

celebrated city of Cœlicia much devoted to the cause of the Cæsars—was circumcised according to the rites of his religion the eighth day after his birth, which was about two years after that of Christ, and received the name of Saul. The inhabitants of his native place were famous for their love of Science and Literature; to prosecute which, numbers flocked to Jerusalem every year, where they had a synagogue, and places of education. On this account the parents of St. Paul sent their son at a very early age to the seat of Learning, where he was instructed in the tenets of the Pharisees according to all the rigour and exactness for which that austerest of sects were renowned. Whilst he continued at his studies he proved to be a most diligent scholar; was seen daily in the synagogue with the son of his professor, whose name was Gamaliel; and arrived at such perfection in the observance of the law, that even his bitterest enemies could not alledge the slightest circumstance derogatory to his character. He knew the Greek and Hebrew languages; was acquainted with the Sciences, and had a tolerable knowledge of profane literature. He had beside these a profession, which was that of a Tent-builder, and exercised himself in the practice of it even after he was called to preach the Gospel.

Thus informed, St. Paul had an ardent zeal for God, which he displayed in an enthusiasm for the Jewish traditions; but the day had come when these traditions were unavailable, and served only to alienate the admirers of them from that Being whose glory they would extend. Inflamed by his pharasaical belief, St. Paul could not, of course, tolerate anything of an opposite nature, and thus arose his hostility to Christianity. His hatred for the new Religion became so great that he became a public persecutor—a tyrannical officer—in a word, a Blasphemer. His name in the Christian ear was as thunder to the timid; and oh, his presence to the rising Church was more terrible than the anaconda of the east to the unfortunate object of its fangs. He began his bloody course by being present at the murder of the first Martyr, in whose death he was the principal. In the deed, however, he did not directly concur, but most certainly he advised it. and while the perpetrators of the act were engaged in the massacre, St. Paul stood by guarding the mantles of the murderers. As days multiplied, so increased his malice, till at length, as an enemy to the Church of Christ, he far tran-

sceded all the others of his sect, for his persecution arose to a very frenzy, actuated by a spirit of cruelty and ignorance. He burst openly into the houses of the Christians, seized upon men and women, loaded them with manacles, thrust them into prison; and laughed with a heartfelt joy at seeing them expire under the fearful tortures to which he subjected them. He entered into all the synagogues, and inhumanly scourged whomsoever he found believing in Christ, dragging them to confinement, and by the most excruciating trials making them blaspheme the name of the Saviour. In a word, there was no means which vengeance and false zeal could devise that he did not use for the purpose of extirpating from the land the religion of that Cross whose standard he was ere long to rear, bright and beautiful, over the ruins of his once well-loved Judaism.

Not satisfied with the progress he had already made in his evil proceeding, he determined on a journey to Damascus, with the intention of bringing thence to Jerusalem whatever Christians he might encounter. For this purpose he obtained letters from the chief authorities, addressed to the synagogues at Damascus, and with a body of men, ferocious as himself he sets forward on his unhal-lowed embassy. This was to be his last attempt. Now was to dawn the happy hour destined for his reformation from all eternity. O day of blissful change! heretofore, Saul's was a wild and a wayward course,—a bloodstained, merciless career,—now to be a heavenly, a sublime one. The thick clouds that obscured his morning sun are going to disperse, and light and splendour are to fling their magnificence over the future day—Heaven will hover above him, and the spirit of Truth will breathe holy counsel to his soul. As the rabid Jew was drawing nigh the end of his journey, the Scripture informs us, that a radiance shone dazzlingly around him, and by the voice of God himself, he was admonished of his impieties, and commanded to seek the city where he would receive all the instruction necessary to his conversion. The Saint was immediately led by his attendants to Damascus, where he remained for three days, in a state of blindness, without eating or drinking, but solely meditating on the evils he perpetrated—begging pardon for his manifold transgressions—and anxiously awaiting the day of his consolation, when he was to become the glory of that Religion he of late so strenuously opposed. After the three days, St