

son Jesus Christ, there he wrought his miracles, there he preached, there he suffered and died. There, the holy Patriarchs lived, there the Prophets taught, and there the Apostles began their labors. There Christianity had her birthplace, where she struggled, and where she grew : Thither again will the ancient people of the Lord return with songs ; and thence shall yet come the clearest evidences of the truth of divine revelation. For these reasons it may be justly called the Holy Land, but we have authority in Scripture for the name. After the Babylonian captivity Zachariah applies it thus : Zach. II. 12 ; “ The Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the *holy land*.” After this it appears to have been a common name, and is to be met in ancient history, and in some of the Apocryphal books. The Jews divided the whole world into two parts. The “ Land of Israel ” and the “ Land of the Gentiles.” All except their own land they considered unclean ; but there were portions of their own land which they esteemed as having more than ordinary sanctity. The parts beyond Jordan, “ In the way of the Gentiles ” were less holy than those on the other side. Walled towns were more holy than villages, because no leper was allowed to enter, or to dwell among them, neither did they allow the dead to be buried within the gates. They supposed that neither the Shechinah nor Sacred Spirit dwelt even on a prophet out of this land. The Rabbins (those who were skilled in the law and traditions) divided Canaan into three countries. Judea, the region beyond Jordan, and Galilee ; thus excluding Samaria, which they considered unclean by reason of its inhabitants ; because, though Jews, they had departed from the Jewish worship, and intermixed with the Gentiles from Assyria. They carried their ideas of purity to an extreme length. The very dust of their land was dear to them, and they determined that the dust of the Gentiles or neighboring countries should not pollute it. When any of them returned from a heathen country, they halted at the boundaries and wiped the dust off their feet. They even carried this so far, that they would not allow shrubs, or herbs, to be brought from other lands, lest any earth should remain on the roots, and thus pollute their holy inheritance. It was likely to this custom that our Lord referred in Mat. X. 13, when the disciples in leaving any house or city where they were not received, should wipe the dust from their feet as a testimony that they regarded them as heathens, (even though they were Jews) rather than the people of God. In reference to this distinction between holy and unholy places, and people, it is likely the Apostle refers in I. Cor : I. 28. It is remarkable that when they were so zealous for the purity of their land, they were not very zealous for the purity of their ordinances ; but it is not uncommon to find many now, stoutly defending the customs and forms of the church, and yet indifferent about religion in the heart ; brushing the outside of the tabernacle, but never going within.