

prepared, with his gold and silver, for all must do their part, in order that our Church may take root and extend. G.

### Scripture Sketches.

#### S T. PAUL.

WHAT pen can pourtray the character of the greatest of all the Apostles, so that the points may stand out clear and just, without useless accessories, but with the traits looking out of the living words, in all the grandeur of force and simplicity? None that we know of could pretend to come up to the mark. The subject is inviting, but who can hope to do it justice in the colouring! We may be able to conceive with some approach to correctness, what the picture ought to be, but to draw it is quite a different thing. What was Paul? A man among men, even when a persecutor. Intrepidity and zeal, carried almost to ferocity, marked the unconverted period of his career. We can conceive him declaiming in the temple and the synagogues of the Jews, with burning, and all but frantic eloquence against the new heresy. Fervid, impetuous and fearless, hurrying from city to city, appealing to prejudices, to laws and ceremonies, rousing the popular passions to fever heat; and overwhelming reason, and even mercy by a flood of burning words, poured forth with all the vehemence and effect of sincere fanaticism. Carried away himself, he carried others in the same course, by the very strength and vehemence of a strong will. The carnal heart was aided by a powerful intellect and a relentless and sleepless resolution to extirpate by main force, what he considered a stain upon his faith and nation. He used his wonderful eloquence, not to convince the Christian, but to incite the powerful and the unthinking to deeds of violence. Stripes, imprisonment or death were the only arguments he would use to convince or convert the humble believer in the divinity of Jesus. We can almost fancy that we see him hastening with his myrmidons towards Damascus, eager and hopeful of rooting out the new sect in that ancient city. His whole unregenerate heart is in his work—the city is in sight—he is maturing his plans in his own mind, when a stupendous miracle arrests him. Speechless terror seizes his attendants, a voice is heard, but they look in vain for any embodied form which gave it utterance. The man Paul is changed; the arrogant persecutor, the ruthless accuser becomes at once the humble and childlike believer. His zeal remains, his intrepidity is unaltered, but it is mellowed and softened and sanctified with the spirit of his new Master. All hatred has died within him, violence of temper and character have been cleansed and purified of their grosser parts. The proud

and great intellect of the man becomes enobled, now that it has been lifted to the height of the great argument which was to be the work of his future life. With a mind filled with all the knowledge of the time, carefully trained and disciplined, either to dispute or persuade, great forbearance, zeal unquenchable, courage, endurance, disinterestedness in the highest degree, a master in the school of eloquence, we see combined in Paul, the three great qualities, which are only to be found together once in a thousand years, courage, intellect and zeal, each in the highest degree. No power on earth could daunt or divert him from his purpose, no rhetorician could foil or cope with him in a war of words, no work or weariness, no disgrace or disappointment, no pain or punishment of the weak body could quench or affect his purpose. By sea and by land, sometimes in chains, sometimes in freedom, he proclaimed from city to city, from province to province, truths unpalatable to power, unpopular to the mass, unwelcome to the learned, yet wherever he went he left behind him the nucleus of a Church, and by his single voice made Christianity a power and a reality in the heathen world.

What majesty, what dignity, what unmatched vigour of thought and expression do we find in his discourses? What remarkable wisdom, what logical precision in his writings! What marvellous tact and beauty and genius in some of his expressions! What orator of ancient or modern times ever equalled or approached the sublime pathos, the wonderful aptness combined with the lofty Christian spirit of the passage, when he exclaimed in answer to the doubting pagan, "Would that thou wast not almost, but altogether such as I am, except these bonds. What a stroke of genius are the last three words!"

But the character of Paul may be said to combine more individualities of the highest cast than that of any man that ever lived. His writings stand alone in their uniqueness, clear, forcible, convincing; the art of the rhetor, logician, philosopher and man of the world stands out, each in all its power and completeness, leavened with the loving humility and all-embracing benevolence of the religion of Jesus. With wonderful skill, he could adapt his character to his circumstances or his audience, without for a moment compromising his principles or sacrificing his consistency. "He could be all things to all men," but hold fast his faith and his honor, and carry out his purpose. His life and history might be studied as affording a pattern for the perfect preacher, perfect in all its details, so far as they have come down to us. A chosen vessel, inspired by God himself, sought out and set apart for his Master's use, he was in every respect equal to the great part he had to perform. The great missionary preacher stands before us now in our mind's eye, feeble in body, mean in appearance, poor and coarse in his raiment,