

worthy of being recorded. Edwin had, in a most wonderful way, escaped the dagger of an assassin, and was implored by Paulinus to show his gratitude to heaven by listening to the word of divine revelation (A. D. 627). The King expressed his readiness, but preferred first to confer with his principal counsellors, so that, if they came to the same opinion, "they might all together be cleansed in Christ the Fountain of life." (Bede ii. 13.)

Among the incidents of the conference then held, a speech of one of the King's chief men is worthy of notice. "The present life of man, O King," he said "seems to me, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your commanders and ministers, and a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and hail prevail abroad; the sparrow, I say, flying in at one door and immediately out at another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry storm; but after a short space of fair weather he immediately vanishes out of your sight into the dark winter from which he had emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space, but of what went before, or what is to follow, we are utterly ignorant. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed."

These and certain other arguments of a more commercial character prevailed with the assembly. Paulinus was allowed to preach openly, and soon an onslaught was made on the heathen alters and temples, the chief priest taking the lead, and, in the words of Bede, "King Edwin, with all the nobility of the nation, and a large number of the common sort, received the faith, and the washing of regeneration, in the eleventh year of his reign (627). He was baptized at York, on the holy day of Easter, being the 12th of April, in the Church of St. Peter the Apostle, which he himself had built of timber, during his time of preparation for baptism."

Soon afterwards King Edwin built "a larger and nobler church of stone," in the midst of which was enclosed the

oratory first erected. Both the wooden and the stone buildings of Edgar have vanished, although the name of St. Peter still belongs to the minster of York, which stands upon the foundation of the old church, and upon that of a heathen temple which formerly occupied the same site. The completion of Edwin's church was effected by his successor, King Oswald.

Wilfrid, Bishop of York, repaired and enlarged the church about A. D. 720, but in 741 it was destroyed by fire, and no part of his work remains, although specimens of it may be seen in some fragments of another of his churches at Hexham. The church was rebuilt by Bishop Egbert, but destroyed by the Danes. Archbishop Thomas, a chaplain to William the Conqueror, rebuilt the cathedral in the Norman style; but of this nothing remains. We may judge of the style of this church by that of Durham, which was built about the same time. The Norman church at York was burnt down accidentally in A. D. 1137. Fire has, more than once, been fatal to the great churches of York.

It is necessary here to note that, as a rule, all the old churches of England were built from east to west, the eastern portion of the building, containing the sanctuary, presbytery, and choir, being the most necessary for worship. The reason why, in so many cases, the choir is the latest built, arose simply from the desire of the chapter, as it increased in wealth, to enlarge and beautify the choir. They seldom had any scruple in pulling down the old building and putting up another in the style of their own period, judging it better—which was not always the case. This will explain the fact of our describing these buildings in what may seem an irregular manner, not beginning at the east or the west, and working from end to end, but taking the different parts in their chronological order.

The oldest part of the existing cathedral or minster of York is part of the crypt in the Norman style, the only remaining portion of the structure raised Archbishop Rogers who, in 1171, began to rebuild, and finished the choir with its crypt before his death. Next comes