

Jesus receive my spirit;" "Lord lay not this sin to their charge;" and to him had been vouchsafed a special revelation of "the heavens opened, and of the Son of Man being on the right hand of God." St Paul must often have called to mind this scene of the death of St. Stephen, with its attendant circumstances; and nobly did he carry out, in life, the holy ardour and intense devotion he had witnessed in the death of the martyr. With neither of these eminent men was there any gloom or uncertainty as to the future, when they were about to surrender their spirits, with unlimited confidence, into the hands of their glorified Saviour.

St. Stephen was one of "the Seven," an order of a temporary character, instituted by "the Twelve" in order that they themselves might attend to the offering of prayer and to the ministry of the Lord. It does not appear that any spiritual duties were necessarily connected with the performance of the requirements of their office. Although some of them had in addition to their temporal work, functions of a purely spiritual character. Thus we find that Philip, one of "The Seven," was also an evangelist, and St. Stephen worked miracles and proclaimed the Gospel. The order of The Seven could not have been that which we now term the Diaconate, the first notice of which we doubtless find in Acts v. 6, where we read of the *neoteroi*, the youngers, as in 1 Tim. v. 1, and 1 St. Peter v. 5; although the order of The Seven, the Diaconate and "the younger men," were probably in process of time merged into the same office.

#### ST. JOHN, THE EVANGELIST.

As St. Stephen was the first martyr for Christ, and was an illustration of the depth of devotion to the Christian cause, which is demanded from its votaries, so the commemoration of St. John the evangelist is very suitably placed next in order, because he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, and whose love to Christ was as strong and as deep as any ever exhibited. He did not die for the name of the Lord Jesus, and yet he was a martyr in intention; for he is said to have been cast into a caldron of boiling oil by order of Domitian, from which he escaped without injury. The visions of Patmos had not then been chronicled, and the servant of God could not be received into the mansions of the blessed until his work was done. The account is related by Tertullian; but as such a mode of punishment appears to have been unknown in Rome, the truth of the relation has been doubted. He was, however, termed "Martyr" by Polycrates, Bp. of Ephesus, writing about A.D. 200.

St. John the evangelist was made by his Lord the medium of communicating to the church two of the most precious documents of which she is the depository; the gospel of St. John and the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The value of St. John's Gospel need not be dilated upon; it is enough that it

should be chiefly singled out for attack by infidels, semi-infidels, and all those who desire to water down the teaching of the Bible on the most important verities of our belief. In this respect it may be viewed as holding a similar relation to the other parts of revelation to that held by the Athanasian creed in regard to the other creeds of the Church. If the Gospel of St. John could only be got rid of, Arians and Neologians think they could easily explain away all the rest of the Bible; but this shows the value of the Book. And so with the Athanasian creed. To the orthodox Christian, it may be difficult to see in what respect its statements are stranger, or clearer, or more definite than the Nicene creed; but the efforts made to get rid of it only show its value.

This Gospel especially dwells upon The mystical relation of the Son to the Father; The mystical relation of the Redeemer to his people; the announcement of the Holy Ghost as Comforter; and the peculiar importance ascribed to Love. The First Epistle breathes love and devotion, and has but little logical connection apparent in the transition from one thought to another. The Second and Third Epistles were written to private members of the church.

The Book of the Revelation is perhaps the most wonderful in the whole Bible, surpassing all the rest in dignity and sublimity. Portions of its imagery may here and there be found in the Old Testament writings, but it contains enough of original and peculiar excellences to place it among the very highest of all literary productions. The variety and force of the images impress the mind of every reader with conceptions of a Divine origin. No uninspired man could have written in such a strain. Some have supposed that it refers to the events that should take place before the destruction of Jerusalem; others have considered it as detailing the history of the church from the beginning. The more probable opinion is that, with the exception of the first three chapters, the whole of the Book refers to what is yet future—to the signs and events connected with the Second Advent.

#### THE INNOCENTS.

The first result of the birth of Christ was the slaughter of the Innocents, which the church therefore commemorates in immediate connection with the Nativity. There are reckoned in the church three kinds of martyrdom; the first both in will and deed, which is the highest, and of which St. Stephen is one of the most eminent examples; the second is in will, but not in deed, such as St. John, the evangelist, is generally reputed to have been; and the third is in deed, but not in will, such as the Holy Innocents. They were not indeed sensible on what account they suffered, yet they certainly and truly suffered for the sake of Christ, since it was on account of His birth, and through the star that announced Him that their lives were taken away. Whenever their

story shall be told the course of their death shall be published; so that they are, in a very proper sense, witnesses or martyrs for Christ. Their innocence furnishes the subject which is principally brought before us, and therefore the collect prays that all vices may be mortified and destroyed in us, and that innocency in life and constancy in death may conduce to the glory of God. The portion of Scripture for the Epistle also illustrates the excellency and reward of innocence and perseverance in following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, as manifested in those who were the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF MOHAMMEDANISM.

This is a subject of very great and general interest, connected with the present complications existing in the east; and therefore any additional light that may be thrown upon it cannot be otherwise than welcome. On the 15th ult., a conference of the friends and supporters of the society for the Propagation of the Gospel was held in the Exchange Hall, Grantham, under the presidency of the Bishop of Lincoln. The Bishops of Peterborough, Nottingham and Trinidad were also present, as well as Archdeacon Badnell from the Cape; the Rev. Nehemiah Gorah, formerly a Brahmin, and other notabilities. The peculiar interest of the conference arose from a discussion on "The relation of the Church of England to the Turks and other Mohammedans, and to the Christian Churches under their rule, on which the Bishop of Lincoln gave an address containing several valuable suggestions. He thought it would be felt to be desirable to view the subject, not in its ephemeral and political aspect, but from a higher and serener position, as it affects us as Churchmen and Christians. And the question would arise whether a very large portion of the blame attachable to the late events in Turkey was not to be laid upon ourselves. The deeds that have horrified "the conscience of Europe," and the world, were done from motives of religious zeal. Mohammedanism for the last twelve centuries has had but one characteristic—to spread what its votaries believe to be the true religion. Fifty years ago there was a massacre in the Island of Chios, where 120,000 Christians, members of the Eastern Church, were put to death upon religious principles. As long as men are Mohammedans, they believe in the Koran, and the Koran inculcates persecution of Christians as a religious duty. Mohammedanism is due to the sins of Christians—to their superstitions, their heresies, their schemes; and above all to their worldly and evil lives. And so Mohammedanism is a dark shadow which a diseased Christianity has cast over the face of Europe, Africa and Asia. It is a scourge in the Divine hands for the sons of Christians; and as such its adherents are not backward in using it.

The continuance of this system of cruelty and falsehood, the Bishop also con-