

Aaron and his sons, the priests, were also commanded to present their offerings to God, by a perpetual statute--and what they offered was to be wholly burnt on the altar! See Leviticus vi. 20--23. Thus none were to appear before the Lord empty: a portion of all must be given to God, as an evidence of his goodness, and their dependance on him.

I might, Mr. Editor, have appealed to other sources in confirmation of the practice of giving a tenth of our increase to God; but I confine myself to the scriptures. Should any of your talented correspondents answer the two following questions of your subscriber, I shall be satisfied; if not, I may take up my pen again.

Your's respectfully,

PHILO.

Historical.

TADMOR—PALMYRA.

BETWIXT eighty and ninety years ago, two English travellers, Dawkins and Wood, in journeying through the wilderness of Syria in Western Asia, were astonished in coming in sight of a plain covered with a great quantity of ruins of magnificent marble buildings; and beyond them, towards the Euphrates, a flat waste as far the eye could reach, without any object which showed either life or motion. The travellers were not altogether unprepared for the spectacle. They had been in search of the city of ruins, and now it fell upon their sight, in all its desolation and melancholy grandeur. What they beheld was all that remained of the famed Tadmor--the city of Palms, or as it has been Latinised by the Romans--Palmyra.

The fate of Palmyra was that of hundreds of other cities in ancient times. It had grown up as a seat of a large and busy population, had arrived at a high pitch of opulence and magnificence, its name had become known far and wide for the traffic of which it was the emporium; and at length, after a lapse of time, it fell a prey to a powerful enemy, by whom it was utterly exterminated, or reduced to a mere heap of ruins. Such was invariably the history of the cities and nations of antiquity. No matter how great and glorious they had become, no matter what was their degree of civilisation and learning, they all sank one after another into oblivion, were overrun by the vast hordes of barbarians which peopled the unreclaimed parts of the earth, and are now either lying in ruins like Palmyra, or inhabited by tribes little removed above the rank of savages.

Palmyra was in its greatest splendour in the third century of the Christian era, and was then the seat of government of an accomplished Syrian Princess called Zenobia. In a work recently published, Piso, a noble Roman, converted to Christianity, is represented as thus describing the appearance of the city of palms to his friend Marcus Curtius at Rome:—"I was still buried in reflection, when I was aroused by the shout of those who led the caravan, and who had attained the summit of a little rising ground, saying, 'Palmyra! Palmyra!' I urged forward my steed, and in a moment the most wonderful prospect I ever beheld--no, I cannot except even Rome--burst upon my sight.

Flanked by hills of considerable elevation on the east, the city filled the whole plain below as far as the eye could reach, both towards the north and towards the south. This immense plain was all one vast and boundless city. It seemed to me to be larger than Rome. Yet I knew very well it could not be--that it was not. And it was some time before I understood the true character of the scene before me, so as to separate the city from the country, and the country from the city, which here wonderfully interpenetrate each other, and so confound and deceive the observer. For the city proper is so studded with groups of lofty palm-trees, shooting up among its temples and palaces, and, on the other hand, the plain in its immediate vicinity is so thickly adorned with magnificent structures of the purest marble, that it is not easy, nay, it is impossible at the distance at which I contemplated the whole, to distinguish the line which divided the one from the other. There was a central point, however, which chiefly fixed my attention, where the vast Temple of the Sun stretched up its thousand columns of polished marble to the heavens, in its matchless beauty, casting into the shade every other work of art of which the world can boast. I have stood before the Parthenon, and have almost worshipped that divine achievement of the immortal Phidias. But it is a toy by the side of this bright crown of the Eastern capital. I have been at Milan, at Ephesus, at Alexandria, at Antioch; but in none of those renowned cities have I beheld any thing that I can allow to approach in united extent, grandeur, and most consummate beauty, this almost more than work of man. On each side of this, the central point, there rose upward slender pyramids--pointed obelisks--domes of the most graceful proportions, columns, arches, and lofty towers, for number and for form, beyond my power to describe. These buildings, as well as the walls of the city, being all either of white marble, or of some stone as white, and being every where in their whole extent interspersed, as I have already said, with multitudes of overshadowing palm-trees, perfectly filled and satisfied my sense of beauty, and made me feel for the moment, as if in such a scene I should love to dwell, and there end my days."

In the year 273, Palmyra was invested by the Roman armies under the command of Aurelian. This man was one of those fighting monsters whose deeds disgrace the pages of ancient history. He was the son of a Pannonian peasant, originally an adventurer and common soldier, who, by his courage, ferocity, bodily strength, power of control, and skill in war, had raised himself to be the emperor or military despot of the Roman empire and kept himself almost five years at its head before his turn for assassination came. This ferocious leader of a powerful army, having taken care to pick a quarrel with Zenobia, the Syrian queen, in order to give a colour to his attack upon her dominions, followed up his intentions, by marching against the devoted city of Palmyra. After investing the place with his troops, and taking Zenobia captive, it was ordered to be sacked and burned, and the whole inhabitants exterminated "by the edge of the sword."