

powerful sermon on the day of Pentecost, recorded in the 2nd chapter of the Acts. He is declared, as well as the other apostles, to have wrought many miracles, several of which are particularised. His concern in the case of Cornelius is, as narrated in the 10th chapter of the Acts, very interesting, as showing him to have been the first, who introduced the gospel among the Gentiles; and he afterwards boldly and satisfactorily defended that procedure in the midst of the disciples. He visited Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, Antioch, and other places. On one occasion, we read of him temporising, so that Paul "withstood him to the face," because he was to be blamed. But he was in general, faithful and noble minded. In the grand council of Jerusalem on the subject of the obligation of the ceremonial law, he took a prominent and decisive lead in maintaining the liberty of the Gentile converts. For the cause of Christ he cheerfully endured disgrace, scourging and imprisonment.

As Peter promoted the gospel by his preaching, so he also promoted it by his writings. He wrote two epistles, which have come down to us; they are addressed—the first, to the believing strangers scattered abroad, through certain parts of the world; and the second, to all, "who had obtained like precious faith." These epistles are teeming rich with matter of the most vital and delightful interest. His second letter was evidently written under the vivid impression that his death was at hand. "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle," says he, "to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I shall put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavour, that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." He here refers to what Christ said to him, as recorded in the last chapter of John's gospel: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, 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 he spake, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

Hitherto we have had the infallible record of God's own word to guide us; but farther it does not conduct us. A great number of additional and minute particulars are related by early uninspired writers concerning Peter and the other apostles. Of these circumstances many bear the mark of improbability and superstition on their face, some are directly contradictory to what is contained in Scripture. But

that all these relations are fabulous, it would be a very unreasonable extreme to suppose. In many, perhaps in most cases, it is impossible to separate with certainty, the true from the fabulous, yet there are some leading points which may be considered as almost certain. It was foretold by our Lord, that Peter was to suffer martyrdom. Without vouching, then, for the particulars of his martyrdom, as given by different writers, many of which, however, are sufficiently probable and very affecting, there seems no reason to doubt, that, after labour in various parts of the world, and arriving at a good old age, Peter suffered martyrdom at or near Rome, by crucifixion, and, according to his own earnest request, was crucified with his head downwards, as judging himself unworthy to die in the same posture with his blessed Lord.

Thus lived and thus died, unquestionably the most remarkable of the twelve apostles. There was a black stain, indeed, in his life, but it was gloriously wiped away at last. Nero, the bloody tyrant, pursued him to the cross, but he could not follow him farther. Simon Peter nobly exemplified his own precept: "If any man suffer as a christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." He passed from the crown of torture and ignominy to the crown of life and glory; and now joined to the noble army of martyrs, who having come through much tribulation, have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, he is before the throne of God, and serving him day and night in his temple. His history furnishes us with a caution against precipitance, self-confidence and some other evils, and with a pattern of zeal and love and many other excellencies. Let us be on our guard against the one and copy the other, and let us see to it, that we carefully study and cordially embrace that divine system of religion, on which he rested all his hope, and for which he thought it not too much to die.

## Astronomy.

### THE PLANETARY SYSTEM.

"Hath not my hand made all these things?" Acts vii. 50.

### NO. III.

In the treatment of this subject we shall at the outset refer to some of the leading characters which are common to all the planets. Science has revealed a *family* connection betwixt the Sun and the remotest orb which circulates about it; and since the Sun itself revolves around some other centre which has not