gods, 369; of Diana, 397.
Idols, Meats offered to, viii. 295.
Image of God, The: Man created in, i. 40; opinions regarding, 41.
Immortality of the Soul, taught in the Old Testament, i. 294, v. 176.
Impostors: Simon Magus, viii. 80, 83; Bar-jesus, 255; numerous in the East, 257; seven sons of Sceva, 397.
Impotent Man, The, Cure of, vii. 280.
Imprecation: Job's, v. 110; other examples, 112; Andromache's lament for Hector, 115.
Incarnation: Our Lord's, vii. 80; the true idea unknown to Pagan mythology, 81, 93; teaching of Brahminism, 81; Budhist views, 84.
Intelligence: Its slow progress in the East, iii. 22.
Interpreters, Egyptian, i. 385.
Irad, meaning of the word, i. 129
Iron: Early use of, i. 115; more recent than copper, 115; chariots of, ii. 352.
Isaac: Reason of the name, i. 233; offered in sacrifice, 263; marriage, 274, 279; blesses Jacob, 296; character, 296.
Isaiah: His counsel to Ahaz, iv. 383; prophecy regarding Immanuel, 385; history, vi. 17; prophetic career, 19; style of his prophecies, 21; "the evangelical prophet," 22; prophecy concerning the person of Christ, 213.
Ishbosheth; His death, iii. 335.
Ishmael: His descendants, i. 227; Ishmaelite traders, 342.
Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, murders Gedaliah, vi. 280.
Israelites, The: Their bondage in Egypt, ii. 13, 41; memorial of their servitude, 14; borrowing of jewels, 84; departure from Egypt, 87; probable number on leaving Egypt, 91; song of triumph, 98; point of crossing the Red Sea, 101; thirst in the wilderness, 103; hunger, 107; fed with quails, 110, 169; at Rephidim, 115; murmurs, 120; punishment of their idolatry, 143; the mixed multitude, 159, 165; murmurings at Paran, 164; discontent with the manna, 166; report of the spies, 181; their Bedouin life, 194; bitten by serpents, 202; victories over Og and Sihon, 208; Moab's policy towards, 213; homage to Baal-Peor, 232; passage over Jordan, 247; faith at Jericho, 266; Joshua's farewell address, 313; treatment of Adonibezek, 316; form of government, 319; subjection to Chushan-rishathaim, 328; oppressed by Moab, 329; by the Philistines, 339; by the Midianites, 361; worship Baal, 370; defeated by the Philistines, iii 75; assemble at Mizpeh, 102; conquer the Philistines, 110, 192; demand a king, 120, 125; disarmed by the Philistines, 176; commerce with the Phenicians, 355; gathered to Carmel, iv. 236; rebellion against God, vi. 48; subjection to Assyria, 386. (See Jews).
Italian Band, The, viii. 196.

Jabal, Author of Nomade life, i. 111.
Jabesh-Gilead: Siege of, iii. 158; relieved by Saul, 168; attachment of the inhabitants to Saul, 313.
Jabin: His military power, ii. 352.
Jacob: His wealth, i. 192; character, 287; purchase of the birthright, 288; receives the blessing from Isaac, 296; God appears to, 300; vow at Bethel, 303; at Haran, 304; first interview with Rachel, 305; bargain with Laban, 311; departure from Haran, 315; covenant with Laban, 321; wrestling with God, 324; change of name, 324; meeting with Esau, 326; bereavements, 327; visit to Shechem, 331; orders the removal of strange gods, 332; obsequies, 428; Jacob's well, vii. 236.
Jael slays Sisera, ii. 355.
Jailer, The Philippian, viii. 352; his conversion, 353.
Jairus: His daughter raised to life, vii. 318.
James, the brother of John, called to the apostleship, vii. 252; his death, viii. 238; Convent of St James, 241.
James, the Lord's brother, viii. 163, 165, 169; Bishop of Jerusalem, 174; author of the Epistle of James, 175
Jason: His kindness to Paul, viii. 359.
Jebusites, The: Defiance of David, iii. 340; their idols, 341.

Jehoahaz, King of Judah, iv. 407; sent in chains to Egypt, 408.
Jehoash: Escapes the massacre of the seed royal, iv. 357; crowned, 359; murders Zechariah, 365; death, 365; refused a sepulchre among the kings, 366.
Jehoiachin, King of Judah: Submits to Nebuchadnezzar, iv. 410; sent captive to Babylon, 410; afterwards liberated, 410.
Jehoiada, the High Priest: Crowns Jehoash, iv. 357; defended from the charge of sacrilege, 363.
Jehoiakim, King of Judah: Tributary to Pharaoh-Necho, iv. 408; his doom foretold by Jeremiah, 409.
Jehoram, King of Israel: Interview with Jehu, iv. 337; death, 338.
Jehoram, King of Judah, iv. 353.
Jehovah, The name: Unknown to the patriarchs, ii. 43; reverence of the Jews for, 161.
Jehu: Anointed king, iv. 335; interview with Jehoram, 336; vengeance on the house of Ahab, 338, 340, 344; massacre of the Baalites, 347.
Jemima, Job's daughter, v. 261.
Jephthah: His vow, ii. 394; sacrifices his daughter, 397
Jeremiah: His prophetic career, vi. 222; his teaching by symbols, 263.
Jericho: Spies sent to view, ii. 241; its fall, 264; its utter extinction decreed, 280.
Jeroboam: His office under Solomon, iv. 135; the rent mantle, 136; Ahijah's prophecy, 136; resides in Egypt, 137; chosen king, 146; religious innovations, 147; God's displeasure, 151; inquiry of his wife at Ahijah, 157; war with Abijam, 173.
Jerusalem: Its conquest by David, iii. 340; by the Egyptians, iv. 166; by Nebuchadnezzar, 410; rebuilt by Ezra, 428; environs destitute of wood, vi. 234; Ezekiel's portraiture of, 288; symbolical siege of, 292; synagogues of, viii. 63; Gate, 69.
Jerusalem, The Egyptian, vii. 147.
Jesus Christ: Isaiah's prophecy, iv. 395, vi. 213; his personal appearance, 215; the incarnate Word, vii. 10; genealogy, 76; incarnation, 80; date of his birth, 94, 97; circumcision, 101; import of the name "Jesus," 102; presented in the temple, 105; early history not a myth, 108; infancy, 156; visits Jerusalem, 160, 165; with the doctors, 168; baptised by John, 181; the voice from heaven, 183; tempted in the wilderness, 186, 192; sinless perfection, 197; first disciples, 202; John's testimony, 203; first miracle, 208; attends the Passover, 211; zeal for the honour of the temple, 212, 397; interview with Nicodemus, 220; the woman of Samaria, 236; cure of the nobleman's son, 241; visit to Nazareth, 244; draught of fishes, 248; manner of his teaching, 254; power over unclean spirits, 257; heals Peter's wife's mother, 259, a leper, 260, a paralytic, 264, 268; power to forgive sins, 271; cures the impotent man, 280; authority over the Sabbath, 283; the man with a withered hand, 286; appointment of the twelve apostles, 288; sermon on the mount, 291; heals the centurion's servant, 292; raises the widow's son, 294; mission from the Baptist to, 296; his eulogy of John, 299; "the woman who was a sinner," 299; second tour through Galilee, 304; expels a devil from one blind and dumb, 304; accused of a compact with Beelzebub, 305; dines with a Pharisee, 307; in the storm, 308; power over demoniacs, 309; parables, 314; raises the daughter of Jairus, 318; cures the issue of blood, 318; two blind men, 320; and a dumb demoniac, 321; sends forth the twelve, 322; opinions regarding, 323; the loaves and fishes, 326, 336; a crisis in his history, 329; walks upon the sea, 330; proclaims the nature of his kingdom, 331, 348; cures the daughter of a Syro-Phenician woman, 333; cures the deaf, 335; and the blind, 336; transfigured, 338; foretells his sufferings, 339, 344, 381; cures a deaf and dumb lunatic, 342; pays tribute, 345; mission of the seventy, 349; at the Feast of Tabernacles, 350; treatment of the adulteress, 353; asserts his divinity, 357; cures the man born blind, 358; miracles on the Sabbath day, 358, 361; sojourn in Judea, 360; reproof to Martha, 363; at the Feast of the Dedication, 364; raises Lazarus, 366; tour in Perea, 374; jealousy of Herod Antipas, 375; dines with a Pharisee, 376; cures ten lepers, 379; blesses the little children, 379; interview with the rich young man, 380; cures Bar-

timeus, 384; interview with Zaccheus, 385; triumphal entry into Jerusalem, 387; weeps over the city, 392; doom of the barren fig-tree, 393; confounds the Sanhedrim, 398, 400; foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, 403; sups with Simon the leper, 405; approval of Mary, 407; last supper with the disciples, 411; agony at Gethsemane, 415; trial before the Sanhedrim, 419; denied by Peter, 421; the Roman trial, 425; his crucifixion, 434; burial, 441; resurrection, 442; ascension, 450; his divinity taught by Stephen, viii. 67; his brethren, 165, 169.

Jethro: His rank, ii. 29; Moses' interview with his daughters, 29; Moslem account of, 31; kindness to Moses, 32.

Jewels: Borrowed by the Israelites, ii. 84; worn at sacred festivals, 86; in rows, v. 420; pearl of great price, vii. 315; travelling jewellers, 315.

Jews: Their captivity, iv. 416; restoration under Cyrus, 419; condition in Babylon, vi. 254; settlement in Egypt, vii. 145; hatred of the Samaritans, 232, 234; native and Hellenist, viii. 57; local courts, 124. (See Israelites.)

Jezebel, Daughter of Ethbaal, King of Tyre, iv. 201; her imperious character, 206; murders Naboth, 268; her end, 340.

Joab: His revenge on Abner, iii. 328; conquest of Rabbah, 393; treachery to Amasa, 428; denounced by David, iv. 12, 13; his death, 13.

Job: Period when he lived, v. 28; his rank, 38; wealth, i. 191, v. 39; character, 40, 42; why called "a perfect man," 42; family meetings, 45; atonement for his family, 49; Satan's conflict, 63, 69, 84; robbed by the Sabæans, 66; by the Chaldeans, 70; death of his children, 72; severity of this trial, 74; his strong faith, 77; personal sufferings, 84, 88; character of his wife, 93; repels her suggestions, 94; visit of his three friends, 98; behaviour under affliction, 102, 108, 133; character of his friends, 105; curseth the day of his birth, 111, 112; terrors of the night, 133; views of a future life, 155; his belief in a Redeemer and in the resurrection considered, 172; prosperity remembered, 199; the object of contumely, 208; taught of God, 235; vindication by God, 251; final prosperity, 254; his daughters, 260.

Job, Book of: Its design, v. 9; not a parable, 13; allegories not to be found in Scripture, 15; reality of Job's person and history, 16; historical—Warburton confuted, 17; its early composition, 22; proved from other parts of Scripture, 21; from the style. 27; probably written by Moses, 27; Caryl's Commentary, 57; its sublimity, 221.

John the Baptist: Why called Elias, vii. 14; his birth, 38; education, 171; prophetic office, 173; in the wilderness, 174; ministry, 177; design of his baptism, 178, 201; terms of discipleship, 180; baptizes Jesus, 181; deputation from the Sanhedrim, 199; testimony concerning Jesus, 203; disinterestedness, 224; imprisoned, 228; sends disciples to Jesus, 296; our Lord's eulogy, 299; his death, 324.

John, the Brother of James: His call to the apostleship, vii. 252; death, viii. 240.

Jonah: His mission to Nineveh, vi. 400; the storm, 401; his living tomb, difficulties removed, 401; prophesies against Nineveh, 408 his gourd, 412.

Jonathan: Attacks the Philistine garrison. iii. 190; affection for David, 254; covenant with him, 274; David's lament for, 307.

Joppa, Peter's visit to, viii. 192, 193.

Jordan: Its ancient course, i. 243; passage of the Israelites, ii. 247; course explored, 273; a geographical problem solved, 274.

Joseph: His dreams, i. 336; slavery, 341; prosperity, 349, 391; piety, 351, 391; Potiphar's treatment, 350, 353; imprisonment, 355; solicits the favour of the chief butler, 360, 368; chief butler's treatment, 363; interpretation of dreams, 364, 369, 382; traditions concerning, 369; promoted by Pharaoh, 394; corn policy, 402; visit of his brethren, 410; treatment of Benjamin, 415.

Joseph of Arimathea, buries Jesus, vii. 441.

Joseph, the husband of Mary: His perplexity, vii. 42; relation formed by betrothal, 43; his dream, 45; flight into Egypt, 138, 145; fear of Archelaus, 152.

Joshua: One of the twelve spies, ii. 177; defeats the five kings, 291;

miracle, 294; farewell address to Israel, 313; his patriotism, 315.
Josiah; His reign, iv. 403; religious zeal, 403; fulfils the prophecy against the altar of Bethel, 403; autograph of the law recovered, 404; death, 405.
Jotham: His parable, ii. 389.
Jubal: Inventor of musical instruments, i. 112.
Judas Iscariot: His treachery, vii. 408, 419; impenitence, 412; self-murder, viii. 13.
Judas of Galilee, Insurrection headed by, viii. 53.
Judea: Zerah's invasion, iv. 181; Assyrian invasion, 387; Babylonian conquest, 408; power of the Romans, vii. 425, viii. 71.

Karnak, Sculptures at, iv. 170.
Keren-happuch, Job's daughter, v. 262.
Kern: Meaning of the word, i. 165; origin and purpose of cairns, 165; Druidical circles, 166.
Kesitah, The, What meant by, v. 257.
Kezia, Job's daughter, v. 261.
Kibroth-hattaavah, the scene of pestilence, ii. 170.
Kings: Their rights over women, i. 182; power in patriarchal times, 204; Eastern reverence for, iii. 122; mode of consecrating, 142, iv. 359; qualifications of Jewish, iii. 151; cost of royal visits, 403; political *combinations, iv. 376; policy towards conquered nations, 391, vi. 80, 255; Persian, present at executions*, 242; divine honours paid to, viii. 252.
Kinnur, The Harp, v. 293.
Kirjath-jearim, Ark removed from, iii. 343.
Kirjath-Sepher, the Book city, ii. 300.
Kiss, A, the token of homage, iii. 142, iv. 360.
Knighthood: David's order of, iii. 301; insignia, in use among the Romans, 301.
Korah and his Company: Their conspiracy, ii. 186; and overthrow, 190.

Laban: His character, i. 306; bargain with Jacob, 311; household gods, 319; covenant with Jacob, 321.
Lamech: The first polygamist, i. 107; address to his wives, 109; Jewish tradition, 109; meaning of the name, 130.
Lamps, burnt all night in the East, v. 199.
Land: Formation of the dry, i. 27, animals created, 36; Israelitish tenure of, iv 268.
Land-surveying: Earliest example of, ii. 305; knowledge derived from Egypt, 306.
Languages: Their origin, i. 176.
Laodicea, The Epistle from, viii. 395.
Lap, Shaking the, iv. 435.
Lapidoth: Meaning of the word, ii. 351.
Lapping with the tongue, ii. 377.
Laws: The Levirate, iii 41; blood-revenge, 330, 435; retaliation, 337; primogeniture, 362; debtor and creditor, iv. 308; right of property in children, 310; divorce, vii. 45; exposure of dead bodies, 441.
Lawyers, Roman, viii. 426.
Lazarus, restored to life, vii. 366.
Leather, used for making bottles, ii. 286.
Lebanon: Its cedars, iv. 34; remains of the forest, 36.
Lentils: Used as food, i. 288; Jacob's mess of pottage, 288.
Lepers: Their condition in Burmah, v. 91; Mosaic regulations, 92; a leper cured, vii. 261.
Leprosy: Miriam's, ii. 174; the black, v. 84; deemed incurable, vii. 261.
Levant, The, A squall in, iv. 250.
Leviathan, The, v. 246.
Levirate Law, The, iii. 41.
Levite of Bethlehem, The, ii. 449; terms of his engagement with *Micah, 451.*
Levite of Mount Ephraim, The: Treatment of his concubine, ii. 453.
Libertines, Synagogue of the, viii. 63.
Lice, Plague of, ii. 57.
Lictors, Roman, vii. 431, viii. 351.
Light: The first, i. 22; formation described, 23; geological conclusions, 24; appearance prior to the sun, 24; the great lights, 30; sun and moon, the depositaries of, 31; objection refuted, 32.
Linen, Fine, Vestures of, i. 398.
Lion, The: Common in Palestine, ii. 405; Samson's encounter, 405; an adventure with lions, vi. 379.
"Living Creatures," i. 37; named by Adam, 51.
Locusts: Plague of, ii. 68; vast numbers, 70; power of destruction, ii. 71, vi. 390; habits, v. 393; dense masses, vi. 394; used for food, vii. 175.
Longevity, Antediluvian, i. 132.
Loosing the Cord, v. 212.
"Lord of Hosts:" First instance of the designation, iii. 56.

Lot: Deliverance by Abraham, i. 202; residence in Sodom, 235; character, 235; fate of his wife, 237.
Lot, The: Much employed by the Jews, ii. 281, iii. 143; used in the choice of an apostle, viii. 15.
Luke: A physician, viii. 334; accompanies Paul, 334.
Lydia: Her conversion, viii. 341.
Lysias: His treatment of Paul, viii. 415, 424.
Lystra: Paul and Barnabas at, viii. 284; cure of the cripple, 285; homage of the inhabitants, 285; subsequent treatment, 289.

Machpelah, Cave of, i. 269.
"Made," as distinguished from "Created," i. 31, 33.
Magicians: Pretended miracles of the Egyptian, ii. 49, 53, 55; supposed power in battle, 214; Eastern Magi, vii. 112; their visit to Bethlehem, 119, 124; belief of Jews and Gentiles in magic, viii. 396.
Mahalath, the lute or guitar, v. 295.
Malachi: His prophecy concerning Edom, vi. 436.
Malchus, a servant of the High Priest, vii. 420.
Man: His devices subservient to God's purpose, i. 187.
Manasseh, King of Judah: His character, iv. 402; captivity, 403.
Manasseh, Son of Joseph, i. 391.
Manna: Its appearance, mode of *cooking, and taste, ii. 111; trees of, 113; discontent of the Israelites, 166; its cessation, 261.*
Manoah: His faith, ii. 402.
Marah, Waters of, ii. 104; its site, 105.
Mark: Paul's disapproval of, viii. 270; his apostleship, 272; founder of the Christian church in Egypt, 272.
Marriage: With persons of inferior rank, not discreditable, i. 138; Arab *custom, 252; purchase of a bride,* 307, iii. 239; position and rights of a concubine, i. 316, ii. 453; proposals made by the parents, 404; feasts, 408; friends of the bridegroom, 409; riddles, 410; use of the shoe, iii. 45; polygamy not practised by modern Jews, 51; royal procession, v. 425; an emblem of God's relation to his church, vi. 383; betrothal, vii. 43; divorce, 45; feast at Cana, 207; early marriages common in Judea, viii. 75.
Mars' Hill, viii. 363.
Martha, Our Lord's reproof to, vii. 363.
Mary, Sister of Lazarus, anoints Jesus, vii. 406.
Mary, The Virgin: Gabriel's appearance to, vii. 30; visit to Elisabeth, 34; hymn of thankfulness, 35; sojourn in Bethlehem, 60; purification, 106; flight into Egypt, 138, 145; visits Cana, 207; reproved by Jesus, 209; at the cross, 439; last mention of, in Scripture, viii. 13; Romanist views, 167
Matron, The Hebrew, v. 358.
Matthew, called to be an Apostle, vii. 274.
Matthias, elected an Apostle, viii. 15.
Mausoleums: Their antiquity, v. 118.
Meals: Egyptian posture, i. 414; marks of distinction, 415; Eastern usages, v. *328,* 331; reclining at, vii. 300, 376; washing before, 307.
Meats: Egyptian mode of dressing, i. 412; offered to idols, viii. 295.
Medes, The: Their relation to the Persians, vi. 151.
Medicine: Practice of, among the Hebrews, iv. 194, vi. 27; supposed medicinal properties of animals, iv. 194; Hebrew knowledge derived from Egypt, 196; diseases supposed to come directly from God, 197; remarkable passage in the Apocrypha, 197; practice in cases of fever, 333; modern practice in Syria, vi. 30; copious bleeding, 32; Roman aversion to, viii. 334.
Mehujael: Meaning of the name, i. 129.
Melchizedek: His present to Abraham, i. 206; opinion of the Jews, 206; Romanist notion, 206.
Melita: Identified with Malta, viii. 443; Paul at, 444; catacombs, 453.
Mephibosheth: His humility, iii. 377; David's kindness, 380; his loyalty, 431.
Meribah: Sin of Moses and Aaron at, ii. 195.
Mesha, King of Moab: His war with the three kings, iv. 290; a large sheep-master, 290; sacrifices his son, 298.
Metals: Their use early known, i. 115; Tubal-Cain's improvements, 116; influx of the precious metals into Palestine, iii. 371; profusion of gold and silver in Solomon's temple; estimate of their value, iv. 63; overlaying with gold, 70; casting of metal known to Hiram, 71; Egyptian operations, 71; writing tablets, v. 178.
Methegammah, a Philistine fortress, iii. 360.

Methusael: Meaning of the name, i. 130.
Micah of Mount Ephraim, erects "a house of God," ii. 448.
Micah, the Prophet: Prophesies concerning Samaria, vi. 416; and Mount Zion, 418.
Michal: Her image, iii. 242; restored to David, 327; despises David, 347.
Midian, Moses resides in, ii. 28, 33.
Midianites, The: A snare to Israel, ii. 232; slaughter by Moses defended, 234; oppression of the Israelites, 361.
Milistones, Eastern, ii. 439.
Miracles, Apostolic: Gift of Tongues, viii. 19; the lame beggar, 27; Ananias and Sapphira, 38; Peter's shadow, 44; Æneas, 187; wherein they differed from our Lord's, 188; Dorcas, 189; Elymas, 254; the cripple at Lystra, 285; the Pythoness, 344; miracles at Ephesus, 396; Eutychus, 406.
Miracles, Our Lord's: Water turned into wine, vii 208; the nobleman's son, 241; the draught of fishes, 248; the unclean spirit, 257; Peter's wife's mother, 259; the leper, 260; the paralytic, 264, 268; the impotent man, 280; the man with a withered hand, 286; the Centurion's servant, 291; the widow's son, 294; expulsion of a demon, 304; demoniac of the tombs, 309; Jairus' daughter, 318; the issue of blood, 318; the blind, 320, 336, 358; the dumb demoniac, 321; the loaves and fishes, 326, 336; Syro-phenician woman's daughter, 333; the deaf, 335, 342; on the Sabbath-day, 358, 361, 376; Lazarus, 366; the ten lepers, 379; Bar-timeus, 384; the barren fig-tree, 393.
Miriam: Murmurs against Moses, ii. 170; her leprosy, 174.
Mirrors, metallic, vi. 56.
Misrephoth-maim: Meaning of the name, iv. 80.
Mizpeh: Israel assembled at, iii. 104; Samuel's offering, 107.
Moab, The plains of, ii. 212.
Moabites, The: Their policy towards Israel, ii. 213; oppression of Israel, 329; decimation by David, iii. 364.
Mohammedans, The: Their fatalism, v. 112; places of prayer, viii. 340.
Monarchy, Hebrew: Its law, iii. 144, 151.
Money: Silver, the standard of value, i. 271; anciently weighed, 272; ring money, 273; its relative value, ii. 451, v. 40; mode of reckoning, iv. 363; the kesitah, v. 257; the didrachmon, vii. 346; the thirty pieces of silver, 410.
Moon, The: Her first appearance, i. 30.
Moriah, Mount, i. 263.
Moriah, The Land of, i. 263.
Mosaic Economy: Reasons of its appointment, ii. 10.
Mosaic History: Proofs of its authenticity, ii. 67.
Moses: His adoption, ii. 19; Jewish traditions, 21; education, 23; early deeds, 23; removal from Egypt, 26; compassion for his brethren, 28; in Midian, 28, 33; interview with Jethro's daughters, 29; Jethro's kindness, 32; employment in Midian, 34; call from God, 35; the burning bush, 35; mission to Pharaoh, 38; his faith, 107; at Rephidim, 116; smites the rock, 121; disinterestedness, 144, 147; heroism, 145; invitation to Hobab, 155; the object of jealousy to Aaron and Miriam, 170; marriage with the Ethiopian woman, 172; Korah's conspiracy, 186; sin at Meribah, 195; request to the king of Edom, 198; slaughter of the Midianites, 234; death, 238; character, 240.
Mothers: A mother in Israel, ii. 348; reviling one's mother, iii. 255; their influence, iv. 138; the king's mother, 179, 410.
Mount Zion, Micah's prophecy concerning, vi. 418.
Mountains, Origin of sacred, i. 165.
Mourning: Mournings of the Egyptians, i. 431; symbols in the book of Job, ii. 151; rending the garments, 151, v. 78; shaving the head, ii. 152, v. 78, vi. 249; cutting the flesh, ii. 153, vi. 249; sprinkling dust on the head, v. 99; days of weeping, vi. 251; condoling with the bereaved, vii. 369.
"Moving Creature," The, i. 33.
Mules, First mention of, iii. 403.
Mummies, i. 429.
Murrain, Plague of, ii. 61.
Music: Its power over diseases of the mind, iii. 212; examples, 213.
Musical Instruments: Invented by Jubal, i. 112; ancient harp, 112, iii. 208; first organ, i. 112; tabret, 318; trumpets of rams' horns, ii. 264; temple service, v. 293; titles of the Psalms, 293.
Mutilation: Practised by the Jebusites, ii. 317; and in India, 319; inflicted on criminals, iii. 337.

Naamah, Sister of Tubal-Cain, i. 107.
Naaman, The Syrian: His pride, iv. 316; leprosy, 319; presents refused by Elisha, 321; conversion, 322.
Naboth: His vineyard, iv. 268; his murder by Jezebel, 271.
Nadab: His sin, ii. 143.
Nahash: His proposal to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, iii. 159.
Nahum: Prophecy concerning Nineveh, vi. 419.
Nain, The widow's son of, vii. 294.
Naioth, Prophesyings at, iii. 247.
"Naked:" Meaning of the word, iii. 248.
Names: Of the living creatures given by Adam, i. 50; antediluvian, 127; significant, 128, iii. 14, iv. 290, v. 261; custom of changing, i. 344, iv. 407, vi. 352; derived from animals, ii. 348, iv. 290, viii. 189; of countries, and heads of families identical, v. 33; indicate change of condition, 261; female, derived from spices, unguents, pearls, etc., examples, 251; double, in use among the Jews, viii. 247, 267.
Naomi: Her love of country, iii. 21; Ruth's attachment, 23
Nathan: His parable, iii. 390.
Nathanael, identified with Bartholomew, vii. 206.
National Judgments, the result of national sins, ii. 77.
Nativity, The: Convent of, vii. 70; the church, 71; the cave, 72.
Natron, used for embalming, i. 430.
Nazareth: Description of, vii. 26; its bad repute, 26; synagogue of, 245.
Nazarite, The: peculiarities of his condition, ii. 400; Samson, 401; Paul, viii. 382.
Nebel, a triangular harp, v. 294.
Nebuchadnezzar: His dream, vi. 365; recovered by Daniel, 368; the golden image, 370; his pride abased, 375; his claim to be the builder of Babylon, 376.
Neginoth, stringed instruments, v. 293.
Nehemiah: His high rank, iv. 429; correction of abuses, 434.
Nehiloth, instruments of the flute or pipe kind, v. 296.
Nicodemus: A member of the Sanhedrim, vii. 220; interview with our Lord, 221; his visit by night, 221.
Nightingale, The, v. 425.
Nile, The River: Its inundations, i. 379; idolatrous worship of, 380; turned into blood, ii. 52.
Niloa, The, an Egyptian festival, i. 380.
Nineveh: Its extent, vi. 404; population, 405; structure of the houses, 407; Jonah's prophecy, 408; repentance of the king and people, 410; fasting extended to the cattle, 411; its downfall, 419; agency of the Tigris, 420; of fire, 422.
Nisan, The Month, ii. 92.
Nisroch: The chief god of the Assyrians, vi. 100; derivation of the word, 102.
Noah: His name, i. 131; builds the ark, 140; a preacher of righteousness, 145; God's remembrance of, 151.
Nob: David's sojourn at, iii. 257; massacre of the priests, 262.
Nobleman, The: Trial of his faith, vii. 241; cure of his son, 243; becomes a follower of Christ, 244.
North, The, Notions of the ancients regarding, v. 192, vi. 207.
Nose-ring, The, i. 282.

Oaths, Importance of, i. 211.
Obadiah: Governor of Ahab's palace, iv. 232; concern for Elijah's safety, 233.
Obed-edom: The ark in his house, iii. 344.
Obeisance in Eastern countries, i. 231.
Obelisk, The Nimrud, vi. 387.
Og: Defeated by Israel, ii. 208; his stature, 209; bedstead, 210.
Oil: In consecration, i. 302, iii. 142; its value, iv. 110, 309; the sick anointed with, vii. 322; cost of perfumed, 407.
Old age, Solomon's description of, v. 388, 394.
Olympic Games, The, viii. 145.
Omri: Builds Samaria, iv. 199; his character, 200.
Ophir: Its probable situation, iv. 102; extent of country included under, 106.
Organ, The first, i. 112.
Orion, Nebula of, v. 129.
Ormuzd, the good principle of Zoroaster, vi. 139.
Ox, The Wild, the unicorn of Scripture, v. 229.
Oxen, not muzzled in the harvest-field, iii. 38.
Ox-goad of Palestine, ii. 340.

Padanaram, the land of Uz, v. 35, 47.
Palanquin: The royal, v. 425; used by the Egyptians, 429.

Palestine: Surveyed by Joshua, ii. 305; state under the native princes, 317; the lion common in, 405; former excellence of the roads, iii. 164; its climate, iv. 250, v. 363, 431; indications of summer, 422; birds of song, 424; present barrenness, vi. 226; change in its climate, 228; earthquake in the reign of Uzziah, 430; and in 1837, 432. (See Canaan and Judea.)
Palm-tree of Deborah, The, ii. 350.
Palmyra, the ancient Tadmor, iv. 107.
Parallelism: A characteristic of Hebrew poetry, v. 272; varieties of, 274; synonymous, 274; examples of, 276; antithetic, 278; synthetic, 281; introverted, 282; psalms of degrees, 284; alphabetical psalms, 284.
Paralytic, Cure of a, vii. 264, 268.
Paran, Murmuring of the Israelites at, ii. 164.
Parlour, The summer, ii. 335.
Paschal Lamb, The: A type of Christ, ii. 78; manner of roasting, 81.
Passover, The: Its first observance, ii. 82; strictly kept by the Jews, vii. 161; our Lord's last observance of, 411.
Paths, The old, vi. 236.
Patriarchs, The: Their wealth, i. 190; hospitality, 223; belief in the soul's immortality, 294, v. 158, 176; low standard of virtue, i. 310.
Paul: A persecutor, viii. 74; descent, 94; a Roman citizen, 97, 355; a tent-maker, 97, 370; education, 103; training at Jerusalem, 112; first visit to Damascus, 116, 121; conversion, 116; its incidents, 121; blindness, 119, 124; his conversion proves the divine origin of Christianity, 125; in Arabia, 138; a trophy of divine grace, 144; self-denial, 145; second visit to Damascus, 149; escape from Damascus, 151; visit to Jerusalem, 157; recognition by Barnabas, 160; apostolic authority, 161; tenderness, 176; in Cilicia, 217; at Cyprus, 254, 260; change of name, 264; disapproval of Mark, 270; at Antioch in Pisidia, 278; at Iconium, 283; at Lystra and Derbe, 284; mission to Jerusalem, 291, 299; reproof of Peter, 310; tradition as to his personal appearance, 312; contention with Barnabas, 315; is joined by Silas and Timothy, 319; in Phrygia and Galatia, 323; his thorn in the flesh, 326; at Philippi, 335, 340, 344; conversion of Lydia, 341; the Pythoness, 344; treatment at Philippi, 350; converts the jailer, 353; at Thessalonica, 357; at Berea, 360; at Athens, 361, 367; on Mars' Hill, 367; at Corinth, 374; his vow, 382; second visit to Ephesus, 383, 386, 393, 397; fights with beasts, 392; signal miracles, 396; kindness of Aquila and Priscilla, 399; at Troas, 406; Eutychus, 406; at Tyre, 409; at Cæsarea, 410; forewarned of danger, 410; re-visits Jerusalem, 412; treatment by the Jews, 413; by Lysias, 415, 424; address to the people, 416; conscientiousness, 419; discourtesy to Ananias, 421; conspiracy against him, 424; before Felix, 426; discourse to Felix and Drusilla, 429; before Festus and Agrippa, 433; voyage to Rome, 435; shipwreck, 441; reception at Melita, 444; heals the governor's father, 445; at Appii Forum, 447; in Rome, 448; tradition as to his death, 450.
Peacocks: Whence obtained, iv. 104.
Pear, The prickly, i. 106.
Pearl of great price, The, vii. 315.
Penguin, The: Its vast numbers, i. 35.
Peninnah: Her treatment of Hannah, iii. 54.
Pentecost: Descent of the Holy Ghost, viii. 9, 18; feast of, 17; gift of tongues, 19.
Penuel, Gideon's destruction of, ii. 382.
Perea, Our Lord's tour in, vii. 374.
Perga, Temple of Diana at, viii. 269.
Persecution: The first great, viii. 74; by Herod Agrippa, 232; the lot of Christians in every age, viii. 274.
Persecutors, God's retributions on, vii. 134.
Persians, The: The court, iv. 438; practice of divination, 445; rock-sepulchres of the kings, v. 120, vi. 344; highly poetical, v. 403; religion, 60, vi. 133, 139; origin, 105, 149; relation to the Medes, 151; employ asses in war, 193; their skill in archery, 197; their standard, 198; cruelty to captives, 242; mode of sepulture, 343.
Pestilence: Egyptian plague of, ii. 61; in the reign of David, iii. 438.
Peter: Meaning of the name, vii. 205; his call to the apostleship, 251; in the storm, 330; declares Jesus to be the Messiah, 338; his denial of Jesus, 421; first evan-

gelical sermon, viii. 21; the lame beggar, 27; proceedings of the Sanhedrim, 30, 46; Ananias and Sapphira, 38; his shadow, 44; rebukes Simon Magus, 82; at Joppa, 193; his vision, 194; mission to Cornelius, 196, 201, 205; imprisonment, 242, 245; dissimulation, 305; Paul's reproof, 310; tradition as to his personal appearance, 312.
Petra: Ruins of, ii. 199; Amaziah's conquest, iv. 369; recent discovery, 369; its desolation, vi. 436.
Petrel, The: Its vast numbers, i. 35.
Phaltiel, Michal taken from, iii. 327.
Pharaoh: His dreams, i. 378, 382.
Pharaoh: His obstinacy, ii. 39, 47.
Pharaoh-Necho, King of Egypt, iv. 405.
Pharisees, The: Their views of Sabbath observance, vii. 284; accuse Jesus of a compact with Beelzebub, 305, 321; attempt his apprehension, 352; variance with the Sadducees, 399, viii. 31, 46, 422; ublic alms-giving, 27.
Phenicians, The: Their skill in the arts, iii. 354; commerce with the Hebrews, 355; enterprise, iv. 99; worship Baal, 208; architecture, vi. 313; sepulchres, 349.
Philip: In Samaria, vii. 78; interview with the Eunuch, 89.
Philippi: Origin of the name, viii. 335; a Roman colony, 337; magistrates, 349.
Philistines, The: Abraham's sojourn among, i. 249; origin, ii. 338; Samson's vengeance, 414, 419, 439; Lords of, 430; festival in honour of Dagon, 442; victory over Israel, iii. 75; Dagon their god, 84; capture the ark, 84, 89; reverence for the threshold, 87; smitten with emerods, 90; their talismans, 91; restore the ark, 96; defeated at Mizpeh, 110; appearance and dress, 222; David's visits to, 263, 286; his wars with, 356.
Physicians: Egyptian, i. 428, iv. 196; Hebrew, 193, vi. 27; Syrian, 30; Greek, viii. 334.
Pigeon: Vast numbers of the American, i. 35; carrier, v. 385.
Pilate: Our Lord's trial before, vii. 425; his perplexity, 430.
Pillar of Cloud, The, ii. 93; caravans to Mecca, 93.
Pillar of Salt, The, i. 237; saline statues in Carinthia, 238; American researches, 240.
Pipe, The, a musical instrument, v.
Plagues of Egypt, The: The Nile turned into blood, ii. 52; frogs, 54; gnats, 57; beetles, 58; murrain, 65; pestilence, 65; storm, 66; locusts, 69; darkness, 73; death of the first-born, 74.
Ploughs: Eastern, ii. 341; wealth in Syria estimated by the number of, iv. 275.
Plucking ears of corn, sanctioned, vii. 285.
Poetry: Lamech's address the most ancient, i. 108; prior to music, 109; Eastern diction, poetic, v. 21; oldest specimen of postdiluvian, 138; dramatic character of Eastern, 401; examples, 434.
Poetry, Hebrew: Its forms, i. 108, v. 272; sublimity, 221; general character, 263; highly figurative, vi. 302.
Political combinations, iv. 376.
Polygamy: Practised, first by Lamech, i. 107; by the "sons of God," 140; not in Egypt, or by the Moslems, 353; or by modern Jews, iii. 51; its evils, 51; inconsistent with the rank of queen-consort, iv. 177; precedence of wives, 178.
Pools: Of Solomon, v. 380; of Bethesda, vii. 275.
Popery: Its intolerance, vii. 134.
Population: Ratio of early, i. 84; value of calculations regarding, 85; of the world at the deluge, 132.
Posts: An Emblem of the life of man, v. 145; dromedaries, 145 Persian, 146; Turkish, 147.
Potiphar: His office, i. 346; why called "chief of the slaughtermen," 347; treatment of Joseph, 350, 353; power of life and death, 353.
Prætorium, The, viii. 426.
Prætors: Their power in Roman colonies, viii 349.
Prayer: The first, i. 323; power of intercessory, ii. 117; combined with action, 118; oral in the East, iii. 58, viii. 340; conditions of acceptable, iii. 147; its efficacy, viii. 242.
Presents, Eastern, iii. 136, iv. 157, 321, 331.
Priests: Their division into courses, vii. 15; services, 16.
Primogeniture, Eastern law of, iii. 382.
Princes, Eastern policy regarding, iv. 172.
Princess, The disguised, iv. 157.
Prisons: Egyptian, i. 355; keeper of the, 358; at Jerusalem, viii. 31, 245; at Philippi, 352; tower of Antonia, 4 4 the Mamertine, 450

Proconsul, The, a Roman governor, viii. 262.
Prophecy: Its nature, vi. 11; prophetic books, poetical, 22; value of the evidence from, 162.
Prophets: Meaning of the word, ii. 349, viii. 228; their functions, iii. 109, vi. 11; seer and prophet, iii. 139; school of the, 245; the two, iv. 151.
Proverbs: English, v. 82; Eastern, 83, 324; teaching by, 321.
Proverbs, Book of, v. 319; Solomon the chief author, 322.
Providence, God's: In the birth of Cyrus, vi. 110; in his early life, 115.
Psalms, The: Their spirituality, v. 267; highly esteemed in all ages, 269; alphabetical, 284, 286; Psalms of Degrees, 284; titles not canonical, 287; authors, 294; longest Psalm, 304; imprecatory, not prophetic, 310; true explanation, 311, 313.
Publicans, The: Hated by the Jews, vii. 273; their character, 274.
Punishments: Regal power of life and death, i. 354; punishment of adultery, 354, vii. 353; scourging, ii. 41, vii. 432, viii. 351; stoning, ii. 163, iv. 271, viii. 68; mutilation, iii. 336; beheading, iv. 345, vii. 324; blinding, vi. 241; burning, 244, 373; throwing to lions, 379; the stocks, viii. 352; fighting with beasts, 392.
Purim, Feast of, iv. 445.
Purple, Thyatira noted for, viii. 341.
Puteoli, Harbour of, viii. 446.
Pyramids of Egypt, The, v. 120.
Python, The Pagan, i. 64.
Pythoness, The: Her spirit of divination, viii. 344; cured by Paul, 348.

Quails: An article of food, ii. 110; the Israelites fed with, 110, 169.
Queen-Consort, The: First mention of, iv. 177.
Queen-Mother, The: Her position in the Hebrew monarchy, iv. 179, 410.

Rabbah: Joab's conquest, iii. 393; Ezekiel's prophecy, vi. 329.
Rabshakeh: His oration, vi. 64; an official title, 66; his terms of submission, 77.
Rachel: Jacob's first interview with, i. 305; her death, 327; tomb, 327.
Rahab: Her treatment of the spies, ii. 242; falsehood, 244; faith, 246.
Rain: Signs of, iv. 250; the latter, vi. 226; the former, 229.
Rams' Horns, Trumpets of, ii. 264.
Ravens: Supposed feeding of Elijah by, iv. 215; legally unclean, 216; food, 217; picking out the eyes of their prey, v. 352.
Reading aloud, common in the East, viii. 91.
Rebekah: Her crooked policy, i. 297. "Receiving Christ," vii. 11.
Rechabites, The, vi. 269; their extraction, 270; Jonadab's prohibition, 270; God's promise, 271; modern Rechabites, 273; accounts of travellers, 275; their habits, 278.
Recorder of Ephesus, The, viii. 400.
Redeemer: Meaning of the word in the Old Testament, v. 172.
Red Sea, The: God's wonders at, ii. 92, 98; place of crossing by the Israelites, 101.
Refuge, Cities of, iii. 164.
Refuge, The sinner's, iv. 9.
Registration, Exactness of the Jewish, vii. 78.
Rehoboam: His character, iv. 138; insane policy, 142; the kingdom rent, 146; national apostacy, 160; invasion by Shishak, 167.
Religion, a progressive work, v. 167.
Rending the garments, v. 78, vii. 425.
Rephidim, The Israelites at, ii. 115, 120.
Resurrection, The: Intimations of, in the Old Testament, iii. 410, v. 156, 175; our Lord's, vii. 442.
Retaliation, Law of, iii. 337.
Reubenites, The, Altar of, ii. 308.
Rezon: His history, iv. 133.
Rhodes, Colossus of, vi. 372, viii. 408.
Riddles: Common at marriage feasts, ii. 410; Samson's, 411.
River-horse, The, v. 240.
Rivers, Moslem worship on the banks of, viii. 340.
Roads: Their excellence in Judea, iii. 164.
Robe, A, Gift of, a mark of respect, iii. 235.
Rocks, Written, of Sinai, v. 180; inscriptions, 181; researches, 183; memorials of Israel's sojourn, 185; specimens of the inscriptions, 186.
Rome: Power in Judea, vii. 425, viii. 71; her colonies, 337; rights of citizenship, 354; unlawful to scourge a Roman, 417; Paul's voyage to, 435, 441; Epistles from, 449; Mamertine prison, 450; catacombs 451; Roman cement, 452.
Roofs of houses, vii. 267, 268.
Round-house, The, i. 355.
Ruth: Her attachment to Naomi, iii. 23; Boaz' kind treatment, 29; Le

virate law, 41; her faith, 47; its recompense, 47.

Sabæans, The: Their origin, v. 66; assaults on Job's property, 66.
Sabæism, the most ancient form of idolatry, v. 32, vi. 134.
Sabbath, The: Its early observance, ii. 268; our Lord's authority over, vii. 283; his regard for the Jewish, 284; Pharisaic notions, 284; a Sabbath-day's journey, 285.
Sacks: Their use in the East, ii. 285.
Sacrifice: Its early existence, i. 88; of divine appointment, 89.
Sacrifice, Human: The only example in Scripture, iv. 298; supposed expiatory character, 299; Iphigenia, 300; illustrations of the practice, 302.
Sadducees, The: Their religious opinions, vii 399; opposed to the Pharisees, 399, viii. 31, 46, 422; enmity to the apostles, 31, 46.
Salem: Its site, i. 208.
Salome, daughter of Herodias: Her dance, vii. 324.
Salome, wife of Zebedee: Her request to Jesus, vii. 383.
Salt, Pillar of: Lot's wife changed into, i. 237; a parallel case, 238; American researches, 240.
Salutation: Hebrew mode, iii. 26; Moslem, 27.
Salvation, The only way of, vi. 236.
Samaria: Its situation, iv. 199; built by Omri, 199; besieged by Benhadad, 324; Micah's prophecy, vi. 416; the woman of, vii. 236; gospel preached by Philip, viii. 78.
Samaritans, The: Their religion, iv. 388, vii. 233; origin, 233; dislike of the Jews, 234.
Samson: His birth foretold, ii. 399; a Nazarite, 401; encounters a lion, 404; his marriage feast, 408; riddle, 411; destroys the standing corn, 415; attacks the Philistines, 417; exploit with the jaw-bone, 420; faith in God, 421; judges Israel, 421; exploit at Gaza, 423; enticement by Delilah, 430; ignominy, 434; deprived of his sight, 436; bound with fetters of brass, 437; a public slave, 438; grinds in the prison-house, 439; vengeance on the Philistines, 443.
Samuel: Dedicated to God, iii. 56; called to the prophetic office, 71; the Lord's vision, 73; offering at Mizpeh, 107; misconduct of his sons, 113; interview with Saul, 133, 140; address on the "manner of the kingdom," 145; at the inauguration of Saul, 174; pronounces Saul's exclusion from the throne, 199; visits Bethlehem, 202; foretells Saul's death, 298.
"Sanctify," meaning of the word, v. 50.
Sandals, Ancient, ii. 288, vii. 201.
Sanhedrim: Council of the, vii. 169; deputation to the Baptist, 199; conduct on the resurrection of Lazarus, 373; ensnaring questions to Jesus, 397, 399; our Lord's trial before, 418; proceedings against Peter and John, viii. 30; judicial authority under the Romans, 71; persecute the early Christians, 74; authority at Damascus, 122.
Sapphira: Her crime and punishment, viii. 38.
Sarah: In Egypt, i. 182; her beauty, 183; jealousy of Hagar, 225; treatment by Abimelech, 249; her veil, 250; death, 268.
Sardis, besieged by Cyrus, vi. 170.
Satan: Agent in the temptation, i. 58; mode of his temptation, 60; appears before God, v. 55, 59, 81; Hebrew doctrine not borrowed from the Persian, 59; Jewish belief in his being and character, 62; conflict with Job, 63, 69, 84; our Lord tempted by, vii. 186, 192.
Saul: His personal appearance, iii. 130; search for the asses, 133; interview with Samuel, 133, 140: consecration, 142; chosen by lot, 143; among the prophets, 149; expedition against the Ammonites, 159; summons the tribes, 160, 163; relieves Jabesh-Gilead, 168; signal victory, 171; inauguration, 172; standing army, 177, 179; disobedience to God, 181, 185; anathema, 193; commission against Amalek, 197; rejected from being king, 199; persecutes David, 236, 242, 275; abuses Jonathan, 255; murders the priests, 262; the witch of Endor, 294; death foretold by Samuel, 298; death, 305; David's lament for, 307; indignities offered to his body, 312; respect shown by the men of Jabesh-Gilead, 313; oppression of the Gibeonites, 433.
Scape-goat, The: Rabbinical traditions regarding, vi. 33.
Scarlet: An emblem of dignity, vi. 35; how obtained, 36; another name for crimson, 36.
Scarlet sins: Force of the comparison, vi. 37.

Sceva, a Jew: His seven sons, viii. 397.
Schools: Of the prophets, iii. 245; Eastern, how conducted, viii. 105.
Scourging: Its severity, vii. 432.
Scribes, The: Their mode of teaching, vii. 255.
Scripture History: Undesigned coincidences, viii. 149, 262, 349, 401.
Sculptures: Laminated, ii. 140; on the rocks at Sinai, v. 176; Assyrian and Persian, vi. *passim*.
"Secret of God," The, explained, v. 201.
Seer, The, iii. 138; distinguished from the prophet, 139.
Sennacherib: Invades Judea, iv. 390; insolence of his commissioners, 391, vi. 65; destruction of his army, iv. 392.
Sergius Paulus: Roman Governor of Cyprus, viii. 260; his rank, 262.
Serpent, The: Employed in the temptation, i. 58; opinions regarding, 58; a name given to Satan, 60; traditions of, 61, 71; Aaron's rod turned into, ii. 49; charmers, 50; the Israelites bitten by serpents, 203; why called "fiery," 205; the brazen, 205; serpentine column at Constantinople, iii. 94.
Servants: Their responsibility, vi. 398.
Seven, The number: Ancient regard for, ii. 268; frequent use of, 271; the reason, v. 20.
Seventy, Mission of the, vii. 349.
Shalmaneser, The ten tribes carried captive by, iv. 387.
Shamgar: His heroism, ii. 339.
Shaving the head, an act of mourning, ii.152, v. 78.
Sheba: Incites the people to revolt from David, iii. 426; his death, 428.
Sheba, Queen of: Her visit to Solomon, iv. 118; the nations so named, v. 66.
Shechem: Jacob's visit to, i. 331; the metropolis of Samaria, vii. 233, 236; Jacob's well, 236.
Sheep, Custom of marking, iv. 290.
Sheikhs: Their power, i. 205; hospitality, 229; respect shown to, v. 203.
Shelomith, The son of: His blasphemy, ii. 159.
Shepherd kings, i. 250, 416; invasion of Egypt, 417.
Shield: The Philistine, iii. 226; Assyrian, 226, vi. 94; anointing the, a call to arms, 190.
Shiloh: Its sacred character, iv. 157.
Shimei: His behaviour to David, iii. 418, 430; treatment by David, 418, 430; death, iv. 19.
Ships: Navis Noachica, i. 144; Solomon's fleet, iv. 100; Assyrian warboats, vi. 83; voyage and shipwreck of Paul, viii. 435, 441.
Shishak: Invades Jerusalem, iv. 167; robs the temple, 168; memorials at Karnak of the invasion, 170.
Shusan: Probable scene of Daniel's death and burial, vi. 381.
Sieges: Ancient mode of conducting, iv. 413; Assyrian mode, vi. 89, Chaldean, 230; trees employed in, 233.
Signet, The royal: The emblem of authority, i. 396, iv. 270.
Signs, Frequent use of, v. 353.
Sihon: His defeat by Israel, ii. 208.
Silas: Associated with Paul, viii. 319; character, 319; treatment at Philippi, 350.
Silver: The standard of value in the reign of Solomon, iv. 68; shrines of Diana, viii. 398.
Simeon: His acquaintance with prophecy, vii. 108.
Simon, a tanner, Peter's abode with, viii. 193.
Simon Magus: A Jewish impostor, viii. 80; rebuked by Peter, 82; traditional notices of, 83.
Simony, Origin of the word, viii. 83.
Simoom, The: Its deadly influence, iv. 395; probable agent in the destruction of Sennacherib's army, 397.
Sin, Wilderness of, ii. 108.
Sinai: Its appearance, ii. 125; difficulties, 130; written rocks at, v. 180.
Sisera, Captain of Jabin's host, ii. 354.
Sitting, a posture of reverence, iii. 362.
"Skin for skin," Meaning of the phrase, v. 81.
Skins: Covering for tents, i. 197; medium of exchange in early times, v. 84.
Skull, The: Solomon's description of, v. 395; Golgotha the place of a, vii. 435.
Slaves: Houseborn, i. 213; received in presents, 215; acquired by purchase, 215; father's power over children, 216; voluntary servitude, 216; debtor's liability, 217; slavery a punishment for crime, 217; power of mistresses over female, 223; suitor's servitude, 307; given in dowry, 308; Egypt a great mart for, 342; policy of dealers, 344; public, how treated, ii. 438; Scythian practice of blinding, 441; medical skill, viii. 334; variety of occupations, 349.

Sling, The: Used by shepherds, iii. 229; in war, 230.
Smiting on the mouth, vii. 423, viii. 421.
Sneezing, Moslem custom regarding, iii. 28.
Snow: Used for cooling drinks, v. 335; its existence in Palestine, 363; frequent allusions to, 363.
Sodom, Abraham intercedes for, i. 233.
Solomon: His punishment of Shimei, iv. 19; wisdom, 24, 116; accomplishments, 25; the two mothers, 26; preparations for building the temple, 29; correspondence with Hiram, 29; woodcutters, 40; commercial enterprise, 98; fleet, 100; trade with Egypt, 110; with the Hittites, 112; military force, 115; commercial operations unsound, 122, naram, 125; backsliding, 127; adversaries, 130; division of his kingdom foretold, 134; exacts labour from his subjects, 135; why called "the preacher," v. 367; pools of, 381; description of old age, 388, 394; state-tent, 412; palanquin, 425.
Solomon, Song of, v. 399; its spirituality, 400, 405; relished by the pious, 407; free from indelicacy, 433; in harmony with approved Eastern poetry, 434.
Songs: Deborah's, ii. 342, 349; the bow, iii. 308; entrance, 349; abusive, v. 210; Solomon's, 399; Moslem, 401.
Sons of God, The: Thought to be angels, i. 136; Sethites, 137; antediluvian chiefs, 137; probable explanation, 139; polygamists, 140.
Sosthenes: His conversion, viii. 381.
South, The: Notions of the ancients regarding, v. 194.
Spear: The Philistine, iii. 227; Assyrian, 227.
Speech, Freedom of, in the East, v. 148.
Spies: Report of the Hebrew, ii. 176, 181; Rahab's treatment of the two, 241.
Spindles: Ancient use of, v. 361; Egyptian, 362.
Spitting, a mark of insult, v. 211.
Spoil taken in war, Usage regarding i. 203.
Sprinkling dust on the head, an act of mourning, v. 99.
Stable of the caravanserai, vii. 62.
Staff: Power of Elisha's, iv. 312; Indian belief in the virtue of the cane, 314; leaning on, vi 65; Egyptian, 65
Star in the East: Notion on the continent, vii. 115; nature of the phenomenon, 118.
Stephanas: His household converted by Paul, viii. 377.
Stephen: His zeal, viii. 61; martyrdom, 66; persecution following his death, 74.
St George and the Dragon, viii. 187.
Stocks, The, Punishment of, viii. 352.
Stones: Origin of sacred, i. 165; Kern, 165; Cromlech, 167; Kistvaen—specimen in Kent, 167; round towers of Ireland, 169; Jacob's monumental, 302, 321; smitten rock at Horeb, ii. 122; great stones used in building the temple, iv. 49; stone-work around the mosque of Omar, 51; ancient masonry in the valley of Jehoshaphat, 53; corner-stones, 53; Egyptian mode of transporting, 56; stone-pillar worship, vi. 218.
Stoning to death, Jewish mode of, viii. 68.
Storm, The, Jesus and his disciples in, vii. 308.
Stylus, The, used for writing on metal, v. 180.
Succoth, Gideon's revenge on, ii. 382.
Suicide: Ahithophel the first, iii. 420; not practised in early times, v. 134; of Judas, viii. 14.
Summer, Indications of, in Palestine, v. 422.
Sun, The: When created, i. 21; Joshua's miracle, ii. 294; dial of Ahaz, iv. 397.
Superstition, prevalent in the heathen world, viii. 256.
Sycamore-tree, The, vi. 396.
Symposiarch, The, ruler of a feast, vii. 210.
Synagogue, The: Supersedes the high places, iv. 165; order observed in, vii. 245; Scriptures read, 245; minister of, 246; of Nazareth, 246; of Jerusalem, viii. 63; of the Libertines, 63; what implied in sitting down, 279.
Syrians, The: Defeated by Israel, iv. 262, 265; their gods local, 263; god of the hills, 263; complexion of the women, v. 415.
Syro-Phenician woman, The: Her faith, vii. 333, her daughter cured, 335.

Taberah, The burning at, ii. 165
Tabernacle, The: Abominations at, iii. 67; women at the door of, 69; tenements for the priests and le-

vites, 71; attendance on the lamps, 72.
Tabernacles, Feast of: Time of its observance, iv. 150; our Lord present at, vii. 350.
Tables: Egyptian, i. 413; Roman, vii. 300.
Tablets: Engraving on, v. 176; writing, vii. 39.
Tabor: First mention of, ii. 354; probable scene of the transfiguration, vii. 340.
Tabret, The, i. 318.
Tadmor: Built by Solomon, iv. 106; identified with Palmyra, 107; a station for caravans, 107; an emporium for the products of the East, 108.
Tamar, Amnon's passion for, iii. 399.
Tanner, The trade of, despised by the Jews, viii. 193.
Tarshish, Ships of, iv. 100.
Tarsus: A free city, viii. 96; noted for its hair-cloth, 97; description of, 98.
Taxation: Exactions of Solomon, iv. 124; Eastern aversion to, vii. 272; Jewish dislike to, 273.
Tekoah, Woman of, iii. 409.
Telesms: Founded in astrology, iii. 91; against scorpions, 93.
Temples: First mention of, ii. 386; reverence for the threshold, iii. 87.
Temple, Solomon's: Great stones used in the building of, iv. 49; its size, 57; proportions, 58; Holy of Holies, 59; decorations, 60, 69; profusion of gold and silver, 60, 63; the molten sea, 62; windows, 76; cherubim, 83; destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, 414.
Temple, Herod's: Desecration of the courts, vii. 213; size and splendour, 218; tribute, 345; the treasury, 356; rending of the veil, 440, viii. 352; plan, 23; Beautiful Gate, 23; cure of the lame beggar, 27; outbreak in, 414.
Temptation: Adam's, i. 58; our Lord's, vii. 186, 192; opinions as to its mode, 189; how repelled, 193, 198.
"Tempted like as we are," vii. 196.
Tempting God, What implied in, iv. 382.
Tents: First use of, i. 111; their origin, 194; made of trees, 195; of bamboo, 195; Arab, 195, 198; Hindoo, 195; Tartar, 196; covered with skins, 197; splendour of royal, v. 414; tent-making at Tarsus, viii. 97.
Terah, Family of, idolaters, i. 179.
Teraphim: Laban's gods, i. 319; Michal's image, iii. 242; their form, 244.
Tertullus, a noted pleader. viii. 426.
Thammuz: The Adonis of the Phenicians, vi. 308; feast of, 309.
Thebes: Memorials of Israelitish servitude, ii. 14; light thrown on metallurgy, iv. 72.
Thessalonica, visited by Paul and Silas, viii. 357.
Theudas, Insurrection of, viii. 52.
Thirst, Agonies of, ii. 103.
Thorns, Our Saviour crowned with, vii. 431; Christ's Thorn, 431.
Threefold repetition, expressive of certainty, viii. 194.
Threshing: Eastern mode, ii. 366, iii. 35; floor, 37; instruments, 38, vi. 397; oxen unmuzzled, iii. 38; mode of winnowing, 39.
Thumbs, Cutting off the: In Canaan, ii. 317; in India, 319.
Thunder-storm, Sublime description of a, v. 220.
Thyatira, famed for purple, viii. 341.
Tiglath-pileser: His hostility to Israel, iv. 378.
Tigris, The river: Its inundations, vi. 420.
Tiles, Chaldean inscriptions on, vi. 289.
Time, Jewish mode of reckoning, vii. 442.
Timothy: His early history, viii. 320; reasons of his circumcision, 321.
Tirshatha, Derivation of the word, iv. 431.
Tongues, Gift of, viii. 19.
Town-Gate, The: The place of business and judicial procedure, i. 269, ii. 344, iii. 44, v. 202.
Transmigration of souls, Jewish belief in, vii. 222, 358.
Traders driven from the temple, vii. 213, 397.
Travellers: Dangers of, ii. 343; couriers, v. 145; the chief sources of information, 188; their tokens, 188; companies, vii. 162; jewellers, 315.
Treasure: Mode of securing, vii. 314; parable of the hidden, 314.
Trees: Their formation, i. 28; tents made of, 195; terebinth, 261, vii. 140; manna, ii. 113; cedar, iv. 35; algum, 106; power of seeking nourishment, v. 140; almond, 392; used in sieges, vi. 233.
Tribes, The, summoned to arms, iii. 160, 163.
Tribute: Mode of presenting, ii. 331; withholding, an assertion of independence, iv. 290, 387; the temple, vii. 345.

Troas: Description of, viii. 332; Paul's visit to, 406.
Trumpets of rams' horns, ii. 264.
Tubal-Cain: His discoveries in the working of metals, i. 115; the prototype of Vulcan, 117.
Turkey: State functionaries formerly Christians, vi. 350.
Tyrannus, Paul teaches in the school of, viii. 394.
Tyrants, their fearful end: Charles IX., vii. 137; Herod the Great, 150; Herod Agrippa, viii. 253.
Tyre: Famed for dyes, iv. 32; dress, 33; prophecies against, vi. 332; destroyed by Alexander the Great, 335, 337; Paul's visit to, viii. 409.

Umbrella, an ensign of royalty in Persia, vi. 161.
Unicorn, The: Heraldic representation of, v. 225; fabulous, 225; not the rhinoceros, buffalo, or bison, 227; probably the wild ox, 229.
Universe, The, Hindoo system of, iii. 63.
Ur of the Chaldees, i. 178.
Uriah the Hittite, one of David's valiant men, iii. 305.
Uz, Land of: Identified with Padan-aram, v. 35, 47; Idumean hypothesis untenable, 37.
Uzzah: His transgression, iii. 344; punishment, 345.
Uzziah: His engines of war, iv. 372; leprosy, 376; earthquake in his reign, 376, vi. 430.

Valerian, The Emperor: His treatment by the Persian king, Sapor, vi. 242.
Valiant men, David's, iii. 301.
Vashti, Queen: Her disgrace, iv. 441.
Veils: Sarah's, i. 250; Eastern, 251; by whom worn, 252; Bedouin custom, 252; various forms of, vi. 51.
Vessels: Moslem ideas of their pollution, vii. 238.
Vinegar, used by reapers, iii. 32.
Vines: Cultivated in Egypt, i. 366, iv. 111; of Palestine, ii. 178; their perfection, iv. 111.
Voice, The still small, iv. 252.
Vows: Jacob's, i. 303; Jepthah's, ii. 394; the Nazarite, 400; their obligation, 463; Hannah's, iii. 55; Paul's, viii. 382.
Vulcan, Origin of the worship of, i. 117.

Waggons, Eastern, iii. 97.
Wailing, Jews' place of, iv. 56.
Waiting for God, vi. 203,
Walking with God, i. 124.
Walls: Of Jericho, ii. 266; wall dial, iv. 400; of Jerusalem, 428; cob-walls, vi. 312; houses on, viii. 151; whited, 422.
War: The first, i. 200; night attacks, 202; spoil taken in, 203; severity of ancient, ii. 235, iii. 365; the tribal, ii. 459; Saul's call to arms, iii. 160; forced marches, 170; military trophies, 312; engines, iv. 372; balistæ, 373; catapultæ, 373; war-horse, v. 230; incidents of ancient, vi. 187; hewing down of trees, 233; cruelties, 239, 260.
Washing: The feet, i. 230, 412; the hands, 412, iv. 276; the disciples' feet, vii. 411; the dead, viii. 190.
Watchmen, Stationary, vi. 193.
Watch-towers, Ancient, iv. 336.
Water: Its value, ii. 30; bitter, at Marah, 104; poured out before the Lord, an act of humiliation, iii. 105; the blood-like, iv 294; frequent redness, 295; turned waters, vi. 81; water-pots, vii. 209.
Weaning, Time of, iii. 58.
Weeping aloud, the practice of Orientals, iv. 424.
Wells: Damsels at, i. 281; watering flocks at, 305, ii. 30; Jacob's well, vii. 236.
Wheat, Egyptian, i. 384.
Whirlwinds: Their fury, v 72; examples in England, 72.
Widows, Oriental: Their destitution, viii. 59.
Wild Ass, The: A type of man, v. 150; varieties, 151; common in Central Asia, 151; said never to drink, 152; interview with, 152.
Wilderness, The: David in, iii. 267; John's withdrawal into, vii. 174; Christ tempted in, 186, 192.
Windows: On city walls, ii. 246, viii. 152; the temple, iv. 76; lattice, 82, vii. 265.
Wine: Egyptian mode of making, i. 367; the wine-press, 367; bottles, ii. 286; mixed for the table, v. 329; excess in the use of, 333; Assyrian wine cups, vi. 179; water turned into, vii. 206; medicated, given to criminals, 437.
Witnesses, Their office at executions, viii. 70.
Woman: Origin of, i. 54; Scripture account not an allegory, 56; formation out of man, significant, 57.
Women: Power of royalty over, i. 182; domestic offices, 281; privileges of Egyptian, 352; honour-

able mention of, iii. 9; social freedom of Jewish, 34; the face concealed, 43; rules of precedence, iv. 177; Hebrew matron, v. 358; manufactures, 359; head-dress, 420; seclusion, 430; attire of Hebrew ladies, vi 37, 40, 51; the epithet "woman" not disrespectful, vii. 209.
Woodcutters, Solomon's, iv. 40.
Word, The: A name given to Jesus Christ, vii. 11.
World, The: Common notion of its formation, i. 19; views of geologists, 19; its age, 107; population before the flood, 132.
Worship: Meaning of the word, vii. 123, viii. 201.
Writing: Hiram's knowledge of, iv. 29; ancient mode of, v. 176; engraving on tablets of metal, 178; the stylus, 180; inscriptions on the rocks of Sinai, 181; ancient form of the writing-table, vii. 39.

Year of Our Lord's birth, vii. 94.
Yoke, The: Frequent use of the symbol, vi. 263.

Zaccheus, Our Lord's interview with, vii. 385.
Zacharias: An aged priest, vii. 15; his vision, 18; prophetic utterances, 40.
Zarephath, The widow of: Elijah's visit to, iv. 224; her knowledge of God, 225; her faith, 226; her son's death, 227; his reanimation, 230.
Zeal, Religious, often the mask of intolerance, vii. 134.
Zedekiah: Raised to the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, iv. 411; his revolt, 412; harshly treated, 414.
Zephaniah: His prophecy concerning Gaza, vi. 426.
Zerah: His invasion of Judah, iv. 182.
Ziba slanders Mephibosheth, iii. 431.
Ziklag, David's conduct at, iii. 290.
Zophar the Naamathite: Visits Job, v. 98; his character, 107; reply to Job, its severity, 148; discourses on God's unsearchableness, 149; second discourse, 186.
Zoroaster: Traditions concerning, vi. 133; his religious opinions, 139, 143.

II. AUTHORS QUOTED OR REFERRED TO.

Abdallatif, iv. 326, 328.
Aben Ezra, i. 138, 304; v. 400.
Aberbanel, i. 290; iv. 281; vi. 217.
Abulfeda, v. 113; viii. 100.
Addington, viii. 177.
Addison, Joseph, v. 423; vi. 383.
Addison, C. J., v. 431; viii. 133.
Æschylus, iv. 300, 336; vi. 194; viii. 345.
Æsop, ii. 390.
Agatharcides, ii. 203.
Aird, v. 232.
Akerman, viii. 197, 238, 264, 390.
Alexander, vi. 16, 213.
Ali Ibn Rodoan, iii. 92.
Anacreon, v. 385.
Anna Comnena, vi. 394.
Antar, Romance of, iii. 55; v. 21, 71, 233, 414, 435.
Apocryphal Gospels, vii. 156.
Apuleius, ii. 438.
Arabian Nights, i. 373, 381; iii. 338; v. 334.
Aratus, viii. 371.
Archæologia, vi. 221, 252.
Aristides, v. 225.
Aristophanes, iii. 24; v. 330.
Aristotle, v. 127.
Aristus, vi. 348.
Arnoldus Bootius, v. 226.
Arrian, ii. 211; vi. 345.
Arundell, viii. 279.
Arvine, iv. 139.
Askew, Anne, iii. 11.
Athenæum, vi. 366.
Athenæus, i. 347; iii. 395; iv. 440; v. 297
Atkinson, iii. 52, 53.
Augustine, i. 334; ii. 211; viii. 2. 5.
Aulus Gellius, i. 309.
Aurelius Victor, iii. 248.
Avdall, vi. 201.
Aventinus, i. 238.

Banks, v. 183.
Barker, viii. 102.
Barnes, v. 125, 139, 174, 193, 201; vi. 16, 37, 188, 234; vii. 150, 198; viii. 311.
Bartlett, ii. 107, 127, 201.
Baruch, Book of, ii. 152.
Bates, iv. 93.
Baxter, i 330.
Bayle, vii. 368.
Beck, vi. 213.
Beer, v. 183.
Beldam, v. 121; vi. 307, 333, 338, 427; vii. 28, 57.
Belfrage, vii. 227.
Belon, iv. 36.
Benjamin of Tudela, iii. 305; vi. 273, 287, 338.
Bernard, iii. 17.
Berosus, iv. 393, 394, 395.
Beza, viii. 266.
Bibliotheca Sacra, iii. 190.
Biddulph, v. 432.
Birch, vi. 68.
Birks, viii. 163.
Bishops' Bible, i. 350; iv. 80; v. 55, 177, 201.
Blackburn, vi 408, 410.
Blackmore, v. 232.
Blair, v. 136.
Blayney, vi. 199, 200, 281, 283.
Bochart, i. 162; ii. 283; iii. 304, 407; iv. 118; vi 402.
Bode, Baron de, vi. 379.
Bonanni, v. 180.
Bonar and M'Cheyne, vi. 417.
Bonomi, vi. 291, 322, 405.
Borlase, vi. 220, 221.
Bossuet, vi 22.
Botta, vi. 64, 85, 422.
Boun-dehesch, The, i 156.
Brand, iii. 28; vi. 252; viii. 267.
Brinkley, v 32.
Brook, v. 339.
Broughton, v. 55.
Brown, Dr John, vii. 281; viii. 141, 304, 308, 311, 313, 327, 328.
Bruce, iv. 333; v. 164.
Brüe, v. 251.
Bryant, i. 162.
Brydges, iii. 395.
Buckingham, ii. 340; vi. 330, 332.
Buddicom, ii. 118, 219.
Burckhardt, i. 244, 253, 409; ii. 204, 365, 451; v. 37, 151, 324, 369; vi. 330; viii. 102.
Burton, viii. 85.
Bush, i 32; ii. 76; iii. 16; iv. 97.
Buxtorff, iii. 28; vi. 251.

Cæsar, viii 258.
Calmet, vi. 213; vii. 113.
Calvin, v. 109, 269, 304; vi. 299; viii. 29.
Campbell, John, v. 228.

Carpenter, v. 143.
Caryl, iii. 413; v. 57, 58, 75, 256.
Catcott, i. 162.
Cato, i. 309.
Chalmers, i 127, 310, 311; ii. 350; iii. 418; iv. 334; v. 137, 149, 306, 409.
Chandler, iii. 395.
Chardin, iii 65, 89; v. 335, 353; vi. 247, 360, 373.
Chaucer, v. 80.
Cheselden, vii 360.
Chesney, v. 35; viii. 102.
Chomer, Rabbi Elias, iv. 399.
Christian Examiner, American, vii. 159.
Christian Physiologist, vi. 269
Chrysostom, i. 211; v. 13, 18; vii. 411; viii. 265.
Cicero, v. 127; viii. 123, 349, 364, 453.
Clarendon, v. 271.
Clarke, E. D., ii. 265; vi. 394.
Clavigero, i. 161.
Cleanthes, viii. 372.
Clement of Rome, i. 240.
Coleridge, v. 425.
Comestor, iii 59.
Consag, iv. 297.
Conybeare and Howson, viii. 102, 103, 113, 115, 220, 240, 268, 313, 371.
Cook, i. 427.
Cory, i. 155.
Cosmas, v. 182.
Coverdale's Bible, v. 201.
Cowper, i. 38; ii. 34.
Creuzer, i. 63; iv. 212; viii. 345.
Crosthwaite, i. 86.
Ctesias, ii. 211; vi. 75.
Cumberland, i. 86.
Cuming, iv. 93.
Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, i. 383, 400; iv. 439; vii. 115; viii. 115
Cyril, vi. 62.

Dacier, iii. 79.
Dantz, iii. 395
D'Arvieux, v. 329, 334, 417
Davidson, vii. 55.
Davis, viii. 298.
Davison, i. 228; vi. 16.
De Breves, v. 382.
De Guigues, i. 72.
Delany, iii. 211, 351, 363, 364, 395
Demosthenes, viii. 366.
De Pauw, vi. 367.
De Sacy, v. 273.
Desatir, The, vi. 343.
De Sola, i. 137, 312.
Desvœux, v. 370, 372.
De Wette, v. 275.
D'Herbelot, i. 85, 03, 425.
Dick, John, viii. 243.
Dick, Thomas, v. 129.
Dio Cassius, vii. 53; viii. 100, 196, 263.
Diodorus Siculus, i. 353, 403, 431, 432; ii. 211; iii. 375; iv. 78, 304 vi. 148, 405.
Docoutant, v. 32.
Doddridge, iii. 303; viii. 188, 266, 267, 356.
Doubdan, ii. 179.
Drummond, vi. 168, 283; viii. 99, 102.
Dryden, vi. 194; viii. 253, 257.
Du Bartas, i. 23, 38, 79, 80, 102, 112, 113, 116, 117, 177.
Duncan, v. 142.
Durbin, ii. 107, 124, 127, 129; viii. 133, 138, 151.
Dwight and Schauffler, viii. 338.
Dyck, v. 165.

Eadie, viii. 395.
Ecclesiasticus, Book of, iv. 198.
Edwards, B. B., v. 311.
Edwards, President, v. 306, 409.
Eichhorn, vi. 23, 426.
Epiphanius, i. 179; ii. 54
Esdras, Books of, vi. 362; vii. 24, 200.
Euripides, i. 309; v. 69.
Eusebius, iii. 92; vi. 22; viii. 87, 230.
Ewald, v. 275, 370

Faber, i 162.
Fairbairn, vi 323, 409.
Fenelon, vi. 22.
Fitch, v. 428.
Flecknoe, vi. 253.
Fleming, iv. 39.
Forbes, ii. 267; iv. 306.
Förkel, v. 292.
Forster, v. 184, 185, 186.
Forsyth, i. 119, 134, 253, 273; ii 37.

Gaffarel, iii. 95.
Garnett, v. 17, 52.
Geddes, i. 31.
Geneva Bible, v. 177, 201.
Gesenius, i. 377; ii. 418; vi. 25, 46, 213
Gibbon, vi 243.
Gifford, viii 257, 258, 259.
Gilfillan, v. 125, 221; vi. 26.
Gill, ii 81; vi. 245.
Goguet, ii 146.
Good, iv. 197.
Gospel of the Infancy, vii. 144.
Gouget, v. 32.
Gould, iii. 25.
Graves, ii. 324.
Gray, T., ii., 361; iii. 412, 413; v. 143; vi. 257.
Gray, R., v. 271, 303.
Grimm, ii. 271.
Grotefend, vi. 99.
Grotius, v. 322; vi. 22; viii 266.

Hale, i. 122.

Hales, v. 32
Hall, Bishop. ii. 171, 176, 234, 427, 428; iii 84, 290. 317, 318; iv. 11, 158, 224; vii. 165.
Hamilton, Lord Claud, vi. 330, 331.
Hamilton, W. J., viii. 279, 284, 391
Harcourt, i. 162.
Harmer, v. 329, 413, 417, 423, 425, 427, 432.
Harness, i. 40.
Harris, iii. 122.
Hasselquist, v. 331, 382.
Havernick, vi. 287.
Hawks, ii. 19.
Hay, vi. 50.
Hazin, v. 404.
Heeren, i. 418; iv. 78, 106; vi. 133, 405.
Henderson, vi 57, 124, 147, 187, 200, 213, 283
Hendewerk, vi. 213.
Hengstenberg, i. 400, 414, 429; ii. 19, 62, 160, 218, 259; v. 23, 26, 219, 311, 370; vi. 16, 26.
Henry, M. D. J. M., i. 418, 430.
Herder, v. 201, 273, 370.
Herodotus, i. 226, 353, 388, 389, 413, 415, 428, 429, 430, 431; ii. 63, 211, 271, 284, 441; iii. 21, 132; iv. 78, 210, 247, 393, 440; v. 249; vi. 70, 81, 111, 121, 149, 168, 372.
Herrera, i. 160.
Herrick, viii. 245.
Herschel, v. 129.
Hesiod, i. 62.
Hincks, vi. 99.
Hitchcock, i. 162.
Hitzig, vi. 213.
Hodges, v. 214, 215, 216
Holden, v. 321, 365.
Hollinshed, i. 321.
Holyday, v. 356.
Homer, i. 212, 426; ii. 271; iii. 32, 133, 227, 231, 323, 359; v. 90, 115, 189, 231
Hooker, v. 269.
Horne, Bp., iv. 93; v 270.
Horne, T. H., v. 275.
Horsley, v. 270
Howes, vi. 62.
Huber, v. 347.
Huc, vi. 294; vii. 91.
Huet, ii. 205; vi. 339.
Hughes, iii. 16.
Hullmann, iii. 157.
Humboldt, i. 160, 161, 172; v. 128.
Huschke, vii. 54, 55.
Hutchinson, iv. 93.

Irby and Mangles, iv. 313; v. 183; vi. 61, 330; viii. 102.
Irenæus, vii. 124.

Jahn, iii. 152, 157; vi. 25.
Jamee, v. 403.
Jebb, v. 275, 282.
Jenour, vi. 16, 42.
Jerome, iii. 105; v. 321; vi. 22; viii. 88, 265.
Johnson, viii. 69.
Joinville, i. 73; v. 385.
Jones, J., vii. 159.
Jones, Sir W., i. 158, 159; v. 80, 437.
Josephus, i. 100, 110, 135, 174, 207, 239, 319, 353; ii. 21, 23, 26, 27, 211, 306, 342, 355, 397; iii. 57, 102, 103, 105, 110, 153, 155, 159, 171, 304, 406; iv. 50, 52, 53, 66, 76, 84, 330, 337, 374, 376, 387, 393; v. 380; vi. 20, 128, 234, 333, 334, 335, 340, 377, 430; vii. 16, 47, 49, 50, 131, 132, 151, 174, 231, 268; viii. 25, 53, 54, 56, 84, 114, 121, 153, 183, 197, 221, 231, 251, 253, 363.
Jost, i. 418; viii 115.
Journal of Sacred Literature, iii. 256; v. 165, 287; vii. 55.
Jowett, v. 355; vi. 304; viii. 91
Judith, Book of, iv. 440.
Junius Piscator, i. 377.
Justin Martyr, ii. 81; vii. 124; viii. 84.
Juvenal, viii. 257, 258.

Keble, iv. 257.
Keith, vi 331, 417, 429; viii. 89
Kellog, ii 132.
Kennicott, ii. 84.
Kirby, v. 347.
Klaproth, iv. 297.
Klopstock, v. 80.
Knobel, vi. 213.
Kohl, iii. 322.
Koran, vi. 234; vii. 25.
Krummacher, iv. 312.
Kuinöel, viii. 266.

Laborde, ii. 107, 132, 178, 204; v. 37; vi. 330.
Lane, i. 408; iii. 115; v. 335, 401; vi. 43.
Langles, vi. 213.
Larcher, iv. 210.
Lardner, vii. 55; viii. 231, 264.
Lassen, vi. 213, 348.
Lawson, v. 320.
Layard, ii. 223, 284, 437; iii. 226, 227, iv. 91, 98; v. 161; vi. 64, 67, 71, 101, 102, 103, 260, 261, 289, 320, 321, 322, 405, 423.
Leake, viii. 234.
Le Bruyn, iv. 37.
Lee, Dr S., iv. 78; v. 14, 174.
Lee, Samuel, iv. 76, 77.
Leunclavius, iii. 95.
Leuwenhoek, i. 34.
Lightfoot, ii. 197; iii. 392; viii. 25, 50, 279.

Lindenthal, i. 312.
Lindsay, vi. 330, 331.
Lithgow, v. 387.
Livy, ii. 211; iii. 249; viii. 336.
Longfellow, v. 393.
Longinus, i. 23.
Lovell, iv. 195.
Lowth, i. 111; v. 272, 274, 276, 329; vi. 22, 23, 56, 301.
Lowthian, vi. 228, 229, 230.
Lucan, iii. 89.
Lucian, i. 157; ii. 458; viii. 259.
Lucretius, v. 80.
Luther, v. 268, 270.
Lynch, i. 242, 246, 248, 390; ii. 274, 275, 276, 364.
Lyttelton, viii. 126.

Maccabees, Books of the, v. 297; vii. 200; viii. 221.
Macculoch, vi. 88.
Macrizi, ii. 54.
Macrobius, ii. 214; vii. 131.
Madden, vi. 305.
Maimonides, ii. 81, 83; iii. 96, 154; vi. 318.
Maitland, viii. 456, 458
Malcolm, v. 91; vii. 86.
Malthus, I 86.
Manasseh Ben Israel, vi. 213.
Mandelslo, v. 427.
Manetho, i. 156.
Mannert, viii. 102.
Marco Polo, v. 415.
Mariti, ii. 178; v. 382.
Marsh, viii. 264.
Martial, i. 299.
Martin, vi. 220.
Maundrell, ii. 340; iv. 37; v. 382; vi. 339.
Maurer, vi. 213.
Maurice, i. 73.
Mayer, vii 417.
Mayhew, iv. 290.
Melala, iii. 92.
Memes, ii. 141.
Mendelssohn, i. 138.
Menu, Institutes of, i. 136, 212.
Merrick, v. 270, 329
Meuschenius, viii. 115.
Midrash, The, i. 94, 109; ii. 21.
Mills, viii. 191.
Milman, vii. 84.
Milnes, i. 379, 380, 381.
Milton, i. 23, 27, 28, 33, 40, 51, 52, 55, 77; ii. 434; iv. 296, 303; vi. 232, 312, 356; vii. 24, 187; viii. 125.
Mizald, iii. 95.
Mohammed, i 341; iii. 28; iv. 84
Molyneux ii. 274.
Monod, viii. 126, 129, 131, 177, 277.
Montagu, Lady M. W., v. 421, 425.
Montague, v. 286.
Montanus, vi. 213.
Montfaucon, v. 179.
Montgomery, J., i. 35, 113.
Moor, i. 73.
More, viii. 177
Moresin, vi. 252.
Morier, i. 171.
Morison, vii. 141.
Mosaize Historie der Hebreuwse Kerke, ii. 55.
Moschus, v. 155.
Movers, iv. 302.
Munro, v. 212.
Munter, iv. 302.

Napier, Sir Charles, iv. 175.
Nau, ii. 179; vii. 141.
Neale, vi. 324, 340; viii. 102.
Neander, vii. 69, 107, 131, 182, 192, 429; viii. 84, 334.
Neitzschutz, ii. 178.
Ness, ii. 197, 230, 419, 427; iii. 17, 18, 88, 317.
Newcome, vi. 303.
Newton, Bishop, i. 179
Nichol, v. 130, 131.
Nicholson, v. 86.
Niebuhr, vi. 274, 275, 276, 392; viii 390, 409.
Norden, i. 426.
Nordheimer, v. 370. 372, 373, 376.
North, Lord, vi. 253.
Norton, viii. 85.
Notes and Queries, iii. 403; vii. 187.
Noyes, v. 174, 201, 230.

Olearius, v. 420.
Olin, ii. 107, 124, 169.
Oliver, iii. 84.
Olshausen, vii. 55, 335; viii. 265.
Olympiodorus, iii. 342.
Onesicratus, vi. 348.
Origen, vii. 124.
Orme, v. 58.
Orphans of Lissau, iii. 194
Osburn, ii. 19; iii. 222, 224; iv. 75.
Ossian, v. 125.
Otway, v. 114.
Ovid, i. 157, 158; iii. 133.

Paley, viii. 150, 162, 163, 165, 204.
Palfrey, ii. 64, 83.
Pallas, i. 72.
Parcelsus, iii. 95.
Pariset, i. 429.
Parker, i. 262, 396, 433.
Parkhurst, iv. 93.
Parrot, i. 172.
Pastoret, iii. 153, 157.
Patrick, i. 237.
Pausanias, ii. 141; iv. 208; viii. 364.
Paxton, John, v. 425.
Peddie, vi. 413.
Pennant, v. 227.
Periegetes, viii. 99.

Peters, v. 189, 190.
Petronius, viii. 364
Phelps, vi. 315.
Philo, i. 157.
Philostratus, vi. 372.
Pictorial Bible, ii. 59, 383; vi. 193, 295, 333; vii. 55.
Piscator, i. 377
Plato, i. 122, 156; v. 272.
Plautus, i. 309.
Pliny, ii. 59, 214, 446; iii. 33, 132, 179, 395; iv. 291, 297, 373; v. 179, 195, 225, 330; vi. 338; viii. 90, 258
Plutarch, i. 108; ii. 214; iii. 85, 136, 321; iv. 325; vi. 234.
Pollok, iii. 411.
Polyænus, ii. 25; vi. 170.
Porter, R. L., viii. 133, 136.
Porter, Sir R. K., v. 152; vi. 345, 347.
Postans, iii. 41, 231, 235.
Pritchard, vii. 310.
Procopius, iv. 56.
Purchas, ii. 70; v. 429; vi. 318.

Quarles, ii. 400, 406, 413, 423, 426, 427, 428, 436; iii. 352; iv. 10, 46; v. 408; vii. 168.
Quarterly Review, v. 197.
Quintus Curtius, iii. 132, 304; vi. 406.

Raleigh, iv. 81.
Rankin, v. 415.
Raphall, i. 303, 312, 432.
Rauwolff, vii. 130, 142.
Rawlinson, iv. 388; vi. 99, 103, 104, 105, 345, 377, 378, 387, 388, 390.
Ray, vii. 140
Reaumur, v. 347.
Renolds, iv, 64.
Reyher, i. 144.
Ritter, ii. 131.
Roberts, ii. 65, 319; iii. 106, 115, 193; iv. 314; vi. 246, 293, 296
Robinson, E., i. 230, 214; ii. 107, 128, 131, 304, 343, 344, 345, 347, 350; iii. 34, 36, 40; iv. 215, 256; vii. 21, 207, 248, 275, 374, 442; viii. 89.
Robinson, G., vi. 331.
Roden, Earl of, vi. 221.
Rogers, Daniel, iv. 321.
Rogers' Version, i. 350; iv. 80; v. 55, 177, 201, 257, 261.
Romaine, iv. 93.
Romauld, iv. 402.
Rosellini, ii. 14, 19.
Rosenmuller, v. 113.
Royle, i. 383; iv. 106.
Rufinus, iv. 246.
Rüppell, v. 247.
Russell, ii. 293; iv. 396; v. 386, 432.

Sallust, viii. 258, 451.
Salvador, iii. 157.
Samaritan Pentateuch, i. 92.
Sanchoniatho, i. 103, 117; vi. 219
Sanctius, vi. 22.
Sandy, vi. 339.
Saunders, vii. 24.
Saurin, i. 85.
Scheffer, vi. 220.
Schleiermacher, vii. 191.
Schwartz, vi. 277.
Scott, T., v. 171, 212, 221.
Scott, Thomas, ii. 119; viii. 244, 422.
Scott, Sir Walter, i. 321; iii. 322.
Seaton, ii. 299.
Seetzen, vi. 330.
Seneca, viii. 259, 379.
Septuagint, i. 92, 346; ii. 341; iii. 156, 309; v. 97, 201, 224, 261, 288, 300, 302, 337.
Servius, viii. 258.
Seymer, iii. 298.
Shakspere, v. 51, 114, 125, 139; vi. 252
Shaw, vi. 393.
Shickard, iii. 156, 157.
Shuckford, i. 110.
Silliman, v. 141.
Simpson, iii. 303.
Smith, C. H., iii. 225, 302; vi. 403.
Smith, George, i. 162; ii 89, 100, 239; iv. 97.
Smith, James, viii. 436, 439, 444.
Smith, J. Pye, i. 150.
Snelgrave, iv. 305.
Solin, ii. 214.
Sophocles, iv. 264.
Southey, ii. 72, 104; v. 126.
Sozomen, vii. 144.
Spence, v. 347.
Spenser, i. 426; v. 113; vi. 48, 54.
Stowe, v. 405, 408, 409, 426, 433.
Strabo, i. 430; ii. 281; iv. 78, 291 v. 250; viii. 99, 112, 263.
Suetonius, vii. 53; viii. 100, 260, 375. 453.
Sumner, viii. 43, 343.

Tacitus, i. 385; ii. 446; vii. 53; viii. 196, 230.
Talmud, The, iii. 102, 154; v. 13, 244, 298, 299; vi. 29, 30, 274; vii. 109, 202; viii. 51, 97, 113, 189.
Targums, i. 94; ii. 118, 301; iii. 33; v. 405; vii. 109.
Tasker, vi. 345.
Tasso, v. 385.
Tavernier, v. 334.
Taylor, A., i. 221.
Taylor, C., vi. 341.
Taylor, Jeremy, vii. 66, 104, 130, 131, 138, 167.
Tennent, Emerson, iv. 250; vi. 222, viii. 341.
Tertullian, i. 107; iv. 304; vii. 113, 124.

Thatcher, i 161.
Theocritus, iii. 33; v. 417; vi. 310.
Theodoret, i. 137.
Theophrastus, iv. 79.
Thersites, ii. 211.
Thiersch, viii. 303, 307.
Tholuck, vii. 368; viii. 115, 257.
Thompson, H., iii. 219, 252.
Thomson, Dr J., vii. 185, 199.
Thomson, James, i. 45.
Thomson, W. M., vi. 432.
Thuanus, iii. 214.
Thucydides, ii. 211.
Tibullus, iii. 89.
Tipping, iv. 53.
Tischendorff, vii. 29, 57.
Tobit, Book of, vi. 251; vii. 23, 24.
Traill, iv. 52, 53.
Tremellius, iv. 80.
Trench, vii. 383.
Tuch, v. 184.
Turner, Samuel, i. 288, 376.
Turner, Sharon, i. 36, 162.
Tweedie, vi. 415.
Tyndale's Translation, iii. 309.
Tytler, v. 197.

Umbreit, v. 201; vi. 213.
United Presbyterian Missionary Record, iv. 180, 307.
Upham, i. 16, 73.
Urquhart, ii. 388, 423; iii. 35, 45; vi. 283, 315.
Ussher, viii. 56.

Van Dyck, v. 165.
Van Egmond and Heyman, v. 413, 414.
Varthema, vi. 275.
Vartomanus, v. 226.
Vatablus, vi. 131.
Venillot, vii. 136.
Virgil, iii. 132, 313; v. 231; vi. 249; vii. 119.
Volney, ii. 379; vi. 339.
Vulgate, ii. 341; iii. 156, 309; iv. 411 v. 228, 261, 291, 337.

Waddell, iv. 307.
Waller, v. 51.
Warburton, Bp., i. 429; v. 17, 58
Warburton, E., vii. 310
Wardlaw, v. 370, 395.
Waring, v. 403, 435.
Watson, vi. 16.
Watts, v. 408.
Weil, i. 93.
Wemyss, v. 174, 201.
Werner, iv. 33.
Wesley, i. 325.
Whitney, vi. 165.
Whittier, iv. 130.
Wilde, vi. 336.
Wilkinson, i. 368, 374, 375, 381, 388, 389, 397, 399, 400, 412, 413, 416, 421, 422; ii. 60.
Willet, iii. 76; vi. 361.
William of Tyre, i. 206; vi. 235.
Williams, viii. 241.
Wilson, Dr John, ii. 122.
Wilson, Horace, i. 73.
Wilson, Thomas, vii. 123.
Winer, vi. 213.
Wisdom, Book of, i. 239; v. 367.
Withers, v. 355.
Wolff, vi. 276.
Worthington, v. 18.

Xenophon, iii. 230, 257; vi. 120, 123, 150, 155, 159, 184, 190, 192, 201, 367.

Yates, vii. 143.
Young, i. 69; iii. 351; v. 100, 150, 221.

Zendavesta, i. 75.
Zonaras, ii. 281; iii. 95.
Zuallart, v. 383.

III. PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED

As the contents of the Volumes follow the order of the Scripture History, and can thus be readily referred to, only such passages are inserted in the following Index, as are out of their natural order, or are incidentally illustrated.

GENESIS.

Chap.	Ver.	Vol.	Page
i.	7.	i.	26
i.	9.	i.	27
i.	26.	i.	41
iii.	15.	i.	59
iv.	7.	i.	91
iv.	24.	ii.	272
iv.	25.	v.	261
v.	29.	v.	261
vi.	6.	ii.	325
vi.	9.	v.	43
vii.	4.	ii.	272
ix.	3.	i.	45
ix.	4.	i.	411
ix.	6.	i.	41
x.	7.	v.	66
x.	13, 14.	ii.	438
x.	17.	vi.	209
x.	23.	v.	33
x.	28.	v.	66
xii.	5.	viii.	166
xii.	7.	ii.	256
xii.	7, 8.	iv.	162
xii.	16.	v.	32
xiii.	5.	i.	199
xiii.	10.	i.	245
xiii.	14, 15.	ii.	256
xiii.	17.	ii.	256
xiii.	18.	i.	261
xiv.	16.	viii.	166
xv.	2.	ii.	44
xv.	13-16.	ii.	256
xv.	15.	i.	292
xvi.	12.	v.	150
xvii.	12.	i.	215
xviii.	4.	i.	414
xviii.	4-8.	i.	199
xviii.	17.	v.	201
xxi.	6.	i.	233
xxi.	16.	iv.	294
xxi.	31.	ii.	270
xxi.	33.	iv.	162
xxii.	2.	iv.	162
xxii.	3.	v.	66
xxii.	4.	iv.	162
xxii.	14.	ii.	46
xxii.	21.	v.	33
xxiv.	67.	i.	199
xxv.	3.	v.	67
xxviii.	18.	vi.	219
xxviii.	22.	vi.	219
xxix.	14, 15.	i.	230
xxix.	15.	viii.	166
xxxi.	33	i.	199
xxxi.	34, 35.	i.	199
xxxi	39.	vi.	398
xxxi.	47, 48.	ii.	313
xxxi.	54.	iv.	162
xxxii.	30.	vii.	190
xxxii.	32.	iii.	88
xxxiii.	17.	i.	195
xxxiii.	19.	v.	257
xxxvi.	28.	v.	33
xxxviii.		iii.	42
xxxix.	14.	i.	418
xl.	15.	i.	346
xl.	15.	i.	418
xli.	8.	i.	340
xli.	12	i.	418
xli.	14.	i.	356
xli.	45.	i.	344
xli.	48.	ii.	307
xlii.	15.	viii.	169
xlii.	23.	i.	250
xliii.	3.	viii.	169
xliii.	32.	i.	418
xlv.	22.	i.	389
xlvii.	23.	i.	217
xlix.	3, 4.	i.	290
xlix.	27.	ii.	460
l.	10.	ii.	272

EXODUS.

Ch.	Ver.	Vol.	Page
i.	10.	i.	418
i.	16.	i.	418
ii.	5-7.	i.	353
iii.	18.	i.	418
v.	7-16.	ii.	16
v.	12.	ii.	17
vii.	5.	ii.	46
vii.	17.	ii.	46
viii.	21, 22.	ii.	59
viii.	26.	i.	390
xii.	9, 10.	ii.	83
xii.	38.	ii.	159
xiii.	18.	ii.	90
xiv.	2.	iv.	208
xiv.	6, 7.	ii.	94
xvi.	31.	ii.	112
xix.	12.	iii.	102
xx.	4.	iv.	83
xxii.	13.	vi.	398
xxii.	30.	ii.	272
xxv.	18-22.	iv.	83
xxvi.	31 37.	i.	199
xxix.	37.	ii.	272
xxx.	11-16.	vii.	345
xxx.	12.	i.	376
xxxiv.	13.	i.	258
xxxiv.	13.	iv.	162
xxxiv.	16.	iv.	427
xxxv.	26.	i.	198
xxxvi	8.	iii.	102
xxxvi	19.	iii.	102
xxxvi	34.	iii.	102
xxxviii.	8.	iv.	80

LEVITICUS.

iv.	32-35.	vii.	203
vii.	26, 27.	i.	411
x.		ii.	148

	Vol.	Page
Ch. xi Ver. 5.	v.	351
xiii. . .	v.	85
xiii. 44-46. .	v.	91
xvi. 8. . .	ii.	282
xvi. 22. . .	vi.	34
xvii. 10. . .	viii.	199
xvii. 12, 13. .	viii.	199
xviii. 24, 25. .	ii.	258
xix. 28. . .	iv.	246
xix. 33, 34. .	viii	199
xx. 2-5. . .	i.	265
xxi. 5. . .	v.	78
xxiii. 42. .	i.	195
xxiv. . .	ii.	159

NUMBERS.

i. 49. . .	i.	376
iv. 4-15. .	iii.	97
vi. . . .	ii.	400
vii. 3-9. . .	iii.	97
xi. 4. . .	ii.	159
xi. 8. . .	ii.	112
xi. 32. . .	ii.	111
xii. 1. . .	ii.	26
xii. 10. . .	v.	85
xii. 14. . .	v.	91
xx. 5. . .	i.	366
xxii. 21. . .	v.	66
xxii. 22. . .	v.	63
xxii. 19. .	ii.	325
xxiii. 29. .	ii.	271
xxiv. 4. . .	vi.	16
xxiv. 16. .	vi.	16
xxiv. 17. .	vii.	117
xxv. . .	viii.	299
xxx. 6-8. .	iii.	56
xxxiv. 11. .	viii.	221

DEUTERONOMY.

i. 22. . .	ii.	176
ii. 6. . .	ii.	206
ii. 9. . .	ii.	213
iii. . . .	ii.	206
iii. 11. . .	ii.	209
iv. 2. . .	vi.	13
vii. 3. . .	iv.	427
vii. 5. . .	iv.	162
vii. 5. . .	vi.	219
vii. 22. . .	ii.	406
viii. 15. . .	ii.	203
ix. 1, 2. . .	ii.	182
xi. 13-15. .	vi.	227
xii. 2, 3. . .	iv.	162
xii. 3. . .	vi.	219
xii. 13. . .	i.	258
xii. 30, 31. .	ii.	258
xiii. 1. . .	vi.	13
xiv. 1. . .	v.	78

Ch. xiv. Ver. 7.	v.	351
xv. 23. . .	i.	411
xvi. 21. . .	iv.	162
xvii. 14-20. .	iii.	151
xvii. 15. . .	vii.	273
xvii. 16. . .	i.	194
xviii. 18, 19. .	vi.	13
xix. 3. . .	iii.	164
xx. 10-14. .	ii.	251
xx. 15-17. .	ii.	252
xx. 19, 20. .	vi.	233
xxi. 17. . .	i.	290
xxi. 22, 23 .	i.	375
xxii. 28, 24. .	vii.	44
xxiv. i. . .	vii.	45
xxiv. 16. .	iv.	367
xxv 4. . .	iii.	38
xxv. 5-10. .	iii.	45
xxv. 17, 18. .	ii.	116
xxviii. 53-57. .	iv.	330
xxix. 11. .	ii.	159
xxxii. 2. .	iv.	289
xxxii. 11, 12. .	iii.	31
xxxii. 13. .	ii.	407
xxxii. 29. .	vi.	267
xxxii. 30. .	vi.	219
xxxii. 37. .	vi.	219
xxxiii. 17. .	v.	224
xxxiv. . .	ii.	238

JOSHUA.

ii. 9-11. . .	ii.	100
iii. 15. . .	ii.	278
iv. 5-9. . .	vi.	219
iv. 6, 7. . .	ii.	312
v. i. . .	ii.	250
ix. 24. . .	ii.	252
x. . . .	i.	204
x. 4, 5. . .	iii.	172
x. 13. . .	iii.	102
x. 24. . .	vi.	262
xi. 4. . .	iii.	172
xi. 8. . .	iv.	80
xv. 55. . .	vii.	21
xviii. 23. .	vii.	374
xix. 29. . .	vi.	333
xxi. 16. . .	vii.	21
xxiv. 2. . .	i.	179
xxiv. 26. .	i.	334
xxiv. 26. .	vi.	219
xxiv. 26, 27. .	ii.	313

JUDGES.

i. 26. . .	iv.	113
v. . . .	v.	284
v. 28. . .	ii.	336
v. 28 30. .	v.	223
vi. i. . .	ii.	273

Ch viii. Ver. 19.	viii.	169
viii. 20. . .	iv.	284
xiv. 12, 13. .	vi.	57
xix. 15. . .	vii.	60
xx. 10. . .	iii.	164
xx. 26, 27. .	i.	304
xx. 47. . .	vii.	374

RUTH.

i. 2. . .	iii.	13
i. 3-18. . .	iii.	19
ii. i-4. . .	iii.	24
ii. 5-14. . .	iii.	29
ii. 17.-iii. 2. .	iii.	35
iii. . . .	iii.	41
iv. . . .	iii	41
iv. 1. . .	i.	270
iv. 13-22. .	iii.	47

I. SAMUEL.

ii. 4, 5. . .	v.	279
iv. 7.-v. 2. .	ii.	40
iv. 8. . .	ii.	100
vii 16. . .	i.	304
x. 3. . .	i.	304
x. 5. . .	v.	296
x. 6, 7 . .	iii	149
x. 20, 21. .	ii.	282
xi. 7. . .	ii.	458
xii. 17, 18. .	iii.	37
xiii. 17. . .	vii.	374
xiii. 20, 21. .	ii.	342
xiv. 25-27. .	ii.	407
xiv. 40-42. .	ii.	282
xv. 35. . .	ii.	325
xvi 6, 7. .	iii.	131
xvi. 16. . .	vi.	29
xvii. 34. .	ii.	405
xix. 24. . .	vi.	16
xxii. 7. . .	iii.	433
xxxi. 11-13. .	iii.	310
xxxi. 13. .	ii.	272

II. SAMUEL.

i 24. . .	vi.	35
ii. 18. . .	iii.	166
v 20. . .	iii.	358
vi. 6. . .	iii.	98
ix. 4. . .	iii.	392
xii. 18. . .	ii.	273
xii. 26, 27. .	vi.	82
xv. 1. . .	iii.	166
xv. 25, 26. .	iii.	76
xvii. 27-29. .	iii.	392
xviii. 18. .	i.	208
xviii. 19-31. .	iii.	166

	Vol.	Page
Ch. xix. Ver. 27.	viii.	327
xxi.	iii.	433
xxii. 41.	vi.	262
xxiii.	ii.	299
xxiii. 20.	ii.	405
xxiii. 24.	iii.	102
xxiv.	iii.	433
xxiv. 13.	ii.	273
xxiv. 16.	ii.	325
xxiv. 22.	iii.	38

I. KINGS.

i. 1-11.	iii.	439
ii.	i.	348
ii. 38, 39.	viii.	149
iv. 31.	v.	302
iv. 34.	v.	368
v. 3.	iii.	361
vi. 7.	iv.	50
ix. 20.	iv.	113
x. 14.	iv.	67
xi. 5.	ii.	62
xi. 7.	ii.	62
xi. 14-21.	iii.	372
xiii. 24.	ii.	405
xiv. 3.	ii.	289
xiv. 15.	i.	258
xiv. 31.	iii.	153
xv. 2.	iii.	153
xvi. 34.	ii.	280
xviii. 28.	ii.	154
xix. 15-21.	iv.	272
xx. 23.	ii.	40
xx. 28.	ii.	40
xxi. 10-13.	v.	53
xxii. 17-23.	v.	57
xxii. 22, 23.	v.	63
xxii. 26, 27.	i.	348

II. KINGS.

i. 2.	iv.	208
iv. 1.	i.	217
v. 10.	ii.	272
v. 14.	ii.	272
v. 27.	v.	85
vii. 6.	iv.	113
viii. 11.	iv.	349
viii. 26.	iii.	153
ix. 4.	iv.	284
x. 24, 25.	i.	348
xi.	iii.	153
xi. 14.	ii.	387
xiii. 7.	iii.	38
xiv. 25-27.	vi.	399
xvii. 25.	iii.	102
xvii. 25, 26.	ii.	406
xviii. 2.	iii.	153
xviii. 4.	i.	258

	Vol.	Page
Ch. xviii. Ver. 4.	ii.	206
xix. 28.	v.	244
xix. 37.	i.	169
xxiii. 13.	ii.	62
xxiii. 14.	i.	258
xxiii. 24.	iii.	243
xxiii. 30.	iv.	407
xxiv. 15.	vi.	285
xxv.	i.	348
xxv. 6	viii.	221
xxv. 7.	ii.	437
xxv. 27.	i.	377

I. CHRONICLES.

i. 15.	vi.	209
ii. 34, 35.	i.	214
ii. 55.	vi.	270
iv. 9, 10.	iii.	18
v. 1, 2.	i.	290
vi. 33-44.	v.	302
viii. 34, 35.	iii.	437
x. 12.	ii.	272
xi.	iii.	299
xi. 22.	ii.	405
xii. 1-22.	iii.	290
xiv. 11.	iii.	358
xv.	iii.	343
xviii. 12, 13.	iii.	372
xxi. 1.	iii.	438
xxi. 15.	ii.	325
xxii. 3.	iv.	32
xxiii. 9.	ii.	351
xxiv. 5.	ii.	282
xxiv. 7.	ii.	282
xxvii. 4.	ii.	351
xxviii.	iii.	439
xxviii. 3.	iii.	361
xxix.	iii.	439
xxix. 2.	iv.	32

II. CHRONICLES.

ii.	iv.	29
ii. 8, 9.	iv.	34
ii. 10.	iv.	40
ii. 15-18.	iv.	40
iii.	iv.	57
iii. 8.	iv.	67
iv.	iv.	57
vii. 9.	ii.	272
ix. 29.	iii.	139
ix. 29.	iv.	152
xii. 2-12.	iv.	166
xii. 15.	iv.	152
xiii. 1-20.	iv.	171
xiii. 19.	vii.	374
xiii. 22.	iv.	153
xiv. 3.	i.	258
xiv. 4-15.	iv.	181

	Vol.	Page
Ch. xiv. Ver. 11.	iv.	190
xv. 11.	ii.	271
xvi. 7-10.	iv.	185
xvi. 12.	iv.	193
xvi. 12.	vi.	29
xvii. 6.	i.	258
xix. 3.	i.	258
xxii. 10.	iv.	353
xxiii. 1-15.	iv.	357
xxiv.	iv.	362
xxv.	iv.	367
xxvi.	iv.	372
xxvi. 21.	v.	91
xxvi. 22.	vi.	19
xxviii.	iv.	376
xxix. 21.	ii.	271
xxxi. 1.	i.	258
xxxii.	iv.	387
xxxii.	iv.	392
xxxii. 32.	vi.	19
xxxiv.	iv.	402
xxxiv. 3.	i.	258
xxxv.	iv.	402
xxxvi.	iv.	411
xxxvi. 1.	iv.	407
xxxvi. 1-10.	iv.	406
xxxvi. 13-16.	iv.	416
xxxvi. 17.	vi.	261
xxxvi. 21.	vi.	226

EZRA.

i.-iii.	iv.	419
iii. 6, 7.	vi.	340
vi. 11.	i.	375
vi. 11.	vi.	367
vii.-x.	iv.	425
viii. 33.	ii.	351
ix. 1, 2.	iii.	20

NEHEMIAH.

i.-v.	iv.	428
v. 1-5.	i.	217
v.-xiii.	iv.	433
viii. 14-17.	i.	195
xiii. 15-19.	vii.	284
xiii. 23, 25, 26.	iii.	20

ESTHER.

i.	iv.	438
i. 6.	ii.	211
i. 6.	v.	337
ii.	iv.	438
iii.-x.	iv.	443
iv. 2.	i.	387
vi.	i.	395
vi. 8-11.	i.	401
vii. 9, 10.	i.	375

JOB.

	Vol.	Page
Ch. i. Ver. 5.	v.	31
i. 14, 15.	v.	37
i. 17.	v.	37
ii. 8.	v.	86
iii. 8.	v.	245
iii. 9.	v.	37
iv. 19.	i.	106
v. 19.	ii.	273
v. 22.	i.	233
vii. 5.	v.	86
vii. 7.	iii.	410
vii. 9, 10.	iii.	410
vii. 13-15.	v.	86
vii. 20.	v.	42
ix. 9.	v.	132
ix. 20.	v.	42
xiv. 10-12.	iii.	410
xvi. 8.	v.	86
xvii. 6.	v.	211
xviii. 17.	v.	190
xix. 17.	v.	86
xix. 24.	v.	190
xx. 9.	iii.	410
xx. 24.	v.	37
xxii. 25.	v.	37
xxiv. 8.	i.	199
xxiv. 8.	v.	36
xxiv. 11.	v.	36
xxiv. 16.	i.	106
xxvi. 7.	iii.	62
xxvi. 8.	v.	36
xxviii. 1, 2.	v.	36
xxviii. 2.	v.	37
xxviii. 6.	v.	37
xxviii. 19.	v.	37
xxix. 24.	i.	233
xxx. 17.	v.	86
xxxi. 26, 27.	v.	37
xxxiii. 14-17.	i.	337
xxxvii. 6-10.	v.	37
xxxviii. 4-6.	iii.	64
xxxviii. 22.	v.	37
xxxviii. 30-32.	v.	37
xxxviii. 31.	v.	132
xxxix. 5.	v.	150
xxxix. 30.	vi.	102
xlii. 6.	v.	42
xlii. 6.	v.	89
xlii. 8.	v.	31

PSALMS.

i. 1.	v.	277
ii. 4.	i.	233
iv.	v.	293
vi.	v.	293
vii.	iii.	282
viii.	v.	295
xv. 5.	v.	281

	Vol.	Page
Ch. xviii. Ver. 4.	iii.	358
xviii. 7.	iii.	65
xviii. 16.	iii.	65
xviii. 20.	v.	282
xviii. 40.	vi.	262
xix. 5.	ii.	358
xix. 13.	viii.	43
xx. 7, 8.	v.	279
xxi. 1, 2.	v.	276
xxiv.	iii.	349
xxv.	v.	285
xxv. 14.	v.	201
xxx. 5.	v.	279
xxxiii. 2.	v.	294
xxxiv.	v.	285
xxxvii.	v.	285
xxxvii. 10, 11.	v.	281
xlv.	vi	215
xlix. 8.	ii.	437
li. 1.	v.	283
liii.	v.	295
liv.	v.	293
lv.	v.	293
lxix. 12.	v.	211
lxxii. 6.	iv.	289
lxxii. 8.	iii.	66
lxxvi.	v.	293
lxxvi. 2.	i.	208
lxxxi.	v.	295
lxxxiv.	v.	295
lxxxiv. 7.	vii.	163
lxxxviii.	v.	295
lxxxviii. 17.	iii.	358
xcii. 3.	v.	294
xcii. 10.	v.	224
xciii. 3.	iii.	358
civ. 6-9.	i.	28
civ. 18.	v.	351
civ. 25.	v.	246
cv. 18.	i.	357
cvi. 38.	iv.	303
cx. 4.	i.	207
cxi.	v.	285
cxii.	v.	285
cxix.	v.	285
cxix.	v.	304
cxxi.	v.	284
cxxiii. 1, 2.	v.	282
cxxiii. 2.	v.	353
cxxvii. 1, 2.	i.	190
cxxxv. 15-18.	v.	283
cxxxvi 6.	iii.	64
cxxxvi. 6.	iii.	66
cxliv. 9.	v.	294
cxlv.	v.	285

PROVERBS.

i. 8.	v.	277
iv. 18.	ii.	358
vi. 6-8.	v.	344

	Vol.	Page
Ch. vi. Ver. 13.	v.	353
vi. 16-19.	ii.	273
ix. 2, 3.	v.	328
x. 1.	v.	278
x. 7.	v.	279
xii. 19.	v.	278
xiii. 7.	v.	280
xiii. 10.	v.	280
xiv. 11.	v.	279
xv. 17.	v.	341
xviii. 18.	ii.	282
xix. 21.	i.	187
xix. 24.	v.	331
xxiii. 2.	v.	332
xxiii. 20.	v.	343
xxiii. 30.	v.	331
xxv. 11.	v.	337
xxv. 13.	v.	335
xxv. 27.	v.	336
xxvii. 6.	v.	278
xxx. 2.	iii.	379
xxx. 17.	iv.	218
xxx. 17.	v.	350
xxx. 17.	vi.	102
xxx. 25.	v.	344
xxx. 26.	v.	350
xxxi. 10-31.	v.	285
xxxi. 10-31.	v.	358
xxxi. 22.	vi.	53

ECCLESIASTES.

i. 1.	v.	365
ii. 5, 6.	v.	380
iii. 4.	i.	233
iv. 14.	iv.	140
v. 3.	i.	338
viii. 11.	viii.	43
x. 20.	v.	384
xii. 1-5.	v.	388
xii 6.	v.	394
xii. 9.	v.	368

SONG OF SOLOMON.

i. 1-6.	v.	412
i. 5.	i.	198
i. 5.	v.	280
i. 9-11.	v.	416
iii. 6-11.	v	425
iv 1-vi. 3	v.	430
iv. 3.	vi.	36
iv. 12.	v.	381
vi.-viii.	v.	434

ISAIAH.

i. 2, 3.	vi.	48
iii 12.	iii.	154

Ch. iii. Ver. 24.	Vol. Page vi. 58
v. 11.	v. 334
v. 12.	v. 265
v. 20.	v. 281
v. 22.	v. 329
v. 26.	iii. 166
vii.	iv. 382
vii. 3.	vi. 18
vii. 19.	vi. 234
viii. 1.	vi. 18
viii. 3, 4.	vi. 18
x. 5, 6.	vi. 97
xiii.	vi. 176
xiii. 17.	vi. 181
xiv. 13.	v. 193
xvi. 10.	v. 295
xxi.	vi. 187
xxii. 12.	v. 79
xxiii.	vi. 334
xxiii. 2.	vi. 333
xxiii. 18.	vi. 340
xxvi. 5, 6.	v. 284
xxvi. 16.	vi. 86
xxvii. 1.	v. 245
xxviii. 27.	ii. 366
xxviii. 27.	vi. 397
xxx. 29.	v. 297
xxxiii. 8.	ii. 343
xxxiv. 7.	v. 228
xxxvi.	iv. 387
xxxvii. 33.	i. 169
xxxviii.	iv. 392
xxxviii.	iv. 397
xxxix.	vi. 19
xl. 3.	vii. 12
xl. 21.	iii. 64
xli.	vi. 156
xli. 2.	vi. 122
xli. 15.	vi. 397
xli. 18.	iv. 289
xlii. 9.	vi. 162
xliv. 3.	iv. 289
xliv. 23.–xlv. 3.	vi. 166
xliv. 23.–xlv. 3.	vi. 170
xlv.	vi. 194
xlv. 1.	vi. 122
xlvi.	vi. 194
xlvi. 1, 2.	iii. 85
xlvi. 11.	vi. 122
xlvi. 11.	vi. 246
xlvii. 2.	ii. 439
xlix. 11, 12.	vi. 207
xlix. 23.	vi. 203
l. 1.	iv. 310
li. 6.	v. 281
liii. 2.	vi. 213
liv. 7, 8.	v. 280
lv. 6, 7.	v. 276
lvii. 6.	vi. 218
lxi. 1.	vii. 246
lxi. 3.	v. 89
lxv. 13.	v. 280

Ch. lxv. Ver. 14.	Vol. Page v. 280
lxvi. 17.	i. 261

JEREMIAH.

i. 15.	vi. 263
ii. 24.	v. 150
ii. 28.	iv. 163
vii. 12.	iii. 103
vii. 14.	iii. 103
vii. 22, 23.	ii. 46
vii. 31.	iv. 303
x. 20.	iii. 57
x. 23.	i. 190
xiii.	vii. 190
xv. 10.	vi. 225
xvii. 16, 17.	vi. 225
xvii. 21, 22.	vii. 284
xx. 9.	iv. 213
xx. 9–11.	vi. 225
xx. 14, 15.	vi. 225
xx. 18.	vi. 225
xxii. 11.	iv. 407
xxvi. 2.	vi. 226
xxvi. 3.	ii. 325
xxvi. 6.	iii. 103
xxvi. 9.	iii. 103
xxvi. 13.	ii. 325
xxvi. 19.	ii. 325
xxvii 3.	vi. 334
xxix. 1-3.	vi. 285
xxix. 22.	vi. 373
xxxi. 37.	iii. 64
xxxiv. 18.	i. 211
xxxix. 8.	vi. 261
xli. 5.	ii. 152
xliii. 9, 10.	vi. 263
xlvi. 11.	iv. 196
xlvii. 4.	vi. 334
xlvii. 5.	vi. 426
xlviii 7.	iii. 85
xlviii. 13.	iii. 85
xlix. 19.	ii. 278
xlix. 19.	ii. 405
l.	vi. 194
l. 2.	iii. 166
l. 41, 42.	vi. 243
li.	vi. 194
li. 27.	i. 169

LAMENTATIONS.

i.	v. 285
ii.	v. 285
ii. 21.	vi. 261
iii.	v. 285
iii. 14.	v. 211
iii. 55-57.	vi. 226
iv.	v. 285
iv. 21.	v. 33

Ch. v. Ver. 12.	Vol. Page vi. 245
v. 13.	ii. 439

EZEKIEL.

i.	iv. 85
i. 4.	v. 194
i. 27.	v. 282
iii. 24.	vi. 285
v. 10.	iv. 330
viii. 1.	vi. 285
viii. 1.	vi. 286
x.	iv. 85
xi. 25.	vi. 286
xiv. 1.	vi. 286
xvi. 20.	iv. 303
xx. 1.	vi. 286
xxiii. 37.	iv. 303
xxiv. 18.	vi. 285
xxiv. 18.	vi. 286
xxvii. 20.	vi. 76
xxviii. 22.	ii. 46
xxix. 17.	vi. 285
xxxi. 3-9.	iv. 35
xxxiii. 31, 32.	vi. 286
xxxix. 15.	vi. 248
xl. 2.	vii. 190

DANIEL.

i.	vi. 349
i. 7.	i. 344
i. 8–15.	vi. 357
i. 19, 20.	vi. 361
i. 20.	vi. 354
ii.	vi. 365
ii. 2.	i. 340
iii.	vi. 370
iii. 29.	vi. 367
iv.	vi. 374
iv. 7.	i. 340
iv. 32.	ii. 273
viii. 2.	vi. 378
ix. 21-27.	vii. 22
x.	vii. 23
xi. 8.	iii. 85

HOSEA.

ii.	vi. 383
ii. 16.	iv. 208
vii. 11.	vi. 386
xiii. 11.	iii. 126
xiii. 14.	v. 282
xiv. 3.	vi. 69

JOEL.

i.	vi. 390
ii.	vi. 390

	Vol. Page
Ch. ii. Ver. 28.	i. 338
iii. 3. . .	vi. 261

AMOS.

i. 1. . .	iv. 375
i. 1. . .	vi. 395
i. 1. . .	vi. 430
i. 2, 3. . .	vi. 397
i. 7. . .	vi. 426
ii. 9. . .	ii. 182
ii. 13. . .	vi. 397
iii. 12. . .	vi. 398
iv. 9. . .	vi. 399
iv. 11. . .	iv. 375
v. 19. . .	vi. 399
vi. 5. . .	v. 265
vii. 1. . .	vi. 399
vii. 14, 15. .	vi. 395
ix. 3. . .	iv. 217
ix. 13. . .	vi. 399

JONAH.

i. . . .	vi. 399
ii. 6. . .	iii. 65
iii. . . .	vi. 408
iii. 3. . .	vi. 404
iii. 6. . .	v. 89
iii. 10. . .	ii. 325
iv. . . .	vi. 412

MICAH.

i. 6. . .	vi. 416
i. 16. . .	v. 79
i. 16. . .	vi. 102
iii. 12. . .	vi. 416
v. 2. . .	vii. 121
vi. 7. . .	iv. 299
vi. 16. . .	iv. 201

NAHUM.

i.-iii. . .	vi. 419
i. 10. . .	vi. 422
iii. 3. . .	vi. 72
iii. 13. . .	vi. 422
iii. 15. . .	vi. 422

HABAKKUK.

i.-iii. . .	vi. 423
i. 6-11. . .	vi. 425
i. 8. . .	vi. 71
ii. 2. . .	iii. 165
ii. 6-17. . .	vi. 425

	Vol. Page
Ch. iii. Ver. 3-15.	vi. 425
iii. 17, 18. .	vi. 425
iii. 19. . .	vi. 425

ZEPHANIAH.

i. 9. . .	iii. 88
ii. 4. . .	vi. 426

ZECHARIAH.

iii. 3, 4. . .	vi. 52
vi. 1-8. . .	v. 194
ix. 5. . .	vi. 426
ix. 16. . .	iii. 166
xiv. 5. . .	iv. 375
xiv. 5. . .	vi. 430
xiv. 20. . .	vi. 73

MALACHI.

i. 3, 4. . .	vi. 436
iii. 1. . .	vii. 12
iv. 5. . .	vii. 12

MATTHEW.

i. 1-17. . .	vii. 76
i. 18-25. . .	vii. 42
ii. 1. . .	vii. 94
ii. 1, 2. . .	vii. 112
ii. 3-12. . .	vii. 119
ii. 8. . .	vii. 134
ii. 13. . .	vii. 124
ii. 13, 14. .	vii. 138
ii. 15. . .	vii. 145
ii. 16-18. .	vii. 129
ii. 19-21. .	vii. 148
ii. 22, 23. .	vii. 152
iii. 1-12. .	vii. 177
iii. 4. . .	vii. 171
iii. 11. . .	viii. 18
iii. 13-17. .	vii. 181
iv. 1-3. . .	vii. 186
iv. 3-11. . .	vii. 192
iv. 11. . .	vii. 278
iv. 12. . .	vii. 128
iv. 13-16. .	vii. 244
iv. 18-22. .	vii. 248
v.-vii. . .	vii. 288
v. 5. . .	vii. 52
v. 43, 44. .	iv. 20
viii. 2-4. .	vii. 260
viii. 5-13. .	vii. 291
viii. 14. . .	viii. 13
viii. 14-17. .	vii. 257
viii. 18-34. .	vii. 308
ix. 2-8. . .	vii. 268

	Vol. Page
Ch. ix. Ver. 9.	vii. 272
ix. 15. . .	ii. 409
ix. 18-x. 42. .	vii. 318
ix. 21, 22. .	viii. 45
ix. 23. . .	v. 297
x. . . .	vii. 288
xi. 2-19. .	vii. 296
xi. 21. . .	v. 89
xii. 1-14. .	vii. 283
xii. 22-xiii. 53.	vii. 304
xii. 40. . .	vi. 402
xii. 46. . .	viii. 166
xii. 46. . .	viii. 168
xiii. 44-46. .	vii. 314
xiii. 55, 56. .	viii. 166
xiii. 55, 56. .	viii. 168
xiv. 1-4. .	vii. 228
xiv. 6-12. .	vii. 318
xiv. 13-36. .	vii. 326
xv. 21-xvi. 12.	vii. 332
xvi. 13-xvii. 21.	vii. 338
xvii. 22-xviii.	vii. 343
xviii. 10. .	vii. 278
xviii. 17. .	vii. 273
xviii. 25. .	i. 217
xx. 17-34. .	vii. 391
xxi. 1-17. .	vii. 387
xxi. 12-xxii. 14.	vii. 393
xxii. 15-46. .	vii. 399
xxii. 19. . .	vii. 48
xxii. 32. . .	iii. 411
xxii. 35-40. .	i. 43
xxiv. 3. . .	vii. 128
xxiv. 31. . .	iii. 66
xxiv. 32. . .	vii. 395
xxiv. 38, 39. .	i. 145
xxv. . . .	vii. 399
xxvi. . . .	i. 348
xxvi. 1-16. .	vii. 405
xxvi. 17-46. .	vii. 411
xxvi. 32. . .	vii. 448
xxvi. 47-75. .	vii. 418
xxvii. . . .	i. 348
xxvii. 1-31. .	vii. 425
xxvii. 5. . .	i. 375
xxvii. 19. . .	i. 340
xxvii. 32-66. .	vii. 434
xxviii. . . .	vii. 442

MARK.

i. 1-8. . .	vii. 177
i. 9-11. . .	vii. 181
i. 12, 13. . .	vii. 186
i. 14. . .	vii. 128
i. 14. . .	vii. 228
i. 16-20. . .	vii. 248
i. 21, 22. . .	vii. 254
i. 23-34. . .	vii. 257
i. 35-45. . .	vii. 260
ii. 1-4. . .	vii. 264

	Vol.	Page
Ch. ii. Ver. 4–12.	vii.	268
ii. 14, 15.	vii.	272
ii. 22.	ii.	287
ii. 23–iii. 6.	vii.	283
iii. 5.	v.	318
iii. 7–19.	vii.	288
iii. 31.	viii.	166
iii. 31.	viii.	168
iii. 31–iv. 34.	vii.	304
iv. 35–v. 21.	vii.	308
v. 22–vi. 29.	vii.	318
vi. 17–20.	vii.	228
vi. 27.	i.	348
vi. 30–56.	vii.	326
vii. 24–viii. 26.	vii.	332
viii. 27–ix. 29.	vii.	338
ix. 30–50.	vii.	343
x. 32–52.	vii.	381
x. 35–45.	viii.	240
xi. 1–11.	vii.	387
xi. 12–xii. 12.	vii.	393
xii. 13–xiii. 37.	vii.	399
xii. 14.	vii.	48
xiii. 3.	vii.	128
xiv. 1–11.	vii.	405
xiv. 12–42.	vii.	411
xiv. 43–65.	vii.	418
xv. 1–20.	vii.	425
xv. 21–47.	vii.	434
xv. 33.	vii.	52
xv. 40.	viii.	170
xvi.	vii.	442

LUKE.

i. 5–10.	vii.	15
i. 5–25.	vii.	18
i. 17.	vii.	12
i. 26.	vii.	22
i. 26.	vii.	25
i. 26–38.	vii.	30
i. 39–56.	vii.	34
i. 50.	viii.	199
i. 57–79.	vii.	38
i. 80.	vii.	171
ii. 1.	vii.	51
ii. 1–5.	vii.	46
ii. 4.	vii.	55
ii. 6, 7.	vii.	60
ii. 8–20.	vii.	65
ii. 11.	vii.	97
ii. 16.	vii.	70
ii. 21.	vii.	101
ii. 22–24.	vii.	105
ii. 25–38.	vii.	108
ii. 37.	v.	101
ii. 39.	vii.	124
ii. 40.	vii.	156
ii. 41–50.	vii.	160
ii. 43.	vii.	165
ii. 46.	vii.	168

	Vol.	Page
Ch. iii Ver. 1, 2.	vii.	95
iii. 1–17.	vii.	177
iii. 2.	vii.	420
iii. 21.	vii.	182
iii. 21, 22.	vii.	181
iii. 23.	vii.	95
iii. 23–38.	vii.	76
iv. 1, 2.	vii.	186
iv. 3–13.	vii.	192
iv. 13.	vii.	196
iv. 14.	vii.	128
iv. 16–30.	vii.	244
iv. 25.	vii.	52
iv. 31, 32.	vii.	254
iv. 33–41.	vii.	257
iv. 42–44.	vii.	260
v. 1–11.	vii.	248
v. 12–15.	vii.	260
v. 17–19.	vii.	264
v. 19–26.	vii.	268
v. 27, 28.	vii.	272
vi. 1–11.	vii.	283
vi. 13–49.	vii.	288
vii. 1–17.	vii.	291
vii. 3.	viii.	199
vii. 18–50.	vii.	296
viii. 1–xiii. 9.	vii.	304
viii. 3.	vii.	241
viii. 19.	viii.	166
viii. 19.	viii.	168
viii. 22–40.	vii.	308
viii. 41–ix. 9.	vii.	318
ix. 7	vii.	200
ix. 10–17.	vii.	326
ix. 18–43.	vii.	338
ix. 43–x. 16.	vii.	343
x. 25–xi. 13.	vii.	360
xii. 5.	viii.	199
xiii. 22–xviii. 30.	vii.	374
xiii. 34.	iii.	31
xvi. 22.	vii.	278
xviii. 31–xix. 27.	vii.	381
xix. 29–44.	vii.	387
xix. 45–xxi.	vii.	393
xx. 20–xxi. 38.	vii.	399
xx. 22.	vii.	48
xxi. 7–37.	vii.	128
xxii. 1–6.	vii.	405
xxii. 7–46.	vii.	411
xxii. 47–71.	vii.	418
xxiii. 1–25.	vii.	425
xxiii. 26–56.	vii.	434
xxiv.	vii.	442
xxiv. 50.	vii.	128
xxiv. 53.	v.	101

JOHN.

i. 1–18.	vii.	9
i. 14.	vii.	80
i. 14.	vii.	87

	Vol.	Page
Ch. i. Ver. 19–27.	vii.	199
i. 29–51.	vii.	202
i. 32–34.	vii.	183
ii. 1–11.	vii.	206
ii. 12.	viii.	168
ii. 13–22.	vii.	211
ii. 20.	vii.	96
ii. 20.	vii.	215
ii. 24, 25.	vii.	221
iii.	vii.	219
iii. 14, 15.	ii.	205
iii. 22–36.	vii.	224
iii. 29.	ii.	409
iv. 4.	vii.	231
iv. 5–42.	vii.	236
iv. 43–54.	vii.	241
v. 1–4.	vii.	275
v. 5–47.	vii.	280
vi.	vii.	326
vii. 2–viii. 11.	vii	350
vii. 15.	vii.	290
vii. 27.	vii.	121
vii. 36–38.	iii.	105
viii. 5.	vii.	44
viii. 12 ix.	vii.	356
viii. 56.	i.	222
viii. 56.	i.	265
ix. 21.	iv.	285
x.	vii.	360
xi	vii.	366
xi. 19	vi.	250
xii. 2 8.	vii.	405
xii. 12–19.	vii.	387
xiii.–xviii. 1.	vii.	411
xiv. 8.	vii.	328
xiv. 26.	viii.	10
xv. 15.	v.	201
xvi. 4.	vi.	164
xvi. 13.	viii.	10
xviii. 2–27.	vii.	418
xviii. 28–xix. 16.	vii.	425
xix. 16–42.	vii.	434
xix. 25.	viii.	170
xix. 27.	viii.	35
xix. 36.	vii.	204
xx.–xxi.	vii.	442
xxi. 18, 19.	viii.	246
xxi. 25.	viii.	150

ACTS.

i. 3.	vii.	128
i. 3.	vii.	450
i. 6.	viii.	240
i. 23.	viii.	305
i. 24–26.	ii.	282
ii. 1–5.	vii.	161
ii. 16, 17.	i.	338
iv. 13.	vii.	290
v. 4	viii.	35
v. 37.	iii.	152

	Vol.	Page
Ch. v. Ver. 37.	vii.	48
vii. 3.	i.	178
vii. 22.	ii.	20
vii. 53.	vii.	278
viii. 4.	viii.	213
viii 20.	v.	318
viii. 28.	viii.	109
viii. 40.	viii.	410
ix. 13.	viii.	76
ix. 16.	viii.	275
ix. 19-26.	vii.	128
x. 35.	viii.	199
x. 45.	viii.	200
xi. 2.	viii.	200
xi. 29, 30.	viii.	309
xii. 6.	i.	348
xii. 7 9.	vii.	190
xii. 13.	vii.	421
xii. 20.	iii.	355
xiv. 1.	viii.	199
xiv. 4.	viii.	172
xiv. 14.	viii.	172
xiv. 22.	viii.	275
xv. 7.	viii.	200
xv. 12, 13.	viii.	174
xv. 14.	viii.	200
xv. 37.	viii.	269
xv. 41.	viii.	219
xvi. 9.	i.	340
xvi. 16.	i.	64
xvi. 17.	viii.	357
xvi. 27.	i.	348
xvii. 17, 18.	viii.	219
xviii. 6.	iv.	435
xix. 12.	viii.	45
xx. 5, 6.	viii.	357
xx. 5, 6.	viii.	406
xx. 6.	viii.	335
xx. 16.	vii.	161
xx. 31.	v.	101
xx. 34.	viii.	103
xx. 34.	viii.	393
xxi. 10, 11.	viii.	229
xxi. 39.	viii.	98
xxi. 39.	viii.	100
xxii.	viii.	126
xxii. 3.	viii.	103
xxii. 3.	viii.	112
xxii. 5-16.	viii.	116
xxii. 5-16.	viii.	121
xxii. 5-16.	viii.	126
xxii. 11.	viii.	124
xxii. 17-21.	viii.	162
xxii. 20.	viii.	70
xxii. 24.	i.	348
xxii. 29.	viii.	97
xxiii. 3.	v.	318
xxiii. 6.	viii.	94
xxiii. 16.	viii.	95
xxiii. 16.	viii.	103
xxiii. 16.	viii.	167
xxiii. 16-22.	viii.	219
Ch. xxiv. Ver. 17.	viii.	232
xxiv. 20, 21	viii.	423
xxvi.	viii.	126
xxvi. 11.	viii.	76
xxvi. 12-18.	viii.	116
xxvi. 12-18.	viii.	121
xxvi. 12-18.	viii.	126
xxvi. 27.	v.	223
xxvi. 28.	viii.	216
xxvii. 1.	i.	348
xxvii. 4	v.	76
xxviii. 16.	i.	348

ROMANS.

viii. 7.	viii.	276
x. 1.	viii.	180
xii. 6.	viii.	228
xv. 19.	viii.	290
xv. 24-28.	viii.	403
xv. 24-28.	viii.	450
xv. 25-27.	viii.	232
xv. 30.	viii.	148
xvi. 3.	viii.	399
xvi. 7.	viii.	95
xvi. 7.	viii.	219
xvi. 11.	viii.	99
xvi. 11.	viii.	215
xvi. 21.	viii.	95
xvi. 21.	viii.	359
xvi. 23.	viii.	377
xvi. 23.	viii.	404

I. CORINTHIANS.

i. 14-17.	viii.	207
i. 14-17.	viii.	378
iv. 9.	viii.	392
iv. 11, 12.	viii.	393
v. 1.	vii.	222
v. 7.	vii.	204
vii. 7, 8.	viii.	75
viii.	viii.	295
ix. 5.	viii.	13
ix. 20.	viii.	322
ix. 20 22.	viii.	130
ix. 27.	viii.	145
x. 14 33.	viii.	295
xii. 10.	viii.	228
xii. 28.	viii.	228
xiii. 2.	viii.	228
xiii. 8.	viii.	228
xiv. 3.	viii.	228
xiv. 5.	viii.	228
xiv. 24.	viii.	228
xv. 5.	vii.	447
xv. 7.	vii.	450
xv. 7.	viii.	174
xv. 8-10.	viii.	144
xv. 32.	viii.	392
Ch. xv. Ver. 51-53.	iv.	280
xvi. 15.	viii.	377
xvi. 22.	v.	318

II. CORINTHIANS.

i. 19.	viii.	305
ii.	vii.	222
iv. 16.	v.	169
vi. 4, 5.	viii.	177
vi. 14-18.	viii.	295
vii. 5-10.	viii.	405
viii. 17, 18, 22.	viii.	405
viii. 18, 19.	viii.	317
xi.	viii.	219
xi. 7-12.	viii.	378
xi. 13, 14.	i.	61
xi. 22.	viii.	94
xi. 23-25.	viii.	351
xi. 23-27.	viii.	290
xi. 23-29.	viii.	274
xi. 26.	viii.	270
xi. 32.	viii.	152
xi. 33	viii.	151
xii. 1-4.	vii.	190
xii. 2-16.	viii.	326

GALATIANS.

i. 1, 2.	viii.	322
i. 17.	vii.	128
i. 17.	viii.	138
i. 18.	viii.	157
i. 18, 19.	viii.	161
i. 19.	viii.	165
i. 19.	viii.	169
ii. 1-10.	viii.	299
ii. 3.	viii.	290
ii. 9.	viii.	174
ii. 10.	viii.	232
ii. 11-13.	viii.	305
ii. 14-21.	viii.	310
iii. 9.	i.	223
iii. 19.	vii.	278
iii. 24.	viii.	104
iv. 13-15.	viii.	322
iv. 13-15.	viii.	326

EPHESIANS.

ii. 2.	v.	69
iii. 16.	v.	170
iv. 24.	i.	43
v. 28-30.	i.	57
vi. 3.	vii.	52
vi. 6, 7.	i.	351

PHILIPPIANS.

i. 8.	viii.	176
i. 14.	v	170

	Vol. Page
Ch.ii.Ver.15-17.	viii. 128
iii. 5.	viii. 94
iii. 13, 14.	viii. 147
iii. 13-15.	ii. 359
iii. 18.	viii. 180

COLOSSIANS.

i. 11.	v. 170
iii. 9, 10.	i. 42
iii. 22.	viii. 199
iv. 10.	viii. 167
iv. 10.	viii. 272
iv. 14.	viii. 334
iv. 16.	viii. 395

I. THESSALONIANS.

i. 1.	viii. 305
ii. 17-iii. 5.	viii. 361
iv. 16, 17.	iv. 279

II. THESSALONIANS.

i. 1.	viii. 305

I. TIMOTHY.

i. 15.	iii. 379

II. TIMOTHY.

iii. 10-12.	viii. 274
iii. 16.	vi. 14
iv. 11.	viii. 272
iv. 13.	viii. 434

PHILEMON.

	Vol. Page
Ver. 24.	viii. 272

HEBREWS.

i. 14.	vii. 278
vii. 6, 10.	i. 207
x. 28, 29.	v. 318
x. 31.	v. 318
x. 34.	v. 170
xi. 4.	i. 88
xi. 10.	i. 223
xi. 30.	ii. 266
xi. 38.	viii. 451
xii. 29.	v. 318

JAMES.

i. 1.	viii. 294
ii. 2-6.	i. 362
ii. 23.	v. 201
iv. 3.	iii. 148
iv. 4.	viii. 276
v. 11.	v. 16
v. 17.	vii. 52

I. PETER.

iii. 20.	i. 145
iv. 14, 16.	viii. 216
v. 12.	viii 305
v. 13.	viii. 272

II. PETER.

i 19.	vi. 166
i. 21.	vi. 14

	Vol. Page
Ch. ii. Ver. 5.	i. 115
ii. 7, 8.	i. 235

I. JOHN.

ii. 16.	viii. 276
ii. 18.	viii. 240
iii. 12.	i. 88
iii. 22.	iii. 148
iv. 3.	viii. 240
iv. 7-11.	i. 43
v. 14.	iii. 148

II. JOHN.

Ver. 7.	viii. 240

JUDE.

Ver. 9.	vii. 23

REVELATION.

vi. 10.	v. 318
vii. 1.	iii. 66
viii. 1.	vii. 17
viii. 3.	vii. 17
ix. 7.	vi. 391
xi. 18.	viii. 199
xii. 7-9.	vii. 23
xii. 9.	i. 65
xiv. 3, 4.	vii. 131
xv. 1.	ii. 273
xviii. 22.	v. 205
xx. 8.	iii. 66
xxi. 9.	ii. 273
xxi. 10.	vii. 150
xxii. 17.	iv. 289

THE END.

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