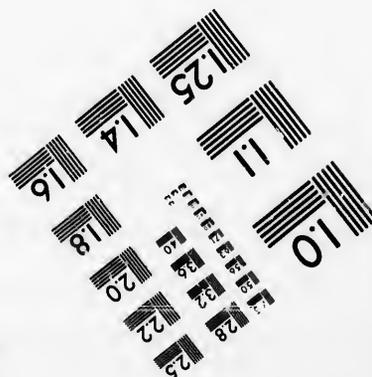
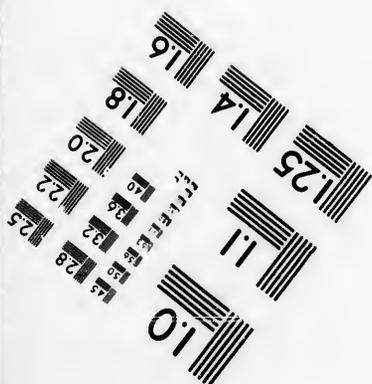
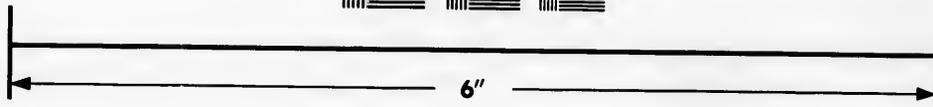
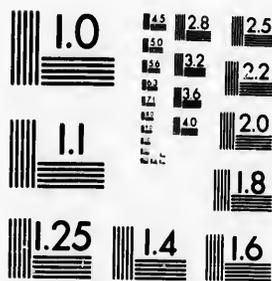


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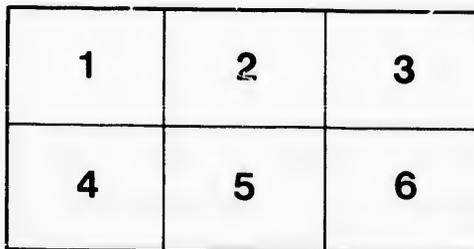
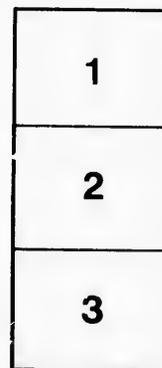
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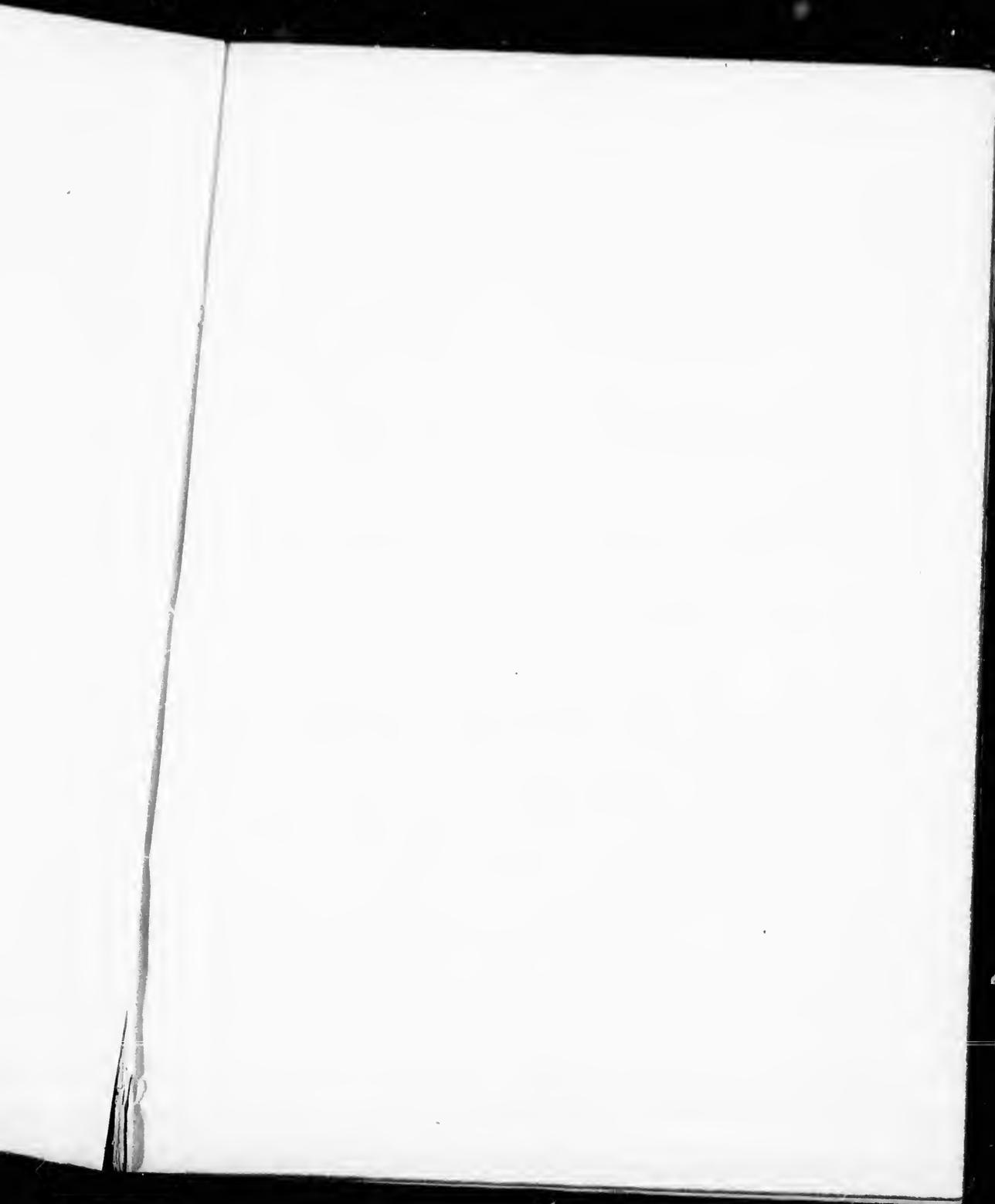
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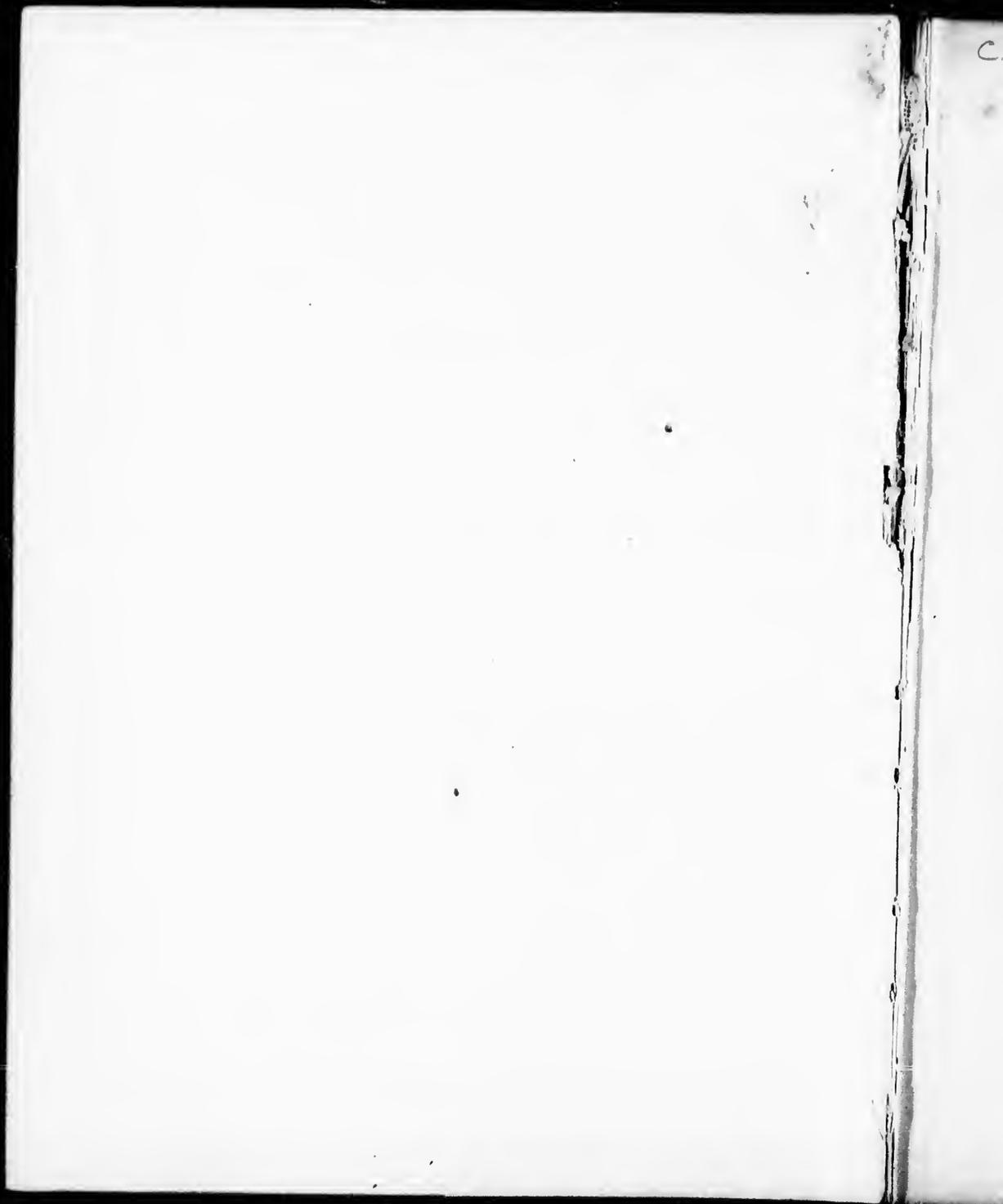
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INTRODUCTION

By REV. DANIEL MARCH, D.D.

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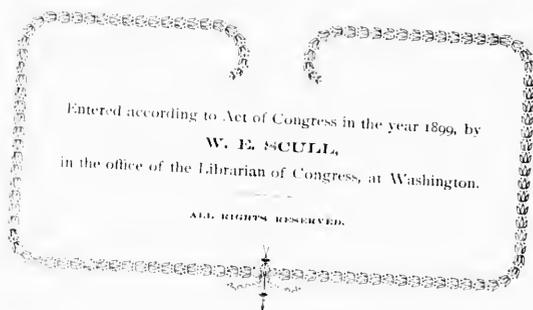
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INTRODUCTION

THIS attractive and beautiful book, with its clear and simple yet graphic style, and its abundant illustrations, is an attempt to set the sacred teaching of Jesus before the intelligent and thoughtful reader, in such a manner as to charm the eye, instruct the mind, and move the heart.

The writer of this Commentary has not attempted to improve upon the Divine record, or to explain those things which are easily and readily understood as they stand upon the sacred page. But wherever there is any serious difficulty, in comprehending that which the Holy Spirit has communicated to men in the word of God, on the part of the reader, he has endeavored, in the plainest and simplest terms, to shed new light upon the blessed word. Believing, as he evidently does with his whole heart, that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh, and that the design of all the revealed word of God is to exhibit the plan of redemption wrought out by him, and to show how, throughout the ages, his coming was heralded, even from Eden, till in the fulness of time he came to be our Redeemer, he makes this purpose of God the key-note of the Commentary; and whatever will aid in its demonstration, whether it be description, history, geography, argument, or simple narrative, is employed freely. In short, the aim and object of the writer is to justify the ways of God to man, and to show how full of mercy and goodness they are. Yet it is as far as possible from his purpose to put anything in the place of the Bible, or to write anything more interesting than the simple and sublime story. He does not presume to improve upon the precepts and instructions that came fresh and living from the lips of the Son of God. He would only gather his readers around him and show them where and how to look, while the awful and glorious vision of Divine revelation is unrolled before them. He does not hold up a taper to give them an illustration of the sun, but he takes them by the hand and leads them out into the broad day, when the sun himself is filling the earth and the heavens with his glorious light.

This Commentary does not assume that the Bible is a blind book, and must needs be explained, or it will not be understood by those who read it. Nor does it imply that it is a dull book, and must be made interesting by all the artifices of the novelist or word-painter, or it will never be read. Nor

does it give its readers the impression that the Bible is an antiquated and obsolete work which must be modernized and improved, or it will have to give place to the fresher and more impressive thought of our own time. On the contrary, it is the object of the author of this Commentary to show his readers that the Bible is *the* book for all times, all places, and all circumstances; that it is the most original, fresh, plain, and interesting book that ever has been or ever will be written; and that its saints, its heroes, and its martyrs are representative men for the whole human race.

The lesson of the sacred story is sometimes rehearsed anew, and in modern phrase, not to give a clearer version of what was written in olden times, but to secure a change of position, and show the inspired picture in a different light, that the reader may see it better and love it more. The best comment is that which brings the reader's mind into closest contact with the word as written. That word is ever so pure, simple, and expressive, that it needs only to find entrance to the heart, and it will enlighten the eyes and convert the soul.

Many books have been written, and much learning expended, in the effort to show that only those who were thoroughly versed in the languages in which the Bible was originally written, and in the history, social customs, and manners, and the literature of the nations among which it had its birth, could rightly understand it; but such an idea is utterly unworthy of the Christian, and savors of the bigotry and exclusiveness of the dark ages. The greater part of the Scriptures, all that is necessary to show us the way of salvation, is within the comprehension of the simplest and humblest, and will educate and elevate their minds as nothing else can. There are some passages which can be more clearly understood, and will receive added force, by a knowledge of the circumstances under which they were spoken or written, and the habits and customs of the people to whom they were first uttered; and in very rare instances, it is possible that our English translation fails to convey the full force of the original expression. But even these exceptional cases are provided for in this Commentary, which, while carefully avoiding all display of learning, gives in simple and clear language the results of the profound and extensive research of the past two centuries, on all points, where there is a necessity for them.

The engravings and illustrations scattered so abundantly through this book greatly increase its value. To young and old they teach more vividly and impressively than words. No verbal description, however accurate and minute, can be worth anything like as much to the reader as the plainest picture of the thing described. One glance at the rudest outline of Jerusalem will fix its form and situation more deeply in the memory than a whole volume of verbal description.

The original works of the Italian, and Flemish, and Spanish schools of art are very wonderful in coloring and in composition, but they are seldom true to the Bible story; they give very imperfect views of people and customs in the Bible times. The Bible student will find more in the pictures which form a part of this Commentary, to help him understand the Scriptures, than he would in all the works of Raphael and Rubens, of Michael Angelo and Murillo.

These illustrations take the reader out into the pasture-grounds of the patriarchs and show him the sheep and the goats, the flock and the fold, the well and the fountain, just as Isaac and Jacob saw them at Beersheba and Bethel and Shechem. He wanders with the great household over hill and plain in the glow of the morning, and rests in the hot noon under the shadow of the shepherd's tent.

All these things, and many others, are set before the eye of the reader in pictorial illustration, and so he receives a far more definite and lasting impression of Bible times, lands, and people, than could ever be given by verbal description alone. The sacred record becomes to him a living book, and its spiritual truths are so bound up in earthly and material forms that he can grasp their meaning and carry it with him through all the journey of life. The great lessons of courage and constancy, and faith, and love, are set before him in such a companionable and every-day dress, that he is insensibly drawn into sympathy with saints, and heroes, and apostles, and martyrs. He makes them the companions of his best hours, and he learns to imitate the best things in their lives. The holy men of old walk with the men of the living age, and the blessing of the fathers descends to the children from generation to generation.

The style and the whole execution of the work are well fitted to secure so great and good a result. The entrance of the book into the house and the careful study of its sacred lessons will begin a new era of light and instruction for the household.

DANIEL MARCH.

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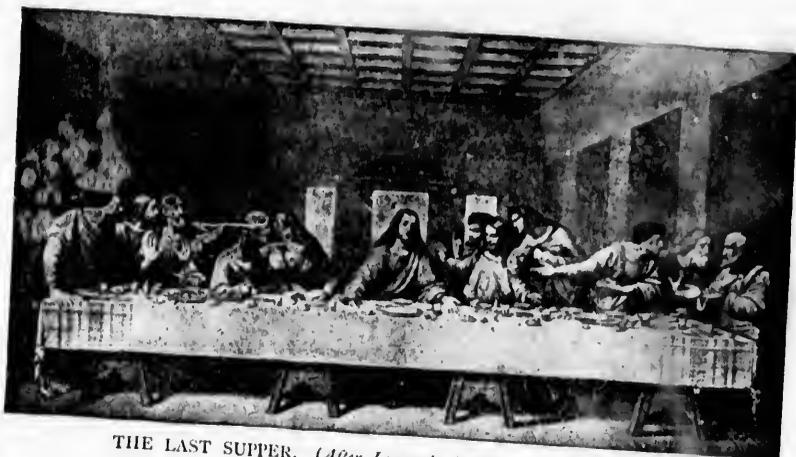
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THE LAST SUPPER. (After Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting.)

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.*

The Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW I, II.



HIS opening book of the New Testament introduces us into a new era and a new condition of things. When this book was written, nearly four hundred and fifty years had passed since Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, had completed his prophecies; the Jews had been governed by their high-priests, under the authority of foreign monarchs; had been oppressed, persecuted, and slain, and many of them compelled, under fear of death, to deny the God who had preserved and kept them; then they had been for nearly one hundred and fifty years under the government of prince-priests, who, at first, were wise, and patriotic, and good, but after three or four generations had become corrupt and vile; and they

* This, the opening book of the New Testament, the Genesis of the later revelation, corresponds in many points with the first book of the Old Testament. It was originally written in Hebrew, or

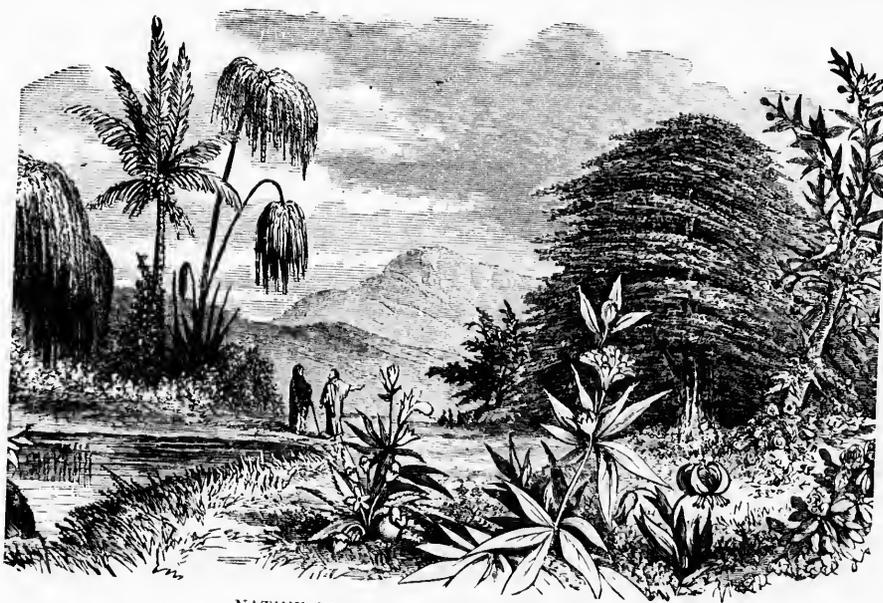
were now ruled by a very wicked king, Herod, who was himself a vassal of the Romans. In these four hundred and fifty years they had become fanatical in their observance of the traditions of the elders or rabbis, insisting on the minutest obedience to them, while they openly disobeyed the great principles of the moral law. The Pharisees, the leading sect among them, were self-righteous and hypocritical; they believed in a coming Messiah, but thought he would be a temporal king, and would deliver them from the Romans. They believed also that they alone would have a right to be the officers of the new kingdom which he would set up, and that the common people and all the Gentiles would be shut out from it.

We shall see, as we study this and the other gospels, how different was Christ's kingdom and mission from what they had supposed; and we shall also see what it really was. This first book or gospel is addressed to the Jews, and hence may be called a Jewish gospel; it presents the Messiah in his kingly character,* and hence is the kingly gospel; but more than all else, it shows, sadly but truly, how the Messiah was rejected by his own people, the Jews, and hence has

rather Aramaic, a corrupt dialect of Hebrew, spoken at that time by Syrian Jews, and was afterwards translated into Greek. As the purpose of Genesis was to show how, to a particular family, race, and tribe, the great Redeemer was to be sent, and how, through all the earlier ages, the promise made in the Garden was to be amplified and extended, so in the Gospel according to Matthew we have the history of the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel, to his own chosen people; of their final and conclusive rejection of him as their King; and of the extension of his dominion, and the offers of salvation to all nations. It is the beginning of a new and more glorious era; and yet, more than any other book of the New Testament, except, perhaps, the Epistle to the Hebrews, it connects itself with the Old Testament in its application of prophecies, in its genealogies, its references to Jewish laws and customs, and in its constant use of Old Testament forms of expression concerning the Messiah. It contains more of the discourses or sermons of Christ, more of his miracles, and a larger number of his parables, than any of the other gospels; and it presents all in a systematic order, not chronological, but with the distinct purpose of showing their relations to one another, and to the general object of the Gospel. It has twenty-eight chapters, and is particularly full on those points on which the other gospels touch but lightly. It was probably written, primarily, for the Jewish disciples, perhaps within six or eight years after the ascension of Christ, and, at all events, several years earlier than any of the other gospels.

* Read Matt. ii, 2; ii, 6, 13; iii, 2; iv, 11, 23; v, 22; vi, 13; vii, 28, 29; ix, 35; xiii, 33, 44-47; xiii, 19, 41; xvi, 19; xix, 28; xxi, 5, 9-16; xxiv, 14; xxv, 31, 34, 40; xxvi, 53; xxvii, 51-53; xxviii, 19. Read, also, "The Gospel according to Matthew, a Lecture," by Rev. Henry G. Weston, D. D., to whom the writer is indebted for some of these thoughts and references.

been fittingly called "the Gospel of the rejection." The word "Gospel" has been variously defined; it comes from the old Anglo-Saxon, and signifies good news, tidings, or history; it is properly the good news or history of Christ's taking our nature and becoming our Redeemer, and this is the way in which it is used in these four books. It is sometimes used in a larger sense, as meaning all of God's word or revelation to man. The Greek word which is translated *gospel* means



NATIVE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM AND LOT.

rather *the evangel*, or good message, implying that it is a message sent from God.

Matthew, whose surname was Levi, was a native of Galilee. Although a Jew, he had been appointed a publican or tax-gatherer by the Romans, who then ruled over Palestine. These publicans were much hated by the Jews. The taxes were of various kinds: a personal or poll-tax, licenses for fishing or for trade; export and import duties, etc. All these taxes Matthew collected at his office in Capernaum, when Jesus called him to leave them all and to follow him.

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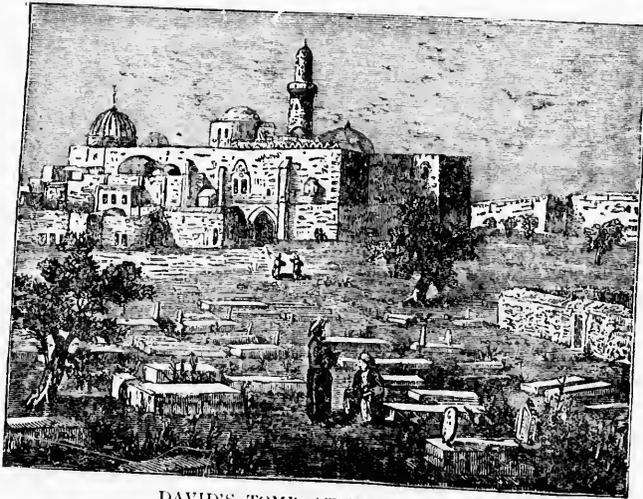
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He obeyed the divine call, became one of the apostles, and recorded for the use of the Jewish disciples what he heard, and saw, and knew of the Messiah.

The first chapter of this gospel tells us from whom Jesus descended. It was the first step toward proving that he was the MESSIAH predicted by the prophets. Messiah means *anointed*. The prophets, priests, and kings of Israel were anointed with oil, to signify that God would so pour his holy blessings upon them; and it showed that they were set apart for their particular offices, to attend to those alone.



DAVID'S TOMB AT MOUNT ZION.

The Messiah, as Jesus is called, more especially bore that name, which is in other words *the anointed*, or *the anointed one*. CHRIST is a name which has also the same meaning. None were ever anointed with such an abundance of gifts and of grace as he was. He was a prophet, because he taught the way to heaven, besides foretelling many things which were to happen on earth; a *priest*, because he offered up a sacrifice, and such an one as made all sacrifices of an inferior kind of no use in future, so that they ceased when he offered up himself; and a *king*, because he was to reign over many hearts, and his subjects should yield him willing obedience in all times to come, and in all parts of the world.

Matthew traces the line of Jesus Christ from Abraham; for God promised to Abraham, in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, "In thee shall

all the families of the earth be blessed." It was, therefore, understood by Abraham that one should spring from him, who should indeed bless all the world,—not the Jews only, but the nations of the Gentiles. Matthew, then, in showing that Christ was the Messiah expected, here proves, in the first place, that he had one mark of the Messiah, for he sprang from Abraham.

But this was not enough: Abraham's family branched off in different lines—Isaac's in one branch, and Ishmael's in another; and so with the families that followed. But there was one particular line in which the promise was made, and among those of that line from Abraham was David; God had promised him, as we are told in the seventh chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, that He would set up his seed—or one of his race, after him, and "establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Matthew proves that Christ sprang from David, as well as from Abraham; and therefore proves that he was of a race from which the Messiah was to come.

It was necessary for Matthew to be thus particular in tracing the entire genealogy from Abraham to David, and from David to Christ, in order to demonstrate to the Jews, who were great sticklers for pedigree, that Christ was descended on his reputed father's side, and on the mother's also, from David and Abraham.*

* Some of those people who are very anxious to find errors and contradictions in the Bible have pointed out the objections to this genealogy, that it did not agree with that in Luke iii, 23-38, and that in this several names were omitted; and they have urged that this was a proof that this Gospel was not inspired, nor true. These objections are very easily answered. In regard to the first, it may be said that the Jews, like all oriental nations, kept two distinct genealogies, both official, of their royal families—the first showing the line of succession; the second, the private or family genealogy, showing the collateral branches from which the succession was to be continued, if the main line ran out from want of heirs. This was just the case with David's line. Matthew gives the line of royal succession as it stood in the genealogy of the house of David; Luke gives the private or family record, showing that Joseph was descended from Nathan, the elder brother of Solomon, by the same mother (1 Chron. iii, 5), who was entitled to inherit the kingdom on the failure of the line of Solomon. That line did fail in the case of Jeconiah or Jechonias, who was written childless (Jeremiah xxii, 30), and who adopted as his heir Salathiel, the son of Neri, of the house of Nathan; who was the father of Zerubbabel, the Rhesa or ruling prince after the captivity. There is a mistake here in Luke iii, 27, as Rhesa is not a man's name, but Zerubbabel's official title. Another Jewish law explains the other difficulty—viz., that when the elder son failed to have a son, the son of his brother became his heir, as in the case of Matthan and of Heli, in the genealogy in Luke. Mary, the mother of our Lord, is, by general tradition, said

The next proof was that, as the prophet of Isaiah had foretold, Isa vii, 14, he was born of a *virgin*, or of one that was unmarried; for



“AND THERE WERE SHEPHERDS ABIDING IN THE FIELDS.”

tells us, “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was

to be the daughter or granddaughter of Jacob, the elder brother of Heli, and to have married Joseph, the son of Heli.

though Joseph was the husband of Mary, he was only her betrothed husband—that is, he was only *engaged* to her, as we say;—yet that engagement, according to the custom of the Jews, could not be broken, and so he was, to all intents and purposes, by law and right the husband of Mary, though she was a virgin, or as yet not in reality married. Now, Jesus Christ was “conceived” or formed “by the Holy Ghost,” or the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Ghost who formed the body of the blessed Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary; and St. Matthew

spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." "God with us" means again—God in flesh, God in our nature.

It was revealed to Joseph, in a dream, that this child was the Messiah; and after Jesus was born, Joseph went to live with Mary.

There was a third sign that Jesus was the Messiah—the anointed and expected Saviour, and this St. Matthew also takes care to tell us. He was "born in Bethlehem of Judea." There were two places called Bethlehem, and the place where Christ was born was called Bethlehem of Judea, to distinguish it from another Beth-



"AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHONE ROUND ABOUT THEM."

lehem in the tribe of Zebulun, which is mentioned in Joshua xix, 15. The place where Christ should be born was also mentioned in prophecy: "for thus it is written by the prophets; and thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel." Micah v, 2.

At the time when Christ was born "there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem," to inquire about him. The place from which these wise men came is supposed to have been Persia, because that lay east of Judea. Here they saw a wonderful star shining in the heavens, and it appeared to them to be exactly over the land of Judea. They, therefore, thought that something extraordinary had happened there; and it is supposed that they now remembered a prophecy of Balaam, who lived in the East,—which prophecy might have been handed down to them,—"There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Numbers xxiv, 17.

Herod the Great—as he was called—then reigned over the Jews; and when the wise men inquired after this new king, and the news came to the ears of Herod, he was "troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Herod was troubled for fear that he should lose his crown; and all Jerusalem was troubled lest there should be a civil war about who should have it, Christ or Herod. Now Christ came not to be the king of the Jews, as Herod was, but to be a spiritual king—to reign, not over territories, but over hearts; and to conquer, not the surrounding nations, but to overcome sin, death, and the powers of hell.

But Herod did not understand this, and he therefore very craftily set about, if possible, to destroy Jesus. And first he inquired of the chief priests and scribes where Christ was likely to be born; and they referred him to the prophecy of Micah, and told him—at Bethlehem of Judea. So Herod sent for the wise men, and informed them that he had found out the place after which they inquired, and he wished them to go and see the new king; and when they had found him they were to let him know, that he might worship him; but his real design was, not to worship Jesus, but to kill him.*

* The exact date of the birth of Christ has occasioned much dispute. Dionysius Exiguus, a Syrian monk of great learning, in the sixth century published, as the result of his researches, the opinion that Christ was born 753 years after the founding of Rome—or, as you will sometimes see in books, A. U. C.—Anno Urbe Condita—753. As no one could then prove to the contrary, that year was after a time generally adopted by the nations of Europe as the year one of the Christian era. But within the last two hundred years, Biblical scholars have discovered, by comparing the death of Herod, the date of which is known absolutely, and the date when certain Roman gov-

Having received Herod's commands, the wise men took their leave, and set off for Bethlehem, which was only six miles from Jerusalem. When the wise men departed, the star directed them to the house, where "they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him." Then, according to the custom in that part of the world, when great persons were approached, and especially kings, they "opened their treasures, and presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh," the frankincense and myrrh both being valuable gums from Arabia and other parts of the East.

The wise men having seen Jesus, and left this suitable supply to his parents, who, though descended from King David, were but poor, departed for their own homes. Their nearest way was that which they took, and so they had no need to return to Jerusalem, as Herod desired them to do; but the grand reason why they did not was because God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

God then spoke to Joseph by an angel in a dream, and ordered him to leave Bethlehem directly with the infant Jesus and his mother, and go into Egypt, which was not far from Judea, and was out of Herod's dominions, and there to remain till he should receive a like command to return, for Herod would seek to kill the child. So Joseph got up directly and escaped by night into Egypt, where he, Mary, and the infant, remained till the death of Herod.

When Herod found that the wise men did not return, he was in a great rage; and supposing that Jesus was at Bethlehem, he was resolved yet to carry his wicked design against him into effect. He could not, indeed, learn which was the infant he wanted, but to make sure of his mark he ordered some of his officers to go to Bethlehem,



BRANCH OF THE SHRUB YIELDING
THE GUM CALLED MYRRH.

errors ruled in Judea, that the date of Dionysius was several years too late. It is now generally believed that Christ was born in 749 A. U. C., or four years before our era, though Lewin and some others say it was six years.

and kill all the children that were two years old and under, thinking that by killing the children of that age he should be sure to kill the new king. The wicked king Herod was so cruel that history tells us he even slew three of his own sons; no wonder he had a heart so hard as to kill the little infants in Bethlehem.

When Herod was dead, Joseph was again spoken to by an angel in



EASTERN TRAVELERS.

a dream; and, being ordered to return, he left Egypt and went to live at Nazareth.

Account of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW III.

Another testimony to Jesus being the Messiah is stated by St. Matthew. It is that the Messiah was to have a forerunner; or, as great men used to have footmen or heralds going before them to clear

the way for them, so Jesus was to be announced to the world by a prophet. And "in those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea." This was "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord," which the prophet Isaiah foretold in the fortieth chapter of his prophecy.

John the Baptist—the name by which he is distinguished from John the Evangelist—was a priest of the order of Aaron, though we do not find that he ever ministered in the temple; but we shall have occasion to notice more about him as we proceed through the four Gospels.

The subject on which John the Baptist preached was repentance; the theme of his discourses was—"Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

The dress of John the Baptist appears to have been singular enough; but it was the dress in which the prophets usually appeared—perhaps a camel's skin with the hair on it, or a garment of hair, which was very rough; for in such plain robes the prophets used to dress. John's meat was also as singular as his dress, for he lived chiefly on "locusts and wild honey."

It appears that John, by his preaching, attracted great crowds. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan"; not that every person in Jerusalem and Judea, and round about them, heard him at the same time, nor that every person heard him at all, but Matthew means that the crowds were great from all parts of Jerusalem and Judea, and they were of all sorts, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, Pharisees and publicans. To these he spoke in bold language, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come! And he told them not to boast about Abraham being their father—that is, not to boast that they were Jews descended from Abraham; but to bring forth good fruit, that is, good works, as a good tree brings forth good fruit; and so, if they wished to be thought the children of pious Abraham, they must be pious like Abraham.

Our Lord Jesus from his childhood till now, when he was almost thirty years of age, had lain hid in Galilee.

"It is supposed that John the Baptist began to preach and baptize

about six months before Christ appeared." Prior to his entering on his ministry, Christ came to John to be baptized of him; and John baptized him, though he felt reluctant to do it, and thought it too great an honor when Christ went to him for that purpose. After this was done, John saw the heavens opened, as it were; the sky looked all clear, and bright, and glorious, to his eyes, and the sweet influences of



THE ANGEL APPEARING TO ZACHARIAS.

divine grace were coming gently and yet strikingly upon Jesus, "like a dove,"—that is, in some form of light resembling the appearance of a dove, and mild as a dove, or as a dove descends, and hovers, and lights.

John also heard a voice speaking from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Thus was Jesus declared to be the Son of God.

In this chapter you read of "the Pharisees and Sadducees;" their

names will often occur in these Gospels. We will next tell you who they were.

The "Pharisees" were a sect or set of men among the Jews, who professed to observe the law of God more than any others; they made a great show of their religion outwardly, and took care that everybody should take notice of them when they prayed, or did any religious service. They contrived, by these means, to gain the favor of the multitude, and their influence was at last so great that they filled many of the best offices. They taught that men could merit heaven, without a Saviour.

The "Sadducees" were a sort of infidels. They believed that the soul died when the body was dead, and denied that the body would rise again. As they believed there was neither reward nor punishment in another world, they did not leave sinners to humble themselves before God, or to receive their deserts from him, but punished offenders against the law in the severest manner. While the Pharisees believed in traditions, these people believed only in the written law of Moses.

The Temptation of Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW IV.

Jesus, after his baptism, withdrew into the wilderness, for a period of fasting and prayer, before entering upon his work as a divine teacher. It is generally believed that the place where he went was what is now known as Mount Quarantania, northwest of Jericho, a very wild and forbidding region, inhabited only by wild beasts. Here, at the end of his forty days of fasting, Satan, who was not quite certain that he was really God manifest in the flesh, assailed him with his sharpest temptations. It is probable that two at least, and perhaps all the three of these temptations were visions, in which the tempter assumed a bodily form; but in the weakened condition of the body of Jesus, after this long fast, these visions might be the most trying of temptations. The first was an appeal to his creative power to furnish himself with food, for he was exceedingly hungry. The tempter suggested: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." It

was in a desert region not far from this that God had provided by a miracle that bread from heaven—the manna—which had fed Israel; and if he was really the son of God, why should he not repeat the miracle in another form? Jesus could have turned the stones into bread if he would, for he afterwards turned water into wine; but he was not willing to lower his divine dignity at the suggestion of the tempter, and he said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." By this he meant that God's word told us to rely upon him to find us bread



THE INFANT JOHN.

when we wanted it, and that those who trusted in him need not require the power of working miracles to produce bread from stones, but only let them trust in God, and he would provide for them. The passage which our Lord quoted you will find in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and in the third verse.

Satan then carried Jesus in vision to the pinnacle, or the top of the temple in Jerusalem, which was not far off. While he was here, standing over the holy city of Jerusalem, Satan proposed to him to cast himself down; and then further suggested

that it was written in the word of God, "He shall give his angels charge over thee," so that he could try by this whether what God's word said was true. Jesus directly replied, with an answer from Scripture, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." To tempt is to try, or put to the test; and we are never to run into danger to see if God can bring us out of it. The above words are quoted from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the sixteenth verse.

Christ was still assailed by Satan, who carried him in vision to a very high mountain, which commanded a view of the surrounding countries, and, while viewing their extent, he showed him "all the kingdoms of the world," and presented to his mind their vast dominion, if he would only serve him. Perhaps his suggestion was

something like this, that: with his mighty power he should have all the idolatrous world immediately for his subjects if he would conform to their customs, and justify their rites, and give honor to their false gods. Here Jesus both baffled and drove the tempter away, for he said: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Here,



JOHN THE BAPTIST PREACHING REPENTANCE.

finally, our Lord referred to the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the thirteenth verse.

Thus this vile enemy was driven away, and offered no more suggestions, for he saw that he could make no impression upon the mind of Christ, as he too often does upon our minds, when we think and do what is evil.

After this Jesus was comforted and fed by angels.

Jesus commenced preaching soon after this, and a few months later

John was cast into prison. The early labors of the Saviour were in Capernaum and its vicinity, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, a few miles from Nazareth; and thus a prophecy was accomplished about his appearing there to give the light of knowledge to the darkened understandings of men.

Now it was that Jesus began to choose some disciples who should attend him on his journeys, learn his doctrines, and see the wonderful things he would do, so that they might bear witness about them after he had left the world.

Walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw Peter and his brother Andrew fishing; and so—for the reason just named—he bade these fishermen follow him, for he would make them “fishers of men,” meaning that they should no more catch fish, but he would employ them to bring sinners to be saved by him. Soon after, he saw James and John, who were fishermen also, and were in a ship, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called to them in the same way, and they also followed him.

Jesus now proceeded in preaching; and, in addition to this, he worked miracles, or did many things beyond the reach of natural means to do; and so St. Matthew gives us yet another evidence that he was the Messiah—the Anointed Saviour.

Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

MATTHEW V, VI, VII.

We now come to what is called our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. It contains the beatitudes, or declarations of blessings made by Jesus. His first words are: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” By these he means all humble souls who feel their need of a Saviour, as a truly poor man feels his need of charity. While many a proud rich man, and many a proud poor man too, shall be shut out of heaven, such a humble poor soul shall have a rich portion there.

Then he proceeds: “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted;” that is, they that are sorry for their sins, and grieve that

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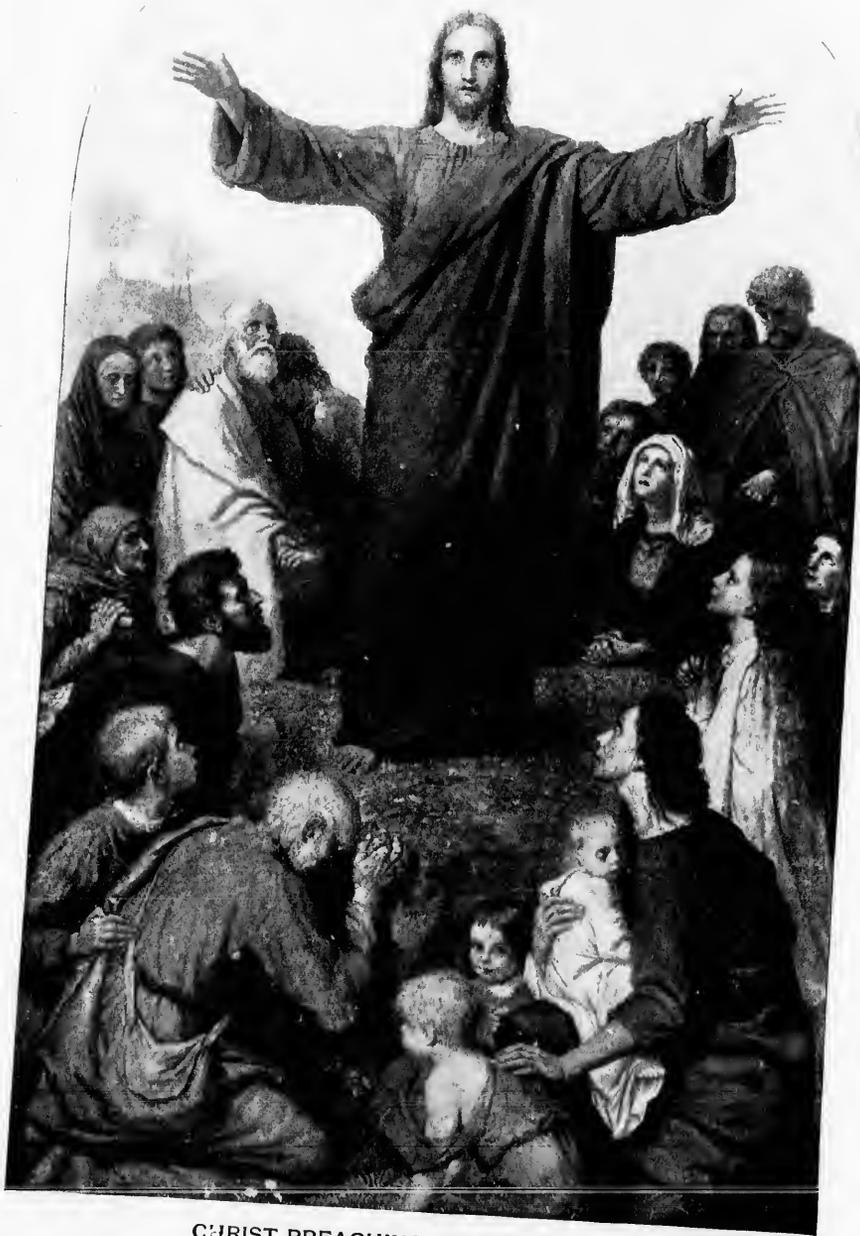
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CHRIST CALLING PETER AND ANDREW.
"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."—Matt. IV, 19.

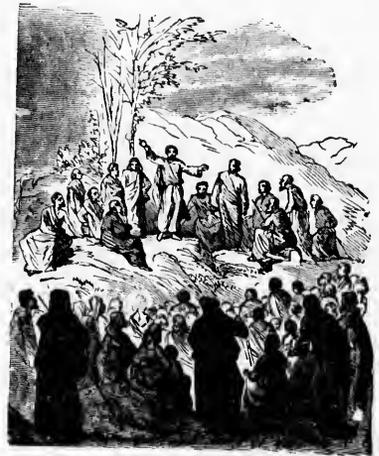




CHRIST PREACHING ON THE MOUNT.

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."—Matt. V, 18.

they have offended against a good God, shall be pardoned for Jesus Christ's sake. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"; angry persons, full of resentment at every affront, can never enjoy any comfort of life; but meek spirits, having the temper of Christ, really inherit all the good that is around them, and enjoy it for themselves. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"; those who find themselves guilty before God, and with a desire strong as a hungry man has for meat, or a thirsty man for drink, look for acceptance with God through a better righteousness, or better merits than their own, shall be satisfied with the righteousness of the Saviour. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"; those who show mercy and kindness toward the bodies and souls of their fellow-creatures, for Jesus Christ's sake, shall receive mercy from him. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"; and none else shall see him in glory, but those whose hearts or dispositions are made clean and new by the Divine Spirit. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." Those who do all they can to make men live quietly and harmlessly, like real Christians, and to stop strife whenever they see it, God will bless, and they shall be owned as his children, who so strikingly bear one of the marks of his image; so you see that those who love to quarrel have no right to look for the Saviour's blessing. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This means that those who are ill-treated by wicked people, because they are religious, shall be rewarded at last with the blessings of glory, which their persecutors, except they repent, can never enjoy. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of



SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

evil against you falsely for my sake." Those who are called ill-natured names, or names intended to reproach them, because they serve God in sincerity, shall be blessed too; "Rejoice and be exceeding glad," if this is the case, "for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets"; and if they did so to the holy prophets, you must expect that they will not spare you.

Our Divine Teacher then goes on to show what he expects from those who are his disciples.

He removes every ground of mistake about his doctrine, and shows the people that his disciples must reverence the holy law of God, and the truths taught by the prophets, and have a better righteousness or holiness than the Scribes and Pharisees, who were men that made only an outside show of religion, while, in their hearts, they did not love the law of God.

To help you to understand better our Lord's discourse, I must just notice these two classes.

The one class of persons is called "Scribes." They wrote copies of the Scriptures long before printing was known in the world, and whatever they heard of traditions, or things in the Jewish history which God's word did not record; they also read and explained the Scriptures to the people, giving their own fancied meaning to them, while the people listened to their comments with great reverence. Many of these Scribes were Pharisees, and so our Lord often coupled them together.

The other class of persons is called publicans. A publican we understand to be a person who keeps an inn; but these publicans were not inn-keepers, but tax-gatherers employed by the Romans to collect taxes of the Jews, who were then subject to Rome. They were not liked by the Jews, and, in gathering the taxes, very often cheated the



READERS OF THE JEWISH LAW.

people, dealt hardly with them, and took more from them than they ought, for the purpose of putting the money into their own pockets.

In continuing his sermon, our Lord warns against making a show of our charity, and also against making a show of prayer.

And here our Lord tells us what kind of petitions are to be offered, in what we call "The Lord's Prayer," which, as you probably know, we wish you well to understand. Here you address God as your Father; for, as a father, he provides for you; you look to him in heaven, the holy dwelling of his glory; you express a desire that his name may be treated with reverence; you wish that he may reign over your heart, and over the hearts of others everywhere, and that his holy law

may be done among all mankind; you acknowledge that you live by his bounty, who gives you daily bread; you confess your sins, which are debts to God, because they have left you short in paying God the duties you owe to him, and you ask him graciously to pardon them, as you pardon those who offend you—which we hope you do; you ask God to preserve you

from doing sinful things, which is meant by "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," or from the evil one, who is Satan; and you express your full belief that God can do all that you ask, and your desire to give him honor and praise, by ending the prayer with saying, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." Amen means, *so be it*.

Other warnings given by our Lord are against being covetous. Jesus Christ tells such persons that, if their treasures consist in fine garments, like those laid up by rich people in the East, the moth will by-and-by eat them up; or, if in precious metals, they will at last canker; or, in other treasures, they may be robbed of them; and it is,



JEWISH SCRIBES IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

therefore, much wiser to look for a lasting portion of better treasure—the happiness of heaven; the love and favor of God forever is far better than all the riches that ever were got together in this world.

He then goes on to warn against being insincere in religion, against thinking uncharitably of others, against doing harm to anybody, against being deceived by false prophets,—that is, false preachers or teachers,—and also against deceiving ourselves.

Lastly, our dear Saviour concludes his sermon by a pretty and striking comparison, taken from fishermen in the East, who, to be near the sea at fishing time, build their huts on the sands, when the storms come and, in a moment, sweep them all away. So, he tells us, will the hopes of all those perish who are contented with hearing what he taught, but never doing it; but those who mind his sayings and do them shall be like a wise man, who built his house on a rock, which floods, rain, and wind could never sweep away. The house of the wise man fell not, for it was founded upon a rock; the house of the foolish man fell, and great was the fall of it, for it was built upon the sand. Christ himself is as a rock, on which thousands have safely rested their hopes for eternity; but this world, with all its hopes of pleasure, is but as sand; and those who build upon it for happiness must at last lose everything, and be ruined forever.

Thus Christ ended his divine sermon, and the people were astonished at hearing him—all he said was so wise, pure, and good; all he said was so different from what the Scribes and Pharisees had taught. And he still preaches to us in this sermon: he still preaches to us in his holy word. May we learn of him, for he is still, by his Holy Spirit, ready to teach us—he is “meek and lowly of heart, and we shall find rest for our souls.”

Miraculous Cures performed by Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW VIII, IX.

When Jesus came down from the Mount, the people did not like to leave him, they were so delighted with what he had said. Crowds followed him wherever he went.

Matthew now tells us about a wonderful cure which Jesus performed. A poor creature afflicted with leprosy earnestly cried to him for help. If we had seen him our hearts would have felt the greatest pity for him, for the leprosy was a most miserable disease. We think we see him, with his white skin covered all over with scurf, which, had it been taken off, would have shown a body full of raw wounds. Perhaps he could hardly drag along his swollen limbs, with deformed joints, the effect of his horrible disease; and every one stood away from him, lest he should be infected by him. But Jesus, whose

“Heart is made of tenderness,”

was ready at once to help him; and if others pitied him, and could not help, Christ both pitied and helped him, too. He touched him, and he was cured; his word was enough to remove the disorder—“I will; be thou clean.”

Matthew here tells us of another wonderful cure which he did. A Centurion, or officer in the Roman army, met him in a place called Capernaum, where he was dwelling; and, doubtless, having heard of his fame and readiness to do good, he humbly asked him to cure his servant. “Lord,” said the officer, “my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.” It is not quite certain that Matthew meant by the palsy, in this chapter, the disease which we call by that name; for the names of diseases, and the diseases themselves change from age to age; but the disease was, at all events, very distressing and generally considered incurable; but Christ could cure it as well as he did the leprosy; so he said, “I will come and heal him.” The officer thought it was too great an honor for Christ to visit him, and again humbly asked him only to command the disease to go, and it would obey him, as readily as his soldiers did when he gave them the word of command. This was great faith in his power, to believe that he could cure the man, though the man was not there. But he knew that Christ could see the man, though the man could not see him; and, as Christ delights in those who fully trust in him, he praised the man’s faith to his disciples, to teach them to trust him with the same confidence; and he told the Centurion to go home, and he would find his

servant well; and so he was, for he "was healed in the self-same hour."

The next account of Christ's curing the sick informs us that the mother of Peter's wife was "sick of a fever"—a disorder that is often very severe and killing, and if cured it is not to be cured in a moment. But Jesus only touched her hand, and the fever left her.

At that time Satan and his wicked spirits tormented the bodies of some persons in a surprising way, as though they would prevent Christ from gaining honor by curing these victims. But these were nothing before him, for "he cast out the devils with his word."

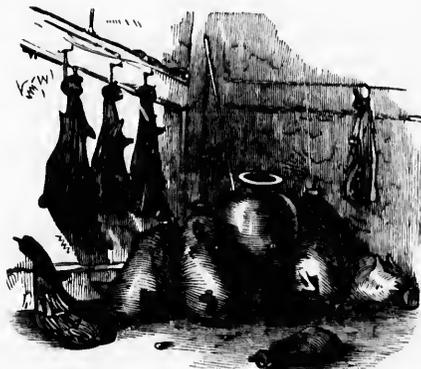


HEALING THE BLIND.

Perhaps you have seen the sea, and how rough its waves are. Did you ever see it in a storm? It foams most furiously, and its waves swell like high mountains. It dashes against the rocks as if it would even crush them to pieces. When this is the case the winds blow with a force that scarcely anything can resist. In such a storm the disciples were when Christ was with them in a ship, crossing the sea of Tiberias into the country of Gadara. While they were all in alarm, and "the ship was covered with waves," he was in a sweet sleep. The disciples, whose faith in his divine power was now fully strengthened, having seen what wonderful things he did, immediately awoke him, and cried, "Lord, save us: we perish!" His tender heart felt pity for their distress, and he instantly commanded the winds and the waves to be still, "and there was a great calm." Well might they wonder and say, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"

The next instance of our Lord's power is the cure of two men possessed of devils. These men lived in caves of the rocks, where the

Jewish people used to make their tombs to bury their dead, and they were so "exceeding fierce" that "no man might pass by that way." The wicked spirits that were in these unhappy bodies were in a still greater rage when they saw Christ approaching them, and they said, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" From which question it is believed that wicked spirits will be more tormented after the day of judgment than they ever yet have been. Since these devils found that Christ would not let them keep possession of the bodies of these poor men whom they tormented, they asked to go into a herd of swine that they saw near them—for they would rather torment these poor animals than be prevented from doing any harm at all. Now, as these swine belonged to Jews, and were kept contrary to God's law, who would not allow them to partake of them, being reckoned among the unclean beasts, Jesus, to punish their owners, suffered the devils to go into the swine, which they so tormented that they "ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters."



WINE SKINS.

The covetous Jews were very angry that they had lost their swine, though two of their people had been saved from cruel torments by the loss, and having besought Jesus to leave them, he went home again to Capernaum.

Jesus having returned to Capernaum, another man, "sick of the palsy," was brought to him on his bed, or mattress, which in the Eastern countries is very light and thin. Our Lord, seeing that the man himself, and his friends, believed in his willingness and power to cure him, instantly gave him relief, both in soul and body,—he pardoned his sins, and he sent him home, carrying the bed on which he was brought. Some of the wicked Scribes who were present, when they

heard Christ tell the man that his sins were forgiven him, charged him with blasphemy, because none but God could forgive sins, and they knew not that he was "God *manifest*," or *secr*, "in the flesh." But they must have been ashamed of themselves, and put to silence when our Lord afterwards cured the man; for as none but God could forgive sins, so none but God could say with effect to one sick of the palsy, "Arise and walk."

At this time Matthew was called to be one of Christ's disciples; Luke calls him Levi, for the Jews often had two names. He was sitting taking taxes at "the receipt of custom," or a custom-house, where duties on goods are paid to the king, when Jesus said to him, "'Follow me.' And he arose and followed him." So, when his grace touches the heart, sinners now leave all their wicked connections, and are ready to give up all their worldly gains, if they stand in their way, and follow the Lord Jesus Christ by openly professing him, and declaring in their lives whose they are and whom they serve.



LEATHER BOTTLES.

We next find Jesus at a feast given by Matthew to his friends, as appears from the fifth chapter of Luke. Perhaps he wished to do them good on this occasion, and wanted them to hear what his Lord would say. His companions were publicans, or tax-gatherers, a set of men greatly despised because they pressed people so hard to get all the money they could from them. The proud Pharisees, who thought themselves the best of men, were astonished that Christ, who taught the people to be holy, should sit down with such company. But our Lord did not go there to countenance any wickedness, but with the design to teach them the way to be saved.

The seventeenth verse of this chapter refers to a custom not known in America, and for that reason some have not understood it. Our Lord says, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." He said this to signify that his disciples, being men taken from active business, and not accustomed to fast, as were the disciples of John,

were not fit to bear the severity of it any more than an old bottle could bear new wine; and, in a verse preceding, than an old rotten garment would bear mending with a strong, new piece. Now we can see why an old garment must not be mended with a strong, new piece of cloth, because the new piece would tear away the rotten part by its strength and weight. But how can new wine hurt old bottles? An old American bottle is as good as a new one, and perhaps, indeed, better, because it is seasoned,—has been tried and found good. But the bottles used in the East were made of the skins of goats or kids, which were taken off whole and dressed; all the legs but one, and the neck, being tied up, were used until the leather became tender and easily rent by strong pressure.

A certain ruler of the synagogue, where the Jews worshiped, had a daughter lying dead; and, having heard of the wonderful things which Jesus did, he believed that he was able to restore his daughter, even from death itself, and so went and worshiped him, and asked him for his almighty aid. Jesus arose from Matthew's table where he was then sitting, and, following the ruler, went with him to his house.

On his way to the ruler's house a poor woman who had had "an issue of blood twelve years," and which she could get no one to cure, came behind him, and, being full of faith in his power to cure her, she thought she would touch the hem of his garment,—the fringe which our Lord wore as a Jew,—and even that garment, hanging about his sacred person, might be the channel of conveying the healing virtue which he possessed to her poor diseased body. Jesus knew all about what she was doing, and why she did it, and he graciously turned round to her and said: "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." *He*, indeed, had made her whole, but by her *believing* in his power to heal her she had received the cure.

Jesus then went to the ruler's house, and when he came there he "saw the minstrels and the people making a noise." This was a proof that his daughter was really dead, for the minstrels were pipers who



POURING WINE OUT OF A BOTTLE.

played mournful tunes, and the noise was such as was made by mourning women, who were always employed among the Jews to groan and cry over deceased persons. So he stopped their playing and mourning, and told them that the little maiden was not dead, but only slept; for she was not dead to him, since he could at once restore her; but, as they had seen that she was dead, they laughed at him for saying the contrary. However, he soon gave proof that death to him was no more than a sleep; and though no merely human being could awake



VALLEY OF SALT, BETWEEN CANAAN AND EDOM.

the dead, he could. And, going in, he took her by the hand; and she rose up: and the fame of this cure went abroad everywhere.

When he left the ruler's house two blind men followed him, and they cried: "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." These men believed that Jesus was the true Messiah, or anointed Saviour,—and, as he was to be of the family of David, they addressed Christ, "Thou Son of David." He let them follow him into the house, and then he asked if they really believed he could cure them. And they said, "Yea, Lord;" and, he having merely touched their eyes, they received sight.

The blind men had hardly left the house when the people brought Jesus "a dumb man possessed with a devil." It is thought that the wicked spirit had taken away his power of speech. "And when the devil was cast out the dumb spake: and the multitudes marveled, saying, 'It was never so seen in Israel.'" Moses, Elijah, and Elisha were great prophets, and did wonderful things,—but so many such things, and done in so wonderful a way, were never before known in Israel. And these same multitudes were doubtless greatly influenced to regard Christ as being sent from God, and as being all he claimed for himself; but were so rigidly held by the power of the synagogue, and the Jewish priesthood, that they hesitated, and even feared, to harbor such conviction—much more, to give utterance to it, in a way that would be likely to reach the ears of those in authority. Only the careful Bible student can properly estimate the force of this.

Christ's Twelve Disciples.

MATTHEW X.

We have here a list of the twelve apostles, which, for the sake of memory, we put down in three columns, and divide into three fours:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Simon, called Peter. | 5. Philip. | 9. James, son of Alphaeus. |
| 2. Andrew, his brother. | 6. Bartholomew. | 10. Lebbeus, surnamed Thaddeus. |
| 3. James, son of Zebedee. | 7. Thomas. | 11. Simon, the Canaanite. |
| 4. John, his brother. | 8. Matthew. | 12. Judas Iscariot. |

Of these, the first two, Simon Peter and Andrew, were brothers. The next two, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, were also brothers.

The last among the next four was Matthew, the writer of this gospel; and the last of the last four was Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed his Divine Master.

In the first verse these are called *disciples*, which means persons who *learn of a teacher*; for Christ was their teacher, and they learned from him. In the second verse they are called *apostles*, which means persons who *are sent*. These twelve were chosen as Christ's disciples, that they might be always with him, and see the wonderful things which he did, and hear the divine doctrines which he taught; and

afterwards they went forth as apostles to tell the world what they had heard and seen, and so to deliver his *message* as servants whom he had *sent*. *

Christ's Estimate of John the Baptist.

MATTHEW XI.

John the Baptist was at this time cast into prison. The cause of his imprisonment is given in the fourteenth chapter. The wonderful things which Jesus did were, however, told him in that place, and as he desired that his disciples should become acquainted with Christ, he sent them to hear from his own lips what proofs he could give that he was the long-hoped-for Messiah. Jesus both told and showed them what wonderful things he performed on the blind, the lame, the lepers, the deaf, the dead; and how he preached the glad tidings of heavenly mercy to the poor. These were proofs enough.



PRISON IN WHICH JOHN WAS BEHEADED.

Then, as soon as John's disciples were gone, he took occasion to show the character of this good man, on whose faithful ministry many of the people had attended "What," said he, "went ye out into the wilderness to see?" when you went to hear John the Baptist. "A reed shaken with the wind?" They understood the meaning of his question, which was that John the Baptist was not a timid, wavering preacher, weak and shaking like a reed—but they had had the benefit of the boldest warnings from his lips.

"But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses." If they

* For full information regarding the Apostles individually refer to the second department of this book, entitled "The Apostles of Jesus."

had gone to see such an one when they went to see John the Baptist, they had found themselves mistaken, for he was quite a plain man, who was not concerned to make a show of himself in the world, but to prepare the hearts of the people to receive Christ.

Yet again he asked, "But what went ye out for to see? a prophet?" If this had been their expectation, they had been even more highly privileged than those who had heard the prophets, for, in hearing John the Baptist, they had heard more than a prophet, a person more excellent than a prophet,—his "messenger,"—one whom God had sent to be the forerunner of his own Son when he came into the world to preach glad tidings to the lost.

They had indeed heard the greatest man that ever was born; for he was prophesied of by the prophets, and pointed to the very object himself before the people which the prophets had never seen, but were only honored to foretell.

Thus you see that true greatness does not consist of riches, or show, or talents, but it consists in our being servants of Christ; and he who is the most faithful of his servants, and is honored with divine intercourse with him, is raised to the most exalted rank. Indeed, though John the Baptist was so great a man, Jesus said even of him, "Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The little infant in heaven is greater than John was, for he was then exposed to the faults which belong to the best of men, while the infant that is in heaven is free from all sin, and forever near and like his glorious Creator.

The Pharisees' Enmity Against Christ.

MATTHEW XII.

One Sabbath day Jesus was going through a corn-field on his way to the synagogue, and his disciples who were with him, being hungry, plucked some ears of corn and ate them. Now, the Pharisees, though they were wicked in their hearts, were very particular about some outward things, wishing people to think them the most pious men in the world. So they found fault with Jesus for letting his disciples

pluck the corn on the Sabbath, which they considered as a sort of work, forbidden by the fourth commandment, which says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy—in it thou shalt not do any work." (See the twentieth chapter of Exodus.) Jesus, who was always full of wisdom, gave them a prompt reply, to which they could not make any answer, for he reminded them how David ate the shew-bread when he was hungry, and that bread God had commanded to be given



DANCING IN THE EAST.

only to the priests, yet the priest gave it to David and his men. He also told them to recollect that the priests did work on the Sabbath day, and that within the temple too, for they could not kill and sacrifice the beasts without doing work, and yet they were not doing wrong. This silenced them, and he went to the synagogue.

When he arrived at the synagogue they resolved on renewing their attack upon him; and as there was a man there with a withered hand, they asked him if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day. This they did "that

they might accuse him," for they even taught that no medicine was to be given on the Sabbath. Our Lord asked them whether it was not lawful to save a sheep on the Sabbath day; when it had fallen into a pit; and, if a sheep, why not a man, who was of so much more value than a beast? "Wherefore," said he, "it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." We may not only worship God on that day, but we may relieve the poor, visit the sick, and do other works of kindness and charity. This Christ has taught us by healing the sick,

for he said to the man, "Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."

As breaking of the Sabbath was a crime punished by death (see the thirty-fifth chapter of Exodus), the Pharisees, instead of being thankful for the good done to the man, sought to destroy Christ for curing him, declaring that he had broken the Sabbath. Oh, how far will men go in wickedness when their hearts are hardened! How blind the Pharisees must have been not to have seen that none could have done such a cure but God, or by his power! Jesus, however, went away from them, and multitudes followed him, who, hearing what he had done, took their sick with them, "and he healed them all." That was, indeed, a happy Sabbath to all these poor creatures; they would remember it as long as they lived. However, "he charged them that they should not make him known." He did this, perhaps, for two reasons: the one to prevent the Pharisees' having any more proofs of who he was, since they had already refused to believe in him from what they had seen; and the other to teach us that when we do good we ought not to publish it abroad in every place like the Pharisees, who did all their works "to be seen of men."



ANCIENT HARVESTERS.

Among those our Lord healed was "one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb." This cure, more than all the rest, quite astonished the people, and they said that Christ was certainly "the Son of David," meaning the Messiah, for he was to spring from David, and so Christ was his son. The Pharisees heard of this cure, but they said Christ did it by the aid of the false god Beelzebub, whom they styled "the prince of devils." Now, the devil does much evil, but never any good, and it was the height of malice to accuse Christ of doing that by the power of the devil which every one whose heart was not obstinately set against him, must have seen was done by the power of God. This was so wicked that our Lord passes sentence against these

hardened men, and since they sinned against the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of God—in saying that the devil did what none but the Almighty could do, he declared that such could have no pardon.

Some Scribes and Pharisees having now surrounded him, asked him to give them some other signs, besides those which he had given, before they would believe in him. Christ would not gratify their vain curiosity, but he tells them that they shall have one sign more, and that “as Jonas (or Jonah) was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” By this he meant his resurrection from the dead—the greatest proof that he was the Messiah. Then, as he was speaking of Jonah, he told them that they, the Pharisees, were so obstinate and wicked that even the men of Nineveh would rise up against them as witnesses in the day of judgment, and condemn them, for they had repented at the preaching of Jonah, while they, the Pharisees, remained impenitent, though a greater than Jonas was there. Jonah is the Hebrew name of that prophet, but Jonas the name he bore among the Greeks.

Parables.—The Sower: The Tares: The Mustard-seed: The Leaven: The Hidden Treasure: The Pearl: The Net.

MATTHEW XIII.

We now come to our Lord’s parables; and they are very interesting indeed, as well as instructive. But do you know what a parable means? It is a sort of fable, and, by feigned stories, teaches us true things. Parable sometimes has other meanings in Scripture, but this is the meaning of our Lord’s parables. You have perhaps been amused with Æsop’s or Gay’s fables, and they teach us many good lessons about how we should conduct ourselves in going through the world; but our Lord’s parables teach us how we may find a better world. The finest fables are comparatively nonsense by the side of Christ’s parables. They are so simple, so natural, so tender, so beautiful—and yet some of them are so grand.

The first parable in this chapter is that called “the *Sower*.”

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A CUP OF COLD WATER.

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."—Matt. X, 42.



"BEHOLD, A SOWER WENT FORTH TO SOW."—Matt. 13: 3.

Our Lord explains this parable. The *Sower* was himself, and it may also mean every *minister of his gospel*; the *seed* which he sows when he preaches is the best of seed—*God's word*. The *ground* on which he sows is the *heart*. Now, when he sows, sometimes "the wicked one" comes and takes away the seed; and when we do not pay attention, we let the devil get into our minds, and, like the little birds with the seed, he carries away from us all the good we might get. At other times we hear the word with great pleasure; but if any wicked persons find fault with us that we are too religious, then we are in danger of minding what they say, and of thinking too lightly of the joy we felt when we heard the gracious truths of the blessed gospel; and so we are like the stony-ground hearers, for the seed withers in our hearts, instead of taking root. At other times we let bad, foolish, and vain thoughts enter into our minds while we are hearing, and these become so numerous that there is not room for anything better to enter. Then it is that the word in our hearts resembles the seed sown among thorns. But if we hear the word, if we understand it, and if we bring forth fruit, and are holy in our thoughts and lives, then the good seed takes root, and we show that we have not received it in vain. The next parable is "The Wheat and Tares." You may read it from the twenty-fourth to thirtieth verses.

You will often find our Lord using the expression, "the kingdom of heaven." But he does not mean by it the state of blessedness to which all that are made holy go when they die. That, too, is the kingdom of heaven, which we may call the kingdom of heaven *above*; but there is a kingdom of heaven *below*. All that hear the gospel are within the boundaries of this kingdom. Christ, in his gospel, asks them to become his subjects; and those who submit to his laws in this kingdom *below* are prepared for the kingdom *above*. There are, however, many that do not submit to them; these are mixed with those that do, and are like bad seed among the good. Well, they must both grow together now, but they will not always grow together. The day of judgment is coming, and that will be the harvest. Then the wicked will be burned, and the good will be laid up like precious wheat, as treasure in a storehouse.



We have then a short parable of "The Treasure." In the kingdom of heaven there is a rich treasure. The gospel is the field where it is to be found. Here are "durable riches."

We have another parable of "The Merchantman." He was trying to find out some goodly pearls, that he might gain by them; and at last he met with one, and parted with everything he had that he might get it for himself.

"My heart exulting sings,
For I this precious pearl have found."

"Jesus Christ," says Mr. Henry, "is a pearl of great price, a jewel of inestimable value, which will make those that have it rich, truly rich, towards God: in having him, we have enough to make us happy here, and forever."



BLACK MUSTARD.

The parable of "The Net" follows next. After explaining the wheat and the tares, you will at once see the meaning of this parable.

Then comes "The Householder." "Every Scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The teachers among the Jews were Scribes. Our Lord, therefore, was now bringing up his disciples to be teachers, and he meant

by this that if they were good teachers, they would be like a good householder, who had both old and new things to set at his table.

We are told, at the close of this chapter, that people were everywhere astonished at Christ's wisdom; especially were they surprised who heard him speak where he was brought up. His reputed father was a carpenter; and they said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" But the knowledge of Christ was that of the Son of God. Yet, because he did not take the form of a rich man, but "for our sakes became poor," the silly people thought it strange that he should know so much,

and be able to teach the way to heaven even better than the learned Scribes. "And they were offended in him." They did not like to be taught by him, and so, as they despised his teaching, "he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."

**The Martyrdom of John the Baptist.—Christ Feeds the Multitude.
—Christ Walks on the Sea.**

MATTHEW XIV.

The first thing that is related in this chapter is the martyrdom of John the Baptist. He was killed by Herod the Tetrarch. This was not the Herod who killed the infants of Bethlehem, but one of his sons. *That* Herod was called Herod the Great, but *this* was called Herod Antipas. When his father died he divided the kingdom into four parts among his four sons, and this son had Galilee, of which he was tetrarch, that word signifying that he had a *fourth part* of the government.

This Herod, like his father, was a bad man. His brother Philip having lost his power and retired into private life, Herod lured away his wife, Herodias, who, being a wicked woman, was easily induced to leave Philip, and marry Herod. John the Baptist had boldly reproved him for this crime, and he cast John directly into prison, and, indeed, would have killed him at once; but as John was esteemed by the people as a great prophet, he feared that they might rise and rebel, and so he contented himself with confining him.

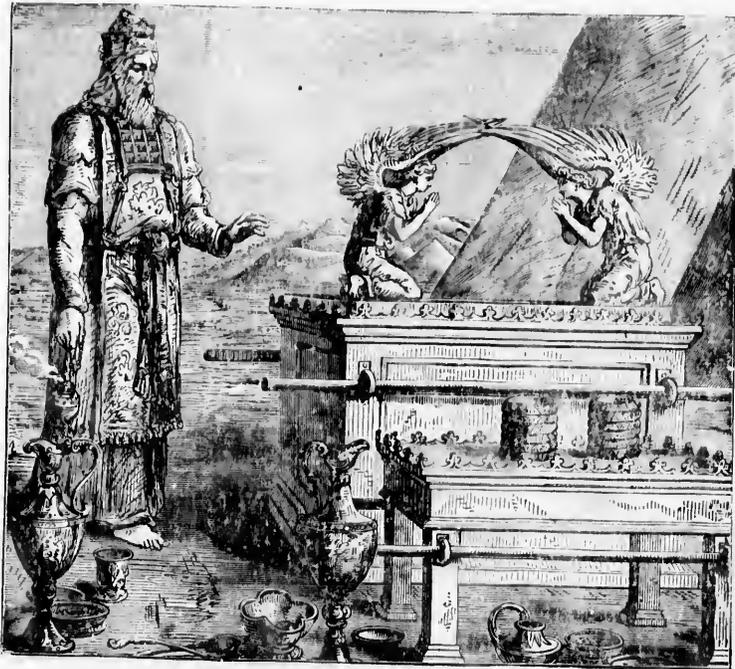
At last his death was determined. Herod kept his birthday with all the splendor of a prince, and there was a merry dance. Among the rest, "the daughter of Herodias was there." She, too, had deserted her unfortunate father. We are not then surprised that she could be guilty of the cruelty she afterwards displayed, for she seems to have been an apt scholar in following the wicked example of her mother. This young creature danced before the court, and Herod was so much delighted that, to show his satisfaction, he declared, with an oath, that she should have anything she asked, even to the half of his kingdom: not that he would have given half his kingdom away, but this was an

Eastern method of speaking, which allowed the person to whom it was addressed to ask a very great favor. You remember that Ahasuerus made the same promise to Esther. Esther, however, saved many lives by her request; but this wretched young creature asked for the life of one of the most excellent of men: she asked for the head of John the Baptist. Her mother urged her on to make this request, but she was as wicked as her mother in making it. When we are told to sin, even a parent's commands are not to be obeyed, because God is above our parents, and all sin is an offense against God. It was not, however, enough that she should ask the head of John the Baptist, but she must have it in a charger, or large dish. This was to satisfy her mother that there was no delay, but that John was actually put to death; and also to prevent Herod's changing his mind, that, on more sober reflection, his heart should not shrink back from the murder. The Evangelists say, "the king was sorry; nevertheless, for his oath's sake," he granted the request. Such an oath had better have been broken than kept. The deed was a far more wicked thing than breaking his word. However, he "sent and beheaded John in the prison;" and the young Salome took the head and handed it to her mother, who satisfied her evil eyes with the sight of her faithful reprovcr's countenance, quiet in death.

And now for a while Herod, Herodias, and Salome were most likely at ease—for conscience often goes to sleep, but only to wake again in a greater fright; but at last it must have been let loose upon them like a roaring lion, when God punished them for their sins. History tells us that when Herod had put away his lawful wife to make room for Herodias, Aretas, king of Petrea—who was father of the former—made war against Herod, and totally destroyed his army. Moreover, at the instigation of the wicked Herodias, he tried to dethrone his brother Agrippa, who ranked higher than he, bearing the royal title, and not that of Tetrarch. Agrippa, however, outwitted him, and procured his banishment to Lyons, where he and Herodias disgracefully died. Salome is also reported to have come to an awful end, and if she had a moment for thought she must have remembered her cruelty to John the Baptist; for going over the ice in winter, it is said the ice broke,

and she slipped in up to her neck, and her head was cut off by the sharpness of the ice. "Thus," says a great writer, "God required her head for that of John the Baptist, which, if true, was a remarkable providence."

When Jesus heard that John was cruelly put to death, he left the place to avoid Herod, for he had yet many works of mercy to do



THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE JEWS BEFORE THE ARK.
JESUS IS NOW THE WHOLE WORLD'S HIGH PRIEST BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD.

before he should leave the world. On his departure, multitudes followed him, and "he healed their sick."

Having led them into a desert place, the people were very hungry and weary, and Jesus felt compassion for them. But there were no less than "five thousand men, besides women and children;" and how were so many to be fed? All that the disciples had were five loaves

and two fishes; and what were they among so many? With Jesus nothing was impossible. "He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." You see: Jesus would not take a meal without looking up to heaven for a blessing. "And they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments twelve basketsful." This was indeed a miracle; and no one could have done this if he had not had power from on high.

Jesus now dismissed the multitude, and sent his disciples across the sea of Galilee, while he went up into a mountain to pray.

In the midst of this night the ship in which the disciples were sailing was overtaken with a violent storm, and they were in the greatest danger of going to the bottom. The Jews divided the night into four parts, relieving their guards on the watch-towers every three hours, and so they reckoned time by these watches. "And in the fourth watch of the night," which was between three and six in the morning, Jesus went to the disciples, "walking on the sea"—another proof of his divine power, who could make the sea, where he pleased to tread, as solid as the earth itself. The disciples were more frightened at the appearance of Christ than at the storm; but Christ spoke kindly to them. And Peter, having asked his leave, went to meet him on the water, for he could make it as firm for Peter as for himself. Peter went a little way, but his faith in Christ's power failed him, and he began to sink; and then he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus caught him by the hand, lifted him up, reproved him for his want of faith, and led him safely to the ship. As soon as they were in the ship the sea was calm. All the passengers and crew saw most plainly that Jesus possessed nothing less than Almighty power, to do what he did, and then "came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

After this they landed in Gennesaret, where Christ performed more miracles.

Christ Cures the Daughter of the Syro-Phœnician Woman, and Feeds the Second Multitude.

MATTHEW XV.

Jesus now left the land of Genesaret, and went into the coasts or borders of Tyre and Sidon, two principal cities of Phœnicia—a renowned country at that time. And a woman of Canaan, or Phœnicia,—for both names meant the same,—met him. You have probably often heard her called the Syro-Phœnician woman, a name given to persons in that part, because Phœnicia bordered on Syria, and, indeed, it had formerly been a part of it by conquest. This woman, it seems, had heard of the fame of Jesus, and she believed, very strongly, that he could help her out of the greatest distress.

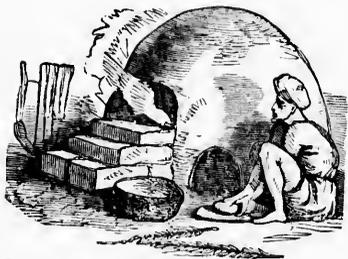
She had a daughter grievously tormented by a violent disorder, resembling madness, and the evil spirit ruled over her troubled mind and body. The instant she saw Jesus she cried earnestly to him to have mercy on her and cure her daughter; and she called him “Lord,” showing her faith in his divine power, and “Thou Son of David,” owning him as the Messiah, the anointed great deliverer who was to save from sin. Jesus, however, did not notice her; but he knew how great was her faith, and he wished to show it to his disciples. Still she cried out, and still he was silent. The disciples then entreated him to grant her request, and send her away. But he said he was only sent “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” meaning that he intended to confine his own ministry to the Jews, and not then to have anything to say to the Gentiles—the people who were not Jews.

The woman was not, however, to be silenced; “she came and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me!” This was a very short prayer, but it was a very fit one and a very earnest one; and if you do but offer up this prayer from your heart, it must and will succeed, and the Lord will help you.

Jesus said, “It is not meet,” or proper, “to take the children’s bread and to cast it to dogs.” By the *children* he meant the Jews, the only

nation that maintained amongst them any of the pure worship of God, their heavenly Father; by the *bread* he meant the word of truth and life which he preached, and which was bread to the believing soul; and by *dogs* the Gentiles, for so they were esteemed by the Jews, being so unclean in their worship and practices. The woman knew what he meant, for in this way the Jews spoke of the Gentiles, and as she lived near them she knew their way of speaking.

Well, she would not take any denial. She knew that Christ could help her, and she still pleaded with him. "Truth, Lord," said she, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." As if she had said, I own all this, I am a Gentile, and thy favors belong to the Jews; I am no better than a dog, for I feel that I am a vile creature before Thee who knowest the heart,—a miserable sinner,—yet as dogs may pick up the crumbs, though they may not sit at their master's table, so in mercy grant me the smallest favor and I shall be happy.



JEWISH BAKER IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

Christ had now fully shown her faith—he commended it, he granted her request, and he cured her daughter.

This story teaches us to be earnest and persevering in prayer, and, though ever so vile, a gracious Saviour will at last have mercy on us.

From the coasts of Tyre and Sidon Jesus went to the sea of Galilee—to the parts near it; and there, upon a mountain, he was visited by "great multitudes," and he cured numbers with all sorts of disorders. There were at this time 4000 men with him, "besides women and children." After being on the mountain for three days, and using the little provision they might have with them, they needed some refreshment; and here again Jesus performed a great miracle, and multiplied seven loaves and a few little fishes, so that "they did all eat and were filled. And they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets-full."

After this he removed to Magdala, a place not far from Tiberias, and

after which it is thought Mary Magdalene was named, of whom we shall read by-and-by.

Peter's Confession about Christ.

MATTHEW XVI.

When Christ came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he put his disciples' faith to the test; and, after asking them what the people in general thought and said about himself, he put the question to them, "But whom say ye that I am?" He knew well all that men said, but he asked the question to lead to the second question, by which he might get a confession of their faith, after all they had seen him do. Peter, who was always forward in speaking, said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" that is, thou art the anointed, by the Holy Spirit of God, to be the King of thy spiritual people Israel;—the true Messiah, and not a mere man, but the divine Son of God. Jesus then commended his faith, and for the information of the disciples around, told him that such knowledge was only given from heaven. Many saw Christ do his miracles, but they did not see his divine glory as Peter did. On this rock, on the dignity and glory of Christ, the Son of God, as on a sure rock, will he build his church; on him all believers rest, who are what make up his church, and hell, with all its powers, shall not prevail against it. Christ told Peter also that he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. You know that I told you, in explaining the parables, what the kingdom of heaven meant, and that all that heard the gospel were in the boundaries of this kingdom, so that it means the spiritual privileges which Christians enjoy in this world, as well as their happy state in the next. Now, there are no *keys* used in this kingdom; the expression is what we call a figure of speech. The keeper of the key of a city is a person of *authority*, and when Christ told Peter he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and so on, he merely meant that he would intrust him, as his faithful servant, with the preaching of his gospel, so that he should have authority to explain what was his truth, since he had so nobly declared it; and what, under the guidance of his Spirit,

he declared to be so, should be so, and whatsoever he declared not to be so, should not be so.

Christ then commanded his disciples to be still for the present, and not to make him known as "the Christ, the Son of the living God"; for, had they done so, the Jews would have proclaimed him as their king, but he came into the world for a very different purpose than that of reigning as an earthly monarch. From this time, therefore, he more fully explained to his disciples why it was that he would not be an earthly king, and that he must suffer, be killed, and raised again the third day. Peter, indeed, could not bear to hear of this, for he loved his Master, and could not without grief think of his suffering, besides which he would rather have seen him king over the Jews. But our Lord reproved him, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" intimating that the evil spirit had suggested the thought of opposing his final suffering, for with that he was to triumph over Satan's kingdom.

He then warned his disciples of the great dangers to which they would be liable if they were true to his cause, and that they must always consider themselves like men having a cross to carry, on which they were to be executed, an allusion they well understood as a mode of execution then in practice.

The Transfiguration of Christ.

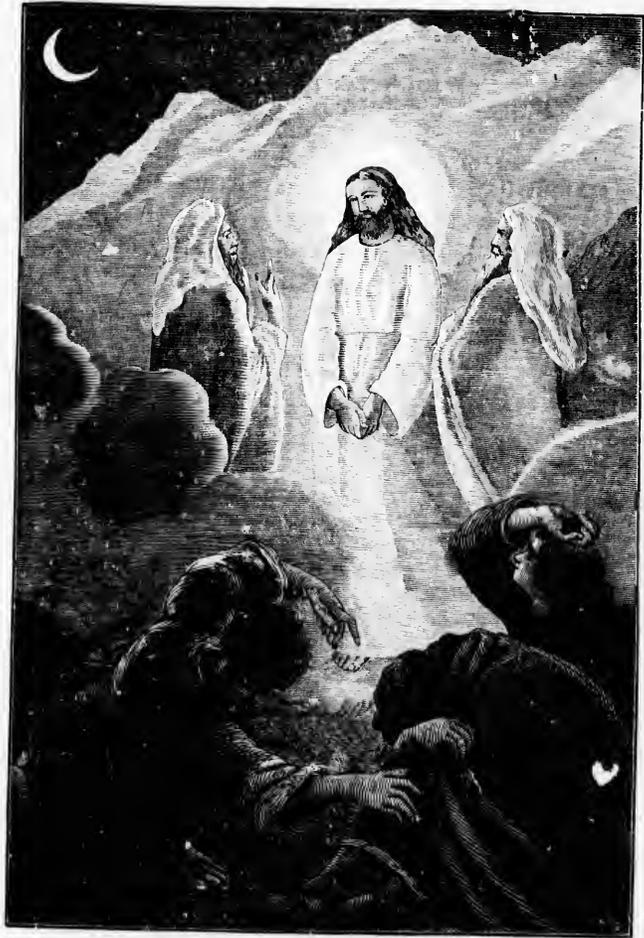
MATTHEW XVII.

We come next to one of the most interesting and impressive scenes in our Saviour's life on earth. He had drawn from the willing lips of Peter, and with the free assent of the others, the frank avowal of their belief that he was the Son of God; he had told them, once and again, the story which had saddened their hearts, of his coming death by crucifixion at the hands of his cruel persecutors; and when they had urged that this must not, should not be, he had calmly, but decidedly, rebuked their lack of faith.

But his heart was full of tenderness, and that they might more clearly comprehend the glory which he had left in coming to earth, and the glory which should follow the completion of his plan of redemp-

tion, when he should return to heaven, he determined to give them such a glimpse as they should be able to bear of the condition of the glorified saints above, and of the necessity of his death, resurrection, and ascension.

For this purpose he takes with him the three favorite disciples, Peter, James, and John, and as the evening shadows are falling, leaves the neighborhood of Cesarea Philippi, in the extreme north of Palestine, where he had been staying for several days, and commences the ascent of one of the southern slopes of Mount Hermon. Wearily did he and his chosen disciples climb the lofty moun-



TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.

tain, till at last, toward midnight, they are within full sight of the highest of the snow-clad summits of the mountain, which, under the bright light of the moon, towers up nearly 9000 feet above the sea. Here,

perhaps, beneath the friendly shelter of some wide-spreading cedar, he withdraws a little from them, to engage, as usual, in prayer. The three disciples, meanwhile, wearied with their climbing, cast themselves down, and are speedily wrapped in slumber. After a while they are conscious of an intense light, which penetrates even through their closed eyelids; and, half-dazed by the suddenness of their awaking, they gaze, astonished, at the scene before them. It is not the light of the moon, though that is shining high in the bright sky of the mountains of Palestine; it is the face of their glorified Lord, shining more brightly than the sun, and illumining the whole atmosphere about them; on that glorious face there are no marks of weariness, care, or sorrow; it is radiant with beauty and joy. The poor, travel-stained robes in which he had climbed, with them, the hills that night, are no longer soiled or frayed, but "white as the light," "shining, exceeding white as snow," more brilliant far than the pure snows on Hermon's summit above them; and while his whole person thus glows with heavenly light, two other forms, glistening, though less brilliantly, with the same heavenly radiance, stand on either side of him. By a sudden intuition the disciples at once recognize them as Moses and Elijah, the greatest lawgiver of Israel and the most renowned and honored of the prophets; they had been in heaven, the one fifteen hundred and the other nine hundred years, and now they have come to do homage to him who had left his throne above, to fulfil the provisions of the law and the predictions of the prophets.

The disciples are dumb with astonishment and awe; they seem to themselves to be in a dream; yet every sense is widely and intensely awake. As they gaze, they listen, and lo! these heavenly visitants are talking, in tones of reverence, with their Master; they are speaking of his coming death at Jerusalem, and the glorious redemption which he will thereby accomplish. Peter, uplifted by the ecstatic vision, and "not knowing what he said," exclaims at once, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." His idea seems to have been that, in such goodly company, and with so much of heaven's own glory around them, it was far better for them to remain perma-

nently than to go back to Galilee or to Jerusalem, and to be subjected to the cruel persecutions of the Scribes and Pharisees. No answer was made to the bold speech of the impulsive disciple, and suddenly a bright yet dense cloud overshadows the whole group, and a still deeper awe overwhelms them as they pass into the cloud; and from the cloud proceeds a voice, tender, yet terrible in its tenderness, and it utters these words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." The affrighted disciples fall upon their faces, and so remain until Jesus comes and touches them, and says, "Arise, and be not afraid." Then, lifting up their eyes, they see their Lord and Master only, and in his ordinary apparel. These three disciples never forgot that scene. Two of them, John and Peter, referred to it expressly in their writings,* and the third, the first apostolic martyr, † was very soon admitted to see the glory of his ascended Lord, in the sanctuary above. But the object which Jesus had in view to confirm their faith in him as the Son of God, the Redeemer from sin, and the one atoning Sacrifice, was accomplished. Thenceforth, in a higher sense than the other disciples or apostles, they were his witnesses; for them Moses and Elijah had appeared in adoring reverence of their Lord; for them they had spoken of his death and sacrifice; to them there had come "the voice from the excellent glory," proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God; they had been, above all others, the eye-witnesses of his majesty.

As Jesus and his three disciples descended from the mountain in the morning they found themselves suddenly translated from the glory of the heavenly state to the cares, anxieties, and distresses of this mortal life. The nine disciples who had been left behind in the vicinity of Cesarea Philippi had found their faith tested, and proved insufficient, in a case of possession by evil spirits, accompanied by epilepsy. It had been brought to them by the father and some cavilling Scribes, and they had attempted to cast out the evil spirits, perhaps relying upon their own power, perhaps with but weak faith in the power of Christ, and had failed utterly. Taunted by the Scribes, surprised and mortified

* John i, 14; Revelation i, 14; 2 Peter i, 17, 18. † Acts xii, 2.

at their failure, they were utterly despondent, when Jesus appeared upon the scene, and, with a word, cast out the spirits and healed the child. To these weak disciples he administered in private a mild reproof for their want of faith, but showed them the necessity of prayer and fasting to accomplish the desired miracle.

In this chapter we also read of Christ's paying the tribute money at Capernaum. This was a half-shekel, paid yearly, for the service of the temple. As he was the Son of God he was not liable to pay a tribute, but, lest offense should be taken on account of his refusal, he preferred to do it. Yet it appears he who had the world at his command chose to be so humble and poor for our sakes that he had not the



THE JEWISH SHEKEL.

small sum wherewith to pay this tribute money. So he worked a miracle to obtain it. He chose so to do, to show his disciples that if he was poor it was not because he was obliged to be so, but because he chose to be so, and to give them additional proofs that he knew all things and could do all things. He knew that in the midst of the sea there was a fish that had swallowed the sum of money he wanted, and he told Peter to go and cast in his hook and catch him, and pay with the money the tax that was demanded for him and Peter.

Christ teaches Humility, Kindness, Self-denial, and Forgiveness of Injuries.

MATTHEW XVIII.

Christ here teaches us not to be proud. His disciples asked him "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Our Lord knew their thoughts; he knew also that they had been talking to one another about this subject. They did not yet clearly understand that his kingdom was to be a spiritual kingdom; and, supposing that he would yet reign over the Jews in Jerusalem, they had almost quarrelled among themselves about who had the right to be his chief officers in managing his government.

"Peter was always the chief speaker, and already had the keys given him, and he expects to be Lord Chancellor or Lord Chamberlain of the Household, and so to be the greatest. Judas had the bag, and therefore he expects to be Lord Treasurer; which, though now he come last, he hopes will then denominate him *the greatest*. Simeon and Jude are nearly related to Christ, and they hope to take place of all the great officers of state, as princes of the blood. John is the beloved disciple, the favorite of the prince, and, therefore, hopes to be the greatest. Andrew was first called, and, therefore, why should he not be preferred?"

Mr. Henry supposes that some such thoughts as these passed between them when they asked Christ to settle the matter. A little child happened to be near, and Jesus took and set it in the midst of them, and told them that unless they were as humble as that little child they could never enter into his kingdom—the kingdom of heaven; and that the humblest among them was the greatest.

Again, Christ here teaches us not to give offense. We should be careful, as much as possible, to offend nobody in any way. But the offense of which he here speaks is particularly against his humble followers and servants. We must not despise one of these his little children, how poor and despised soever he may be by a wicked and sneering world.

Christ also here teaches us self-denial, to part with things that we even dearly love, rather than lose our souls. He tells us that we are to cut off our hand and foot and pluck out our eye rather than let them stand in the way of our salvation. He does not, however, mean that we should really do so, but he does mean that whatever hinders it, if it be even as dear to us as these parts of our body, we must be ready to give it up. An amusement, though ever so delightful, if it leads us into sinful habits and company, must be parted with. A friend and companion that would draw our hearts away from Christ, though we love him ever so much for his kindness in other respects, must also be parted with. Many such right hands must be cut off, and many such right eyes must be plucked out.

Another thing here taught is forgiveness of injuries. And this is a

very hard thing indeed to learn. When Christ talked on this subject Peter wished to know how many times he might be offended by another, and yet forgive him. "Seven times?" said he. "Yes," said Jesus, "as much as seventy times seven." It is not likely that any one would offend as often as this, so that our Lord meant that we should always be ready to forgive those who injure us.

Our Lord enforces forgiveness by a parable about a steward that owed his lord ten thousand talents (nearly \$200,000), and yet he forgave him his debt; but a fellow-servant happening to owe the steward only a hundred pence (about \$34), though he had been so kindly treated by his lord under like circumstances, yet cruelly threw his poor fellow-servant into prison till he should pay him every farthing. His lord, however, heard of it, and, as the steward's debt was still due in law, to punish him for his cruelty he laid hold of him and threw him into prison also.

God forgives us our sins, though they are great as the ten thousand talents; we ought, therefore, surely to forgive the hundred pence due to us from others, and to pass by their little offenses when they are ready to express any sorrow that they have done us injury; and, even if that be not the case, we should not render evil for evil, but, contrariwise, blessing. We have seen a hard-hearted man softened by receiving kindness for injuries.

Christ receives Little Children.—Converses with a Rich Young Man.

MATTHEW XIX, 13-30.

In this chapter we read of little children being brought to Christ, that he might bless them and pray over them, as it was usual with the Jews to do. Most likely they were parents, or it might be friends, who brought these children to Jesus. Children should feel themselves very happy when they have parents or friends who take them to Christ and ask for his blessing upon them. They can not now do this exactly in the same way, for Christ is ascended up into heaven, but they can

take them in prayer, and, though Christ is in heaven, he can still bless them there.

The disciples thought that these parents were troublesome, but Christ did not think so, nor will he ever think you troublesome for going to him. He says, "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." What he said to the disciples he says now: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Another thing here recorded is a conversation of Christ with a rich young man. This young man was desirous of going to heaven, and wished to know what he should do to enable him to get there. In this respect he was better than some people, who hope to go to heaven when they die but live all their days as if they cared nothing about it. He called Christ "Good Master,"—or good Teacher,—but Christ told him there was no one good but God, and as he only considered Christ as a teacher, and did not see his divine glory, he was wrong to give any human being the title of good.



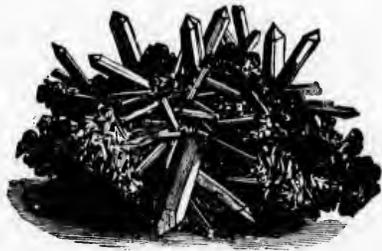
EASTERN GOLD.

Jesus told this young man, who had no notion of believing in him as a Saviour, but only thought of doing something to become eternally happy, that if he would keep the commandments all would be right. The young man said that he had kept them all. He did, indeed; but knew little of his own heart to say so, for a wrong thought breaks the commandments as well as a wrong word or deed. He should, as Mr. Henry observes, instead of saying, "All these have I kept, what lack I yet?" rather have said, with shame and sorrow, "All these have I broken, what shall I do to get my sins pardoned?" and thus have, at least, avoided his claim of self-righteousness.

Christ, however, soon put him to the test. He proved that he was an idolater, and so broke the very first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." He did not, indeed, bow to idols wrought out of gold and silver, as the heathen did, but still he loved

his gold and silver above everything besides—he gave his heart to his riches, and that was sin enough. Jesus told him to sell everything he had, and give to the poor, and follow him. Not that Christ requires this of us; he leaves us to enjoy what his providence gives us, and be thankful for it; but here was a particular case, which put this young man's heart to the test, for "when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions"; and he could not give these up to enter into life.

After the young man was gone, our Lord showed his disciples, from this example, how difficult it was for a rich man to enter heaven. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." That is, it is a great difficulty for a rich man, surrounded with the snares of riches, to enter into the kingdom—for this is what the words mean.



EASTERN SILVER.

This incident led Peter—who was as impulsive as ever, and had, moreover, some of the oriental disposition to extol his own sacrifices and to seek to have them noticed and rewarded—to ask, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?"

Of this boasting inquiry Mr. Henry well remarks: "Alas! it was but a poor all that they had forsaken; one of them (Matthew) had, indeed, quitted a place in the custom-house; but Peter and the most of them had only left a few boats and nets, and the appendances of a poor fishing trade; and yet see how big Peter there speaks of it, as if it had been some mighty thing: 'Behold, we have forsaken all!'" However, what they had left was their all, and Christ accepts of a little sacrifice where we can not make a great one; and in answering his question Christ wisely reminded him that his rewards were mainly in the future life, and that many who had supposed themselves to be first should be last, and the last should be first.

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.—Christ foretells his Sufferings.—The two Blind Men.

MATTHEW XX.

This chapter contains four things, which we shall briefly notice in the order in which they stand.

First.—*The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.*

Here our Lord compares the kingdom of heaven—or the season of proclaiming the gospel to poor sinners—to a person who kept house and hired servants. Being in want of some to work in his vineyard, he “went out early in the morning to hire laborers.” “And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.” Our Lord here means a coin called the Roman penny, which was of more value than ours, and equal to about seventeen cents of our money; this, indeed, was low for wages, but they differ very much in all parts of the world, and even in our own country, in some parts not being more than half what they are in others.

Several hours after the householder went out, and finding more laborers wanting work he hired them also. Three hours after that he employed some more to work, and three hours after that still more. And now it drew toward the end of the day. “And about the eleventh hour, and within an hour of finishing work, he, seeing some more standing idle, hired them also.”

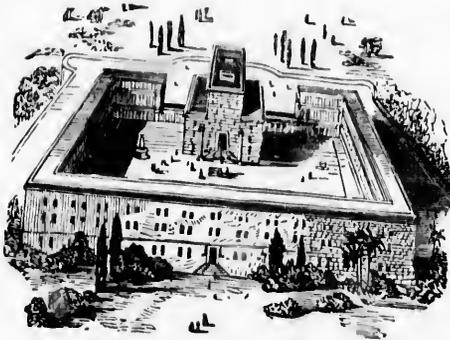
After they had done their work he paid them, and gave every man a penny; so that you see he gave just as much to those he employed last as to those he employed first, though, of course, they had done but very little, while the others had done much work.

Those that had done much work began to complain on seeing the others paid as much as they were; but the good man of the house told them they had no right to do so, for he had done them no wrong; they agreed to work for a penny, and he had given them their penny; and if he chose to pay the others as much as he had paid them, though they had done less, he had a right to do as he pleased with his own.

Now, the Jews were very jealous of the Gentiles, or nations not of

the Jews, and so selfish that they could not bear to hear of the grace of God being bestowed upon them, after they themselves had, for so many ages, been ranked among the servants of God. This parable was, therefore, to reprove their selfishness, and to show that God has a right to do with all nations as, in his grace, he pleases; and, also, it teaches us that if he gives us any mercies, and especially the blessings of heaven at last, it is not according to what we have done—for our services are but poor at the best,—but according to his own great generosity and grace.

The second thing our Lord here mentions is the sufferings which were coming upon him. These he had twice before named to his disciples, and so he prepared their minds for the terrible event of his death.



FORM OF SECOND TEMPLE.

The third thing is a singular petition made to him, through their mother, by the sons of Zebedee, James and John, who were two of his first disciples. It was no less than that they should have the first places of honor in his kingdom; for, though he had told them of his

death, they seemed either not to understand it, or to suppose—which was most probable—that after his death he would mount the throne of Judah, and become king of the Jews: so they asked that they might sit nearest to him when he should be king—the one on his right, and the other on his left hand. The right hand of a person of rank was always considered to be a place of honor; but Cyrus, the great Persian king, of whom we read in Scripture, used to place the guests he valued near his left hand, because his heart was on that side of him, and he thought that being placed near that was a great sign of his affection.

Our Lord replied to the ambitious disciples, "Ye know not what ye ask." They were pleasing themselves with the prospect of honors,

when all the time there was nothing but suffering before them. And he said, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" To this they replied, "We are able." They thought that if they could have the dignity at last, a little pain or suffering would be of no consequence in the way. Jesus then let the disciples know that they should, indeed, drink of the same cup with himself, and so be partakers of a great honor; but that cup should be sufferings; and, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." The honors of the kingdom of heaven were, however, not given by him, who was in our flesh, but by his Father, God, who is a Spirit; and mortals were not to have their pride and curiosity gratified about what he would please to do in heaven.

The fourth thing in this chapter is the petition of two blind men, who were "sitting by the way-side," and "when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!" This was a request that Jesus would not deny. "The multitude rebuked them." Some who were his real friends thought, perhaps, that they were troublesome, and his enemies did not like their honoring him by calling him "Lord," and "Son of David"; but "Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

"Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!" is a cry that Jesus still hears.

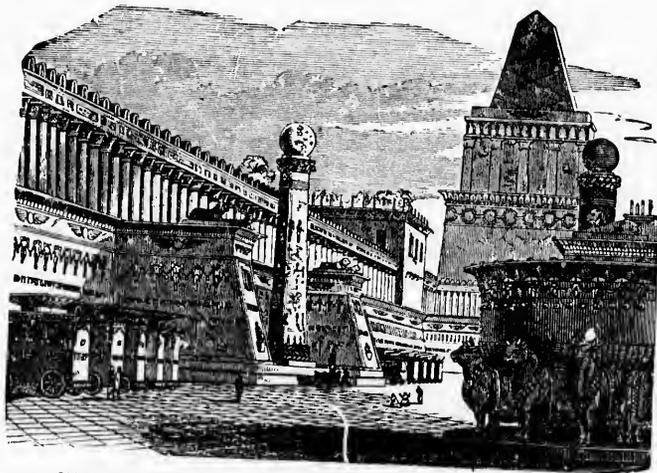
Christ's Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem.

MATTHEW XXI.

The first thing which is related in this chapter is the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

Having commanded two of his disciples to go into a neighboring village, where they would find an ass tied, and a colt with her, which they were to bring to him, they did as they were told; and there—as he had said who knew all things—they found the beasts ready for his use. "And they brought the ass and a colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon."

Christ was followed by a multitude wherever he went. His fame in doing good caused many to go to him to receive benefits, and others went to see this wonderful person. These strewed the way on which he was to ride, some with their garments and some with branches of trees, among which it is supposed were quantities of beautiful roses, which grew in those parts. This was a method of paying honor to great persons, and is still practised in the same parts of the world, and was intended to be in honor of Christ. And the



INTERIOR VIEW OF ANCIENT TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM.

people cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" Hosanna means "Save, I beseech," or "help us, we beseech thee, thou Son of David, the Messiah!" words which were used by the people at the feast of tabernacles.

Now, "all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." The prophecy here quoted is found in Zachariah ix, 9, and by Sion is meant Jerusalem. Here Christ claimed authority, being

King over his church, and in token of it he rode, as the judges of old, on an ass. At this time, indeed, the great, and they only, rode upon horses; so that Christ did not enter Jerusalem in worldly splendor, but still he entered it like one bearing a high dignity. And this fulfilment of prophecy was one of the many marks which the prophets gave, by which the Messiah was to be known. Had not Christ so gone into Jerusalem, one of the marks to show him as the true Messiah would have been wanting; while every mark which so distinguished him was a confirmation of his character and office, and so must establish our faith in him.

Another thing here recorded is Christ's entrance into the temple, or rather that part of its courts in which were daily sold frankincense, oil, wine, and other requisites for sacrifice, such as doves, lambs, and oxen. It was near the time of the passover, and as many of these were then wanted, the courts were well stocked. This custom was most likely in imitation of the heathen, who did the same in their temples. Among the traders were also money changers; these were persons who accommodated the people with proper coin for any foreign coin which they had taken from any of the neighboring nations with whom they traded, and in so doing they overreached their customers, and were guilty of shameful extortions. All these things made our Lord very indignant; he could not bear to see the house of God profaned and such wickedness practised, and he cast out the dealers, and "overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves"—a place as bad as the caves in which robbers hid who infested Judea.

That Christ should have disturbed these people, and, though numerous, have driven them out in the midst of their gains, and for the time have spoiled their trade, is a proof that they were overawed by something in him, while, their own consciences being guilty, they were the more easily affrighted when they were so attacked.

Returning in the morning to Jerusalem, having slept in the quiet village of Bethany, which was only two miles from the city, it is said

"he hungered." Jesus hungered! Think on this; he who was the bread of life was himself hungered! Seeing a fig tree growing in the way, he would have refreshed himself with a fig; but, though it had plenty of fine leaves, it appears that it had no fruit, and he pronounced sentence upon the tree: "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away." This was a sign by which he taught his disciples that the Jewish nation, which made such appearance of being as the garden of the Lord, were like nothing but the fig tree, which bore only leaves, and no fruit. And it teaches us also that mere show is not what Christ looks for, but he expects us to bear something good, if we profess to bring forth the fruits of holiness.



ROBBERS LYING IN WAIT.

The chief priests could not let Christ alone, and as soon as he had returned to the temple, and began to teach the people the way to heaven, they beset him, and wished to know who authorized him to do his work. Now, they might have easily seen by the miracles that he did that he was divinely authorized, and if any doubt had been in their minds and they had humbly asked him for information, he would have given it; but knowing the obstinate hatred and malice of their hearts, that they would not be convinced, he gave them no direct reply, but only put a question to them which obliged them to keep silence.

They—the chief priests—had hated John the Baptist, and, it was believed, had urged Herod to imprison him, but the people had always regarded him as a prophet, and would not allow him to be spoken against. So Christ asked them whether John's baptism was from heaven or of men? One of the two it must be. Now, they felt that

they could not say it was from heaven, for then Christ and the people could justly have reproached them for not believing on him, and for persecuting a prophet of God; and yet, if they said it was from men, they would equally expose themselves to difficulty, since the people believed otherwise, and would have been enraged against them. So they told a falsehood, and said, "We can not tell." Then our Lord told them that as they would not answer his question, he would not answer theirs, and so he confounded them.

After this he instructed the people by interesting parables. The first of these is usually called "The Two Sons." By this he taught the sin of pretending to works of righteousness, and not doing them.

Our Lord afterwards said, "Hear another parable"; and then spoke the parable of "The Husbandmen."

This parable was to show how they had treated the servants of God whom he had sent to them; for they had ill-used and killed his prophets, one after another, and in the end God had sent himself, the Son of God, but they used him no better, and were now conspiring to put him to death.

We should have supposed that the priests and Scribes would have felt ashamed when they found that the parable described their wickedness; instead of which they even then sought to lay hands on him, "but at the time they were afraid lest the multitude should take his part, as he was then high in favor with them."

There are two verses near the end of this chapter which we must just explain. In the forty-second verse you read, "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?" This is a figure of speech, and refers to some words in the hundred and eighteenth Psalm. The church of Christ—or "the congregation of faithful men," of which it is formed—is compared to a building; and,



FIG BRANCH.

as there is one stone which is of great importance to a building, and is called the chief corner-stone, because it supports the building, so Christ is the support of all his church, and the whole building rests upon him. But the Jewish builders—the Scribes, Pharisees, and priests—would have had a church without him. They rejected Christ; and so he was the stone which these builders refused, but which was, nevertheless, the chief foundation which God laid in Zion, or his church, on which sinners, in every age of the world, must build their hopes of salvation. Our Lord goes on to say in the next verse but one, the forty-fourth, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." The Jews knew very well what our Lord referred to. They had two ways of stoning criminals; the one was by throwing stones upon them, the other was by throwing them from a high place down upon stones; and as in both cases the criminal died, so he intimated to the Jews that, as the person falling on the stone does not hurt the stone, but only himself, so those who opposed him would be their own ruin, and on whomsoever his power fell it would be like the falling stone, crushing the individual beneath its weight.

The Parable of the Marriage Supper.—Conversations of Christ with the Pharisees.

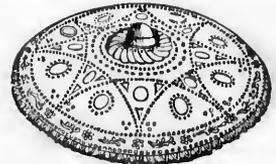
MATTHEW XXII.

This chapter begins with another parable, known by the name of "The Marriage Supper; or the Great Supper."

This parable had a like meaning with the last. The blessings of Christ's kingdom were offered to the Jews, but they rejected them, and ill-treated his servants, who invited them to feed on the bread of life. Their city, Jerusalem, would therefore be attacked by the Roman armies, and their city burned. The heathen nations, who were as the people on the highways, poor and wretched, without the knowledge of God, were then to learn about Jesus Christ, and when they should hear the glad news of salvation through him, declared by his faithful servants, they would accept of his invitation and so hasten to the feast.

We must now notice the conversations of our Lord with his adversaries. Mortified at his parables, the Pharisees took counsel together to try and catch him saying something that they might accuse him of speaking against the emperor at Rome. The Jews had then a king, Herod; but he held his crown under the Roman emperor—the people having been so far conquered as to pay tribute to him. So the Pharisees took with them some of Herod's cunning courtiers, and asked Christ if it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?—that is whether, according to the law of Moses, they should pay tribute to a heathen? Now, if our Lord had said it was lawful, the people would have been enraged at him, for they did not like Cæsar, who was a Roman, taxing them, who were Jews; and, if he had said it was not lawful, they would have carried him before the Roman magistrates, and have had him put

to death for teaching rebellion against Cæsar's authority. By such a subtle question, therefore, any other person would have been liable to be en-



EASTERN IVORY ORNAMENTS.

trapped; but our divine Lord "perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?" meaning, whose likeness was that stamped upon the penny, as the queen's head is stamped upon the English coin, with her name and dignity around it. "They say unto him Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Now, they could not say that he had taught rebellion against Cæsar, for having his coin in circulation among them was a sign that they were subject to his authority: and so he hinted as much as that they were to give him his dues, while he left them to think what were the dues of Cæsar. And they could not say that he had set Cæsar above

their divine law ; for he told them they must at the same time give to God all that was due to him.

This prudence and wisdom confounded them, and they left him.

By-and-by the Sadducees came to him. This sect among the Jews denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the body at the last day ; indeed, they denied even a future state, and supposed that when they died there was an end of them forever. Now, they thought that they should perplex our Lord in teaching this doctrine if they questioned him about a curious case that perhaps had or at least might happen. Seven brothers had had the same wife, the first brother dying, and then the second, on to the last ; and so they married her one after the other, which they could do by the Jewish law. Then, said they, if the resurrection is to take place, what a curious difficulty she and they will be in, for whose wife is she then to be ? Our Lord, in reply, told them that they were quite mistaken ; that there was no marrying in heaven, and that all there were as angels—happy without the need of those domestic comforts which are wanted here. And, with respect to the resurrection, he referred to the language of their own Scriptures in such a way that they could not possibly contradict him : “ Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? ” This was the language of God to Moses at the burning bush ; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then all dead. Now, added Jesus, “ God is not the God of the dead, but of the living ” ; if these were never to rise again, and their spirits were not still living, he could not be called their God. Therefore, God is not the God of the dead, who are not, but of the living, who now exist. Our Lord would give no direct answer on state matters when asked about Cæsar, for his kingdom was not of this world ; but, when the Sadducees disputed a great truth, he directly declared it, for he came to bring “ life and immortality to light,” or to make them clear as the light of day, “ by the gospel.” The Sadducees supposed that when the body died the soul died with it ; but Christ gave them to understand the very contrary—that the soul did not die, and that the body would live with it. The

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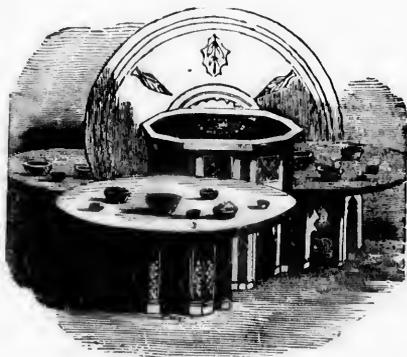
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spirit lives, but the spirit is not a perfect man, and so there shall be a resurrection of the body to unite it to the spirit forever.

The Sadducees had nothing to say, and the people were all surprised at the powerful teaching of Christ.

The Pharisees were much vexed to find that our Lord had so put the Sadducees to shame, for they thought that he would gain all the people over to him; and, being jealous of his popularity, they resolved to try what further could be done to confound him. So they set their heads together, and got a clever lawyer of their body to attack him. But by a lawyer you must not understand one who practised the common law of the land, as our American lawyers do, but one who understood well the law of Moses, and was accustomed to be looked up to by the people to explain it. The question which the lawyer put to Christ was, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" The Jews were used to quibble and dispute about a number of trifling things, and there were many opinions among them on this question, and so the lawyer hoped that by obtaining an answer from Christ he should set all those against him



EASTERN TABLES.

who held the opinions which he opposed. But our Lord did not hesitate one moment to reply, and he said that the great commandment was to love God with all the heart; and who could dispute this—that God has the first claims on the love of his creatures? However, as all the commandments are great, he added, "The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; and what could they say against that being a great commandment? for if all men were to be guided by it, no one would ever do wrong to another. You know, indeed, that there are ten commandments, but all the rest are to prevent our oppressing or doing wrong to our neighbor, and so our Lord made here two great command-

ments. The question, however, was which *one* was the great commandment, and his answer did not evade it, for the whole signified as much as this—that love to God is the great commandment; for love to our neighbor, if it be of the right sort, can only be exercised by him who truly loves God.

Christ now turned the tables, as we say, and on his part he began to question his adversaries; but they were equally defeated whether he answered or proposed the question. The question was, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?" As Christ means *the Messiah*, whom they were expecting, the teachers of the people and this skilful lawyer ought to have been able to make some reply to his question; but what they said was what any little child could have answered: "The Son of David." Now, every one who had learned the least about the Messiah must have known that he was to spring out of the family of David. But on their answering this question, which they could not avoid, our Lord then added another, which arose out of it, and to which they found it difficult to reply: "He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" The words quoted are in the one hundred and tenth Psalm. The Jews understood these words to describe the Messiah, and they understood rightly—though now they did not receive that Messiah when they saw him, notwithstanding that he worked so many miracles among them, which showed him to be a most extraordinary person. Now, the Messiah was to spring from the line of David, and so he was his son after the flesh, though many generations in distance from him; yet David called him Lord. The great Jehovah is represented speaking to him, and telling him to sit upon his seat of dignity and power; and, in describing this, David, a prophet, speaking of what was to come to pass, said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand." Now, if he were David's son, said Christ, how could he be his Lord? Is a son lord over his father? Certainly not. The Pharisees were puzzled, for they looked for some great *man* to come to be their Messiah, and did not see that the Messiah-Christ was to be

not only man in his flesh, but also THE SON OF GOD, THE LORD—Him in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Since, therefore, they could not see this grand part of the description of the Messiah, they could not make out how David called his son Lord, and so could not answer Christ, and were put to shame and silence. They who truly know Christ, know him now to be David's son and David's Lord; the son of David, as he was a man of his race, and yet the Son of God, and the "Lord of all"—reigning over all things, and the great Governor of his Church. And on this account they own and adore him.

After this no man durst ask Christ any more questions.

Christ's Discourse Respecting the Wickedness of the Pharisees.

MATTHEW XXIII.

We need only notice, in this discourse of our Lord respecting the wickedness of the Pharisees, the principal charges he makes against them.

Verse the fifth.—*But all their works they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.* They were fond of making a show of religion, and did everything before men, instead of secretly before God. They wore great phylacteries, or pieces of parchment, on their foreheads and on the wrists of their left arms, on which were written certain words of the divine law, to make the people believe how much they tried to remember it. And as the Jews wore fringes on the edge of their garments to distinguish them from the heathen nations round about, so they, to distinguish themselves from others of their own countrymen, wore broader fringes than others.

Verse the thirtieth.—*But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* By woe is here meant sorrow, misery, and a threatening of dreadful punishment for such great wickedness as hypocrisy. By the kingdom of heaven is meant, not heaven itself,—for happily no man has power

to shut another out of heaven,—but what is called “the gospel dispensation,” or *the time of preaching the gospel* to perishing sinners, as I have before explained it to you. Now, by trying to prejudice the people against Christ—the Messiah who came into the world to open the gates of this kingdom and to preach the gospel to the meek—they did, as it were, shut the gates of this kingdom against them; and, not contented with refusing to enter in themselves, they both ruined themselves and others by persuading them not to enter in.

Verse the fourteenth.—Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypo-



MODERN HEBRON; SHOWING THE GREAT MOHAMMEDAN MOSQUE.

HEBRON WAS KING DAVID'S CAPITAL BEFORE HE REMOVED TO JERUSALEM
IT NOW CONTAINS ABOUT 5000 INHABITANTS.

rites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. It is said by some writers that the Pharisees, to seem very holy, prayed three times a day, and three hours at a time, so that they must have prayed nine hours a day. But they did not pray from the heart. They repeated, over and over again, some forms of prayer, without their souls going out towards God in what they said. They also made money by their prayers, and this was their object, which was a vile abuse of the design of prayer, which is to ask blessings of God for ourselves and others. And, what was worse, under this pretence of praying they devoured widows' houses; that is, they imposed upon poor widows—from whom they very often took much of the money

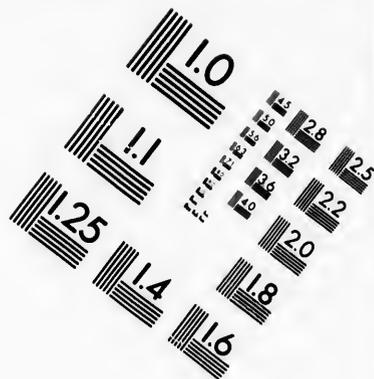
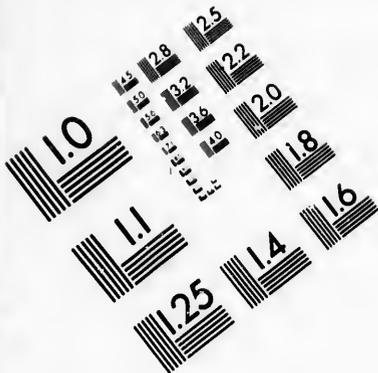
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left to them for their support—by pretending to pray for them better than they could pray for themselves.

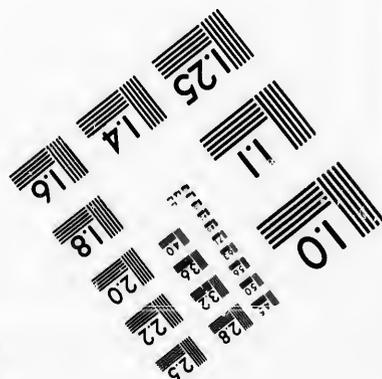
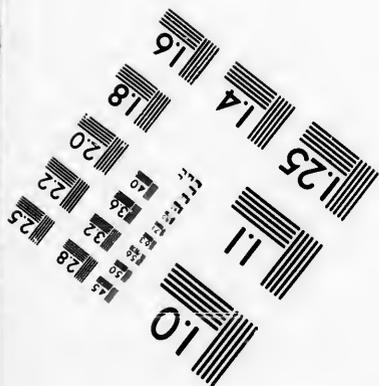
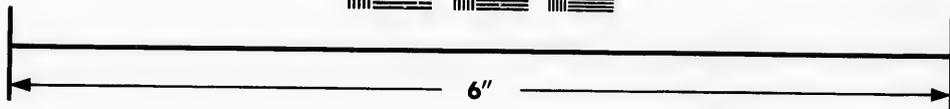
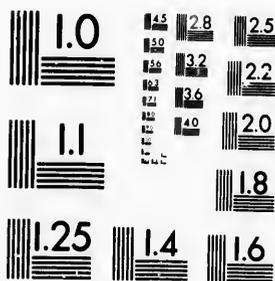
Verse the sixteenth.—*Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor.* People were accustomed to offer gifts of gold for the use of the temple, and sometimes to swear or make oath that they would give certain gifts. Now, if they made oath to do anything, and merely said, "By the temple," or in the name of the temple, "I will do it," the Pharisees said they might break their promise if they pleased; but if they swore in the name of the gold vessels of the temple they must keep their oath sacred. But our Lord said this was wicked, for one sacred promise should be kept as much as another; and if there was any difference in point of dignity between the gold consecrated to the temple and the temple itself, the temple was the most noble, and the promise made by it ought rather to be kept. But He who knows men's hearts saw that this was all hypocrisy, and that they made this distinction, as they did that regarding the altar and the gift upon it, from corrupt and hypocritical motives. Christ called these men blind guides, since they pretended to guide others in the way to heaven and could not see it themselves.

Verse the twenty-third.—*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.* Mint, anise, and cummin are herbs. The Pharisees were very particular in giving the priests and Levites the tenth part of the value of everything that made their income, even to these small herbs; and they did not lose by it, for the priests made them due returns for setting this example. But they were unjust, unkind, and unfaithful to others; and so while they minded trifling things that cost them nothing, and turned to their advantage, they neglected to do justice and to be merciful, kind, and righteous in their dealings with others.





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Christ Foretells the Destruction of Jerusalem.

MATTHEW XXIV.

The temple of Jerusalem was a most splendid building, and king Herod had expended a great deal for its improvement, so that it was so grand that the Jews used to say, "He who has not seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building."

The disciples one day, having taken particular notice of its fine marble columns and curious workmanship, pointed them out to Christ, that he might admire them too. Our Lord then told them, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down"; which really took place not a very long time afterwards, though there was then no probability that so fine and firm a building would or could be so easily destroyed.

The disciples were then more curious to know when this wonderful destruction should happen. Our Lord did not satisfy their curiosity, but gave them warning how they might know when it was coming on; that there should first be false prophets arising who should deceive the people; and so it was. Then there should be wars; and there were terrible wars for a long time between the Jews and the Romans, who then ruled over them, as between them and several other nations. There should also be "famine, pestilences, and earthquakes." There should likewise be cruel persecutions and murders of the followers of Christ; and, finally, the gospel should be preached to all other nations as well as to the Jews.

This would be a dreadful time. The Jews must then expect miseries never known before in the whole world. God was about to punish them for their many and great sins against him, but especially for the greatest of all sins—that of rejecting and hating Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. So dreadful would be the vengeance of the Roman armies when once Jerusalem should be besieged, that the moment there was an appearance of it, all Christians were advised to escape, and lose not a moment, but flee and hide themselves in secret places in the mountains. If they were walking to cool themselves on the tops of

their Eastern houses, they must not even return to pack up anything, but hasten down outside; if at work in the field, and their clothes lay at a distance, it would be unwise to risk delay by going after them; and unfortunate would the mother be that then had to escape with the burden of a child; or if the siege should happen in winter, miserable would it be for the poor creatures who had to hurry over bad roads and amidst swelling floods; or if on the Sabbath-day, when they were limited by the law to a short journey, it would hardly be possible to escape at all.

Then Jesus spake a parable or comparison about the fig-tree, and told them that these signs of the destruction of Jerusalem which he had given them would be as sure guides as were the leaves of the fig-tree, when they broke out, guides of the approach of the summer. But the exact time was a secret known only to God, though it would be sudden as the destruction of the world in the days of Noah.

The desolation should also be so great that, if but two were together, even one of these should perish while the other escaped, whether they were laboring in the field or grinding at the mill: "the one" should "be taken and the other left."

Hence he told them all to "watch," and be on the lookout for these signs, that they might be ready to escape.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.—The Parable of the Talents.— The Day of Judgment.

MATTHEW XXV.

This chapter is a continuation of the last, and refers to the same terrible event—the destruction of Jerusalem. But our divine Lord clearly glides from that awful subject into the destruction of the world and the day of judgment.

We must ask you to read the first thirteen verses of the chapter, or we shall have no pages to spare to explain much of the parable which they contain. It is usually called "The Parable of the Ten Virgins." It refers to a custom among the Jews, and still practised among people in Eastern nations. When two persons are married, the bride-

groom goes out at night to meet his wife. He has his friends with him, and she has hers, called here "ten virgins," or young unmarried women. Torches and lamps are always carried in these processions. Our Lord represents five of the virgins as foolishly forgetting to take any oil with them. When, therefore, the party were all in a bustle to trim their lamps and to light those which had gone out while they had fallen asleep, and to go to meet the bridegroom on his arrival at the house of her father, where the bride was, the foolish virgins had

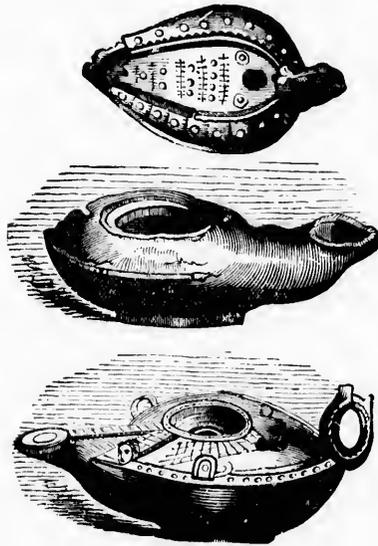
no time to buy or get oil elsewhere, and asked the other virgins to supply them. But as the others had only oil enough for themselves, they could not spare any to their foolish companions. So the foolish virgins had to leave the company to get oil; but before they could get back the procession was gone, the party had entered the bridegroom's house, and, agreeably to their custom, the door was shut, and no further admittance given to any.

By this our Lord teaches us that if we are not prepared with grace or holiness in our hearts when Christ comes to judgment, we shall be able to get none after; and, as the foolish

virgins were shut out of the bridegroom's chamber, so must we in such a case be shut out of heaven.

There is also another parable, which is known by the name of "The Parable of the Talents."

The design of Christ in this parable is to teach us all to use our time, and abilities, and money, and whatever we have, diligently, in the best way we can, to promote his glory. These are our talents, intrusted to us to use properly. The talent was a fixed weight of gold or silver; a golden talent was worth nearly fifty-seven thousand



ANCIENT EASTERN LAMPS.

dollars, and a silver one about sixteen hundred and sixty dollars; but some of our talents are of much more value than gold and silver, and must be answered for by even the poorest amongst us, for through them we must expect to secure to ourselves such unending pleasures and joys as all the wealth of earth could not purchase—no, not so much as a tithe of it.

The last thing in this chapter is a grand description of the day of judgment. Passing from the destruction of Jerusalem to that of our sinful world, our blessed Lord describes his second and final coming in all his glory, attended by all his angels and seated on his judgment throne. All nations, of all times, shall be raised from the dead and appear before him; and then he shall make one grand division between them, and separate forever the righteous from the wicked, just as a shepherd would divide his sheep from the goats.

Sheep and goats are not, indeed, generally seen together amongst us; we have very few goats; but in some countries abroad, especially about the hilly countries in Greece, there are flocks of both sorts of animals feeding together. Now, the righteous are often called in Scripture by the name of sheep because they are thought to be good emblems of innocent, harmless, and pure persons, while goats, from various causes, are emblems of the opposite characters.

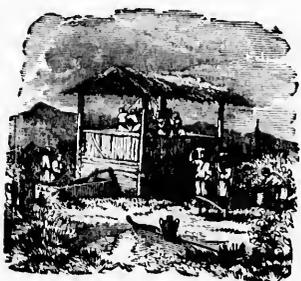
Having separated the two, the great and heart-searching Judge will place the righteous at his right hand, which is considered as the place of honor, and the wicked at his left hand, as a sign of their dishonor; or, to speak in other words, he will mark the righteous with his approval and the wicked with disgrace and shame. He will then invite the righteous, and say to them, "Come, ye blessed," and introduce them to his heavenly kingdom; while to the wicked he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed!" He will even notice and reward the acts of kindness done to those who love him, as if done to himself, and will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." While neglect, unkindness, and cruelty, shown towards those who love him, will equally be marked and punished; for he will say to the guilty, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." "And

these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

The Passover.—The Sufferings of Christ.

MATTHEW XXVI.

When our blessed Jesus came into the world to save sinners, he knew what he had to suffer. He was to die that we might live. And now the time of his death began rapidly to approach: and he told his disciples that in two days the passover was to be eaten, in remembrance of the eating of the lamb at the escape of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and that then he was to be betrayed that he might be crucified.



ANCIENT WINE-PRESS.

The disciples soon found that it was but too true—they must lose their beloved Lord and Master. For "the chief priests, Scribes, and elders of the people," who had so often shown their hatred to Jesus, because he exposed their wickedness to the people and reproved them for their hypocrisy and other crimes, now assembled together in the palace of the high priest, called Caiaphas, and con-

sulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him. They, however, did not like to venture to do so just at the passover, for they feared lest there should be "an uproar among the people." The people had received great benefits from Jesus; many of them and their friends, who would travel from all parts of Judea to the feast, had been cured of their diseases by his kindness, and had seen the miracles which he had done, and it was, therefore, natural to suppose that if they had any gratitude about them they would avenge any insults offered to him.

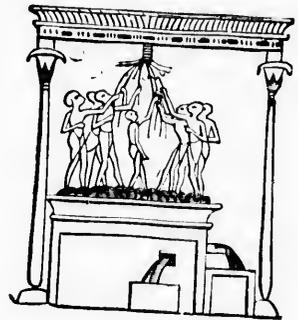
A few days before the passover Jesus came to Bethany, a village near Jerusalem, and was invited to eat at the house of Simon the leper—very likely one who had been a leper and whom he had cured, and so he showed him this gratitude for his kindness. At all events he entertained Christ, and it is here related to his honor.

While Jesus was eating a woman approached him and poured some precious ointment on his head, which she had brought in an alabaster box. According to our customs this would seem very rude, and particularly free behavior in a female. But it was different in the Jewish country, and was a mark of very high respect, the ointment being expensive and the fragrant smell proceeding from it most grateful to all present. Some of the disciples thought the woman was extravagant; but Christ knew her motive in what she did, and commended her love. Who she was is not exactly certain, as some suppose she was Mary Magdalene, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, and others that she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. The fame of her kind act—her liberal token of love to Jesus—was, however, well known and spread abroad at that time; and wherever the gospel was preached this was mentioned to her praise.

And now the moment arrived when the sufferings of our gracious Saviour began. One of his disciples, Judas—the wretched man!—went to the chief priests and offered to deliver up Christ to them for thirty pieces of silver—the paltry price paid for a purchased servant, about eighteen dollars and fifty cents! They durst not take Christ publicly for fear of the people, but Judas offered to take them to one of his private retreats, and there to deliver him up; and with the greatest care he watched for the most favorable opportunity.

There were seven days in which the Jews ate their unleavened bread,—or bread not made of yeast or anything to ferment it,—and during this time the passover was celebrated. You remember that the reason of eating this bread was to keep the Jews in mind that they were delivered from Egyptian bondage in the greatest haste, so that they had not even time to mix the leaven with their dough, ready made in their troughs.

Jesus sat—or, more properly, leaned or lay down—at the passover with his disciples. The first passover was eaten standing, as another ad-



ANCIENT WINE-PRESS.

ditional sign of the haste in which the people were to escape; but this sign was afterwards not used, and now they lay down, leaning on their elbows, just as we do on a sofa, this being the fashion in the Jews' country, and is still so in that part of the world. While our blessed Saviour took the passover, he said to his disciples, "One of you shall betray me." So that he showed that he knew what wickedness was in the heart of Judas, and that he could have escaped from his treachery if he pleased, but he came into the world to give his precious life a ransom for sinners.

His disciples were very sorrowful, and all were afraid lest they should be tempted to do so wicked a thing as to betray their beloved Lord; and they asked with great concern, "Lord, is it I?" Then he said to them, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." They would all do this, for this was the way of eating, taking it out of one dish with their fingers, and not with knives and forks, as we eat; but then this was to show how villainous the man would be; for to eat together was the greatest sign of friendship, and so this showed his conduct to be as bad as it possibly could be. Yet Judas, in order to disguise himself before the other disciples, daringly asked, "Master, is it I?" and Christ said it was he.

Jesus then took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, as is now done, after his example, at the Lord's Supper; and in like manner he took the cup. When he gave the bread he said, "This is my body"—meaning this *represents* my body—to be broken for you; it could not actually be his body, for his body remained the same. So, also, he said when he took the cup, "This is my blood, of the *New Testament*"—that is, this represents my blood to be shed for sinners, and represents it by a different sign from that which has been used; hitherto the blood of beasts was shed as the sign that he was to die, but now and henceforth wine, the blood or juice of the grape, was to be the sign. Both of these—the bread and the wine—were to be taken, and afterwards to be continued in the church, and received by Christians in remembrance that Christ died for them—"for the remission of sins"; that is, the pardoning of sins.

Gethsemane.—The Sufferings of Christ.

MATTHEW XXVI.—*Continued.*

It was now evening, and probably as late as ten o'clock, or the fourth hour of the night, according to the Jewish reckoning, when Jesus, after a long and tender conversation with his disciples and an earnest prayer for them in their trouble, now so close at hand, left the upper chamber, where the Passover feast had been eaten and the Lord's Supper instituted, and passed through the narrow streets of Jerusalem to the eastern gate, which led to the Mount of Olives. On their way he continued his loving exhortations and warnings to them. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night," he said; "for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." How merciful and gracious was our blessed Lord in this! He knew that these disciples, strongly as they were attached to him, would, when the actual time of danger came, all forsake him and fly. Yet, knowing that he would be left alone in his worst sufferings, he pitied their weakness, and promised to meet them again with blessings, after his resurrection. But Peter felt too strong in his love for Christ to believe that he should abandon his Master. "Though all men," cried he, "shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." The Lord knew Peter better than he knew himself, and saw, perhaps, in this very vehemence of his protestations that the evil in his heart was struggling with the



ONE OF THE GATES OF JERUSALEM.

good, and would for the time overcome it. He therefore said, very quietly, "Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." So near was the time of Peter's fall and disgrace, and yet so wholly unconscious was he of its approach. "Though I should die with thee," he protested, "yet will I not deny thee." Likewise also said all the disciples.

They had by this time descended the slope from the city gate to the bridge which spanned the Kidron ravine, crossed it, and were ascending the opposite slope of the Mount of Olives. Their destination was an inclosed garden or olive orchard, known as Gethsemane, from the oil-press which was near it, in which the oil was expressed from the ripe olives which abounded in that vicinity. It was in one of the secluded hollows of the western slope of the mountain, and was well known to the disciples as a place where their Master often went to pray.

As they drew near to it Jesus began to be in great distress of mind, and said to the disciples, while they were yet without the inclosure, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." His anguish of soul increased, and taking with him Peter, and James, and John, the three who had witnessed his transfiguration, he entered the inclosure. Turning to them with every feature indicating his agony of spirit, he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me." This craving and longing for human sympathy is perhaps the strongest evidence we could possibly have that he, the Son of God, had taken upon him our nature; that he was, in reality, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, and was a man of like passions with us, yet without sin, while he was also the Divine Redeemer. Having made this touching appeal to the three disciples for sympathy, "he went a little farther [Luke says, "about a stone's cast"], and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." After this earnest petition, he rose and came to the three disciples and found them sleeping, and said unto Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." "He went away again the second time,

and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Luke adds these particulars: "that there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him"—a rebuke to his disciples, who, notwithstanding his earnest appeals, had not even watched with him. "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." Amid all this agony, he came again to his disciples, and again found them asleep; and when they were roused, they were still so dazed and heavy with sleep that they did not know what to answer him. A third time he departed to his chosen place of wrestling prayer, perhaps under the shadow of one of the old and spreading olive trees, and asked that the divine will might be accomplished, at whatever cost of suffering to him; and this time his prayer was heard and answered; strength was given to the weakened body, and thenceforth he welcomed the pain and suffering, for the sake of the redemption that should follow. Now, as he returned to his disciples he saw the lights and torches borne by the multitude descending from the gate of the city to the Kidron ravine and bridge, and knew that this was the company led by Judas. Addressing his disciples, he said, "Sleep on, now, and take your rest." The agony which had so crushed his spirit was gone, and he now needed not their watchful care, which hitherto they could not bestow. Angels had ministered to him. But it was now his turn to watch over them, for their enemies, as well as his, were at hand; the hour of their supreme temptation was coming; as for him, it had passed, and therefore he says: "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."

Let us pause here, and inquire what was the cause of this terrible anguish of soul, which thus for a time overwhelmed our Lord, and made his "soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!" That it was not the fear of death, not even the painful and ignominious death of the cross, is evident from several considerations: he had known from the first that he should thus die, had conversed about it with his disciples, and with Moses and Elijah, if not without emotion,

yet without fear and without distress; in the twelve or fifteen hours which followed his arrest, amid the insolence and insults of priests and rabble, of Roman soldiers and malefactors, amid the cruel tortures of the thorny crown, the scourging, and the terribly painful death of the cross, he manifested not the slightest fear; his calm and dignified demeanor awed his judges, and on the cross his pardon of the dying thief, his care for his mother, his sublime prayer for his murderers, and his calm announcement of the completion of the work of redemption, all showed a spirit incapable of fear.

Weakness and exhaustion of body may have had some, though probably but a slight, influence. The previous week had been one of great excitement and weariness; vast multitudes had listened to his teachings; even the Greeks, first fruits of the Gentiles, had sought an interview with him; the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians had combined to entangle him in his talk, and all had completely failed; more than once the officers of the temple had been sent out to arrest him, and had been prevented only by some sudden change of base, or by his eloquence, which disarmed them. The knowledge on his part of every step of Judas in betraying him had added to his cares and anxieties; but none of these troubles could have so weighed down his spirits or whelmed him in such deep distress. The great cause of this fearful anguish was that he, the Sinless One, to whom all sin was so loathsome and hateful, was to satisfy the divine law by taking upon himself the burden of the sins of the whole world; he, the guiltless and Holy One, was to bear the guilt and impurity of the sinners of all the ages. He was to be wounded for our transgressions, to be bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was to be upon him, and with his stripes we were to be healed. But under this terrible pressure it was not the divine nature that faltered; that had from eternity determined on this plan of salvation, and had foreknown all its details; it was the human body and the human soul which stretched its arms outward and upward for sympathy and comfort under this dreadful load, and found it at last in sweet submission to the divine will. Once more, and but for a moment, in the hours of torture which followed, did this "horror of great darkness" fall upon the dying

Redeemer; it was while he was on the cross, when he uttered that bitter cry, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But the everlasting arms were again around him, and the racked and tortured body rested in the embrace of death.

But we, too, in this discussion of the causes of his terrible agony, have left the Saviour as the betrayer approached him. Judas now drew nigh, at the head of a rabble composed of the officers of the temple, the night watch, a small party of Roman soldiers, and such servants and hangers-on of the high priest as could be conveniently assembled. The Roman soldiers and perhaps the officers of the temple wore swords; the rest of the party were armed with sticks or cudgels. Judas, with an infamous hypocrisy, had proposed that in order that the officers might be able to recognize Jesus he would go up to him boldly and kiss him. Accordingly, as soon as they were come to the garden the traitor hurried forward, and exclaiming, "Peace be to thee, Rabbi" (the true translation of the "Hail, Master," in the text), kissed him. Jesus replied with perfect dignity, "Comrade [not "friend," as our version has it, but an entirely different word], for what art thou come?" The other evangelists give a few items which Matthew has omitted. After this treacherous kiss, Jesus stood before the multitude, and asked, "Whom seek ye? They answered, Jesus of Nazareth." "Jesus answered, I am he"; and such was the dignity and power which accompanied the answer that the crowd, awestruck, retreated, and many of them fell to the ground. When they had recovered themselves he again put the question, "Whom seek ye?" and again they answered, with bated breath, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus, ever thoughtful of others, and especially tender of his disciples, said, "I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these (my disciples) go their way." As the Roman soldiers advanced to seize him, Peter, as recklessly and imprudently brave as ever, drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant of



OFFERING SALUTATION IN THE EAST.

the high priest. Jesus instantly commanded him to put up his sword into its sheath, and apologizing to the soldiers for the rashness of his follower, touched and healed the wound. While they were binding him Jesus remonstrated with the multitude, saying, "Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness." When the Roman soldiers had bound his hands behind his back, and moved forward with their prisoner to the high priest's palace, all the disciples fled, under the apprehension that they too would be arrested; but John and Peter, loth to leave their Lord, followed on at a safe distance, and John first, and Peter later, entered the palace hall; Peter sitting with the servants to see the end.

In the meantime the priests and elders tried to obtain some witnesses to testify that Christ had said something in their hearing that was very wicked, and according to their law deserved death. Now, none could say this in truth; so they were obliged to get false witnesses; that is, pay some bad men to say anything they wished, to justify them in pronouncing sentence on him. These vile men then declared that they had heard Christ say that he could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Christ had, indeed, said to the chief priests, more than three years before, when he had driven the traffickers and money-changers out of the temple and they asked him for a sign of his authority, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"; but this saying of his had reference to his own body, the temple which enshrined the living God, as the temple at Jerusalem was supposed to enshrine the divine Shechinah; and he had not said that he could destroy that temple. But it was evident, even to them, that this testimony was worthless; so the high priest tried if he could get Christ to say something that would suit their purpose better, and adjured him to tell them whether or not he was "the Son of God." "Thou hast said," said Jesus,—that is, thou art right,—"I am the Son of God." Then the high priest rent his clothes, declared he had spoken blasphemy, and that there was no further need of witnesses. Had he not been the Son of God he would, indeed, have spoken

blasphemy, but they would not believe that he was so, though he had done miracles enough in the land to prove it, and therefore they now seized the opportunity of putting to death the Lord of Life and Glory.

And now the servants and soldiers spit in his face, struck him, slapped his cheeks, and, having blindfolded him, asked him to tell them who did it. This was horribly wicked: and they are as horribly wicked who make sport with the name of Jesus and use it triflingly or in jest. Take care never to sport with sacred things.

Peter was all this while sitting among the servants of the high priest, when one of the maids espied him out, and accused him of being a disciple; but Peter was afraid of suffering in the same way, and so denied it. He then left his seat and went to the porch or entrance of the high priest's hall; but there he was again discovered by another maid, and then he swore that he knew nothing of Christ. After this some more persons charged him with being one of Christ's followers, and they said that his dialect proved he came from the same part of the country. Peter again cursed and swore, probably worse than before, and said he knew nothing of Christ. Those that curse and swear show most plainly that they can not belong to Christ, so Peter took a most effectual and wicked method to disguise himself.

Jesus had warned him of this, and told him that before the cock should crow twice he would deny him thrice. His words now came to pass; the cock crowed—Peter remembered it—his heart was ready to break—he thought how wicked he had been, and, going away, he “wept bitterly.” This was a sign that he sincerely repented; but no weeping bitterly can ever wash away the foulness of your sins and of mine; *that* can only be done by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, which alone can bring healing to the wounded soul and take away its guilt and defilement, and which “cleanseth from all sin.”

The Sufferings of Christ.—His Death.

MATTHEW XXVII.

We left Christ in the hands of the chief priests and elders, condemned to die; but they had not full power to kill him—they could

only show how much they desired to put him to death. About two years before this the Romans, who had conquered the Jews, had taken from them the power to execute any, and therefore another council was held to know what further to do. So they bound Jesus and led him to Pilate, the Roman governor who was placed over them, in order that he might execute the sentence which they had passed upon him.

While this was doing Judas' conscience became so troubled for having basely delivered up his innocent Master that he went and threw down the money which, for his wicked act, he had received from the chief priests and elders, and he said, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." But the priests, even more hardened than he, said, "What is that to us? see thou to that." As much as to say, that is your concern, Judas, and not ours; our end is served, and so you may do as you please; and if you have betrayed the innocent, the fault is yours, and not ours.

Christ having declared himself to be the Christ or Messiah,—the Son of God,—the Jews thought they had excellent grounds on which to accuse him to the Romans. They had a notion in their heads that the Messiah was to be their king, as David and others had been before; and so they thought that by Christ owning himself to be the Messiah he professed also to be their king. This was their own fancy, for his kingdom was not of this world, but spiritual; he never intended to sit upon an earthly throne, but to reign in the human heart, making it obedient to him from love. This fancy of theirs they told to Pilate as truth; and as the Romans would be jealous of any one claiming the throne—as Herod was when Christ was born—they thought they could bring a charge of treason against Christ. Pilate being informed of this asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou sayest"; meaning, "I am." He explained, as John tells us, to Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world, and Pilate understood it. To the other false charges of the Jews he would make no reply.

Now, there had been a custom introduced by the Romans—perhaps to win the hearts of the lower orders of the Jews—to release some prisoner at the time of the passover. So Pilate fixed upon Barabbas,

a most notorious thief and murderer, and proposed to the Jews to determine which of the two should be set at liberty, Barabbas or Christ. He believed Christ to be innocent, and proposed this Barabbas, whose life none could well wish to be spared, that the innocent Saviour, whom he set in contrast to him, might escape. But the chief priests and elders managed to persuade the people to demand Barabbas. Astonished at their choice, Pilate then asked what was to be done with Jesus, and they said, "Let him be crucified!"

Crucifixion was a cruel, lingering, and disgraceful punishment. Cruel, for the criminal had to bear his cross to the place of execution, and then, faint and weary and heartbroken, he was stretched upon the wood, which was something like the letter T. On the top part his arms were extended and his hands nailed to the wood; and on the upright part his body was to hang, supported by his nailed hands, and being at full length, his feet were nailed to the lower part. The cross was then lifted up, and with a jerk it was thrust into a hole in the ground, thus adding to the poor victim's sufferings. The criminal sometimes lingered a long time before he expired, and was killed at last. This mode of putting to death was only practised on wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and murderers, and the vilest of men; and it showed, indeed, the bitter and horrid malice of the wicked Jews against the innocent Saviour that they wished him to suffer no less a punishment; and they thought that this would frighten all his followers, as well as make them ashamed of him.

Pilate was shocked at the Jews, yet he had not courage nor uprightness enough to refuse them their wicked request; so, to quiet his own conscience in giving up the innocent Saviour to be put to death, he took some water and washed his hands before all the people, which was a custom to show that a man took no part in the murder of any person; and he said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." Then answered all the people and said, "His blood be on us and on our children"; that is, "we will bear the blame, whatever may happen from it, so let him die; we care nothing for the consequences, we are not afraid of them."

Oh, miserable people! His blood was afterwards upon them indeed!

Nearly their whole nation were butchered, enslaved, driven into perpetual banishment, and scattered among all nations, as they are to this day; and the Romans, whom they used as the tools to do their wicked deed, were the men that afterwards executed the Divine vengeance. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Jesus was scourged, stripped, dressed in mockery in a scarlet robe, like a pretended king; a crown of thorns was made and put upon his



CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS.

head, that his tender temples might be pierced and made to bleed; and a reed, or cane, was put in his hand as a sham scepter. All of this the Saviour submitted to with the greatest meekness. Then, to finish their mockery, the Jews bowed their knee to him, and cried, "Hail, king of the Jews!" Now they spit upon him out of contempt, and smote him on the head with the reed, and finally took off his mock robes and led him away to be crucified.

On their way to the place of execution they met with a man of Cyrene, named Simon, thought by some to

have been attached to Christ; and as they feared that our blessed Lord could hardly live to be crucified, having suffered so much, they made Simon carry the cross.

At length they came to a spot called Golgotha, and there "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted thereof he would not drink." Compassionate people usually mixed a drink to cheer the spirits of the victims going to execution, and to

stupefy their griefs; but none offered to soothe the blessed Jesus. Vinegar would have quenched his thirst, but gall mixed with it was nauseous indeed!

And now he was stripped naked, and his garments were parted by lot among the soldiers who were engaged in his execution; and, being crucified, the soldiers sat down to watch him, lest his disciples should take him.

It was usual to write the offender's accusation, and to have it affixed to the cross. Pilate wrote that of Christ: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Two thieves were crucified with him, at the same time and place.

As the cross was placed by the roadside, the mob from Jerusalem that passed by it wagged their heads in derision at Jesus, and reviled or blasphemed him, and told him that if he was the Son of God he ought to show it by coming down from the cross! He was, indeed, soon to show that he was the Son of God, but it would be in another way, after their malice was satisfied, by rising from his tomb. The chief priests and scribes also united in mocking him, and said if he would come down from the cross they would believe him. These priests and scribes knew that he had wrought wonderful miracles, yet they would not believe him; and now they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and must bear their guilt. One of the crucified thieves also mocked him.

At noon-day—called by the Jews "the sixth hour"—there came on a darkness, which lasted for three hours, and spread over all the land. And at the ninth hour, or "three o'clock in the afternoon," Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and so his human nature sank upon the cross. Some thought that he cried out from being so thirsty, and handed him some vinegar in a sponge put upon a reed; and now Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost, or yielded up his spirit.

Oh, what were his sufferings! His bodily sufferings were indeed great, but these were nothing compared with those of his soul. For God to forsake him at that moment, how awful! But why did God forsake him? God hates sin. The innocent Jesus then bore our sins.

This was the reason why he yielded to death. The Jews were wicked in killing him, and did it all of their own accord and out of the malice of their own hearts; but they could not have killed Christ if he had not willingly given himself to their malice and cruelty. And this that in his death he might bear the sins of all his people, for he himself was innocent, and it was these sins that caused God to withhold his comforts from him. Well may we adore the blessed Jesus for such a display of love. But, if he cried out beneath the weight of man's guilt, what must those sinners endure who will not believe in him and be saved, and so doom themselves to bear the weight of their own guilt forever?

But besides the great darkness, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, the earth quaked, and even the rocks were split asunder. The thick tapestry veil was rent, as a sign that all that was sacred in the ceremonies of the law was now over, and those ceremonies of no use; for the great Saviour and sacrifice was now come, and he had finished his work for guilty men. The earth quaked, perhaps as a sign of the dreadful shaking which was soon to befall the whole Jewish nation; and



INTERIOR OF A ROCK SEPULCHRE.

the rocks were split asunder to shame the hearts of the people, more hardened than those rocks.

These things convinced the soldiers who watched Jesus and the centurion who commanded them that he was no common person; and they were struck with fear, and said, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Many women also, who followed him from Galilee, were witnesses of his crucifixion; among whom "was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children."

On the evening of this day, when the Jewish Sabbath was about to begin, the body of Jesus was obliged to be removed; and Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and secretly attached to Christ, went to Pilate

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THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH VIRGINS.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins."—Matt. XXV, 1.



THE WIDOW'S MITE.

"This poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury."
Mark XII, 43.

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and begged his body, which could not be taken down and buried without permission being given by the Roman governor. Leave being granted, "he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock"—for the sepulchres of the Jews were made in rocks; "and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."

The day following, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate, and, fearing lest the disciples should steal the body of Christ and say it was risen, they begged that they might have the tomb guarded. So they made all as sure as they could, and sealed the stone that nobody might remove it, and set a watch or guard of soldiers to prevent any one approaching. This was one of the happiest events that could have taken place, because it furnished in the end the surest proofs that Jesus was not stolen away, but that he arose from the grave.

The Resurrection of Christ.

MATTHEW XXVIII.

It is reckoned that Christ lay in the tomb thirty-six or thirty-eight hours. At the dawn of day, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the wife of Cleophas, went to the sepulchre, still desiring to see the dear remains of their beloved Lord. "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." These keepers were Roman soldiers, the most courageous men in the world; but they were frightened at the scene. If the resurrection of Christ was so awful, what must his coming to Judgment be! How will the guilty quake then!

When the women approached the sepulchre the Angel spoke kindly to them, and told them that the Lord was risen, and desired them to tell the glad news to the disciples, who were greatly discouraged at his crucifixion and death, and they were to assure them he would soon meet them in Galilee.

The women ran with all speed to tell the disciples, but on their way Jesus himself met and saluted them; and they fell at his feet, and held them, and worshiped him: and he repeated the orders to go into Galilee.

But what did the Roman soldiers do? They were set to guard the body of Jesus, and yet he had escaped. How could they escape punishment for this? They went into the city and told the simple story how it happened, and how terrified they were. "They showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done"; how that there had been a very great earthquake, and a very surprising appearance; for one like a young man descended from the clouds, whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, which filled them with astonishment and dread; that he rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and then sat upon it; and that some women coming to the sepulchre were shown by him where the body had been laid, but was now gone; and how that after they had recovered themselves from the fright they had themselves examined the sepulchre, and the body was certainly gone; and sure they were that the women did not carry it away, nor any others; all which they thought proper to relate to the chief priests; partly on their own account, to clear themselves from the charge of bribery, corruption, sloth, and negligence; and partly that the chief priests might consider what further was best to be done.

Now, it would not do to bring the guards to trial for letting Jesus escape, for they would have defended themselves by telling the truth, and only have spread the account of the resurrection more abroad. So it was settled that a story should be made up that the disciples came by night and stole the body away while the guards slept; and the elders gave the soldiers a large reward to keep the resurrection secret. But this story, after all, was a very poor one; for it was not very likely that the timid disciples, who all forsook Christ and fled, would have stolen his body from the Roman soldiers; nor that all the guards would have been asleep; and even if they had, it was more than probable that some would have roused up, and the disciples would then have endured their vengeance. And then it was very

strange that the Roman soldiers should have been saved from punishment after they had slept upon their watch, which by their laws was deemed a heavy crime; but it was settled that the Jewish elders should explain the matter to the Roman governor if the affair came under his notice, and that so the soldiers should not be injured. The bungling nature of the story shows that the soldiers told a lie, and that they could not prevent the resurrection of our blessed Saviour, though they were even set to watch his tomb. Either they were asleep or awake: If awake, why should they suffer the body to be taken away? If asleep, how could they know that the disciples took it away? How could they, then, state that it was stolen? Then, again, the evidence of the apostles furnishes us with arguments of the clearest and most powerful kind: (1) They were poor, unimportant, and timorous creatures; (2) the number of them forbids collusion, for the witnesses to the resurrection were very many; (3) the facts they avow were apparent to their own eyes; (4) the concurrence of all their testimony; (5) they gave their evidence before Jews, heathens, philosophers, rabbins, courtiers, and lawyers; (6) they bore evidence right at Jerusalem, in the synagogues and the prætorium; (7) their evidence was just at the time of the occurrence, when everything was being investigated, or seemingly so, by those in authority; and (8) the motives prompting the testimony must have been for truth's sake, for all knew that in so testifying they were exposed to the enmity and persecution of the Jewish authorities.

The story, reported by the Jews even to this day, is a delightful encouragement to our belief that Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the third day; but not the only proof we possess, for the eleven disciples went into Galilee, and there he met them after his resurrection, and he commanded them to go and preach the gospel to every creature; to tell men the glad tidings, or good news, that he had died to



MOURNERS.

save sinners, and that whosoever believed in him should never perish; and that he had risen again, and was therefore an ever-living Saviour, to whom all sinners might look for salvation to the end of time. When any professed sincerely to believe their message, they were to baptize them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—*i. e.*, in the name of the blessed Trinity; and this was to show that in like manner the Holy Spirit would purify their hearts who truly believed in him, and was to be a bold avowal before the world that they were the followers of Him who was crucified. As a further proof that those baptized were his followers, they were to do all his holy commands, and then all of them might expect his blessing and favor, "even unto the end of the world. Amen."



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GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

OR written by Mark, under the direction of the Apostle Peter, through whose ministry, doubtless, Mark was converted. That this Gospel received the sanction of Peter, and was received into the Christian Church upon his authority, is conceded. St. John had seen it, with the other two Gospels, and wrote his own as supplementary to them. Papias speaks of the writings of Matthew and Mark as existing at the beginning of the second century, when he talked with the disciples of the Apostle. This, with the other Gospels, was known to Justin Martyr in the second century, when it was read in all the churches; and during the latter part of the first and the former part of the second century, the apostolic authors, Clemens, Hermes, Barnabas, and Ignatius, made use of it, as also of the other Gospels. But we need not add to these statements the list of evidence showing that this Gospel, though not written by an Apostle,—as in the case of Luke's Gospel,—was received as authentic, was divinely inspired, and was endorsed as such by the Apostles themselves; this latter fact inducing the early church to receive it at once into the canonical books. It carries with it the stamp of the Holy Spirit, and stands before the mind of man as a monument with foundations deeper and summit higher than any human conception. It is remarkable for its simplicity and clearness, and is usually regarded as a model record of facts. It is divided into sixteen chapters, and furnishes most of the things given in Matthew, adding thereto some further particulars.



MARK is shorter than Matthew. It is a repetition of the same history by another hand, with here and there some few facts not mentioned by Matthew. Some of these, therefore, are all that need be added in this place.

In the *fourth* chapter we have the Parable of the Seed, which appears to have been delivered at the same time that the Parable of the Sower was, as we have read in Matthew, but was not mentioned by him with that parable. Thus, that nothing important might be lost, one Evangelist has supplied what another has omitted, as well as confirmed the truth

of all that the other has said.

The parable given by Mark is contained in the verses between the twenty-fifth and the thirtieth, of the fourth chapter.

In the *seventh* chapter Mark gives us the particulars of Christ's curing a deaf man: "And he put his fingers in his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Be opened," and his deafness was cured, and "he

spake plain." Most likely he might have once had his hearing, and had learned to speak a little, but having lost his hearing early in life, he could learn no more; but now with his hearing he learns also to speak. This kind action of Christ made the people look upon him with admiration, and they said, "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

In the eighth chapter is related the cure of a blind man at Bethsaida, on whose eyes he spat, and he put his hand upon them. And the man directly saw men as trees walking: he could not exactly make out their shape from a tree. He put his hands on his eyes a second time, and then he saw clearly: teaching us, perhaps, to persevere in the use of proper means. But both in this case and in that of the deaf man the means were only signs; they could never have cured the man if administered by a common physician; these were miracles—things not of a common kind, and showed that he who performed them could only be the Son of God.

In the last chapter we have some further particulars about Christ's resurrection, and his encouragement to his disciples to preach his gospel and work miracles in his name, which would prove that their message was divine, and establish the truth of it at its beginning, before all the world. They were to cast out devils, who then possessed the bodies of men, just as Jesus had cast them out; they had to speak new languages which they had never learnt, so as to be able to tell men of every country about the way of salvation through Jesus Christ; they were to take up serpents without being bitten or endangered by them; if any attempt should be made to poison them, the deadly potion, which would kill other persons, should do them no harm; and if sick persons were brought to them to be cured, they should only lay their hands upon them and they would recover. You must, however, remember that there was this great distinction between the miracles performed by Jesus and those performed by his disciples,—that Jesus did all his by his own power, and without using any other name; but the power which the disciples had was not their own, but only what he gave them, and they were to work miracles only in his name. These miracles are not now needed, because we have so

many proofs left us that they were done by the first ministers, and the religion of Jesus is everywhere spread and spreading without them.

Mark further informs us more than Matthew, as he not only mentions Christ's command to his disciples, but the effect of their obeying it, and preaching the gospel to every creature; for "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Amen.*

*As the observance of the Christian Sabbath—the first day of the week—instead of the Jewish Sabbath—the seventh day, or Saturday—commenced soon after the ascension of Christ, it may be as well to explain the reason of the change here. The setting apart of one day in seven for the worship of God is older than the Hebrew nation or the Jewish religion. It dates from the creation of man; and at first was, unquestionably, the seventh day, as that was the day of the completion of the creative work. All nations which are wholly or partially civilized adhere to this practice, which is founded in nature as well as in revelation; but in the lapse of time they have selected different days; so that almost every day of the week is the Sabbath of some nation. The Jews adhered to the seventh day; but the early Christians, and especially the Gentile Christians, felt that they should rather observe the first day of the week (our Sunday), since our Lord rose from the grave on that day, and his resurrection was a cardinal point in their faith. Some of the Jewish Christians, in the apostles' time, observed both days; but it was not easy to do this, and very early the Christians were distinguished from the Jews as those who observed the first day of the week for religious worship. God requires one-seventh of our time for his service, and that day is best for it which commemorates the resurrection, and is most generally observed.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

OR, written by Luke, the companion of Paul during his most active labors and severe sufferings. It was extant at a very early period, and was received as of divine authority by the infant church from the time of its publication. Some uncertainty hangs about Luke's early history and his position among the followers of Christ. The sanction of the Apostle Paul, and the early and unanimous reception of the Gospel of Luke as divinely inspired, and its insertion into the Scripture canon, are alone sufficient proof of its heavenly origin. It furnishes many parables, discourses, miracles, and events omitted by the Gospels preceding it, whilst some already recorded are omitted. The style of Luke is distinguished from that of other New Testament penmen by its pureness and classical finish, aside from its occasional use of Hebrew and Syriac notions. It is divided into twenty four chapters, evidently written for the instruction of Gentile Christians.

The Birth of John the Baptist.

LUKE I.



LUKE is thought to have been the same mentioned by the Apostle Paul in the last chapter of his epistle to the Colossians, where he speaks of "Luke, the beloved physician."

This Evangelist tells us some particulars about the birth of John the Baptist which are not mentioned by the other three—that his father was a priest of the name of Zacharias; that his mother's name was Elizabeth, and that she was sprung from the race of Aaron; that they were both very good people, and walked together in the holy ways of God; and that John the Baptist was born when they were "well stricken in years," or quite old.

This remarkable forerunner of Christ was born, like him whom he was to honor and proclaim, in a very honorable and wonderful way. John's father, Zacharias, was burning incense in the temple, while the people "were praying without," when an angel appeared to him and told him that his son should be born, and that he must call him John—a name which means *the grace and favor of God*; and this was to show that God's grace would be upon him in a very striking manner.

It was extant at its publication. The sanction of and its insertion in lectures, discourses, &c. The style of it is set aside from its value for the instruction.

mentioned in the life of his father speaks of

particulars which are not in his father's life; that she thought that they were together when

whom he had seen in a different way. While he was in the East, and John was to go in that manner.



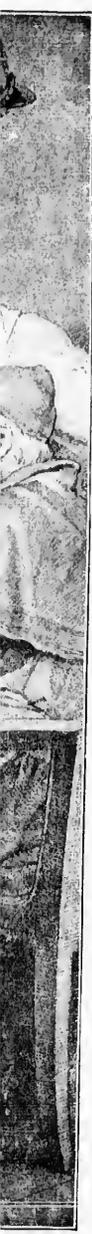
THE ANNUNCIATION OF CHRIST.

"Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women," Luke I. 28.



CHRIST IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE.

"And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."—Luke VII, 48.



He was to be separated from the world, like the ancient Nazarites (Numbers vi, 3), to drink "neither wine nor strong drink"; and God would bless his preaching, so that he should turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He should have the same holiness, courage, and zeal as Elias, or Elijah, to turn the disobedient into the ways of wisdom. Zacharias, though a good man, doubted the truth of what the angel told him, and asked for some sign from which he might have better reason to believe that what he said would come to pass. The angel told him he should be dumb till the child was born, and this should be a sign, and, at the same time, a reproof for his doubting the message which God had sent.

The people wondered that Zacharias should remain so long in the temple, and when he came out he had lost his speech, as the angel had said. Elizabeth, his wife, at length had a son; and when he was to be circumcised at eight days old, he had his name given to him. It was usual to name the son after the father, and the friends and relatives present would have had him called Zacharias, but Elizabeth having been informed in writing by her husband of all that had taken place, in obedience to the command of the angel would have him called John. The friends, however, asked the father what he would have him called; and he by signs asked for a writing-tablet, or little table made of brass, wood, or wax,—used in those days,—and wrote or scratched upon it, as they then did, with an iron pen, "His name is John. And they marvelled all."

No sooner had Zacharias obeyed he divine command than his tongue was unloosed, and he spake as before.

This event, which caused so great wonder among all present, was soon reported throughtout the hill country of Judea, where they dwelt; and all that feared God were filled with awe at this extraordinary child, and anxiously waited to see for what purpose he had been sent into the world.

His father, Zacharias, was then "filled with the Holy Ghost," or the Holy Spirit inspired him to prophesy about the coming of Christ. And John grew up, but loved retirement, and went into desert and lonely places, no doubt God holding sweet communion with his spirit,

or talking, as it were, with his holy mind; and so he remained till he came to proclaim Christ's coming, "preaching in the wilderness of Judea," as we have already seen in Matthew.

The Birth and Early Days of Jesus Christ.

LUKE II.

About the same time that John the Baptist was born Jesus was born also; John was born not more than six months before Christ. At this time Cæsar Augustus, who was the second Emperor of Rome, reigned over that empire, which had become so large from its conquests that it was called "all the world." Judea, you know, was then tributary to it, or paid taxes to the Roman government. But a particular sort of tax was now determined on by the Emperor, which is called a poll-tax, or tax upon the head of every person; and to make sure of all the subjects in the empire they were obliged to attend in person at an appointed place, and be enrolled, or entered in a book.

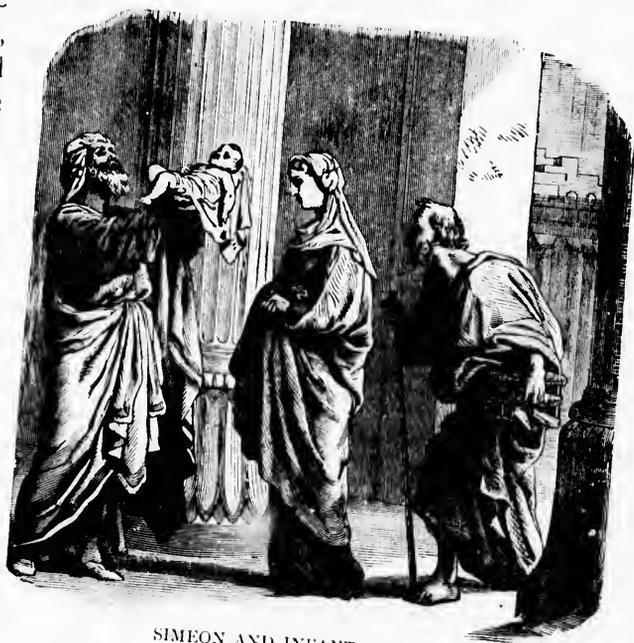
It is a remarkable fact that the Emperor had resolved on this tax twenty-seven years before; but disturbances in the empire distracted his attention, and it was only now, when all the world was at peace, that he had time to attend to it. See here how Providence overrules all things! Had he been able to carry his purpose into effect before, then the mother of Jesus would not have been there with her husband Joseph, and Jesus would not have been born in Bethlehem, but at Nazareth, where he was afterwards brought up. But if he had been born at Nazareth instead of Bethlehem, then the prophecy respecting him would not have been fulfilled, as recorded in the fifth chapter of Micah and the second verse, and the fact that he was the true Messiah would have so far been doubtful. But here the ambitious views of a Roman Emperor to fill his coffers with money were made to bring about the fulfilment of God's promise to his church, by bringing the parents of Jesus to Bethlehem, the place prophesied of, where he was born.

At this time one Cyrenius was governor of Syria, which was an-

anexed to Judea, and he had the management of the tax. And every one went to his own city where he was born or the place where his inheritance lay; and as Joseph's family sprang from David's city, and, indeed, from David himself, though Joseph was now a poor man, he had to go up to Bethlehem.

The city was so crowded that there was no room for the infant Saviour and his mother in the place called by us the Inn, though rather a sort of lodging-place only. He was, therefore, born and lodged in a place for the accommodation of cattle.

Now, there were some shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem who were on the hills watching their flocks at night to preserve them from beasts of prey, when an angel appeared to them, surrounded with a bright glory, and told them not to be afraid, for he came not to hurt them, but to tell them the glad news that the long-expected Saviour was born. And a multitude of other happy spirits joined the first messenger, and sang in the sweetest strains—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men"; that is, glory be to God in the highest heavens, and let all the happy spirits there praise him, for peace is now to dwell upon earth in Christ, the great peacemaker between



SIMEON AND INFANT SAVIOUR.

God and guilty men, and every kind of blessing will proceed from him.

And when the angels departed the shepherds went to Bethlehem and saw Jesus, as the messenger had exactly described him, "wrapped in swaddling clothes," or bound closely up, as was the custom in many countries about a hundred years ago, instead of infants having their limbs free, as they are now; and he was "lying in a manger." And they told every one they knew what wonderful things they had seen, and praised God for his great mercy in sending a Saviour into the world. Let us praise him, too.

After this Jesus was *circumcised*, and by this rite became a Jewish citizen, entitled to the covenant blessings promised to Abraham and his seed. Then he was *redeemed*, another custom of the Jews; for when God slew all the first-born of the Egyptians, he protected the Israelites, who, according to his command, given through Moses, had sprinkled the lintels and posts of their doors with the blood of the Passover lamb; and from that time he kept up the remembrance of this mercy by demanding the first-born to be consecrated to him; "for," said he, by Moses, "all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for myself." Instead of giving them up, however, to the service of the tabernacle,—which was consecrating them entirely to God, as the Levites were,—"the first-born of man might be redeemed for five shekels," or about two dollars and eighty cents of our money, which went to the service of the sanctuary. As no mention is, however, made here of the performance of this custom, it is supposed by some that "in case of poverty the priest was allowed to take less, or perhaps nothing." Our Lord's mother also *presented her offering*, a further custom usual on such an occasion. Had she been able she ought to have presented a lamb for a burnt-offering and a dove for a sin-offering; but as she was poor, and not able to purchase a lamb, she took two turtle-doves; for so the Lord had ordered by Moses: "If she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest

shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean." This custom was to teach the Jews, and us also, that we ought to thank God for all our mercies, and that we should express our unworthiness of them by confessing our sins—we must present the sin-offering together with the burnt-offering.

While the infant Jesus was in the temple there came in a good old man named Simeon, who had been anxiously waiting for the coming of the Messiah; and God having shown him by his Holy Spirit that the Saviour, whom his heart desired to see, had come, he took him up in his arms, and blessed God that he had lived to see him, and said he could now depart in peace, since he had seen God's salvation. "One Anna, a prophetess, who was eighty-four years of age, also entered the temple, and gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake of" Jesus "unto all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

Luke omits to tell us of the flight into Egypt; but that was told us fully in Matthew.

After these things Joseph and Mary, with the infant Saviour, "returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth."

And the child Jesus was brought up at Nazareth, under the care of his parents, and he "waxed," or grew, "strong in spirit," giving signs of a wonderful mind and of great piety, for "the grace of God was upon him."

When Jesus was twelve years old his parents went up to the temple to the feast of the Passover, in remembrance of the deliverance from Egypt, and he went with them. Probably this was his first Passover, and something now occurred which made the Evangelist Luke take notice of him at this age. For when the feast was over, and they returned with a number of other families that had gone for the same purpose, Jesus remained behind. His parents did not miss him till the end of the day; for, as he was amiable and beloved by all who



TURTLE-DOVE.

knew him, they supposed that he was among some of their friends and acquaintances on the road; but not hearing anything of him, they became uneasy, and went back the next day to Jerusalem, and it was not till the third day that they found him. But where was he? Not in bad company, for he never stood in the way of sinners; nor was he at play, for he was of an age to learn, and he was improving his time and getting knowledge from the doctors of the temple. The teachers of the law were used to instruct the young there, and they were allowed to ask any questions they pleased for the purpose of learning. Jesus had, therefore, placed himself at their feet, and was "both hearing them and asking them questions." "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

His parents wondered to find what he was about and to see how much he was approved. And his mother gently chided him for having given them so much alarm for his safety; but he replied "Wist ye not," or know ye not, "that I was about my Father's business?" or, "in my Father's house?"

His mother remembered this and other sayings, and waited to see what more wonderful would happen as he should grow up to become a man.

So they returned to Nazareth, and there he lived, obedient to his parents and growing in favor "both with God and men"; his behavior, says the pious Dr. Doddridge, "being not only remarkably religious, but so benevolent and obliging as to gain the favor and affection of all that were about him."

You will observe that most of these interesting facts about the birth and early days of Jesus Christ are not mentioned by the Evangelists Matthew and Mark and are only given us by Luke.

Christ Persecuted at Nazareth.

LUKE III, IV.

We shall now glance at some other matters mentioned by this Evangelist which have not been before noticed, and run through many chapters.

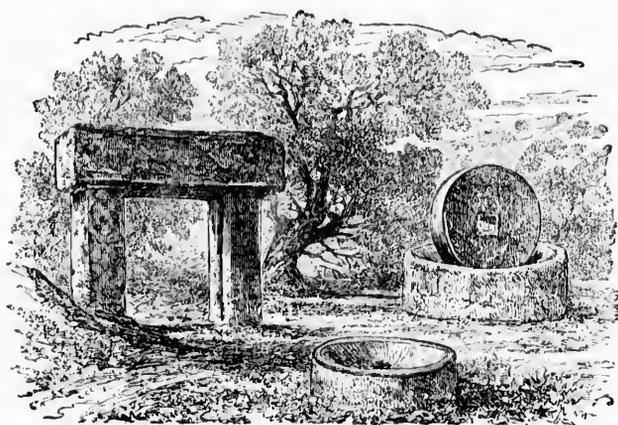
Luke tells us the exact time when John the Baptist made his first public appearance. It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea; and, as the dominions of Herod the Great had been divided after his death, *Herod Antipas*, one of his sons, *was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea*; or ruler of one-fourth of Herod's kingdom; *and his brother Philip* tetrarch of another fourth part, which was *the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis*—the name which was now given to the tract of land on the other side of Jordan, which had formerly belonged to the tribe of Manasseh; *and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene*, a province of Syria, whose territories extended to Lebanon and Damascus and had many Jewish inhabitants. At that time, also, *Annas and Caiaphas were high priests*; not that there were two high priests at one time, but Annas, who had been high priest several times, had so managed as to have five of his sons and one son-in-law (Caiaphas) appointed high priests when he was not in office himself; and he generally ruled when they were high priests in name.

The third chapter contains a long list of names, like the first chapter of St. Matthew. They are, however, reversed in their order, and somewhat different, but both are designed to trace up the genealogy of Jesus Christ through its proper line; that is, to show who were his forefathers after the flesh. Matthew traces it forward from Abraham down to Joseph; and Luke traces it backward from Joseph, the son, by adoption, of Heli (who was the brother of Jacob, the real father of Joseph) to Adam. It is supposed that Heli was the elder brother, but had no sons, and so Jacob's son was called his, according to the Jewish law. There is a tradition that Mary was the daughter of Heli, which may be true, but this genealogy does not state it.

John the Baptist having been thrown into prison by the wicked Herod, Jesus left Perea and went into Galilee.

There his fame had already spread, and he went from place to place, teaching in the synagogues, while every one admired him, and declared "they never heard such preaching in all their lives." "And he came to Nazareth," where he had been brought up, and, as his custom was, "he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up for to

read," for this was a constant part of the Jewish worship. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet *Esaias*," or *Isaiah*; the former being the Greek and the latter the Hebrew for the prophet's name—just, for instance, as *Louis Philippe* was the French name for the king of the French, and *Lewis Philip* the English name for the same king. "And when he had opened the book," or unrolled the volume,—for the Hebrew Scriptures were written on long pieces of parchment, fastened at each end on sticks, and so rolled up,—he found the place where it was written as in the forty-first chapter of *Esaias*, and the first, second, and third verses. Having read the pas-



OLIVE-PRESS.

sage, "closed the book," and rolled it up, he "sat down," as the Jews used to do, to preach, while "the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him," being very curious to know what he was going to say about a text which they knew

described the Messiah. And he then discoursed upon the passage, and told them that the Scripture was that day fulfilled in their hearing.

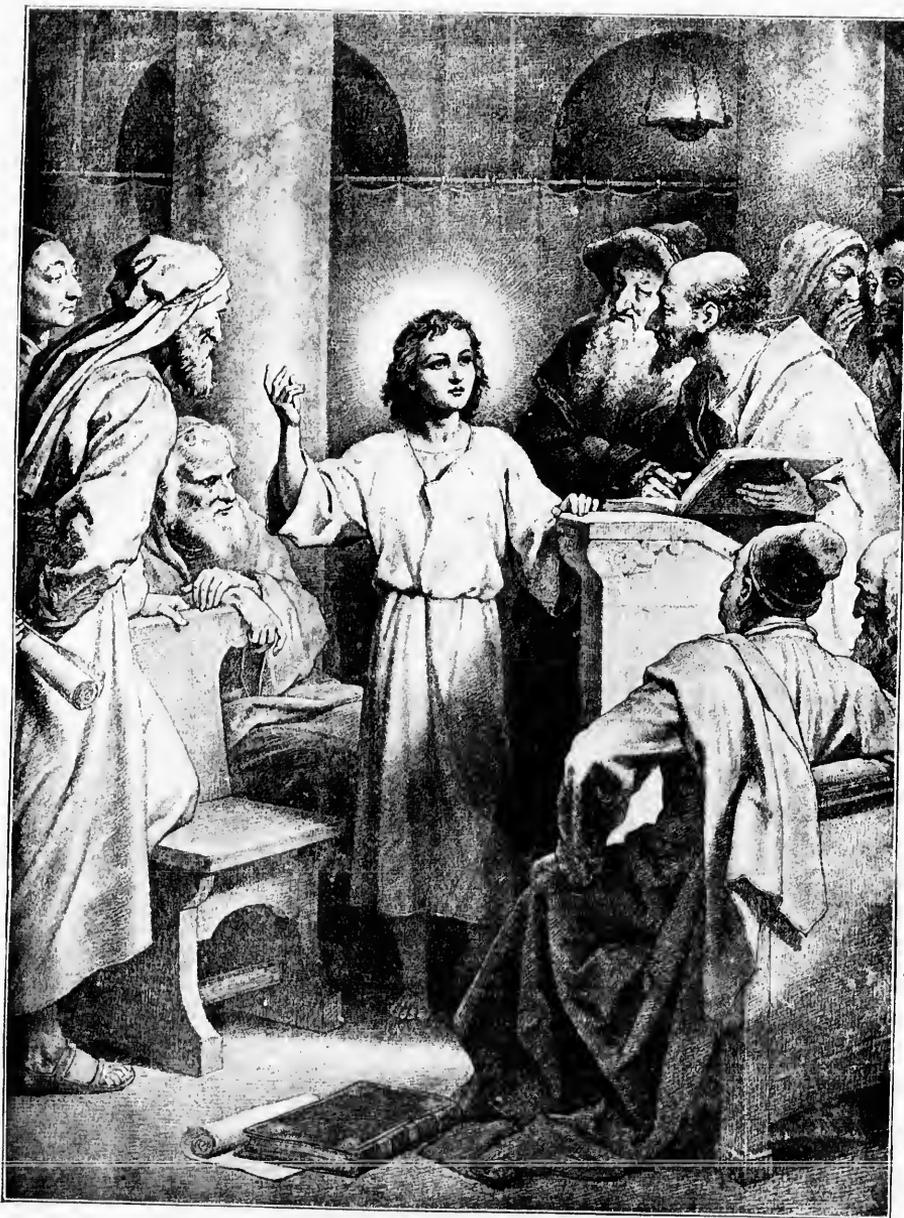
His words were so full of grace, both in the precious truths which he uttered and in the way in which he uttered them, that all his hearers were exceedingly surprised; but yet they could not forget that he was the son of the humble Joseph, and had been brought up at Nazareth under his care, "and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"

Jesus knew what they thought. And he said, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself." You have worked miracles abroad, now do so at home. "Whatsoever we have heard

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"BUT A CERTAIN SAMARITAN HAD COMPASSION ON HIM."—Luke 10: 33.



CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE WITH THE DOCTORS.

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."—Luke II, 47.

done in Capernaum, do also in thy country." And he said, "Verily, I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country"—which was another proverb, or common saying. By this he meant that his miracles would be thrown away upon them; for they would still think from whom he was descended and wonder at what he did, as they now wondered at what he said, but they would not believe in him as the true Messiah. In the days of Elias, or Elijah, though there were many widows living in Israel, he performed the miracle of multiplying the cruse of oil for a widow of Sarepta, a city of the Gentiles; and in the time of Eliscus, or Elisha, the prophet, though there were many lepers in Israel, he cured none but Naaman, who also was a Syrian and a heathen. So our blessed Saviour intimated he would do miracles for and in the presence of heathen rather than before them, for he knew they were so hardened that they would not believe in him.

This faithful address turned their admiration into rage, and, rising up in a tumultuous manner, without any reverence to the place or day, they violently cast him out of the synagogue, and out of the city, too, and brought him to the very brow of the mountain on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong and dash him to pieces. But Jesus, when he had permitted their madness to go thus far, confounded their sight in such a miraculous manner that he passed through the midst of them unknown, and went away to the neighboring city of Capernaum, where he abode for some time.

We have given you the latter part of this account in the words of Dr. Doddridge, because we think we can not possibly make it more plain.

Christ's Miracle of the Draught of Fishes.—Christ Raises the Widow's Son.—The Penitent Woman.

LUKE V—IX.

While our Lord was at Capernaum we find him continually engaged in doing good, teaching in the synagogue, and instructing the people at all other opportunities. Where he went he was attended by crowds, and on one occasion they were so great that they



“pressed upon him to hear the word of God, as he stood by the lake of Gennesareth.” Seeing two fishing vessels near the shore he went into one of them, and, pushing off a little way from the shore, he there “sat down and taught the people out of the ship.”

The fishermen who owned the vessels had been very unsuccessful in their last night's labors, for they had toiled all the night and taken nothing. When Christ had done preaching, and feeding them with food for their souls, he now thought of their bodies also, and he desired them to launch out into the deep, and let down their nets for a draught of fishes. They had little hope of success, but, in obedience to Christ's word, they were disposed to try. The nets were let down, and they drew them up so full of fishes that one of them broke, and the fishes taken so overloaded both the vessels that they began to sink. All were astonished; and Simon Peter, who was one of the party, with his partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, fell down on his knees, and cried out, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” —meaning that he was not worthy of the high honor of having Jesus on board his vessel and of continuing in his presence. Jesus encouraged the timid man, and told him that he would employ him in a far nobler work, and that henceforth he should catch men. And so it came to pass when—if we compare the gospel to a net—he caught 3000 souls at once by his preaching, as we shall read in the Acts of the Apostles. Matthew and Mark have given no more of what happened at this time than merely that Christ sat down in the ship and taught, so Luke has supplied what they omitted.

In the sixth chapter of Luke we find a beautiful discourse of our Lord's, something like that which we call the Beatitudes, in the beginning of Matthew. That, however, was delivered on a mount, and this on a plain; and on examining them and comparing them together, we find them differing very much, though parts of the former discourse were repeated in this, it being another assembly.

In the seventh chapter the Evangelist informs us of Christ's raising to life the son of the widow of Nain. He was just at the moment entering into that city, and a number of his disciples and followers were with him; and on approaching the gate he met a funeral proces-

sion. The dead person was a young man—the only son of a widow. The custom was not to inclose the body in a coffin, as with us, but to carry it on an open bier, borne on the shoulders, just merely covering the corpse with a cloth. The poor widow followed in great sorrow, weeping intensely over her great and overwhelming loss. And who could help her? She seems to have been much respected, and so was her son, by the large concourse that attended the funeral; but her friends and neighbors could only pity her. Jesus pitied her too, for he had a heart full of tenderness, as he has now; but he could do something more for her than mere mortals—he had power even over death; and so he said kindly to the widow, “Weep not. And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother.”

In the same chapter we have also an account of a woman that had been a notorious sinner, who entered the house where Christ was dining with one of the Pharisees. He, as usual, was engaged in speaking the words of instruction, and she listened to him with the greatest attention. Every word touched her heart, and as his feet lay bare on the couch, according to custom, the tears fell in a shower from her eyes, and bathed them all over. She, perceiving this, wiped them with the tresses of her hair, which hung loose about her shoulders; and then, not thinking herself worthy to anoint his head, she kissed his feet, and poured upon them some liquid perfume. The Pharisee was surprised that a holy prophet, as Jesus professed to be, should allow a woman of such a class to approach him; and though he did not speak, Jesus knew what he thought. And he told him there were two debtors; and the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. As they were unable to pay, their creditor kindly forgave them. Now, he would ask the Pharisee, which of these was likely to love the kind creditor most? “Why,” said the Pharisee, “the one who had most forgiven him.” “Rightly said,” answered our Lord; “now thou hast not had the sense of pardon as this woman. My words touched her heart; she has sincerely repented; her many sins are forgiven her, and she therefore loves me much.”

Some think that this is the same woman that we read about in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew; but many who have carefully studied their Bible think otherwise, and for these reasons: the story told by Matthew happened in Bethany, this in Galilee; that in the house of Simon the leper, and this in the house of Simon the Pharisee; that was but two days before the death of Christ, and this a considerable time before; the ointment that woman poured was poured upon his head, and this upon his feet.

In the second verse of the eighth chapter we have mention made of "Mary called Magdalene," or Mary of Magdala, so called, just as Jesus was called Jesus of Nazareth; for Magdala was the place of residence of this Mary, as Nazareth was that of Jesus. Out of this woman our Lord cast seven evil spirits, which, I have before remarked, were suffered then in an extraordinary manner to torment the minds and bodies of men. Few persons can, without considerable reflection, form the slightest idea of the gratitude and love toward Christ that must have moved the poor afflicted creatures whose lives were converted from misery to a full degree of health and bodily comfort. Among them not the least favored by this "Physician of all physicians" was this Mary, who became a faithful follower of her Lord.

The Seventy Disciples sent forth.—The Inquiring Lawyer.—The Good Samaritan.—Martha and Mary.

LUKE X.

In the tenth chapter we are told that, besides the twelve apostles whom Jesus chose to be witnesses to his truth and to declare it to the world, he also sent forth seventy disciples, who were to go in company with each other, two one way and two another way, and so with the whole.

And now he mentioned the awful state of Chorazin and Bethsaida—cities where he had preached and performed his glorious miracles, so that the inhabitants, if they had reflected, must have seen that he was the true Messiah, the Son of God, and have repented and believed his words. Instead of which they rejected him, in spite of all the

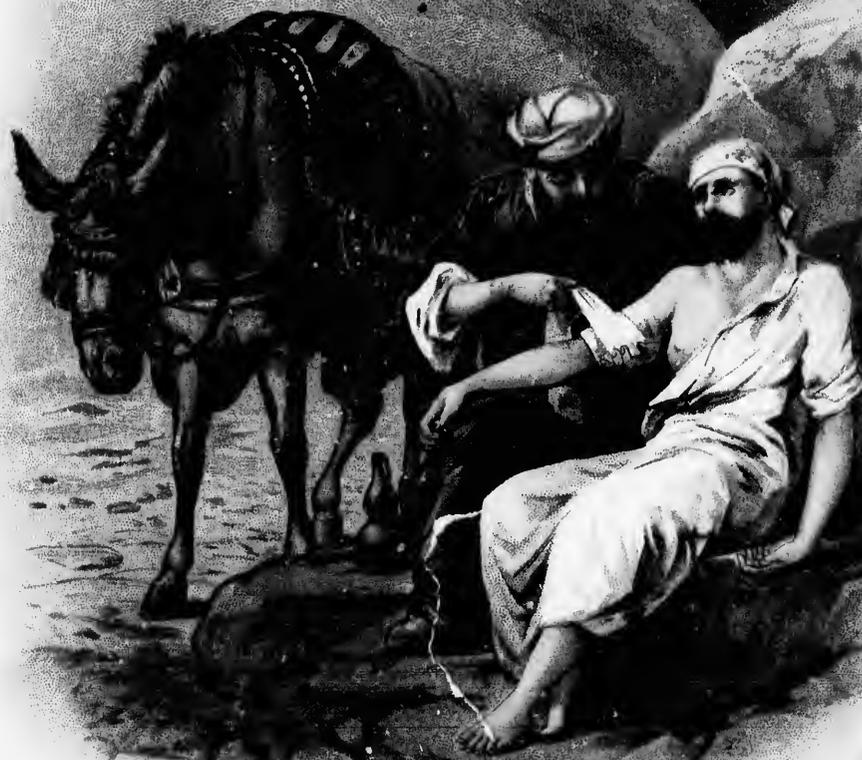
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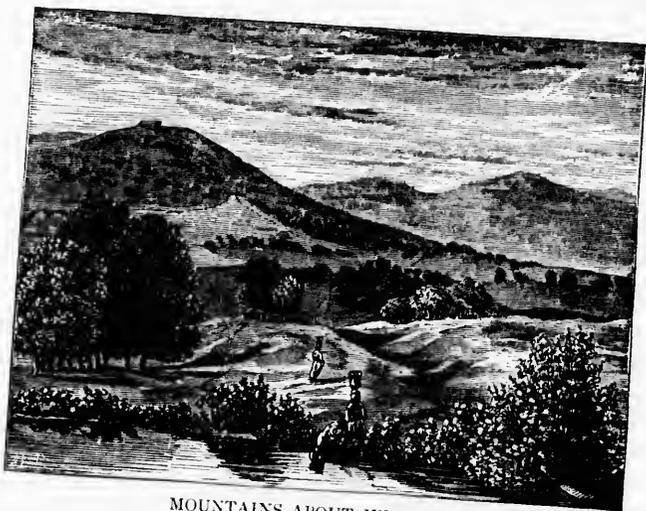
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words he spoke and the mighty deeds he performed to prove that his message was divine—and so now they must perish. Tyre and Sidon were very wicked cities, but these were more wicked; for Tyre and Sidon had never heard nor seen such things as were made known to the people of Capernaum and Bethsaida.

Encouraged by their divine Lord, the disciples went forth; and, having gone on their circuit, they returned and told their Master of their great success, and that they had even cast out devils at the mention of his authority. He then told them that he saw Satan when he was, for rebellion, cast out of heaven quick as lightning, and he still foresaw that his power on earth should be destroyed. They should trample on venomous creatures and receive no hurt; but much more should the preaching of his word break down the power which



MOUNTAINS ABOUT JERICHIO.

evil spirits might have over the minds of men. Yet they were not to glory in being able to perform miracles, for they could do nothing without his aid and might; but they ought indeed to glory when he told them that their names were "written in heaven"; and that as citizens were often enrolled, or their names written in the books of cities where they dwelt, so they were considered by him as the citizens of that happy place, as much as if such a book of their names were actually kept there.

While our Lord was talking to the seventy disciples, a lawyer—or

one of the writers and expounders of the Jewish law—came to him and said, "Master," or Teacher, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Our Lord asked him what he read in his own law. And he said he found there that he was to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. "Do this," said Jesus, "and thou shalt live." This is the grand proof of our religion: if we truly love God and endeavor to do the best sort of good to our neighbors. The lawyer next inquired, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus told him in the interesting *parable of the Good Samaritan*.

This parable begins at the thirtieth verse of this tenth chapter. I must merely tell you that the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was, and still is, very dreary, and has always been a lurking-place for robbers, so that it was called the "bloody way"; that priests and Levites often traveled that road, for some thousands of them lived at Jericho, and they had frequent occasion to go to Jerusalem; that the Jews and Samaritans hated each other greatly, and so the kindness of the good Samaritan in relieving a poor injured Jew, while even his own priest and Levite cruelly passed him by, was so much the more to be admired; and that the two pence mentioned by our Lord mean Roman pence, which were worth about seventeen cents each. We will end all we shall say about this parable by the words of our divine Lord to the lawyer; and when you meet with an enemy in distress, do not be revenged upon him, but "go and do likewise."

This chapter closes with an account of a visit which Jesus paid to Martha and Mary, two pious sisters who lived at Bethany, a village about two miles from Jerusalem.

May my young readers all have grace to choose Mary's good part, and, like her, by faith sit at Jesus' feet and hear his word!

**Jesus teaches his Disciples to pray.—The Parable of the Rich Fool.
—The waiting Servants.**

LUKE XI, XII.

Our blessed Saviour often retired to pray; and he taught his disciples to pray what we call the Lord's Prayer, which is repeated here

and which we have before seen in ^{the} sixth chapter of Matthew. In this, however, are not mentioned all the things we may ask; for we find many other prayers, or parts of prayers, in Scripture, as David's, and Solomon's, and Daniel's, and those contained in the epistles, especially of the apostle Paul.

And here he particularly reminds his disciples that when they pray they must be in earnest. And he tells them that if any of them happened to be out of bread, and a friend should come to see him late in the evening, and he should be obliged to borrow some, as the Jews used to do of each other, it might happen that the house would be shut up at which he might knock. But, then, what will he do? Will he go away? No, he will knock and knock again.

By this our blessed Lord would teach his disciples, and us also, that we must not pray in a hurry, but keep on knocking at the door of mercy, and earnestly ask, as if we wanted indeed to have; and if the man's friend was obliged to give him bread on account of his pressing him so much, then much more would our gracious Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him.

In the twelfth chapter Luke relates *the parable of the Rich Fool*, as we call it. I should like you to read it from the sixteenth to the twenty-first verse. Our Lord describes in it a rich man, who had large barns, full of what his lands had produced, and so much stock that he did not know where to put it. So he resolved to build new barns in the room of the old ones, and to make them larger. And then he thought, "How happy I shall be! I have many years yet to live, and my soul and body may be both at ease: so I will eat, drink, and be merry." But he never thought of thanking God for his wealth or laying any of it out for his glory. So just as he fancied he had got all things to his mind, God sent death to him, and spake to his conscience by his Providence: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" How important is gratitude to God!

In the thirty-fifth verse our Lord says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding." Among the Jews weddings took place at night. The servants, therefore, would

have to sit up for their masters, and must keep their lamps trimmed ready to light them. If the lamps went out it would be a sign of negligence, or that, instead of watching, they were asleep. The garments being long, like a morning gown, it was also usual to tuck them up and gird them close round the waist if anything needed to be quickly done. By mentioning these customs our Lord would show the disciples and us that, as his servants, we should always be ready to meet him at his coming. Death, at his command, will take away all that we have; but as one would watch a thief expected to come at midnight, so ought we to be upon our watch, and then, when called to die, we shall not be taken by surprise. The faithful steward, who uses his time and talents for the divine glory, shall be richly rewarded; but he who presumes on his Lord's delaying, and does wicked things, must suffer the most dreadful consequences. As the faithless and disobedient servant was, by the Jewish people, scourged with stripes, so shall all such receive the sorest punishment, and that punishment shall be the greater for those who have been taught good things and choose to do those that are bad.

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.—Of the Highest Seat.—Of the Lost Piece of Money.—Of the Prodigal Son.

LUKE XIII—XXIV.

My limits now oblige me unavoidably to pass over many things in this gospel which I should be glad to explain to you; but there are many parables given by this evangelist which we do not find in the others, and as I wish particularly to explain them, I must beg you to place your Testament before you, and refer to and read them before you read my short remarks, which I hope, by God's blessing, will be some help to you in the right understanding of them.

The first is *the Barren Fig Tree* (Chap. xiii, 6-9).

Explanation.—The tree referred to by our Lord was a sort of white fig, which, if it did not bear fruit in three years, rarely bore any at all. This tree represented the unbelieving Jews, whom God had favored with great privileges, and sent his prophets and his Son among them

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THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing."—Luke XV, 5.



THE PRODIGAL SON.

"His father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck."—Luke XV, 20.

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to call them to repentance; but still they had not glorified him. Still, he had been patient with them, and had not punished them as they deserved, but all in vain. His kind care over them must therefore soon cease, and they be ruined like a tree cut down.

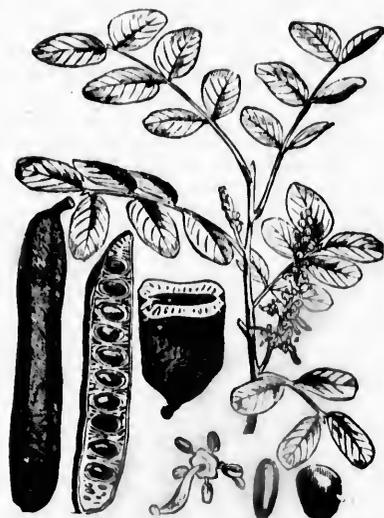
In the fourteenth chapter, from the seventh to the eleventh verses, we have the parable of *the Highest Seat*.

Explanation.—We have some ceremonies among us about taking a seat, but in the East the ceremonies are much greater. The Persians in particular, when invited to a feast, will wedge themselves in at the table just at the place where they suppose their rank entitles them to sit. The master of the feast may, however, raise any one as high up the table as he pleases. The Greeks have the same custom at their wedding feasts, and if any take places higher than they ought, they are very likely to be put lower down.

Our Lord here teaches us "that pride will have shame, and will at last have a fall."

The Prodigal Son is a most delightful parable, from the eleventh verse to the end of the fifteenth chapter.

Explanation.—This parable represents to us the Jews under the character of the eldest son; they having long been treated as God's children, while the Gentiles were not so; and how they felt themselves mortified when our blessed Lord gave them to understand that the Gentiles should be also blessed in the Christ, the true Messiah. It shows us, also, how the sinner, choosing his own way, goes afar from God, our common Father, and so from real happiness. And it points out the folly of those young persons who will break through every restraint and have their own way, which most frequently brings on



CAROB FRUIT (HUSKS OF PRODIGAL SON) AND LEAVES.

misery, and often ruin. It likewise teaches us at the greatest extreme of misery and wretchedness not to despair, but to go to a merciful God, who will look upon our tears, will hear our supplications, and will yet receive us graciously into his tender mercies, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The sixteenth chapter begins with *the Unjust Steward*, and it is contained in the first eight verses.

Explanation.—"This world," says one, "is a house; heaven, the roof; the stars, the lights; the earth, with its fruits, the table spread; the Master of the house is the holy and blessed God; man is the steward, into whose hands the goods of this house are delivered; if he behave himself well, he shall find favor in the eyes of his Lord; if not, he shall be turned out of his stewardship." We see in this parable that one step of sin leads on toward another, and that he who begins to cheat will soon easily go on cheating. Roguery is, however, sooner or later discovered, and then it ends in the disgrace of the offender. Yet bad as it is to act unjustly toward man, it is worse when we consider that we can not do wickedly toward others without breaking God's law. Such a steward must break the sacred command, "Thou shalt not steal"; and God marks those who wickedly break his righteous laws.

In the nineteenth and following verses we have the parable of *the Rich Man and Lazarus*.

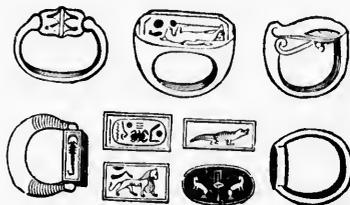
Explanation.—The expression "Abraham's bosom," used here, was used among the Jews to express heaven. We must remember that this is only a parable, and that the happy in heaven and the wicked in hell are too far apart ever to talk with each other.

In the seventeenth chapter is a short parable which we call *the Servant in the Field*. It is to teach us that when we serve God ever so diligently we have only done our duty, and have merited nothing from his hands.

In the eleventh and following verses we read of *ten lepers* whom Christ cured, but out of the ten only *one* gave him glory for what he had done. Was not this ungrateful? But ask yourself, How many mercies have I received and have forgotten to praise God for them? "In everything give thanks," and bless the kind Giver.

The eighteenth chapter begins with the parable of *the Unjust Judge*, which, as the introduction of it tells us, is to teach us "that men ought always to pray and not to faint," for if the unjust judge could be wearied to do what the poor widow needed, surely God will not suffer those who love him to plead with him in vain.

The last parable that requires our notice in this book is that of *the Pharisee and the Publican*. It is included in the tenth and following verses. The Pharisee represents those who think there is merit in their performing their religious duties, and who hope to be saved by them; while the publican represents the humble-hearted sinner, who feels no pride in praying, but only feels his need of God's mercy.



ANCIENT SIGNET RINGS.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

In this gospel there is an account given of Zaccheus, the publican, or tax-gatherer, who was very rich: and as Jesus was passing through Jericho, he wished much to see him. But he was a very short man, and could not see among the crowd, so he got up into a sycamore or kind of fig-tree. Jesus looked up and called him by name to come down, for he meant to go with him to his house. Zaccheus was delighted at this, but many were mortified, and, no doubt, many of the Pharisees, for they said that Jesus was gone to be a guest with a sinner. Yes, Jesus Christ "came into the world to save sinners." And now the heart of Zaccheus was touched

by his grace. He had been an oppressive and unjust tax-gatherer, and had wronged those of whom he had collected, to enrich himself. But he was not ashamed to confess his sins, and to make recompense to those whom he had injured, and so to repent. Jesus saw that he was sincere. He knew, too, that his heart was ready to receive him as his Saviour. Zaccheus becoming blessed, would now be a blessing



ANCIENT SIGNET RINGS.

to others. "This day," said Jesus, "is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham." Publicans, though Jews, were reckoned by them but as heathens; but now Zaccheus is blessed with faithful Abraham; like him, he would command his children and his household to walk in the ways of holy obedience. The salvation of Zaccheus was an example of Christ's design in coming into the world, "to seek and to save that which was lost."

In this gospel there are also several particulars concerning the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ which are not found in the other gospels. Among those relating to the crucifixion are: his praying for his murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; the petition of the dying thief, and his prompt pardon by the Saviour; the commending his spirit into the hands of his Father just before his death. In regard to the resurrection, we have two angels appearing to the women; Christ's appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus; and to the eleven in Jerusalem. As to his ascension, Luke gives a more particular account of it, both here and in the first chapter of Acts, than any of the other Evangelists. He is also the only Evangelist who gives the command of Christ that they should remain in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit.

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GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

WRITTEN by John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the son of Zebedee, brother of James, and cousin of our Lord. His relations to the Saviour were more intimate even than those of his brother James and of Peter. He wrote this Gospel probably twenty years or more after the other Gospels were in circulation. His purpose in writing it seems to have been not to repeat the incidents of the birth and youth of Christ, which the other Evangelists had already given with sufficient fullness; nor to describe many of his miracles (he mentions only eight, six of which are not found in the other Gospels), or recount his parables, which had already been done; but to demonstrate to the disciples at Ephesus, and to the world, *that Jesus was the Son of God*. In doing this he necessarily supplies many particulars which his more intimate intercourse with Christ enabled him to know more fully than the other Evangelists, and he gives special prominence to those teachings of Christ in which his divine nature was asserted and demonstrated. As instances of this, his conversation with his earliest disciples, with Nicodemus, with the Samaritan woman, with the Jews after the miracle of healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, after the feeding of the five thousand, and on several other occasions at Jerusalem; at the raising of Lazarus, in the temple, and in his long and tender interview with his disciples the evening before his betrayal, may be adduced. It was incidental to this purpose that John gives a much fuller account of the Saviour's labors in Judea than the others, their narratives being mostly occupied with his life and labors in Galilee. His account of the trial, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ are, as was becoming in the principal eye-witness of all these, more full and definite than those of any of the other Evangelists; and this also aids his main purpose—to demonstrate that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." This Gospel has always been accepted by the church as authentic and inspired; of late years infidels and rationalistic writers have attempted to show that it was written in the second or third century after Christ, and was not genuine; but they have signally failed. It is divided into twenty-one chapters. The last two verses of the twenty-first chapter are supposed to have been added by the elders of the church at Ephesus, at whose request the Gospel was written.

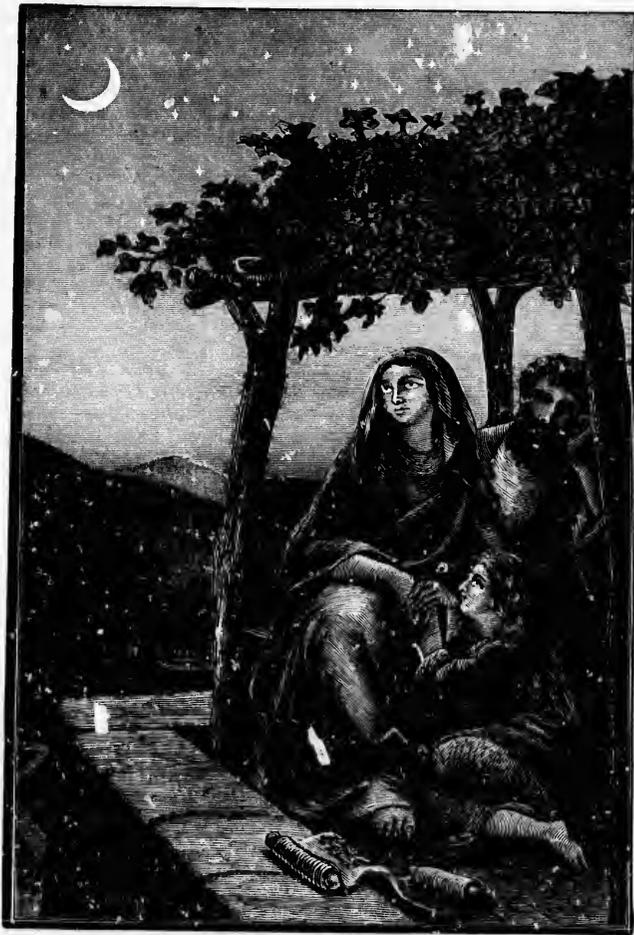
Account of John the Evangelist.—John the Baptist's Testimony to Christ.

JOHN I.



THE Evangelist John was distinguished as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." Jesus loved all his disciples, but John was particularly honored by him, sat near him, and leaned upon his bosom. When Jesus shone in such glory on the "high mountain," John was one of the three disciples that saw him. He was, likewise, one of the three that saw his agony in the garden. To him also was committed the care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, when he died on the cross. History informs us that he lived till he was very old, and, while the other disciples were martyred, he was suffered to die a natural death.

As we find things in Mark and Luke which are not in Matthew, so we find things in John which are not in either of the other Evangelists.



"HE CAME TO NAZARETH, AND WAS SUBJECT UNTO THEM."

than a mere man, for no man could do the miracles which he did; and there are also expressions used at different times which point out that he was a divine person. But John treats more

John does not repeat the account of the birth of Jesus Christ, for that had been sufficiently done by the other three Evangelists; those who followed the first having told us about matters omitted by him, that nothing important might be wanting. And throughout this Evangelist the history of what Jesus did is not so much related as what he said.

In the other Evangelists we are told about the things which Jesus performed, from which we must conclude that he was more

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largely on this point, and begins his gospel by declaring that Jesus Christ is God.

Christ is here called "the Word." We will tell you why: because he it is that speaks all divine things to us; we know the word of God only through him.

He who is called "the Word" is also called God; "and the Word," says John, "was God."

He was in "the beginning"; in the beginning of time, and therefore he was from eternity, before time begun. The world was not "in the beginning," as eternity is called, but was from the beginning. The world can not have existed as this divine Word has existed, because—as is elsewhere said of him—"he was before all things, and by him all things consist."* He must have been before the world, because he made the world; for John adds, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Now, we have seen in Genesis that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"; so that it is clear he who is here called "THE WORD" is the same that is there called "GOD."

John further says, "in him was life": all living beings derive their life from him, and nobody can give life but God. Men can make a fine statue, but all the men in the world can not give it life; God alone must do this. But in this divine "Word was life."

"And the Life was the Light of men." The world must have been in gross darkness without him. We could have known nothing about

* It has been well said that "while Matthew begins his genealogy of Christ with Abraham, and Luke traces it back to Adam, John goes back to 'the beginning,' before the creation of the earth or the universe. To him the creation of man seems to be a modern and recent occurrence. His genealogy dates from eternity." Our readers should also notice the similarity between the commencement of this gospel and that of the book of Genesis. The old revelation of God's will and the new both start from "the beginning" of all things; but while the Old Testament only brings us to the hill-tops, from whence we may see the first signs of the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness,—the coming of the light of the world,—the new bears us up, as on angels' wings, till we can see, from the walls of the Jerusalem above, the end of all earthly things, and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In the Scriptures, then, we have the whole history of God's dealings with man—past, present, and future; from that remote period far back of the ages of the geologist when the plan of salvation was first conceived in the mind of God, to that period in the future when the earth and heaven, that now are, shall pass away, and, the judgment being ended, the saints of all ages shall reign forever with their glorified Lord.

God and the way to heaven but through Jesus Christ. Where he is not known even the wisest men did and still do worship carved figures of different materials, believing them to be God.

This "light shined in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not." "The world by wisdom knew not God." When Jesus Christ appeared men could not see his glory; they were even so blind that the miracles which proved him to be no mere man could not convince them.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light—that all men through him might believe. He" [John] "was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The heathen have the light of reason, which God gave to them; and we have the light of revelation, or of the gospel, revealed—or made known to us—by his Holy Spirit.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us: and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Now, think a little on what John has here said. Though his language, being about uncommon matters, is expressed in a way not directly to be understood,—on account of our being so used chiefly to common concerns,—yet by a little thought it becomes very clear.

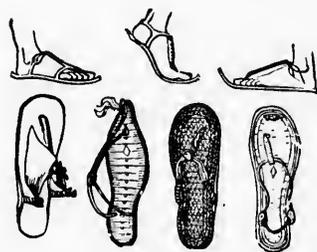
The Word—which spoke the mind of God, and was God; which made all things, and is the life and light of all men—was borne witness to by John the Baptist, who came preaching a few months before Jesus openly showed himself in his ministry; and that "Word" was the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who "was made flesh" when he took our nature and was born in Bethlehem; who "dwelt" some time in the world; whose "glory" the apostles saw—in the deeds he did, in the heavenly truths which he taught, in his transfiguration on the mount, and in his ascension to glory, of which we shall hereafter read.

John attracted much attention by his bold and singular way of preaching; and the Jews made inquiries of him if he was the Christ—the Messiah foretold by the prophets. John replied that he was not;

that he was only like the forerunner of a prince in his processions or travels, going before him and saying, "Make straight the way of the Lord," remove every impediment out of the way to receive him; or, as a king's servants say, "Make room." Men must turn out their sins by repenting of them, and so make room in their hearts for Jesus Christ. He, who was the Christ, was speedily coming to preach his gospel, and he was far greater than John; so much so that the latter was not worthy of being honored as his servant, to unloose even the straps of his sandals—or shoes without the upper leathers, as worn in the East.

The very next day Jesus made his appearance, and John pointed to him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said,

After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me." But why did John call Jesus "the Lamb of God"? Because he came into the world to die for sinners. Every morning and evening the Jews offered up a lamb in sacrifice; which sacrifice in the morning took away the guilt of the night, while that of the night took away the guilt of the



SANDALS.

morning. So God appointed, and so the Jews sacrificed. But Jesus Christ was now to be the Lamb slain. What those lambs did only in type, or as a sign, he came to do in reality for all who by faith behold him as "the Lamb of God"—the only Lamb that can take away sin; or, in other words, the only sacrifice that can be truly effectual, and on whose account alone all the old sacrifices were of any use. The Jews would in vain have offered their lambs in sacrifice if Jesus Christ had not died; and the truly pious Jews believed this, and looked to something more that was to take place when the Messiah should finish his work.

John, moreover, declared that he knew nothing of Christ any more than other people—there was no scheme between them that he should make out Christ to be the Messiah, for he declared him to be such

because he had seen the Holy Spirit rest upon him in some extraordinary appearance, resembling a meek and innocent dove, yet at the same time all glorious and divine. On this account he "bare record," or declared of Christ that he was "the Son of God."

John's disciples, on hearing this testimony, wisely left John, as John wished, and followed after Jesus, and were soon joined by other disciples, whom Jesus added to them to be witnesses of what he said and did.

After this Jesus soon gave his disciples a proof that they had not been mistaken in following him as the true Messiah. Nathanael was invited by Philip to come to Christ, and to follow him.

Nathanael went to Jesus, and when Jesus saw him approaching he said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!" This was a proof that he was more than a mere man, or how should he have known anything about Nathanael, whom he had never before seen? By this he meant that Nathanael did not merely pretend to serve God as an Israelite, but that he served him from his heart. There was no guile or deceit about him, but he was truly sincere.

The good man was surprised at our Lord's knowledge, and asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus said, "When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee." This was probably some spot where Nathanael retired to meditate and to pray, and where he was so shut out from the world that he knew no eye could possibly see him but the eye of God.

Nathanael needed no further proof that Christ was the Messiah, and so he directly cried out, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." That is, "My Master, thou art a divine person, thou art the Messiah, prophesied of to rule over Israel."

Many suppose Nathanael to have been the same disciple which is called Bartholomew; because Bartholomew being called to be a disciple is never mentioned, and so they think that Nathanael must have been the proper name of Bartholomew, for Bartholomew is not a proper name, but signifies the son of Ptolemy. The Evangelists who speak of Bartholomew never mention Nathanael; and John, who mentions Nathanael, never mentions Bartholomew; so that it is thought

the one name is mentioned for the other; and, lastly, John seems to rank Nathanael among the apostles, when he says that Peter, Thomas, the two sons of Zebedee, Nathanael, and two other disciples having gone a-fishing, Jesus showed himself to them. See the twenty-first chapter and the second verse.

Marriage at Cana, in Galilee.

JOHN II.

We have here an account of the first of Christ's public miracles, which he performed at a marriage feast at Cana in Galilee, to which he and his disciples were invited, and his mother Mary was also there.

There being more guests than were probably at first expected, the wine was soon consumed. Mary mentioned this lack of wine to Jesus. Some think that Mary, having seen him perform some miracles in private, now expected to see him perform another by supplying the wine. And they suppose this because Mary could have no other reason for mentioning it to him than that he should take notice of it, and because he checked her for intimating it to him, probably to induce him to work a miracle. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour"—that is, my time for working any miracle here—"is not yet come." I wish you just to observe, by the way, that this language seems rather rude, and for us to say to any one, but especially to a mother, "Woman," would show a very great want of respect; but it was a manner of speaking which in that society implied no rudeness, for even princes addressed ladies of rank in the same way, and servants employed the same word to speak to their mistresses; just as people now address a lady by the name of Madam.

His mother left him to perform his own pleasure, and told the servants just to mind what he should say if he gave them any orders.

Now, there were six stone water-pots there, which had been used for water for various purposes, especially for purifying or washing the hands and feet and the cups and platters. These water-pots, or jars, learned men have reckoned, from the size of the measures used at that

time, to have held about fifty-four gallons. "Jesus saith unto them, fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it." When the governor had tasted the wine, he was delighted with the flavor, but did not know whence it came, and he said, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

Some persons have argued from this miracle that our Saviour approved of the use of intoxicating wines; but this is wrong, for the common wines of Palestine were not as intoxicating as our cider, and the Jewish people were very temperate; and, besides, we have no warrant for thinking that this wine, miraculously changed from water by our Saviour, contained any intoxicating principle; though tasting like their wine, it was not the fruit of the vine, nor had it been fermented; furthermore, to draw from this an argument in favor of indulgence in intoxicating drinks is to contradict the spirit of Christ's teachings. He requires us to deny ourselves, take up our cross,—that is, avoid the indulgence of selfish and sensual appetites,—and follow him. Doing this, we are in no danger of using intoxicating drinks freely.

Christ's Conversation with Nicodemus.

JOHN III.

In this chapter we have an interesting conversation which our Lord held with Nicodemus, one of the sect of the Pharisees, and "a ruler of the Jews"; that is, a member of the great Sanhedrim,—a sort of parliament, consisting of seventy-one or seventy-two members,—and consequently he was one of considerable authority in Jerusalem; though this parliament was perhaps now somewhat altered in its character, and allowed only to meddle with religious matters, the government being under the Romans.

Nicodemus being afraid of incurring the displeasure of the Jews by going to see Jesus, went to him "by night." He respectfully addressed him by the name which the Jewish Doctors bore, and called

him "Rabbi," by way of distinction. He told him he believed him to be "a teacher come from God," and that he had given proof of it by the miracles which he had wrought, and which no common person could do.

Jesus replied that this was not enough to save him, but he must be "born again"; that is, born anew: in other words, he must undergo as great a change in his heart as if his old life had come to an end and he had been born anew into the world. He must be quite a different creature from what he had been. He was born in sin, but he must be born of the Holy Spirit, or he could never enter heaven.

Nicodemus could not understand him; but Christ told him not to "marvel," or wonder, at what he said; for as the wind blew which way it would, never seen by our eyes, yet felt in its power upon our bodies, so the Divine Spirit works unseen, yet powerfully felt, on the heart of the sinner before he can be saved. So, that as by nature he can not love God, now by grace he loves him; as by nature he practises sin, so by grace he practises holiness; as by nature he delights in folly, so by grace he delights in that which is good. This change of the mind is equal to a new birth, for none can understand it but those who have felt it; and those who have felt it know that they are "born again"—are "new creatures in Christ Jesus."

The Woman of Samaria.—The Nobleman's Son Cured.

JOHN IV.

There is a very pleasing little narrative in this chapter about a woman of Samaria. She lived at a city called Sychar: Jacob formerly had purchased a piece of ground here, and gave it to his beloved son Joseph; and here was a well, which still bore the name of Jacob's well.

Jesus having occasion to pass that way on a journey, being hungry, thirsty, and fatigued, sat down by this well just at the moment the woman of Samaria went to it to draw water, and Jesus asked her to give him some to drink. The woman wondered at such a request from Jesus, he being a Jew, and the Jews and Samaritans having a very

bitter dislike to each other; for the Samaritans had in various ways endeavored to injure the Jews. Jesus then said to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God,"—that is, that God has given his own Son to save lost men of every nation,—“and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water”; by this he meant the Holy Spirit's influences, which, because they are refreshing to the thirsty soul of man in search of peace and happiness, are often compared to water.

The woman did not understand him, and asked him how he could draw water elsewhere, having neither well nor bucket at hand; as if he thought himself wiser than Jacob, who had drunk the water of that well, and left it as a valuable gift to his family.



JACOB'S WELL.

Jesus told her that those who partook of that water would grow thirsty again, but that which he could bestow would afford full and everlasting satisfaction.

Still the woman could not comprehend his meaning, and either supposing he might know of some extraordinary water, or might be boasting of what he could not give, she proposed putting him to the test, and said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Jesus then began a conversation which convinced her that he was no common man, and told her all about her private concerns.

She then said, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet"; and not liking to talk about some things which she had wrongly done, she asked him to inform her which place of worship was most pleasing to God, that in which the Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim, or that in which the Jews worshiped at Jerusalem.

Jesus told her that the time was now coming when no one place in particular should be more holy than another, but every spot would be the same in the sight of God in which the worship was sincere; for

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The woman further answered him that she believed what he said was right; but the Messiah was expected soon to come, and then he would clear up all difficulties about the matter.

Imagine how surprised the woman must have been when Jesus said, "I that speak unto thee am he." The disciples, however, who were gone away to buy food, now returned, and so the interview ended.

Seeing Jesus thus engaged in what appeared to be an interesting conversation with a Samaritan woman, the disciples were quite amazed; but they would not take the liberty of asking Jesus why he did so.

In the meantime the woman, leaving her water-pot, hastened to the city, and told all her acquaintances there that she had seen the Messiah; for a person she had talked with had told her the most wonderful things; and they must come along with her, and see and hear him too.

While this was taking place the disciples begged of Jesus to eat of the food they had brought; but he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of"; and his mind was so intent on his work of doing good, which he called his meat, that he cared not about eating. The disciples, however, were often dull of understanding, and so they were now, for they thought that he had got some other meat, and wondered how he could have procured it. Jesus then explained to them his meaning: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." It wanted then four months of harvest-time, but he nevertheless had a great harvest to gather in—not of barley, but of souls. It was not a time then to eat and to drink, but to work; for the Samaritans were ready to receive him and to believe on him, and these were his precious fields, which were white and ready for harvest. And so it came to pass, for "many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him."

Having been prevailed upon to stop at Sychar two days, he then proceeded on his journey into Galilee; and going again to Cana, "where he made the water wine," he performed another miracle by curing the

sick son of a nobleman of Herod's court. This nobleman, hearing that Jesus was there, took a journey from Capernaum to see him, and to implore him to cure his son. Jesus knew how unbelieving the people of Capernaum were, and perhaps that the nobleman had been so himself, so Jesus reproved him and did not say he would cure his son, but told him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman, however, urged him to return and save his child. The kind heart of Jesus could not resist the yearnings of the fond parent over his beloved son, and he said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." The nobleman relied on his word and hastened home. But before he got home some of the servants were sent on the road to meet him and to tell him the joyful news that his son was recovered; and on his inquiring at what time it took place, he found it was exactly at the time which Jesus had said.

Owing to this remarkable miracle, the second which Jesus performed at Cana, not only did the nobleman believe, but all his family were convinced that Jesus was the true Messiah; that is, "THE CHRIST, the Saviour of the world."

Christ Cures the Disabled Man at the Pool of Bethesda.

JOHN V.

We now behold Jesus going, according to custom and in obedience to the law, to the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem, on which occasion, a vast number of persons being assembled, he had the greater opportunity of doing good.

There was at Jerusalem a pool which, on account of some medicinal properties in its waters, was a sort of bath, to which persons with complaints of various kinds went in order to obtain a cure, and many had been cured by bathing in it. It seems, however, that it was necessary they should go in just at a certain time, when the waters were agitated by an extraordinary cause.

Jesus arriving at the pool, saw a poor man there who had been disabled during no less than thirty-eight years, and having no money to pay any one to wait upon him and put him into the water whenever it

began to stir, some other person always hurried into the pool before him just at the proper moment, and obtained cure instead of himself.

Jesus talked to him about his complaint, and learning his hard lot, asked him if he would like to be cured; and then he commanded him to take up his bed and walk. We have noticed a similar cure in the ninth chapter of St. Matthew, and there told you that the bed



AN ANGEL WENT DOWN AT A CERTAIN SEASON INTO THE POOL AND TROUBLED THE WATER.

used was a sort of mattress, or, we may add, if you have ever seen a sailor's hammock, it was something of that kind, so that a man in health could carry it without any great inconvenience.

This happened on the Sabbath day. Now, the Jews were very strict observers of the Sabbath, and so far they were right; and they would not allow any one to carry a burden on that day. So, seeing this man carrying his bed, they told him that he was breaking the Sabbath.

The man then excused himself for what he was doing, and intimated as much as that he could not in that instance be doing wrong, for he who had power to cure him had certainly a right to order him to carry his bed. The poor man could not afford to lose his bed, and he was not going to leave it by the pool. He did not carry it for the purpose of business, but only from entire necessity. Besides, all works of necessity and mercy are lawful on the Sabbath.

These were probably Pharisees, who, guessing that it was Jesus who cured this man, endeavored thus to prejudice him, for they took every opportunity to show their hatred to our divine Lord.

The man afterward finding that it was Jesus who had cured him, went and told the Jews, hoping, no doubt, that they would raise the fame of his divine Saviour; instead of which these wicked people only hated him the more, and sought to kill him by bringing him before their Sanhedrim, or court of justice, to have him condemned for breaking the Sabbath.

As yet, however, they could only threaten to stone him or to use mob violence toward him, for the plans afterward concocted by the Pharisees and priests for his destruction had not then been matured.

Christ compares Himself to Bread.

JOHN VI.

Soon after the events mentioned in the last chapter Jesus had left Jerusalem and gone into Galilee, and at Capernaum and Bethsaida, and other towns on and near the Sea of Galilee, had taught and performed miracles. Withdrawing at last to the hilly region northeast of the Sea of Galilee for a short period of rest and quiet, he had been followed by a great multitude, and had taught and healed them for two or three days, finally feeding five thousand men and many women and children with five loaves and two small fishes, as you read in the fourteenth chapter of Matthew. The people who had been fed thought this an easy way to obtain a living, and as he could so easily work miracles they followed him across the sea to Capernaum, whither he had gone the night after the miracle. Here he took occasion to tell them that

he knew they sought only their own gratification in following him, and that their motive was wrong; they thought to make themselves rich and great by following him, but they were mistaken.

He then told them not to labor so much for the body as to forget to feed their souls: that to do this they must believe on him. They ungratefully replied that if he would rain manna from heaven they would. Jesus replied that his Father had sent them bread from heaven—the bread of life: they asked to be fed with it. Then Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life." Yes, my dear young readers, those who believe in him find life for their souls. Bread sustains the body, and Christ only can sustain the soul.

Many of the Jews were so much displeased at the spiritual character of Christ's teachings that, though they had previously professed to be his disciples, they now "went back and walked no more with him." Jesus said to the twelve whom he had chosen, "Will ye also go away?" Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we know and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

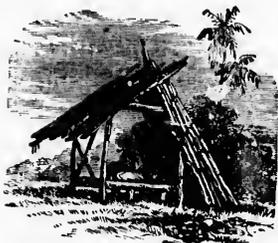
Christ the Spring or Fountain of Happiness.—The Jews try to stone Christ.—Christ gives Sight to a Man born Blind.

JOHN VII-IX.

Jesus had left the province of Judea for that of Galilee, for while he remained in Jewry, or Judea, "the Jews sought to kill him"; but he soon afterward returned thither at the feast of tabernacles, when all the males went to Jerusalem, and when the Jews erected tents, or booths, in which they dwelt and ate their meals, in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in tents in the wilderness. Here Christ went into the temple and taught the people; and they wondered at the divine truths which he told them. He also repeated his reproofs to the Jews, and they still tried to get a favorable opportunity to kill him, but they could not then do it. And in the last great and solemn day of the feast he stood up and cried aloud, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." You understand what you have read

about the woman at the well : Christ here means the same—that all true life proceeds from him, and that if any man wished then to be happy, by coming to him he could make him so ; from him he could always be supplied, as a thirsty man could from an overflowing spring ; he should be brimful of happiness, which he expresses by saying that “out of his belly” should “flow rivers of living water.” Springs make rivers ; and the more plentiful the springs, the larger or more numerous the rivers. Thus his very heart and soul should abound with comfort and joy, always flowing like a fresh spring, and not like waters that might be dried up.

In the following chapter a woman was brought to him who had forsaken her husband and lived with another man. This was forbidden by the laws of God, and was to be punished with death. The Jews brought this woman to Christ, that he might say whether she ought to be punished or not. Now, if he had said that she ought, they would have accused him to the Sanhedrim and to the Roman government of taking upon himself to sit in judgment without any authority, which would have been a high crime ; and if he had said she was not punishable, they



TENT, OR BOOTH.

would have accused him of contradicting the law of Moses. In both cases, therefore, they would have taken an advantage of him ; but, with his usual wonderful wisdom, he defeated their design, and instead of answering their question for his opinion, he said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Jesus knew that her accusers were as wicked as she, and this answer made them quite ashamed of themselves ; so they all slunk away one by one, leaving the woman with Christ, who faithfully and tenderly admonished her to “go and sin no more.”

Jesus still continued to exhort in the temple, and pointed to himself as “the light of the world,” and “many believed on him.” He also further reprov'd the Jews, who became so enraged with what he said to them, and especially when he spoke of his own eternal existence as

the Son of God, that they took up stones with which some builders were repairing the temple that they might throw them at him; but Jesus escaped again from their hands, for his work on earth was not yet done.

And as Jesus passed by from the temple he saw a man who was born blind; and he wet some clay with his spittle, and putting it on his eyes commanded him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash there. The man accordingly obeyed him, "and washed, and came seeing."

Now, the putting of clay on the man's eyes could not give him sight, nor could the washing in the fountain called Siloam; but this was done to show us that we ought never to despise the use of any means, how simple soever they may seem, if those means are divinely commanded. Praying to God and hearing and reading the word of God can never save our souls; but they are all means which we are commanded to use, and in using them, with a dependence upon God's grace, he is pleased to give his blessing.

This miracle attracted much notice, for the man was a public beggar, and everybody knew him, and now everybody asked, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Then the people wished to learn in what wonderful way he had got his sight; and he told them. The Pharisees also soon heard about it, and they were also very inquisitive in the matter. The man told them the same story. Now, this miracle, like that of curing the impotent man, was done on the Sabbath day; and being still full of malice against Jesus, these wicked Pharisees said that though Jesus might have cured the man, yet nevertheless he was a bad man, for he had broken the Sabbath. Some few, however, thought differently, and they quarreled among themselves about it. As for the blind man, he made up his mind at once that Jesus was a prophet, for he knew that no common person could do what he had done to his heretofore sightless eyes.

The Pharisees then sent for the man's parents, to know if he had really been born blind; or, if so, whether perhaps some means had not been used to cure him to which they might ascribe his cure rather than to Jesus. The parents were as much surprised as the Pharisees, but as they knew nothing about the cure, they were obliged to set them

again inquiring of the man; and, besides, had they known more about it, they were afraid to say what they thought of Jesus, for the Pharisees had threatened severely to punish any who should own that he was the true Messiah: they were liable to be put out of the synagogue, which was a sentence that did not exclude them from going to the synagogue but was only so called. It was, however, very severe. After this sentence no one durst hire the punished person to work, no one durst trade with him, and his goods were confiscated or taken away from him.

The Pharisees again, therefore, spoke to the man who was cured, and told him to praise God for it, and not Jesus, for he was no more than a sinner. But the man thought more highly of him. He who had opened his eyes had thrown some light of knowledge into his mind and given him to see that he was no sinful creature who had cured him. And after disputing their opinion he at once asked them if they would become disciples of Jesus. This was more than their malicious and proud spirits could bear, and they then reviled him and Christ too. The man, however, reasoned well with them, and said it was very strange indeed that they could not take a different view of Christ's character, for it was plain enough that by no human power could he have opened his eyes: "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."

Being unable any longer to reason the point, they had recourse to violence, and they said, "Dost thou dare to teach us?" and so they cast him out of the synagogue.

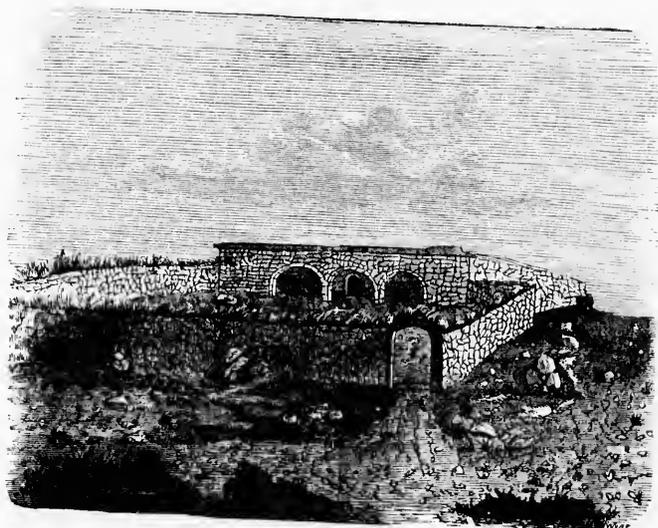
In this pitiable condition the Saviour sought for him and found him; and he said to him, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?"—that is, Dost thou expect the Messiah? Wilt thou trust in him? for in the prophecies he was called the Son of God. The poor man's heart was made ready to receive Christ's instructions, and he said, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" Jesus then told him that he himself was the Son of God, and the man worshiped him.

Christ Compares Himself to a Door.—Christ, the Good Shepherd.

JOHN X.

This is still a continuation of our Lord's conversation at the temple, at the time that the blind man received his sight; for though it is here divided into chapters, for the convenience of our reading it in smaller portions, it was not formerly so.

We find Christ here comparing himself to a door, through which it was necessary to enter properly into a sheepfold; for any one climbing over into it did so from bad designs—he was a thief and a robber. We have doors of entrance to our houses, and none but thieves and robbers think of getting in to them by climbing up to the windows.



SHEEPFOLD.

The allusion was well understood by the Jews. The sheepfold was "an inclosure, sometimes in the manner of a building, and made of stone, and sometimes was fenced with reeds, and in it was a large door, at which the shepherd went in and out when he led in or brought out the sheep."

Now, the real shepherd would always enter in by that door,—that is, by the proper way,—and the man who watched the door inside, and

watched the sheep there, would always open the door on hearing his voice. The sheep, too, would directly know him when he called them by name; for in Eastern countries the shepherds know their sheep as we know our dogs, and they give them names, and when they are called they will come to the shepherd out of the flock and answer to their names, as a dog we know will answer us. With the same familiarity they would also follow their shepherd, who frequently, in old times, went before them, playing some musical instrument. But if a stranger attempted to lead them, they took fright at the sound of his voice and ran away.

By the sheepfold Christ meant his church, to which he was the only way of entrance, and he tells the Pharisees and people that whoever before claimed to be the Messiah had deceived them, for he—Jesus—alone was the Saviour of the world; therefore he alone that went in and out of this fold under his guidance would find happiness and peace.

Again, Christ says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." So you read that David exposed his life and fought with wild beasts to save his father's flock. Christ, our good shepherd, actually gave himself up to death that his sheep might not perish, unlike the hireling that cares not for them, and if his life is endangered by protecting them, hastily flees and leaves them to the devouring wolf.

Thus he loved his church and gave himself for it. Among the Jews he had many sheep, whom he came to save; but not among them only, but also among the Gentiles—among the heathen; that is, the nations that were not Jews, of which we form a part. Jesus further says, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

Christ raiseth Lazarus from the Dead.

JOHN XI.

At a village called Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, there lived two sisters, Martha and Mary, of whom we have read in the

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CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."—John IV, 14.



"IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS."- John XIV, 2.

tenth chapter of Luke. They had a brother named Lazarus, and he seems to have been an excellent man, for Jesus loved him, as he did also Martha and her sister, who were pious women.

Lazarus was taken ill, and his sisters went unto him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." But Jesus delayed going to see him till he was dead. This Jesus did that he might try the faith of Lazarus' sisters, and see if they really believed in his divine power to



"BUT MARY SAT STILL IN THE HOUSE."

raise their brother again; and also that he might perform another miracle, to confirm the faith of his disciples.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany Lazarus had lain in the grave four days; and there were many Jews at the house of his friends, comforting the bereaved sisters. As soon as Martha heard that he was coming she hastened out to meet him, and perhaps to warn him, in case he might consider himself in danger from the Jews. Mary continued

a mourner in the house, as she did not know that Jesus had arrived, for she had a most sincere love for him.

Martha complained, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This proved how high an opinion she had of his power to save him; and she seems to have had faith enough to believe it possible that he might raise him from the dead.

After some further conversation with Jesus Martha hastened to call her sister, who, suddenly leaving the house, was supposed by the Jews to have gone to weep over her brother's grave, and so they followed her.

As soon as Mary came to Jesus she also said, as her sister had said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died"; showing by this that she had the same belief in his power. The blessed Jesus, who had all the feelings of our nature, was tenderly touched at the affecting scene, and going to his sepulchre "Jesus wept." Oh, the kindness of his heart! Who could but love him!

Some of the Jews who did not like him reasoned wisely enough, and said that since he had opened the eyes of the blind, surely he might as easily raise the dead; but they said this in order to raise a doubt whether he ever had done such a thing in reality as made the blind to see.

Jesus now went to the cave, in which, according to a custom of the Jews, the body was placed; "and a stone lay upon it," or rather upon the mouth of the cave. Jesus immediately desired the stone to be removed, and "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes"—having several folds of linen wrapped about him, which was another custom of those times; "and his face was bound about with a napkin"—that is, round the forehead and under the chin. Jesus then said to the persons at the grave, "Loose him, and let him go."

This miracle made many more Jews believe in Christ; but some remained so astonishingly obstinate that still they would not believe he was the Messiah; and, being filled with hatred to him because he was becoming so popular, they went and told the Pharisees, probably that they might adopt more crafty or active means to take him and put him to death.

The Pharisees were more alarmed than ever, and began seriously to think what it was most wise to do to prevent the people from becoming the disciples of Jesus. They acknowledged that he did many miracles, and that if he proceeded in this manner all men would believe in him. This was a reason why they themselves should have believed in him, as the promised Messiah; but it showed the blindness of their hearts that they did not.

"Jesus, therefore, walked no more openly among the Jews," at or near Jerusalem; he did not teach in their streets, nor work miracles, nor appear in public company; but went and resided in a little and obscure city called Ephraim.

The Precious Ointment.—Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.—Some Greeks desire to see Him.—The Voice from Heaven.—He Washes His Disciples' Feet.—More about Judas.—Christ's tender Address to His Disciples.

JOHN XII—XIV.

We have in this twelfth chapter a more particular account of the pouring of the precious ointment of spikenard on the feet of Christ, as he reclined at the table in the house of Simon the leper, of which some notice was taken in the notes on the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew. We are told here that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who thus showed her affection for her Lord and her gratitude for his miraculous restoration of her brother to life. We are also informed that it was Judas Iscariot who complained of the waste, and said it might have been sold for three hundred pence (about \$51) and given to the poor. What he really wanted was that the value of it should be intrusted to him, and he would have stolen it. He was so angry at our Lord's rebuke of his greedy spirit that he immediately began to plot to betray his Master. The Pharisees now, and especially after his entry into Jerusalem, already described in the twenty-first chapter of Matthew, were so much displeased at Christ's popularity among the people that they wanted to kill not only him, but Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

There were some Greeks (probably Jewish proselytes) who had come up to attend the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem at this time, and they came to Philip, one of the apostles, and said they wanted to see and talk with Jesus. They were, perhaps, the first fruits of that abundant harvest of Gentile souls which was soon to be brought into the garner of Christ. This gave our dear Lord great joy in the midst of all his trials. And while he was thus rejoicing and praying in the court of the temple, there came again to him, in the presence and hearing of the people, a voice from heaven, from the excellent glory, such as had been heard before, at his baptism and his transfiguration; and the voice said, in reply to his prayer, "Father, glorify thy name"—"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But notwithstanding these repeated attestations from heaven to his divine mission, the unbelieving Pharisees and Jews would not, with a few exceptions, receive him as the Messiah. Since he would not be the temporal ruler for whom they had hoped, to free them from the power of the Romans, they cared nothing for him.

A short time before the feast of the Passover, we are told, in chapter thirteen, that Jesus, in order to teach his disciples humility, and to prevent them from having such jealousies as they had hitherto manifested toward one another in regard to the places they were to occupy in his kingdom, after supper girded himself with a towel, and proceeded to wash his disciples' feet, and on their expressing surprise he said to them: "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Some excellent Christian people think that Christ intended to establish this as an ordinance to be practised by the church in all ages, and they do practise it accordingly. Others think that he meant to teach us humility, and to show us that if we were truly his disciples we would be willing to do even humble and menial things for those who are his disciples, in his name and for his sake.

We also learn from this chapter, in relation to the wicked traitor, that Christ pointed out Judas as his betrayer to the other disciples, by saying, in answer to the inquiry of John, "Lord, who is it?" "He it

is to whom I shall give a sop" (the unleavened bread folded up and dipped into the stew or the gravy of the meat) "when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop he gave it to Judas," who went immediately out.

After Jesus had thus distributed the bread and the wine, he commenced a most touching and tender discourse to his disciples, answering their questions and removing their doubts and fears. He told them



"THEY WENT BACKWARD, AND FELL TO THE GROUND."

of his death and resurrection, and of his ascension to heaven to intercede for them, and of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to teach and guide them. In the progress of this discourse he gave them the parable of the vine, of which we speak in the next chapter, and closed this beautiful address to them by a prayer of the deepest earnestness and the most tender pathos, with and for them, in which, after extolling the obedience and love which they had manifested and would yet

manifest for him, he commended them, and all who should believe on him through their word, to the tender love and keeping of his heavenly Father. As the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane had already been fully described by the other evangelists, John does not dwell upon it, though himself an eye-witness of the agony of that hour; but he is more full and minute in his account of the circumstances of the arrest and trial, as well as of the fall of Peter, of the whole of which he was the only observer on the side of our Lord. He does full justice to the hesitation and unwillingness of Pilate to give judgment against the Saviour, and the consciousness of his own misdeeds, which made him afraid to be just to his prisoner.

The Parable of the Vine and Branches.

JOHN XV.

Christ here speaks the parable of the Vine. The wine which had just been drunk at supper with his disciples afforded our divine Lord an opportunity of comparing himself with it. He had said he was Bread and Living Water to them that believed on him; and now he says, "I am the true Vine." He also compares his Father to the Husbandman.

You know that most of the wines, and all those which were drunk at this supper, were made of the fruit of the vine—that is, the grape. Christ compares himself to the vine, because he wished to show his disciples how closely by faith they were united to him. He therefore compares them to branches; and he says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Fruit is that which the tree produces of any real value. Now, in like manner as the branch united to the vine is expected to bring forth fruit, so those who are by faith united to Jesus Christ are expected to bring forth their fruits. What these fruits are we may learn from the like expressions in other parts of the sacred Scriptures—"fruits meet for repentance—fruits unto holiness—the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus to the praise and glory of God."

Now, if we profess to belong to Christ, and do not bear these fruits, we are cut off, as the husbandman cuts off the useless or withered branch; for we have no proper union with him, and receive no more life from him than a withered branch does from the tree. And if we belong to Christ, and really are his disciples from the heart, yet his heavenly Father purges the branches of the true vine. By purging is here meant pruning. The vine is taken much care of in the East. It is of great importance there, because it furnishes refreshing drink. Its grapes are very large indeed, and full of fine juice. But in a wild state it would not produce in this manner. All this fruitfulness is effected by cultivation; and if it have too many branches, the fruit becomes weakened; for the fewer the branches, the more juices the root sends up into those which remain, and the stronger the fruit which they yield. For this reason the knife is freely used to cut off the superfluous branches which are not likely to bring forth good fruit.

You must recollect all this is merely the language of comparison; that is, "like as the husbandman prunes the vine, my heavenly Father will prune you who are my disciples"; and by pruning, cleansing, or purging the vine, as it is here called, we are taught that there is much in us that requires often to be removed, even if we are Christ's real disciples; and it is chiefly by afflictions that God will prune us, so that we must not wonder when good people suffer under trials—they are the pruning-knives which purge or take away the branches that are useless.

Christ proceeds, urging that his disciples should therefore abide closely in him, living by faith on him as the Son of God, cleaving with all their hearts to him; and he tells them, "as the branch can not bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Thus, too, we draw from him such life as is necessary to our increase here and our rejoicing hereafter. The power of his truth continually flows into the branches that abide in him, and through this fruits are continually produced.



THE HUSBANDMAN.

**Christ's certain Death from the Soldier Piercing his Side.—
His Appearances after his Resurrection.**

JOHN XVI—XXI.

We have now gone through the principal passages of the four Evangelists: a few things only remain in John of which it may be necessary that we should take a short notice.

The first is in the *nineteenth chapter, and twenty-fifth and following verses*. We here learn that three Marys stood by the cross of Jesus when he was nailed upon it, and dying with his crucifixion: Mary his mother, Mary his mother's sister—who was the wife of Cleophas—and Mary Magdalene. As for our sakes the blessed Jesus became poor, he had nothing to leave his mother: and as Joseph was without doubt now dead, and she was getting old, he was affectionately concerned for her that she should not want for comfort and support in her last days. This, I think, is a most lovely trait in the character of Jesus. Though he was then in the deepest agony of body on the cross, he forgot his pains to think on his poor afflicted mother. He, therefore, commended her to the care of his beloved disciple John. "Woman," said he,—and you remember that I have before told you that this name, so spoken, was a title of respect,—"behold thy son!" As much as to say, "I am going away from earth, and thou canst therefore have this body with thee no longer, but look upon John as thy son; and I know the kindness of his heart, that for my sake he will love thee and treat thee as a son." And then he said to John, "Behold thy mother"; meaning, "behave toward her as a son; take care of her; comfort her in her old age." Some writers say that Mary lived with John at Jerusalem eleven years and then died; and others say that she lived longer and removed with him to Ephesus; but the Scripture gives us no more information on this subject. Jesus knew that John loved him, and would therefore obey him; and no doubt he behaved to her as a kind son †, the day of her death.

In the *thirty-first and following verses* of the same chapter we also read some particulars respecting the crucifixion of the blessed Jesus

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THE TRUE VINE.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches."—John XV, 5.



MARY MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE.

"As she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre."—John XX, II.

which are not mentioned by the other Evangelists. The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that the legs of the victims might be broken, and that the bodies might be taken away. It was now the preparation time for the Sabbath day, which at the period of the Passover was a grand festival—it was one of the days of unleavened bread, and, some reckon, the day of the offering of the first-fruits. The Jews were therefore afraid of a breach of the law on that day, for, according to the Jewish law (Deuteronomy xxi, 22, 23), the body of one hanged on a tree was not to remain all night, but to be taken down that day and buried. Among the Romans the carcasses remained to be eaten by birds; but the Jews were taught to consider them as defiling the land, and viewed it as still more shocking for such a thing to take place on their sacred Sabbath.

Now, this circumstance led to a certain proof that Jesus had really died for us on the cross; a fact very important, for when he rose from the grave it might have been said that he was not then dead, and so it was no resurrection, but only a recovery from the faintness occasioned by his sufferings.

The Jews took care that the bodies should not be taken down alive, and that the criminals should not escape; so to hurry their death they used to break their legs, and this they now begged permission of Pilate to do. "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." The soldier did this to try if he were dead or not; and at all events he seemed resolved that he would give a finishing stroke to his life. The mixture of blood and water showed that the wound was of such a nature that, had he received it at any time, it was sufficient of itself to kill him. Now, his death was of the utmost importance to us. If Jesus had not died we must have perished. If he had not so died, we should, as just intimated, have had no such strong proof of his living again, which is equally important for our salvation; for now we who trust in him may rest on his word, "Because I live ye shall live also."

And on these accounts the Evangelist John is very particular, not only in stating this fact, but in adding that he had it not from mere hearsay, but that he himself saw it, being near the cross at the time, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

The Evangelist John tells us of a very particular circumstance that happened after the resurrection of Jesus. Thomas would not believe what all the rest told him; and declared that nothing should satisfy him about the Saviour's resurrection short of seeing and touching him himself: "Except," said he, "I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe." Eight days after this Jesus appeared among the disciples, when Thomas was with them; and he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas was astonished, and instantly confessed that it was indeed his divine Master who was alive again; and he said to him, full of love, and gratitude, and praise, "My Lord and my God!"

John also relates another appearance which took place at the Sea of Tiberias. There were then present six disciples. Peter went a-fishing, and not having succeeded, he, and his companions were desired by Jesus, who stood unknown on the shore, to cast their net on the right side of the ship, and then they caught so many that they were unable to draw them up. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" in a very particular manner, on seeing this miracle, said directly, "It is the Lord"; and Peter instantly, without waiting to get ashore in the ship, cast off his fisherman's coat and swam ashore to meet Christ. It is said "He was naked," but this does not mean quite so, but only that he had thrown off his cumbrous upper garment; so we call a person stripped who has thrown off his coat, though he has many other garments remaining on him.

The other disciples soon after landed with the fish, and "they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread," which Jesus had also miraculously prepared.

Jesus then invited the disciples to dine. This was "the third time

that Jesus showed himself to his disciples." He had been often seen by individuals or small groups, but this was the third time he had showed himself to them when many of them were together.

And now he asked Peter to say if he still loved him. And he asked him three times, because he had denied him three times. He did this, perhaps, to humble Peter for his offense, and, at the same time, to show his disciples that he was yet a true disciple, whom they should not reproach, since he had forgiven him; for after each answer he commanded him to feed his lambs and his sheep, meaning the young and the old of his sincere followers, who are called his flock.

The Evangelist in conclusion tells us that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one," "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." John simply meant that there were many more prayers, many more conversations, many more miracles, many more kind acts of Jesus, which would have filled an immense number of volumes had they been recorded; but as we can remember a few better than all, enough only are related that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing" we "might have life through his name."

Surely, too, we ought always to lift up our hearts and praise God—who evidently provides for our necessities, even to the least—that he has given us so much of sure and faithful testimony; so much that is comprehensive and soul-satisfying; so much that is written and adapted to the wants of every age, as well as every individual, notwithstanding that every creature differs more or less in mind, body, and estate. It clearly would not answer our condition in life, our surroundings, our capabilities, our wants, to have a fuller and more extensive or elaborate revelation than has been given. And we even bear within us the consciousness that, in the infinite goodness and love of our God, we have dealt out to us with a profuse and liberal hand everything—every line and word—that it is well for us to have in regard to our souls or their eternal concerns; indeed, all that we are able to bear. We can well fancy the All-wise Ruler moved with compassion toward us, in not being able to confide to our limited and

narrow understandings more of the great and grand truths of his glorious and limitless kingdom. We may, however, sit down and look out, in our imagination, into the distant realms of our future homes with rejoicing, knowing that after a few fleeting years we shall have a more complete knowledge of the life and work and teachings of Christ, as well as all his wonderful dealings with us. May this be the experience and joy of every reader of this work is the prayer of the writer.



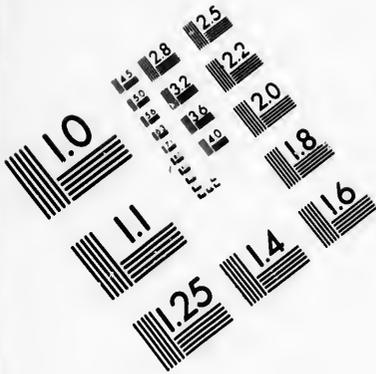
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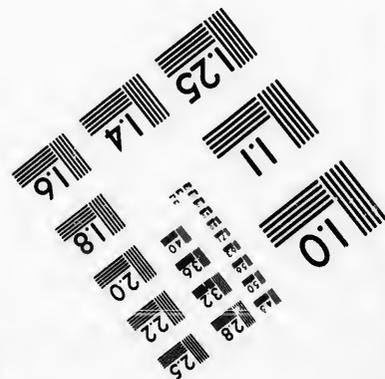
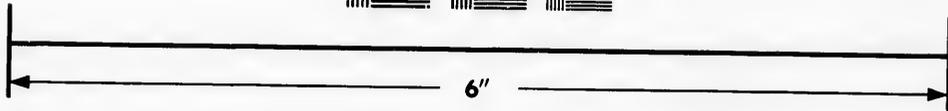
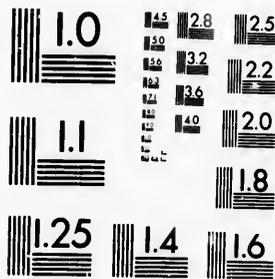


THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON





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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

OR, a history, by Luke, of the ministry and labors of the Apostles of Christ. This fills the position in the New Testament of a needful supplement to the Gospels and an important and indispensable introduction to the Epistles. It begins with the ascension of the Messiah, and continues its history through about thirty years, to the end of the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome, A. D. 63. Its inspired character has never been doubted in the Christian Church. The first twelve chapters are mainly devoted to the spread of the Gospel in Palestine and to the earnest labors of Peter, James, and John, and their associates, in Judea and Samaria. From the thirteenth chapter to the close it is almost exclusively occupied with the work of the Apostle Paul as a missionary to the Gentiles. The graphic and interesting account of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of thousands on the day of Pentecost, and, subsequently, of the zeal, and miracles performed by Peter and John, of the martyrdom of Stephen, and the conversion of Saul and of Cornelius, render it one of the most attractive books of the New Testament; and the career of the Apostle Paul, his perils, sacrifices, and triumphs, are not less entertaining and delightful. Of all the inspired writers of the New Testament, Luke possesses the greatest descriptive power and the most lucid and finished style.

History of what the Apostles of Christ said and did immediately after his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

ACTS I, II.



It is generally agreed by writers on Scripture that this book was written by the Evangelist Luke. As "the former treatise," or his Gospel, was written respecting "all"—meaning a great number of things—"that Jesus began both to do and teach," as were also the treatises of Matthew, Mark, and John, so this was written to relate the "acts," or what his faithful servants *did* from the time of his death, and gives the history of about thirty years.

I told you in my remarks on the tenth of Matthew that "apostles" means persons who are *sent*; that is, in other language, *messengers*. The first disciples were Christ's messengers, as all good ministers must be, declaring to men the message of mercy which he wished them to know when he said, "Go ye out into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"; tell every creature the *glad tidings—the good news*—which I have told you.

Now we shall see how the apostles obeyed their divine Master, and what success attended their labors.

In this chapter we learn that Jesus appeared to his disciples at different times during forty days after his resurrection and taught them many important "things pertaining to the kingdom of God"; or, as it means, the period of preaching the Gospel, commonly called "the Gospel Dispensation"; that he told them to remain together at Jerusalem, and to "wait for the promise of the Father"; that they should have another comforter when he was gone,—the HOLY SPIRIT,—whose comforts they should feel in their hearts; that he should give them such power that nothing should hinder or discourage them in preaching the Gospel in all parts of the world.

While Christ was giving these instructions, he finally left them, as-



ANCIENT MESSENGERS IN THE EAST.

ascending up into heaven in a way like to that in which the prophet Elijah ascended, "and a cloud received him out of their sight." Two angels then appeared, and, as the disciples gazed with wonder at the sky, they told them that in the same manner Jesus should appear, meaning at the time when

he shall come to judge the world. The account of his being "taken up" which is here given is that which we commonly call *the ascension*, and the event happened on the Mount of Olivet, a spot distant from Jerusalem "a Sabbath day's journey," or the distance allowed for a Jew to walk on a Sabbath day, which was a mile, or perhaps something less.

After Jesus had ascended to heaven his disciples assembled together in "an upper room," which was a retired place where they might pray, having those women who had so much loved the Saviour joined with them.

Peter now observed to those that were met together that as they lacked one disciple of their full number since the treachery of Judas, it was desirable to choose another, and they therefore

cast lots to know whom they should choose: "and the lot fell upon Matthias."

In mentioning Judas, Peter says that he purchased a field with the money which had been given him by the chief priests, "and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Now, we know that he returned the money to the chief priests, so that he could not have paid for the field; but, as they afterward purchased a field with the money, it could be said that he bought it. This field was on the brow of the precipice which extended to the deep valley of Hinnom, southwest of the city; and Judas, hanging himself there, fell into that deep and foul ravine.

The day of Pentecost was the fifteenth and last day from the day on which the Jews offered the first-fruits of their harvest, as a token of gratitude to God; and that day of offering the fruits was the second day of the feast of the Passover. On that day the disciples of Jesus were all met together "in one place"; and while they were so met a singular sound filled the house, as though a wind were rushing through it, and flames, like fire, appeared on each of those assembled, having the shape of tongues, cloven or divided. This was a miraculous token that "the Holy Ghost," whose divine influences Jesus had promised, to comfort, strengthen, and instruct his disciples, had now come among them, in proof of which they "began to speak with other tongues" than their own.

Now, you must know that it requires some time, and labor, and diligence to learn different languages, but these disciples spoke several languages at once; and the reason of this was that they might directly tell people of different countries who came to Jerusalem about all the great things that Jesus had done, and what had happened to him that sinners of mankind in every country might be saved.

At this time a great number of Jews, who inhabited various countries of the world, as they do now,—though the nation was not then entirely dispersed,—had visited Jerusalem, most likely to be present at the Passover; and hearing of the wonderful event which had taken place, they ran to the house where the disciples were, and there was universal astonishment when they found that these disciples could speak the

languages of all the countries whence they had come. Some of the people of Jerusalem, who hated Christ and his disciples, mocked, and said that they were drunk. They were more like drunken men themselves, who could suppose that men could speak other languages than their own merely because they were tipsy; and if they had not been full of prejudice and hatred against Christ and his disciples, they would never have suggested such a reason for this miraculous gift. The apostle Peter, who from this time, as the oldest, and perhaps the most thoroughly instructed in his Master's will and purposes, took the lead of the apostolic band, thought it best to preach to the multitude. And "when they heard it, they were pricked in their heart"; that is, "the word of God entered into them, which cut and laid open their hearts, and the sin and wickedness of them"; and they felt as you have perhaps felt when you have been detected in doing something you ought not to have done, and perhaps something very bad indeed; for shame and guilt pierce and wound the soul, as a sword cuts and pains the body. And they "said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter told them they must "repent"—that is, their minds must be changed; they must seek forgiveness and pardon from Christ for the wickedness they had done, and they must be "baptized," as a proof that they had embraced the religion of Jesus, and then the Holy Ghost would work in their hearts, and make them both holy and happy.

In the course of the day no less than "three thousand souls" repented and believed, from the preaching of Peter, and were baptized.

The Lame Man Restored at the Gate of the Temple.—Peter and John taken before the Jewish Sanhedrim.

ACTS III, IV.

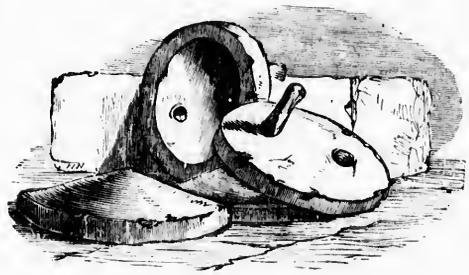
We have here the account of a miracle wrought by the apostles Peter and John. We are told that they went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, and there they saw a poor man who was born lame, and who was daily carried to the gate of the temple which was called "Beautiful," on account of its being more handsome than the other

Some of the gates. As he was unable to work, here he was to be seen begging alms of the charitable. As the two apostles entered, he asked them also to give him something. Little did he expect what he should get by that supplication. "Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his ankle-bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God."

The cure of the man drew together a great number of people, all wondering at what they saw; and Peter again embraced the opportunity of preaching a sermon to them, in which he told them the same truths as before, and urged them to repent of their sins, and to submit to Jesus as the Saviour of sinners; that Almighty Saviour, by whose power he had performed this cure.

The Jewish priests, who had opposed Christ, now tried to stop the mouths of his apostles, so they laid hold of them to prevent them from preaching again; and well might they fear the success of the apostles, for under this sermon no less than five thousand souls were converted!

The next day the apostles, with the man that was cured, were taken before the Jewish Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, where were assembled together their rulers, elders, scribes, and priests; and the apostles were asked by what power they had cured the man, whether by the help of the devil, as they thought, or by the help of God. At this moment the Holy Ghost filled Peter's heart with the greatest courage, and he again preached, having the rulers and priests to hear him. These were not converted, but nevertheless they were struck with wonder at "the boldness of Peter and John," for they recollected them as having been



EASTERN MILLSTONES.

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among the timid disciples of Jesus, who once all forsook him and fled.

The apostles being set free, again joined their brethren, and told them of their treatment and escape. Then they all united together in prayer to God, to give them courage still to speak his word, and to enable them to show it was his word by performing more miracles. And God gave them another sign, as on the day of Pentecost—a mighty shaking of the place where they were assembled, such as when a house is shaken with the wind; and by this sign they knew that the Holy Ghost would give them new power and energy, which immediately was the case, “and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

Ananias and Sapphira Struck Dead for Lying.—The Apostles Peter and John thrown into Prison.—Released by an Angel.

ACTS V.

There were now above eight thousand Christians; and, as they were liable to great afflictions and persecutions in embracing the faith of Christ, they all readily agreed to sell their possessions and to put all their money into one common stock, and so help one another, just as they might stand in need.

But a man named Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, while professing to do as the rest did, gave only a part, and slyly kept back the rest.

Liars think they can not be found out; but God can always find them out. And so he did here. It was revealed to Peter that Ananias had kept back part of his money, and he told Ananias that Satan had got possession of his heart, to do so wicked a thing.

Ananias was terrified at this discovery; he was convicted of his sin, and instantly fell down dead.

In about three hours after this Sapphira made her appearance, and, not having heard of the death of her husband, she expected to see him among the disciples of Christ, received as one of his sincere and liberal followers. Peter asked her for how much the land was sold for which Ananias kept back the money. And she told him the same

lie as Ananias, having agreed with him to deceive the apostles. Peter then rebuked her for daring to tempt or try the Spirit of the Lord by seeing if it were not possible to conceal from his inspired apostles so base an action; and he said, "Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost; and the young men came in and found her dead; and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." And well might they fear. These were awful examples of the hatred which God has to lying, for Peter could not have killed Ananias and Sapphira merely by what he said: it was God's hand that killed them.

The apostles continued working miracles and preaching, "and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." The people also, learning what cures the apostles performed in the name of Jesus, thronged to them with their sick, and were happy if they could get within reach of the shadow only of Peter's body, supposing that there must be some virtue in it, not understanding how he cured only by the power of the blessed Jesus.

The Jewish rulers were now greatly enraged, that after they had so strongly commanded the apostles to be quiet, they still continued preaching about Christ and working miracles in his name; and they "laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison," where they put their malefactors, as if they had done the very worst deeds, instead of kindly curing the sick and the lame.

But God sent an angel, who opened the prison door at night and set the apostles free, desiring them to go to the temple and preach again to the people.

All that now happened to the apostles our Lord had foretold, as



SLAVES GRINDING CORN.

Matthew informs us in the tenth chapter of his gospel: "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake." The apostles, therefore, rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Thus, from morning to night, every day, they continued at the work of preaching, and embraced every opportunity to teach, even in the temple itself, as well as from house to house. They made it the great business of their lives to exhibit Jesus to the people as the promised Messiah; also to clear from their spiritual eyes, beclouded by the forms and ceremonies and customs of the fathers, all that was dark and incomprehensible, so that they might appropriate him to their souls.

The Death of Stephen.—Saul of Tarsus.—Persecution of the Christians.—Simon Magus.—Philip and the Eunuch.

ACTS VI—VIII.

In the sixth chapter we are told that the disciples chose seven men out of their number to take care of the poor among them, that they should not be overlooked; Stephen, who was afterward martyred, was among those now chosen. It is one beautiful feature of Christianity that it never overlooks the poor.

The disciples of Jesus still continued to increase in numbers, and even many of the priests were at last converted.

Stephen was a man very "full of faith," and he "did great wonders and miracles among the people." Like Peter and John, therefore, he was dragged before the council; and as there was no crime committed by him to condemn him, false witnesses were procured; and wicked men, for the sake of a reward, made up a story against him, that he had spoken blasphemous words against the temple and the law. Stephen was quite calm and happy; "and all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel." The good man made a noble reply, and boldly told them of

their wickedness and of that of their fathers before them. He charged them with being "the betrayers and murderers" of Christ, and cut them so to the heart with what he said that in their rage they, like a pack of dogs, "gnashed on him with their teeth." Then, thrusting him out of the city, they stoned him, while he called upon God, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And while they yet stoned him, he kneeled and prayed for his persecutors, and then "fell asleep." "Fell asleep!" Stephen was amidst a shower of stones, and he fell asleep! Saints when they die fall asleep. When we sleep, we rest; and death to them is no punishment, but only a rest. Stephen was the first Christian martyr.

And here begins the history of the most extraordinary man among all the apostles. At this time he was "a young man, whose name was Saul," and who was an enemy to Jesus, and took care of the clothes of the false witnesses that had pulled them off that they might the better stone the pious Stephen. Indeed, he "was consenting to his death," which means here that he even "took pleasure" in it. "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria," fleeing wherever they could to escape the fury of their enemies; the apostles only remained at Jerusalem, still to bear witness in behalf of Jesus. Among the persecutors none were more active than this Saul; for "he made havoc of the church," falling on them like a wild beast on his prey, "entering into every house, and haling men and women,"—that is, dragging them by force,—"committed them to prison."

This persecution, however, turned out for good. Instead of checking the progress of the religion of Jesus, it only spread it abroad the more; for the disciples being driven from Jerusalem, "went everywhere preaching the word." And among those who preached with very great success was Philip, one of the seven who went to Samaria and preached Christ unto the people. And they all with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he wrought. "And there was great joy in that city."

And there was a man at Samaria, named Simon, whom we are

accustomed to call Simon Magus; that is, Simon the magician or conjurer, because he used cunning arts like the magicians of Egypt. This man "bewitched," or astonished, the people with his tricks, and they thought he was some wonderful person. But when they heard the wonderful things about Jesus which Philip had to tell, and saw how he cured the lame and the sick and others, they would no longer believe in Simon Magus, but became disciples of Jesus; and Simon professed to be a disciple also.

The apostles at Jerusalem, informed of the great things that were being done in Samaria, sent Peter and John to assist Philip in his work. And they laid their hands on some of the disciples, as a sign of imploring the Holy Spirit to give them peculiar courage and abilities, that they might become fellow-laborers in their great work; and the Holy Ghost gave them extraordinary powers, as had been done to the disciples assembled on the day of Pentecost. Simon, seeing this, and having been left out of the number, offered Peter money if he would enable him to do the wonderful things which he saw the others could do; that is, speak in different tongues and heal diseases and the like. Here he showed that his heart was awfully darkened, or he must have seen that no money could purchase such power, and that it could only have been given from above. This Peter told him, and exhorted him to repent, and pray God to forgive him for such wicked thoughts. It is most likely that Simon Magus, seeing he had lost his chance of being popular and of making money by his old tricks, wished now to attain the same ends by means of the gifts of speaking and healing, having no design to glorify Jesus by what he might say and do; and it is generally believed that he died a bad man, for we never read of his heart having been changed.

But we have directly after a more pleasing account in the narrative of the Ethiopian eunuch.

Philip, having been ordered by an angel to take a journey on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, was traveling in obedience to the divine command, when he met with an Ethiopian dignitary; an officer "of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship."

He was now returning, and was sitting reading in his chariot. Philip was inclined, by a peculiar impression made upon his mind by the Spirit of God, to hold conversation with this eunuch; and, approaching his chariot, he found that he was reading aloud from the prophet Esaias; that is, Isaiah—the former being the Greek and the latter the Hebrew name for the prophet. And Philip said, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Now, the eunuch, though riding in a chariot, was a very humble man; and, sensible that he needed to learn all that he could, especially about the Saviour, he replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." And he was reading the prophecy about the blessed Jesus being led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer—but he was at a loss to know whether it spoke about the prophet or about any other person. Philip then explained it to him, and preached about Jesus. No doubt he told him that the prophet was setting forth the purity, innocency, meekness, and patience of the suffering Jesus—"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"; and showed him how he was led to be crucified, and so shed his precious blood for us, as the lambs' blood was shed upon the Jewish altars. No doubt Philip also told him of the command given to the disciples to go and teach all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For, on arriving where there was some water, the Ethiopian desired to be baptized, and declared his firm belief that Jesus was the Son of God, and, therefore, he was willing to become one of his disciples; so Philip baptized him. Philip was now miraculously removed from his presence all on a sudden, a circumstance which must have satisfied the eunuch's mind that he was no inferior person, but a messenger sent from God to teach him the way of salvation. So the eunuch went on homeward, rejoicing that he had been favored with such news of salvation and had found the knowledge of Christ crucified. The Scripture does not tell us, but some respectable ancient writers do, that this eunuch founded a flourishing church in his own country. Those who know Christ will try to make others know him also.

Remarkable Conversion of Saul of Tarsus.—Peter cures Eneas of Palsy.—Raises Dorcas to Life.

ACTS IX.

We shall now hear more about Saul of Tarsus, whose history has been interrupted by noticing the persecutions of the Christians, and the labors of Philip.

“Not satisfied with the murder of Stephen, and with the havoc he made at Jerusalem,” we learn here that Saul was “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” and he



OX-CART IN PALESTINE SHOWING THE GOAD.

therefore went to the High Priest and begged him to give him authority to go to Damascus, the capital city of Syria, that he might there search for the Christians, and take all that he could find bound to Jerusalem.

But the grace of God stopped him, as it has many a wicked person, in his career. “As he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from

heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Now, you must observe that Saul did not know Jesus; that Jesus was in heaven, and therefore he could not persecute him in person; but Jesus so loves those who love him that, in persecuting his sincere followers, he felt the cruelty of Saul as if it had been inflicted upon himself. And Saul said, “Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,” or goads, as a stubborn bullock would against the spiked stick with which his driver

would urge him on with his work in the plow. Saul's spirit was immediately subdued; and he who made others tremble now trembled himself, and said, like a submissive servant, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The great light which had flashed upon him from heaven had blinded his eyes, and he was obliged to be led into Damascus as a blind person; and there, during three days, he could neither see, nor eat, nor drink. The Lord, now seeing Saul humbled and praying for mercy, commanded a disciple of the name of Ananias to search him out, and to speak comforting words to him. Ananias knew what a bitter persecutor Saul was, and was afraid to go near him, but the Lord told him that Saul was one of his chosen vessels and as men put treasure into urns, and such things, so he would put the treasures of his grace into the heart of Saul, and make him one of his most eminent ministers. So Ananias went to the house where Saul was, and restored him to sight as he was commanded to do, and the Holy Ghost gave sight at the same time to his before darkened mind, and taught him everything that could qualify him to preach Christ to sinners and show them how he was a Saviour. And Saul was at the same time baptized as another disciple of Christ. Instead of persecuting the disciples, Saul now joined himself to them, and remained a while with them at Damascus. And there "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

The Jews now tried to kill him, as he had tried to kill others, and they hid themselves in certain places to put him to death by suddenly falling upon him; and they watched the gates of Damascus night and day that he might not escape. However, the disciples, notwithstanding their vigilance, managed to get him out of the city; for the house of one being built on the city wall, he was let down by a basket from a back window and so got away from the city without passing through either of the gates.

Saul then went to Jerusalem, but his name was so terrifying there as a persecutor that when he offered to unite with the disciples they were all afraid of him. They most likely supposed that he only professed to be a Christian that he might the better learn their secrets,

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and so play the part of spy, and inform against them, and get them to be imprisoned and put to death. At length Barnabas told the disciples not to fear, and what wonderful things had happened to Saul, "and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus."

At Jerusalem, also, the new apostle met with the most violent enemies, who seemed the more enraged against him because he was a deserter from their ranks. Here the Grecians, as they are called, or Jews that used the Greek language, and not Greeks, who were heathen, "went about to slay him," and he found no rest until he went to his own city of Tarsus. After this the churches were allowed for some time to enjoy a little rest.

We now leave Saul at Tarsus, and return to notice what Peter was doing. We are told that he paid a visit "to the saints which dwelt at Lydda."

Lydda, where Peter went, was a city about thirty miles from Jerusalem. Here Peter worked another miracle in the name of Jesus, and cured a certain man named Eneas, who had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

We are next informed about a good woman, whose name you may often have heard mentioned, because her memory is held in great repute on account of her being very charitable. Her name was Tabitha in the Syriac language, and means *a roe*; and because a roe in the Greek is called Dorcas, that was the name which she bore among the Jews that spoke Greek. She lived at Joppa, a town now called Jaffa. This excellent woman died, and was laid out. Peter being then at Lydda, which was near Joppa, the disciples sent to him to tell him of their grief, and no doubt with a view to his restoring her to life. Peter hastened to Joppa, and there he found the dead body in an upper chamber, "and all the widows" to whom Dorcas had been very kind and charitable "stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." It is from this circumstance that we call some of our societies for giving clothes to the poor, Dorcas societies.

Peter ordered every one of the widows to leave the room, that he

might, in a more undisturbed way, kneel down and pray to God; and having done so, he said to the dead body, "Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows he presented her alive."

These miracles caused many more to believe in Jesus: and Peter continued for some time at Joppa, with one Simon, a tanner, no doubt busily engaged in following up these miracles and conversions, by exhorting the disciples to continue firm in their attachment to Jesus, from which they would be liable to be shaken by future persecutions, which were to be expected from the envious Jews.

Cornelius's Dream.—Peter's Vision.

ACTS X, XI.

There was a man living at Cesarea, commonly called Cesarea Philippi, on the borders of Syria, whose name was Cornelius, and he was a centurion, that is, an officer commanding a hundred men, who were Italians, subject to the Roman government. This man was very pious and charitable, and particularly fond of praying to God. Now, while he was devoutly engaged in one of the hours of prayer, an angel of God spoke to him in a vision; that is, he saw the angel, not in a dream by night, but in broad day; and the angel said to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God;" meaning that the prayers which he had put up in faith, for himself and family, and the charitable actions he had performed from a principle of love, were like sacrifices upon the altar, which ascended to God with acceptance. And he desired Cornelius to send men to Simon the tanner's house, at Joppa, where Peter resided, and Peter would teach him about those great things which he was desirous of learning. So he sent two of his servants, and a pious soldier, to make inquiries for him at Joppa; these were, no doubt, all concerned faithfully to do the business about which Cornelius had informed them.

These messengers went to Joppa on the next day after the vision of Cornelius, and reached it at another hour of prayer used among the

Jews, and Peter at that moment was praying, and fell into a trance; that is, he lost all sense of what was going on, and felt as if he were a happy spirit, departed from the body; and he saw heaven opened, and a large sheet let down to earth and spread out before him as a table-cloth, in which were wild beasts and creeping things, as well as tame beasts and fowls; and a voice desired him to kill and eat. Peter, who had strictly observed the Jewish law, had never eaten anything which it forbade and called unclean, and he hesitated to touch the offered food. The voice then said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This vision seems to have been repeated three times, to impress his mind the more strongly. Peter, on coming



JOPPA, FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

to himself, could not think what all this could mean; but while he was thinking upon it the messengers from Cornelius arrived at his door, and he was urged by a secret impression of God's Spirit to meet them and go with them.

When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, the good man had assembled his relatives and friends, supposing that some blessing from God would attend this

extraordinary meeting, and he wished them to enjoy it as well as himself.

On seeing Peter, Cornelius fell at his feet "and worshipped him," or paid him reverence. He was not a foolish heathen, who paid him worship as if he had been a god, but he paid him very high respect as a servant of God, sent to instruct him. Peter, however, thought that he paid him more reverence than he ought, and, fearing that he might rob Christ of the honor which was really due to him, and none other, he "took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."

And now Peter saw the plain meaning of the sheet with the unclean creatures of which he was to eat. This was a sign to teach him that although he was a Jew, yet he was now to unite with those

who would believe in Christ, of all nations; and he said to the company: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Cornelius now told Peter for what reason he had sent for him, and that his little company were assembled to hear from him any words which God might speak through his lips.

Peter then preached to this Gentile company the same truths which he had preached to the Jews, and encouraged them to believe in Jesus as a Saviour, assuring them that "in every nation he that feareth" God, "and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"; and that whosoever believed in Jesus should receive remission, or enjoy the putting away of their sins, so that they should not be brought against them in the day of judgment.

While this honored apostle was preaching, the Holy Ghost also came upon these Gentiles, as on the Jews assembled on the day of Pentecost. They also were now filled with zeal for the honor of Christ, and could speak in tongues they had never learned, so as to explain to all they might meet, of any country, the great things about their salvation. "They of the circumcision," that is, the Jews who were present, were astonished; for they had no notion that the Gentiles would receive the Spirit, but thought that this blessing was to belong to the Jews only. These persons, having received the Spirit, were also baptized, to show that they were the disciples of Christ.

The apostles, who were scattered at the time of the persecution of Stephen, still continued "preaching the word"; but they confined their labors to the Jews only, and to the Grecians, or Jews which spake



TEMPLE CANDELABRA.

the Greek language, commonly called Hellenist Jews, which means Grecian Jews. These apostles preached at Phenice, Cyprus, Antioch, and elsewhere: "and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." And Barnabas being sent from Jerusalem, paid a visit to the new disciples at Antioch, where he was much delighted, for he "saw the grace of God," in its holy and happy effects, in the lives and dispositions of the people, and this made him "glad"; and while he preached, "much people" were also "added unto the Lord." Barnabas also got Saul of Tarsus to help him, and they labored together for a whole year, "and taught much people."

It was at this time that "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

The eleventh chapter closes by telling us about a kind act of the Christians at Antioch, in sending needed comforts to their brethren in Judea. At this time Agabus, who was endowed with the spirit of prophecy, foretold that a famine would shortly take place all over the world, "which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar," a Roman emperor. The Christians at Antioch, which was a fine city in Syria, had some reason to believe that their brethren at Jerusalem would suffer much from this famine, and so they made no hesitation, but sent them what money they could spare to meet their wants, when the time of need should come.

The Apostle Peter's Imprisonment and Miraculous Escape.— Herod's Miserable Death.

ACTS XII.

The Herods were all bad men. Herod the Great slew the infants at Bethlehem; Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist; and Herod Agrippa "killed James the brother of John with the sword," which was one of the modes of putting to death among the Jews that was considered very disgraceful, and was especially inflicted on those who deceived the people.

As he saw that the wicked Jews were pleased at his murder of one of our blessed Lord's apostles, he proceeded next to persecute Peter,

and by his orders this faithful servant of Christ was thrown into prison, and carefully guarded by "four quaternions of soldiers," that is, sixteen—a quaternion consisting of four; and these quaternions relieved one another's guard, and so watched him by turns, night and day. It was impossible that he could escape but by some miracle, for his hands were chained, and when he slept at night he had two soldiers lying by him, one on each side, and the chain on each hand was fastened to a hand of each soldier.

But nothing can withstand the power of God; and when the Christians met together to pray for Peter's deliverance, God heard their prayers and sent his angel to set him free. The very night that this happened was to have been Peter's last night in prison; for on the next morning Herod intended to have exposed him to the people, and to have put him to death, as he did James. When the angel appeared, surrounded with brightness which illuminated the prison, he awoke Peter by touching his side, and, raising him up, "his chains fell from off his hands"; and having put on his girdle and his sandals, he followed the angel out of the prison. All this was so sudden and surprising that Peter scarcely believed it was real, and thought he must be dreaming. When they had passed the first and second ward, or watch, they had to escape through the strongest gate of the prison, a gate made of iron, and through which they could enter directly into the city. This gate opened of its own accord, and so Peter escaped from the hands of his enemies. What was the state of the guards during this time is not said: perhaps a deep sleep came over them, or their sight was darkened so much as to be unable clearly to distinguish objects at the moment.

The angel having left Peter in the street, he began to recover from his astonishment, and comforted himself that God had really interposed to save him. Then, without loss of time, he hastened to his fellow Christians, who were just then met together for prayer at the house of "Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark." Having knocked for admission, a young woman named Rhoda, or Rose,—for that is the meaning of Rhoda,—coming to the gate, asked from within who was there, and on hearing Peter's voice was so overcome

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with joy that she ran in and told the company instead of stopping to let him in. Though they were praying, and no doubt praying for his release, yet they could hardly believe that it happened so soon, and they said to the young woman, "Thou art mad"; and when she assured them it was true that Peter was at the gate, they said, "It is his angel": they thought it was some heavenly messenger that had assumed his form to bring them some news about him.

As Peter continued knocking they went and opened the door; and, to their astonishment, they saw Peter himself, and he then told them how he had escaped.

When daylight came, Peter being missed from the prison, the soldiers were all in alarm; and Herod, on being told what had happened, was so enraged that he ordered the poor soldiers to be put to death, or executed, as we say, for their negligence.

Herod now left Jerusalem and went on a journey to Cesarea, a city about fifty-five miles from it. Here he was visited by some persons of importance, who were sent from the people of Tyre and Sidon, to reconcile him after some offense which he had taken, and on account of which they feared he would make war against them. This would have been ruin to them, for they lived by merchandise, which they could not then so extensively sell; and, as they were not accustomed to the labors of the field, they were also "nourished by the king's country"—that is, received their food from it, especially their corn. Herod appointed a day to receive the supplicants, as he sat on his throne; and, being very splendidly dressed with robes which Josephus, the Jewish historian, says were richly worked with silver that sparkled brilliantly in the sun, he delivered a speech to the ambassadors of Tyre and Sidon, in the presence of a great multitude of people. The foolish people, in order to compliment the king, cried out, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." The more foolish king was delighted with this praise, and instead of reproving them for their blasphemy, in so extolling a poor mortal like themselves, he silently heard and rejoiced in their flattery. But God can punish kings that offend him, as well as poor men; and while this impious king was setting himself up for a god, an angel secretly smote him

"because he gave not God the glory" in reproving the profane people, "and he was eaten of worms," and died.

The Travels, Sufferings, and Success of Paul and Barnabas.

ACTS XIII, XIV.

In this chapter we find Barnabas and Paul traveling about together to preach the gospel. They went to Seleucia, a city of Syria, and thence "they sailed to Cyprus," an island in the Mediterranean Sea. There they visited Salamis, a chief city of Cyprus; and thence they proceeded to Paphos, on the same island.

We are here told that Saul was also called Paul. It was common to have two names of these kinds; for Saul was the Hebrew name by which this apostle was known among the Jews, but Paul was his Roman name.



ANCIENT JEWISH IDOLS.

From Paphos they next "came to Perga, in Pamphylia," a country in Asia, of which Perga was the chief city; and from Perga "they came to Antioch in Pisidia," so called to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria. Here they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and were invited by the rulers to speak; and Paul preached a sermon, the design of which was to show that Jesus was the Messiah, the anointed one of God, for whom the Jews had long looked; that he was of the seed of David, as foretold by the prophets; that though he had died, he had also risen again, and that now they were come to preach salvation in his name.

The people were so struck with this sermon that they wanted to have another on the next Sabbath; but the rulers would not allow of it, for they were jealous because the preacher had attracted so much attention. Then Paul and Barnabas told them that since they had refused to hear any more about Christ, they should carry the glad

tidings to the Gentiles or heathen, which the heathen, at Antioch, were glad to learn; and many of them heard the holy preachers and believed.

The Jews then raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and got some women, who had gained fame as devout women from their attention to the laws of their religion, and who were also of rich families, to help them in driving these servants of Christ out of the city. So they shook the dust off their feet, as Christ had told them to do if their message was not received in any place, as a sign of displeasure against it, and they "came unto Iconium," another place on the borders of the country.

At Iconium they again went into the Jews' synagogue, and "a great multitude," both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed their divine message.

But the Jews and Greeks were now greatly divided among themselves; some of them believed, and some of them did not believe, notwithstanding all the divine proofs of the heavenly message; and as parties rose very high, and it was determined by some that they would even stone Paul and Barnabas, they left the place, that they might carry the Gospel elsewhere, where the hearts of many more would be ready to receive it.

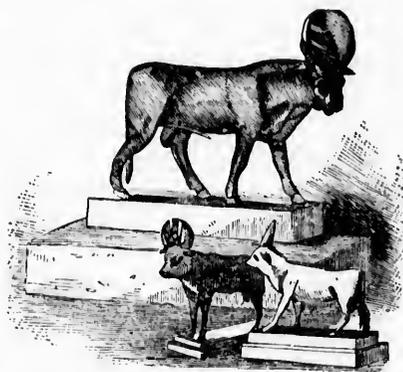
They now "fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia," at no great distance, "and there they preached the gospel."

Here a man, who was born a cripple, was sitting to hear a discourse, when the apostle Paul, perceiving that he had faith in the truth of his message, addressed him before all the people, and "said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

The heathen people were so astonished and delighted that they said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." They thought there were many gods, and that these were two of them. They knew no better, not having the Scriptures; and they took Barnabas for Jupiter, one of their gods, and Paul for Mercury, another of them; and, according to their custom of worshiping and honoring their deities, the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the

people—that is, have sacrificed the oxen to Paul and Barnabas; but the apostles rent their clothes, as the Jews did when they heard blasphemy, and showed what horror they felt that the people should make such a mistake. They then declared they were only men, and exhorted them to cast off their false gods, and believe in “the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.” The people were, however, even then with difficulty prevented from worshipping the apostles. Yet notwithstanding this servile adoration of them, when, soon after, some Jews arrived in the city from Antioch and Iconium, who told them how the apostles had been driven from those places, and spoke against them—these same people who had seen the miracle performed on the lame man, and would then have adored the apostles, now were persuaded to stone Paul, so fickle were they; and they hurt him so much that he appeared to be dead, and his body was dragged by them out of the city. He must have been dreadfully injured by this treatment; but God left the people without excuse for future punishment in thus treating his servant, and tried the boldness of Paul in his cause; and when he was left for dead, God wonderfully restored him, so that he was immediately able to pursue his journey to another place; “and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe,” a city of Lycaonia, as mentioned in the sixth verse, and there they made many disciples; and then they revisited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, to instruct, comfort, and establish the minds of those that had believed, that they might not be frightened at their persecutions.

Here the Christians now formed themselves into churches; and the apostles having taught them and prayed with them, set them in order, and appointed proper persons from among them to manage the worship of God, and for other Christian purposes.



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN IDOLS.

Then they passed through Pisidia, the country where Antioch was, and came to Pamphylia, in Asia, and preached at Perga in that country, and thence went into Attalia, a seacoast town on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea. Then they took shipping and sailed to the other Antioch, which was in Syria, and delighted the Christians there by telling them of their travels, and of the great success which, notwithstanding all opposition, had attended their preaching of the Gospel of Christ—"and there they abode a long time with the disciples."

Disputes Among the Christians at Jerusalem Settled by the Apostles.

ACTS XV, XVI.

While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, in Syria, some persons from Jerusalem came to Antioch and raised a dispute. Paul and Barnabas, therefore, went to Jerusalem to settle the question.

The affair being quietly settled, Paul and Barnabas now resolved on revisiting all the places where they had preached the Gospel; and Barnabas wished John, whose surname was Mark, to accompany them; but he, having been their companion on a former occasion and left them to bear their labors and dangers alone in a manner that did not quite please Paul, who perhaps thought him timid, or not sufficiently zealous, Paul did not wish to have his help. This caused a misunderstanding between Paul and Barnabas, and so they parted company. Barnabas, taking Mark with him, sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, and, as we learn in the latter part of the fourth chapter, the native place of Barnabas. Paul, accompanied by Silas, took another route, and went through Syria and Cilicia, which was his native country, and visited the churches or assemblies of Christians whom he had before brought, through his preaching, to receive the religion of Christ.

Among the places visited again by the apostle Paul were Derbe and Lystra. At the latter place he found a young disciple named Timotheus, or Timothy,—the same to whom he afterward wrote the Epistles. The mother of this young man was a Jewess, but his father was a Greek; and so it happened that he was not circumcised. Now,

as Paul wished to have his aid as a fellow-laborer, seeing that he was a youth of fine talent and spirit, but as the Jews would not have allowed him to speak in the synagogues unless he had been circumcised, Paul therefore "took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters"; who, knowing that his father was a Greek, and therefore had not had the rite performed upon him, would have raised objections to his preaching.

And now they traveled throughout Phrygia in Asia, and the region or country of Galatia, in that part called Asia Minor; then they came to Mysia, another country in Asia Minor, and "assayed," or attempted, to go into Bithynia, another country also in Asia Minor, but were prevented by a particular impression made on their minds by the Spirit of God. Perhaps had they gone, their lives would have been taken, and these God designed to spare for future labors. So they did not stop at Mysia; but "came down to Troas," then a colony of the Romans, now called Alexandria.

Being prompted by the Spirit of God in a vision, or sort of trance, which happened in the night, and in which a man of Macedonia appeared before Paul and said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," Paul proceeded thither, which was a very large country in Europe. He loosed, or set sail, from Troas, and reached Samothracia, an island in the Archipelago, and the next day Neapolis, a seaport, which was a part of Macedonia. From thence he went on to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and stopped there some days. Here, on the Sabbath day, they visited one of the spots where the Jews worshiped, and "spake to the women which resorted thither."

Among these women was one named Lydia. She was a seller of purple—most likely of purple dye, which was a valuable article at that time—and she belonged to a place called Thyatira, a large city in the province of Asia, in Asia Minor. She was a worshiper of the one true God, but knew nothing of Jesus Christ. But now she heard him preached, the Lord opened her heart, like a door, to let him into it by faith; and she received Jesus there, and embraced all the important truths spoken about him by Paul. And she was baptized, and received

the sacred messengers into her house, while they remained in that neighborhood.

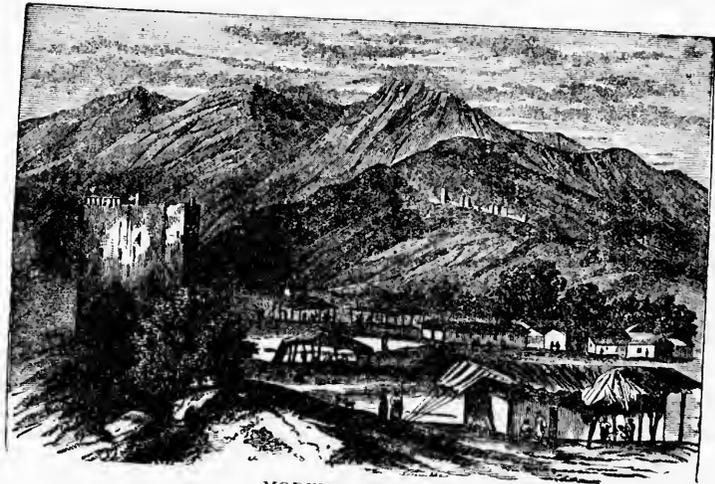
The apostles regularly went to a place used for prayer ; and a girl, who knew their custom, followed them, as they went every day, and cried after them, " These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." This girl was one of a certain class of people of those days who pretended to be divinely inspired, and who might possibly have been permitted to perform some astonishing things by the aid of the devil, who seems to have had full possession of her mind. By her predictions she gained much money. It seems that she was not free, but belonged to masters who received what she gained. Paul, perceiving what kind of a person she was, was grieved at her condition, and, in the name of Jesus Christ, he commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. " And he came out the same hour."

Her masters were greatly enraged that they had now lost their gains, for the girl could serve the devil no longer. They therefore seized Paul and Silas, and carried them before the magistrates, accusing them of teaching doctrines and customs contrary to the laws. Then the magistrates had them stripped, by tearing off their clothes, and commanded them to be beaten with rods, after which they were cast into prison, and the jailer had orders to take the greatest care that they should not escape. So he thrust them " into the innermost prison "—one that, lying beyond others and having more bolts and bars, was the more secure. And still, to add to their security, he put their feet fast into heavy wood stocks, and thus they lay, as it is supposed, in the most painful position, with their sore and naked backs stretched upon the cold and dirty stones—the prisoners not sitting, as in modern times, when the stocks are used, but being compelled to occupy the most painful and unnatural position suggested by the mode of punishment.

In this situation, which would have made most men groan and weep, Paul and Silas, being comforted in their minds in an extraordinary way, sang praises to God in the middle of the night: it is thought that they sang one of David's Psalms, which is not unlikely.

"And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." The keeper awoke with the noise, and, seeing the doors open and the prisoners free, he drew his sword and would have killed himself, fearing that he should be dreadfully punished for their escape. But Paul cried out to him, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here." Then he called for a light, sprang in and "came trembling"; and, according to the Eastern custom of showing respect, fell down before Paul and Silas, and bringing

them out of the inner prison, he began to talk to them directly about his poor soul, and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" The apostles told him to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; and



MODERN JERICHO.

they also preached to his whole family. Then the jailer washed their stripes, which had perhaps begun to fester, and showed them every kindness. They had done good to his soul, and to the souls of his family, as well as saved his body, when he was about to destroy himself; and the least he could do for them was to show them kindness by comforting their bodies. The people's hearts were all ready to receive the Gospel from their lips; and, having renounced their idolatries, they declared their readiness to become Christians, and were all of them baptized. Then the jailer took his prisoners into his house, and set meat before them to refresh their wearied bodies, and they all rejoiced together.

In the morning the magistrates thought that Paul and Silas had had punishment enough, and so sent orders for them to be released. But Paul, being a Roman citizen, now maintained his privilege, teaching us that Christianity is not at all opposed to our claiming and defending our civil rights—that is, those which belong to us as men and citizens. “They have beaten us openly uncondemned,” said he, “being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.” The magistrates had taken upon themselves to do what they were not authorized to do; for the magistrates were not to try prisoners, but only to see that the lawless were seized and secured and that the law was properly put into execution when the prisoners were condemned. Paul, therefore, on account of others, as well as on his own account, would not sanction such shameful proceedings; he did not, however, demand revenge upon them, though he might have got them severely punished for what they had so unjustly done, but he required that they should acknowledge themselves wrong, and, with all respect, make amends to them by fetching them out. So the magistrates, being now greatly frightened, went to the prison, and begged Paul and Silas to forgive them, and that they would leave the city as soon as possible, that nothing more might be said about the matter.

When they had quitted the prison they paid another visit to their kind hostess, Lydia, and then pursued their journey.

Paul Preaches at Thessalonica and is Persecuted There.

ACTS XVII, XVIII.

Paul and Silas, having passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, both considerable cities in Macedonia, “came to Thessalonica, a free city of the same country,” where the Roman governor resided. Here there “was a synagogue of the Jews,” and during three successive Sabbaths Paul went in and reasoned with them about what the Scriptures said of the Messiah, and proved that Jesus was he. His facts and arguments were so forcible that, accompanied by the power

of the Spirit of God, many Jews and many Gentiles who had become Jews were converted.

This enraged the unbelieving Jews; and these, supposing Paul to be at the house of Jason,—one of their number whose heart had been brought to trust in Christ,—violently beset Jason's house, and dragged him on, with others, to the rulers of the city, and charged them with turning the world upside down, or throwing every place which they visited into confusion by their doctrines. The magistrates, however, acted on this occasion with great propriety, and as these Christians were accused of being troublers, they only required pledges of them that they would not in future disturb the peace of the city, but did not attempt to punish them, where they could not see they had committed any crime.

Paul and Silas, having left the city quietly during the night, proceeded next to Berea, another city in Macedonia, and there also they "went into the synagogue of the Jews." Here the gospel was readily received by the people, who heard Paul and Silas with attention, and then examined the Scriptures for themselves, to see if what was said about the Messiah agreed with the character of Jesus Christ; and so many of them became true Christians.

The Jews of Thessalonica, hearing of their success, followed them to that place, and stirred up the unthinking part of the people to disturb the apostles.

The apostle Paul was therefore sent out of the way, because against him the bitterest enmity prevailed; and Silas and Timotheus remained behind to explain things further to the young converts, who would have many questions to ask about what Jesus Christ taught and did.

Paul next went to Athens, a city in Greece, exceedingly famous for its knowledge and learning. When he arrived there his spirit was grieved and provoked to see the stupidity of the people, notwithstanding all their knowledge, for the city was full of idols: it had more images called gods than all the rest of Greece, so that one humorously said of it, it was easier to find a god there than a man. Here Paul, according to his custom, disputed with the Jews in their synagogue, and with "the devout persons," or Jewish proselytes, who

had left heathenism and embraced Judaism; and he also took every opportunity of conversing about Christ with the Athenians, whom he met in the great market-place.

In this city he was violently opposed by the heathen philosophers, called Epicureans and Stoics.

The Epicureans were so called from their first teacher, Epicurus. Though they believed there was a God, they were foolish enough to believe that the world was made by chance, and that no Providence ruled over it. See how ignorant the wisest of men were without the Scriptures! The Stoics received their name, not from their founder, whose name was Zeno, but from a Greek word, *stoæ*, which signifies a portico, or piazza, because it was customary for Zeno to walk under a portico and teach his scholars. He was wiser than the Epicureans, since he believed that God did make the world: but he, like them, denied that the Creator cared anything about it after it was made; and so, instead of being ruled by His Providence, it was left to Fate.

These were the men with whom Paul had here chiefly to contend. They were, however, disposed to hear him; for though they despised him and called him a babbler, yet, as he brought with him doctrines new to them,—and they were fond of “some new thing,”—they thought at least that they should be amused.

There was at Athens a celebrated place called the Areopagus, “in the midst of Mars’ hill.” This building was used as a court of law, and was adapted to accommodate a large concourse of people. Here it was determined that Paul should publish his opinions. It was a fine opportunity, and he embraced it.

He told them that he had observed they were very superstitious, or given to the worship of many and false gods; and that in passing through their streets he had even seen an inscription—“TO THE UNKNOWN GOD”; which perhaps meant the God of the Jews, of whom they had heard, but did not know. Now, he came to tell them who he was, and that instead of the world being made by chance, as some among them believed, he it was who made all things and all men; and whose providence, so far from not noticing the world he made,

even notices every individual, and fixes the boundaries of every man's life and the very spot where he shall reside. And as we spring from God, our spirits being breathed into us by his Spirit, nothing could be more absurd than to imagine that stone carved into different images should represent God—many of them being even unworthy to represent men, whom God has made. For a long while God had borne with this idolatry, but now Paul declared he had sent his apostles to bear witness against it, and called upon men everywhere to repent, for he has determined to judge the world, and Christ will be the judge, who is now risen from the dead.

On mentioning the subject of the resurrection the whole assembly seems to have been in a tumult. It was a doctrine either disbelieved or never thought of by the Grecian philosophers. "Some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." So, as they were not disposed to hear any more at that time, and received his message so unfavorably, Paul left them. Yet his address was not altogether useless: "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed; among which was Dionysius, the Areopagite,"—or a judge in the court of Areopagus,—“and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”

Paul next proceeded to Corinth, another Grecian city of considerable importance. Here he took up his abode with a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who had lately left Rome in consequence of a decree of the Emperor that no Jews should remain there any longer. From what is reported by historians it is supposed that this decree was made because the Jews were so violent in opposing the Christians that they caused continual disturbances. It appears that Paul and Aquila were of the same craft or trade—tent-makers; and this was one reason which brought them together. It was no disgrace among the Jews to be of a trade but rather a disgrace to be without, and therefore every one was brought up to a trade, that he might never want the means of procuring his livelihood; and so the apostle Paul, though a learned man, and brought up at the feet of the learned Gamaliel,—that is, as his pupil,—was nevertheless taught the craft of tent-making. Tents, in hot countries, are very common and useful, and it was

by this trade that the apostle supported himself while preaching the gospel.

While at Corinth Paul, as usual, visited and "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath"; and here he was joined by Silas and Timothy.

The Jews having refused to hear what he had to say about Christ, Paul "shook his raiment," it being loose about him, as a sign that he would shake them off and have no more to do with them, and went to the Gentiles who were in the city. For this purpose he took up his abode at the house of a man named Justus, who, though not a Jew, was a sincere man, and worshiped the true God, having learned about him from the Jews, his house being near the synagogue. His labors were, however, not altogether useless among the Jews, for "Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house." Many Corinthians also believed.

Paul was, indeed, particularly encouraged in his labors at Corinth, for God told him in a vision, "I have much people in this city." "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

The success of Paul excited the enmity of the Jews, whose rage against Christ was as bitter as it still is. They therefore rose up against Paul, and accused him before Gallio, the Roman officer who at that time presided over Achaia, in which the conquered province of Corinth was. Gallio saw their wicked rage, and told them that if Paul had done any bad thing he would have taken notice of it, but as they accused him only about religious matters, he had nothing to do with such disputes, and so he drove the Jews away from his presence. The Greeks, seeing how he treated the Jews, and knowing that they were not now in high favor, immediately fell upon Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him severely; so that the harm the Jews wanted to do to Paul now fell upon themselves; "and Gallio cared for none of these things," but looked on with total indifference.

Paul's next journey was into Syria, and he took with him Priscilla and Aquila. Then he came to Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia, where he still reasoned with the Jews by entering into their synagogue.

Having left Ephesus he landed at Cesarea, and visited the Christian church there. Thence he went to Antioch, "and after he had spent some time there he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples."

While Paul was engaged elsewhere Apollos visited Ephesus. This was a most eloquent Jew, who had been taught about Christ by John the Baptist. Here he preached boldly, urging men, no doubt, to repentance and faith in the Messiah. But Aquila and Priscilla, having been instructed by the apostle Paul, knew more than Apollos did, and they therefore assisted in showing him "the way of God more perfectly," and about Christ as the Saviour of sinners.

After this Apollos visited different parts of Achaia and strengthened the minds of those who believed in Christ, and "he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, that Jesus was the Christ."

Paul's Extensive Travels to Preach the Gospel.

ACTS XIX.

In the last chapter we learned that Apollos visited different parts of Achaia, and here we are informed that he also paid a visit to Corinth, which was the capital of Achaia. During this time Paul "passed through the upper coasts," or countries to the north of Ephesus, called Phrygia, Ionia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia (see ASIA MINOR, at the end of ACTS), and then again to Ephesus. He here instructed some of John the Baptist's disciples, and baptized them "in the name of the Lord Jesus"; and he "spake boldly" in the synagogue "for the space of three months concerning the kingdom of God"—that is, the reign of Christ the Messiah.

However, at length he gave over instructing the Jews in this place, since their hearts were so much hardened against Christ; and "one Tyrannus" having a school of public instruction and disputation, he went there and taught his disciples about the way of salvation, and in this manner he passed two years. Ephesus being a place of great importance, and numbers of persons, both Jews and Greeks, visiting it for purposes of trade and information, the doctrines of the apostle

were heard by most of these, and so conveyed abroad and spread in all the cities and towns of Asia.

Seeing the wonderful things done by the apostle, some "vagabond Jews" who strolled about from place to place, like our vagabond mountebanks, to gain a livelihood by their tricks, and who were "exorcists," or a sort of conjurers, tried to do a like thing in a similar way. Among these were seven sons of a Jew, a "chief among the priests" at Ephesus; and they attempted to cast out evil spirits from those who were tormented with them, and said, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." They, however, were soon proved to

be imposters, to their injury and shame, to the honor of the apostle and to the advancement of the cause of Christ.

This affair was soon spread over the city of Ephesus, and produced a great change in many persons, both among the Jews and Greeks. Indeed, "many of them which used curious arts brought their books to-



PART OF ANCIENT WAR-GALLEY.

gether, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." This was a glorious triumph over Satan in his own territories, for Ephesus was a very wicked and idolatrous city, where magic was taught, and it was a deadly blow to the wicked art when the books were destroyed by which the people had learned how to perform it. The price of the books burned has been reckoned, at the lowest rate, at about eight thousand eight hundred dollars; but some think it was not less than thirty-one thousand two hundred and fifty dollars. Books were extremely dear before the art of printing was invented, and books on curious arts were dearer than others.

The apostle Paul now began to think about visiting some other parts, and, having decided to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and thence to Jerusalem, and then to Rome, he sent forward Timotheus, or Timothy, to whom he wrote two epistles, and Erastus, who was chamberlain of the city of Corinth, as we learn in the sixteenth chapter of Romans; and so these gave notice of his visit, and collected the Christians to receive him. While the apostle was about to leave Ephesus, there was, however, "no small stir" about the religion of Jesus; for the makers of images, which the idolatrous people called gods, having lost much of their custom, endeavored to excite a tumult and to drive him out of the city.

Efore we notice this affair it may be necessary just to give you a short account of this famous city of Ephesus and of its celebrated temple.

We have before said that Ephesus was the metropolis of Asia, and, indeed, it was the most famous place of trade in all Asia Minor. The ancient city stood about fifty miles south of Smyrna. It has long gone to decay, like many other once splendid cities of the East. The chief ornament of this city was the Temple of Diana, to erect which all the states in Asia were made to contribute a portion of their wealth. This temple was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It was nearly as long as St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and nearly as wide as St. Paul's at its greatest breadth. It was supported by one hundred and twenty-seven marble pillars, seventy feet high, or twelve times the height of our tallest men, and these were either most curiously carved or highly polished. From accounts given by ancient writers, this temple was two hundred and twenty years in building, and was continually improved for four hundred years. The imaginary goddess, Diana, was represented by a small statue made of ebony,—a hard, black, and valuable wood,—and the people were weak enough to believe that this piece of carved wood was sent down to them from heaven by Jupiter, a name by which they distinguished one of the heathen gods, and whom they supposed to be the father of Diana. To this statue, therefore, they paid a great deal of reverence. It had been formerly placed in the trunk of an old elm, but, from the

honors paid to it, it was at length provided with this magnificent building. All the inhabitants of Ionia went every year to Ephesus to solemnize a festival to "the great goddess Diana," and wives and children carried their offerings to her temple, many of which were exceedingly rich and valuable. Priests who officiated on this occasion were liberally maintained by the people; and the citizens, no doubt, made much money by the gathering together of so large a number of people, many of whom were wealthy, and who remained during the continuance of the sports which accompanied their offerings.

The throngs that yearly visited Ephesus furnished the silversmiths with plenty of employment to make silver models of this famed building, which the multitude so much venerated, and brought no small gain to the craftsmen. One of these silversmiths in particular, whose name was Demetrius, called together his fellow-workmen and told them of the injury they suffered by the reduced sale of their silver temples, in consequence of the apostle Paul having "almost throughout all Asia persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands." And Demetrius showed that the temple itself was in danger of falling into contempt and neglect, owing to the success of the apostle's preaching. His interested auditors felt the force of what he said, and "they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Their noise and shouting roused the whole city, and, having put many others in a rage against the apostle's preaching, the mob caught Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's companions, and rushed with them into the theater, where public plays were acted in honor of the goddess, and where, among other things, men were set to fight with wild beasts; and very probably it was intended to hurry the servants of Christ thither to throw them to the wild beasts.

Paul, not in the least afraid, would have followed them into the theater to preach the gospel even to this enraged multitude; but the Christians at Ephesus advised him not to expose himself to danger, and probably thought the people were not in a mind to attend to anything he might say.

When the people were got together in the theater a great many of

them did not know why they were there, and as one asked another what was the matter, all were in confusion.

In the meantime Alexander, who was a professed Christian, was dragged into the theater, the Jews helping to push him in, and so uniting in their wicked deeds with the Ephesian idolaters. Here Alexander would have defended his faith, but when he attempted to speak the mob drowned his voice, and cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" They knew that they could say nothing in their own defense in reply to Alexander, and so for two hours he tried in vain to speak and they roared out against him.

At length "the town clerk" interfered. (This was a person of some influence and authority; and he hit upon a very good method to restore quietness.) "Why," said he, "you know that everybody worships the goddess Diana—there is no need to dispute about that; and you know that her image came down from Jupiter, and as nobody can contradict it, what need is there of all this noise?" (This is just what he would have said in English, for his words are to the same purport.) "Besides," he added, "these men have done no harm to our goddess; they have neither robbed the temple of her wealth nor said anything that I know of against her dignity. However, if they have done any harm, the law is ready to appeal to; but if they have not, the injury will fall upon your own heads for disturbing the peace and making this terrible uproar; and if you do not immediately depart quietly home you will all be in danger of being taken up as rioters." Having spoken to this effect, the people grew a little cool, and, seeing that they could do nothing to stop the doctrines of the apostle, and might injure themselves, they quietly departed to their homes. The foolishness of their proceeding was thus quickly made very apparent to the idolatrous multitude. In fact, there is nothing that can be made to appear so ridiculous, even to the least reflective mind, as the enmity that would overcome truth by the merest outcry and passion.

**Paul's Travels and Preaching.—His Arrest and Trial at Jerusalem.—
Taken to Cesarea and Pleads in his own Defense.**

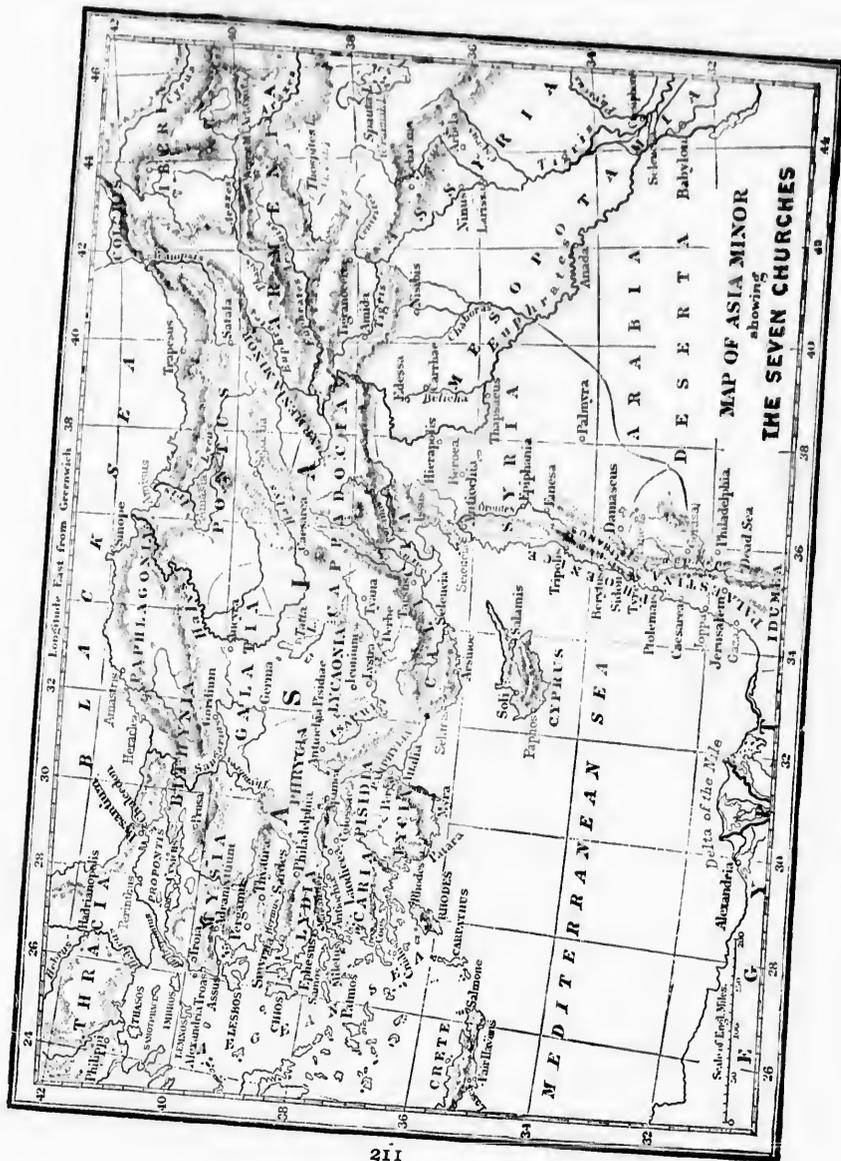
ACTS XX-XXVI.

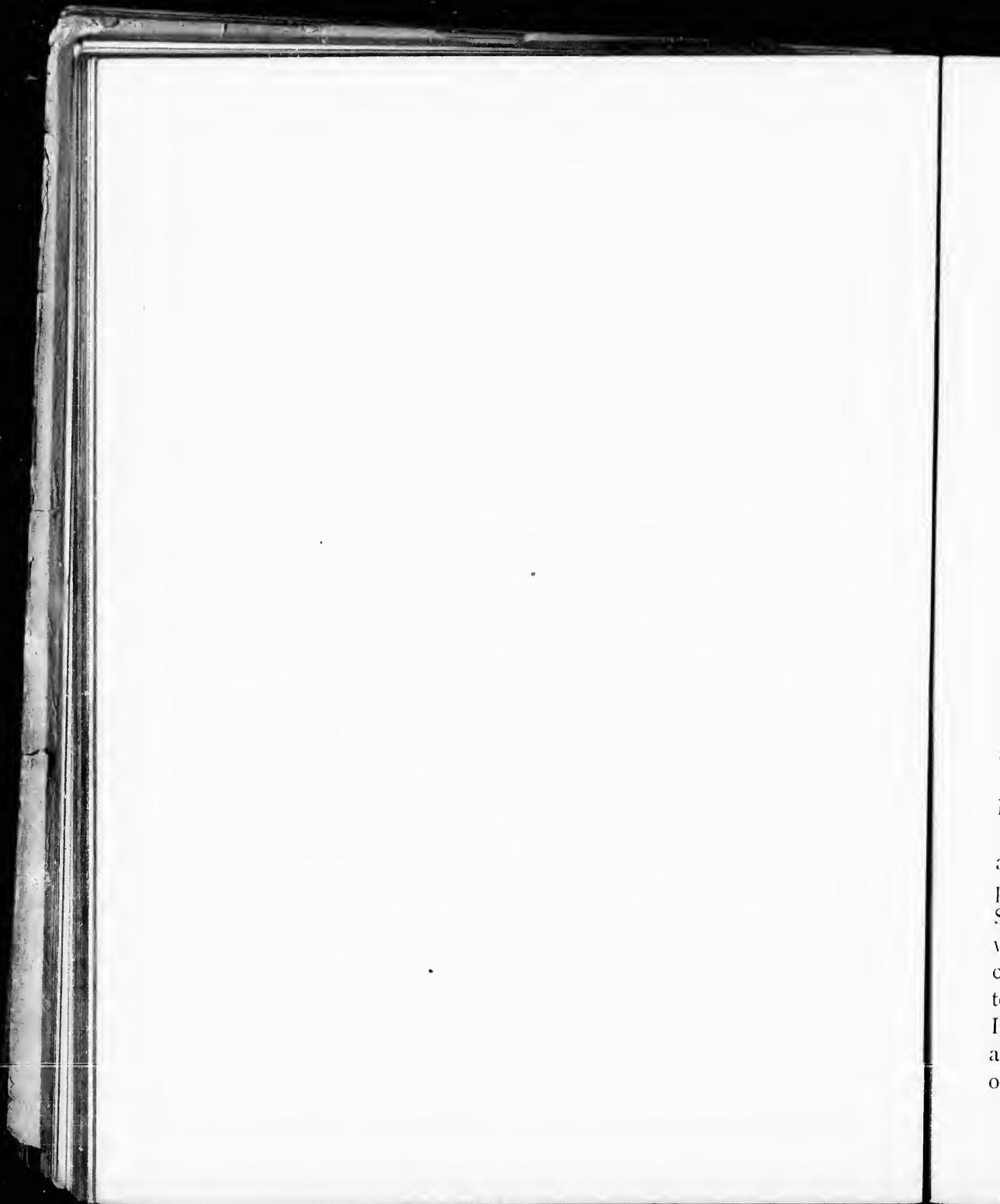
We have now to follow the apostle Paul rapidly through some more of his travels; and, except a few occasional remarks, shall merely notice the places where he went, so as to explain their situation and importance, if they have not been noticed before.

Paul, having taken leave of the disciples at Ephesus, now went into Macedonia, and, having visited the disciples there,—at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, of which we have lately read,—“he came into Greece,” or, as some think, Achaia. Here he remained three months, and was preparing to sail for Syria, when he heard that the Jews were watching for him to kill him if he went in that direction; and so he resolved not needlessly to put himself into danger, but returned by land through Macedonia to visit the churches there. He was now accompanied into Asia by Sopater, of Berea, and Luke, the writer of the Acts, who includes himself as one of the party when he speaks of “us”; and Aristarchus and Secundus, of Thessalonica, and Gaius, of Derbe, and Timothy and Tychicus and Trophimus, of Asia, went on to prepare matters for the apostle's reception at Troas. They sailed from Philippi, as the apostle had intended to do, and it being a short way they reached Troas in five days. The apostle, however, was not many hours behind them, since he joined them there and spent a Sabbath with them; and they remained there altogether but seven days.

The companions of Paul now took passage in a ship to go from Troas to Assos, a city of Asia by the seaside; and here the apostle, having traveled on foot, shortly joined them; when, having been taken into the ship, they sailed for Mitylene, a city in Lesbos, an island situated in the *Ægean* Sea, now known by the name of the Archipelago, being that part of the Mediterranean Sea which divides Greece from Asia Minor. Thence they continued their course “over against Chios,” another island in the *Ægean* Sea, and the next day they

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reached Samos, another island in the same sea, and anchored or stopped at Trogyllium, a small island near Samos, for there was a bay here convenient for vessels to anchor in; and the next day they came to Miletus, the chief city of Ionia. On his way to this place Paul passed by Ephesus, for he had determined to sail past it, "because he would not spend the time in Asia," wishing to be at Jerusalem at the great feast of Pentecost, that he might have an opportunity of preaching the gospel to a great number of Jews, out of all countries, whom he knew would come to that feast.

Miletus being only about twelve miles from Ephesus, the apostle sent for the elders or managing members of the church in that city, and he most affectionately addressed them, urging them to hold fast their profession of faith in Christ; and he told them this was the last time he should see them, for he knew that he was about to go where he must become a great sufferer and a prisoner for the sake of the Lord Jesus, for whom he was even willing to lay down his life; "and then he kneeled down and prayed with them all." We are not told what his prayer was; but we may readily suppose that it was one of the most earnest, affectionate, and tender prayers that was ever offered up to God, for he seemed to love the Ephesians most sincerely, and was deeply concerned for their happiness; "and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." In this way Esau fell on Jacob's neck, and Joseph on his brother Benjamin's; it was, as you have heard before, the Eastern way of showing great affection.

Having parted with these elders, who accompanied Paul to the ship, and did not leave him till the very last moment, he and his companions sailed straight for Coos, or Cos, another island in the Ægean Sea, and the day following they reached Rhodes, a celebrated island, which had a city of the same name. Here was that famous statue called the Colossus of Rhodes, which cost twelve years of the sculptor's labor and \$528,000. Its height was seventy cubits, or 105 feet. It was esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. As it lay along it astonished all beholders, for few men with their arms stretched out could embrace the thumb.

They next proceeded to a place called Patara, a city of Lycia,

which was a country of Asia Minor, bounded on the south by the Mediterranean. Here they found a ship for Phœnicia, and thither they sailed, and passing Cyprus stood for Syria, and landed at Tyre, the chief city of Phœnicia. Having met with some Christians here, they stayed to establish them in their faith, and were with them seven days.

Then they sailed from Tyre to Ptolemais, a city of Galilee, on the seacoast, where they remained with some fellow-Christians during one day. And the day following Paul's company stopped at Cesarea, "and entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist,"—undoubtedly the same who had baptized the eunuch,—and there they took up their abode while they remained in that place. It is worthy of remark that Philip had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy, or were inspired by the Holy Spirit to foretell events which should happen to the Church of Christ.

While the apostolical travelers were at Cesarea the prophet Agabus arrived from Judea, and foretold the treatment Paul would meet with from the Jews at Jerusalem; at the same time, taking the girdle which fastened Paul's robes around his body, he expressed it by the significant sign of binding his own hands and feet. This made Paul's companions weep and entreat him not to go to Jerusalem; but the holy servant of God, bent upon the conversion of men, would not be dissuaded from his purpose on so important an occasion, when thousands of Jews would be collected together at the feast, and he answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Shortly after this the party took their carriages—or, rather, "their baggage"—and went to Jerusalem, accompanied by some disciples of Cesarea and one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, who happened to reside at Jerusalem and who accommodated them at his house.

When Paul visited the temple the Jews "laid hands on him," and treated him so cruelly that they would have killed him had not the Roman commandant rushed in among them with some soldiers and rescued him. He, however, supposed from their treating Paul in this

manner that he might have been doing something wrong, and ordered him to be bound with chains, and so the prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled.

Paul was now, with some difficulty, carried prisoner to the castle, for the Jews still pressed upon him to murder him. Here he conversed with the commandant, who fancied he might be an Egyptian robber that had done much mischief, and, accompanied by four thousand desperate men, had lately troubled the neighboring country. Paul then informed him that he was mistaken, for he was a citizen of Tarsus, no mean city in Cilicia, and begged to be allowed to address the people, which he did as he stood on the steps of the ascent to the castle. He then told them that he was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel," a learned Jew—that is, he sat to receive his instructions, as scholars then sat beneath their masters; that he had been as zealous as any Jew could be in behalf of his religion, but that he was converted on his way to Damascus, as he was going to persecute the Christians; and that now he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to preach to the Gentiles. This they could not bear, for they fancied themselves to be the only people whom God would honor with a divine message; and now again they broke out into a rage and tumult. The chief captain then ordered Paul to be scourged; but while they were binding him he said he was a Roman citizen, and it was a great crime to scourge such a person without a trial. Tarsus was a free city, and Paul's parents being citizens of Tarsus, he was born free; so Paul escaped being scourged, and the captain was greatly frightened that he had even bound him, for it was also a great offense against the Roman law to bind a Roman citizen.

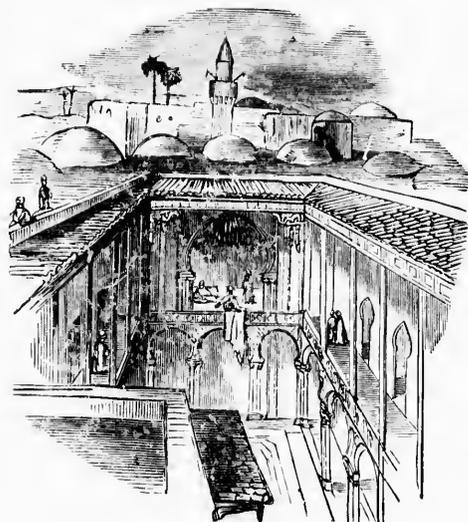
On the morrow Paul was taken before the chief priests and council, or Jewish Sanhedrim. While he was attempting to address them, the high priest, Ananias, commanded some to give him a slap in the face, which the apostle resented as a violation of the law, and called the priest a whited wall, meaning that he was a hypocrite, looking fair without but bad within. The Jews then reproved him for reviling God's high priest, when he acknowledged that he would not have done it, but he was not aware that he was the high priest.

The apostle, finding that the Jews would not hear him, wisely be-
thought himself to divide his enemies among themselves; and as one
thing which had offended the Jews was his preaching the resurrection
of Jesus, he called out that he was brought there for professing his
hope in the resurrection of the dead. Now, the Sadducees denied
that there was any resurrection, but the Pharisees believed it, and
immediately, as Paul had foreseen, they fell out among themselves;

and the Scribes in the council,
who were Pharisees, declared
that Paul was unjustly accused.

As the parties became vio-
lent. Paul's life was in danger
amongst them, and the chief
captain, now fearing the con-
sequences of his being injured
as a Roman citizen, commanded
the soldiers again to rescue him
and take him into the castle.
Here Jesus appeared to him in
a vision, and told him he must
preach his gospel yet at Rome.

Above forty of the Jews, en-
raged at the deliverance of the
apostle, now took a solemn
oath that they would neither



UPPER CHAMBERS IN ORIENTAL HOUSE.

eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, and they proposed to the chief
priests and elders that if they would make an excuse to have him once
more before the council they would take care that he should not again
escape alive. However, God defeated their wicked purpose, for, pro-
videntially, a sister of Paul's had a son at Jerusalem, who, having
learned the intended plot of these men, went himself and informed the
apostle, who sent him to tell the chief captain. The captain then lost
no time to protect him, but ordered a body of soldiers to take him at
night to Cesarea, a place which was seventy-five miles from Jerusalem,
and where Felix resided, who was governor of Judea. The captain,

whose name was Claudius Lysias, also sent a favorable letter to Felix, which you may read in the twenty-third chapter.

At Cesarea Paul was kept for five days in "Herod's judgment hall," or court for holding trials. At the end of this time Ananias, the high priest, and the elders had traveled from Jerusalem, accompanied by an orator, or sort of counsellor, named Tertullus, for the purpose of prosecuting Paul. Tertullus, appearing in court, delivered a very flattering speech to Felix, and then accused Paul of being "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of seditions," and "a ringleader of the Nazarenes," a name of contempt given by the Jews to the Christians, derived from Jesus being brought up at Nazareth. Paul, in reply, defended himself with great eloquence, and his speech agreed with what the captain had said about him in his letter. Felix would not, therefore, hastily condemn him, but put off the business till he had inquired and thought more about it, and had seen the chief captain, who could more particularly explain what he knew of the matter. In the meantime he ordered a centurion to keep guard over Paul, but allowed him to go unfettered and to see any of his friends.

Some days afterward, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, he sent for Paul and had some private conversation with him "concerning the faith in Christ." His wife was a Jewess, the daughter of Herod Agrippa, who was eaten by worms, and sister of the king called Agrippa; and probably Felix wished to satisfy his curiosity and that of his wife about the new faith, which she could better understand than he, knowing something about the prophecies of the Messiah. Paul's reasoning was most powerful; and while he took this opportunity of striking at some vices which he knew had disgraced the character of Felix, and showed him that, though a ruler himself, he must be judged at last for all his crimes before the Judge of the whole earth, the guilty "Felix trembled," and then put off the conversation for another opportunity; but he lulled his conscience to rest and never met Paul again, except on common matters, when he hoped he might in some manner bribe him to gain his liberty.

In this unjust way was Paul kept a prisoner during two years, when Porcius Festus was appointed governor of Judea in the room of Felix.

Felix did not even then set the apostle at liberty, but left Paul bound, to please the Jews. This was, however, of no advantage to him, for he was himself accused by some of the Jews of oppressive conduct, and taken before Cesar to answer for his own real offenses; and had it not been that he had a brother named Pallas, who had great influence in the court, he would have been severely punished.

The new governor, Festus, arriving at Jerusalem, the Jews had great hopes that they should now accomplish their wicked purposes against Paul; and "the high priest and chief of the Jews" even begged it as a favor of Festus that he would send Paul back to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem to be tried, where they would not have failed to have murdered him. Festus, however, thought he would first go to Cesarea and inquire into the merits of the case, and he wished the Jews to accompany him thither and bring forward their charges against Paul. On reaching Cesarea he took his seat as judge, and the apostle was brought before him; but his accusers were not able to prove anything against him. Notwithstanding this, the wicked governor, who ought to have set him free, proposed, after all, to send him before the Sanhedrim, wishing by so doing to gratify the great persons among the Jews. Paul, however, again took shelter under his rights as a Roman citizen, and demanded that he should at once go before the emperor,—Nero, then in the seventh year of his reign,—which completely defeated the malicious schemes of his adversaries and left no means of evasion for Festus.

Agrippa, who ruled over the northeastern portion of Palestine, with the title of king, and his sister Bernice, came over to pay a visit to Festus and congratulate him on his new dignity. Festus told Agrippa how much he was perplexed about Paul; that he had been tried before him and appeared to be an innocent man; but that, as the matters in dispute were chiefly things which concerned the Jews, and which he did not well understand, he had wished to have sent him before the Sanhedrim, but Paul had resolved to appeal to Cesar.

Agrippa, being a Jew, had his curiosity excited, and wished to examine Paul himself; so he was, on the next day, brought before the public court, where Agrippa and Festus and Bernice and all "the

chief captains and principal men of the city" were assembled together. Festus then openly declared his opinion of Paul's innocence; but since he had appealed to Cesar, he said he must now send him to Rome, but he really did not know what to say to the emperor as an excuse for sending him thither. He had, therefore, assembled this court for advice, and especially wished for that of Agrippa, an illustrious person, and who was capable of entering better into the matters in dispute.

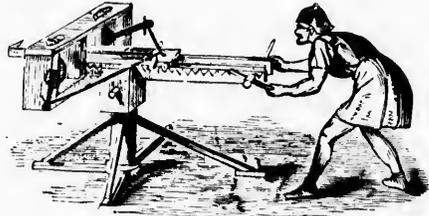
After Festus had spoken Agrippa told Paul he might speak; when the apostle again eloquently pleaded his own cause, stated his early life, his conversion, his mission to the Gentiles, his sufferings from the Jews, and the doctrines which he preached. At length he was suddenly interrupted by Festus, who said, with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." To whom Paul replied that he was perfectly in his senses, and his doctrines were the words of truth. The apostle also so closely pressed his address upon Agrippa that he forced him to cry out, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul said to the king, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

After breaking up the council Agrippa told Festus that if Paul had not appealed to Cesar he should certainly have advised his being set at liberty, for he was without doubt an innocent man.

Paul's Dangerous Voyage to Rome.—His Miracles at Melita.

ACTS XXVII, XXVIII.

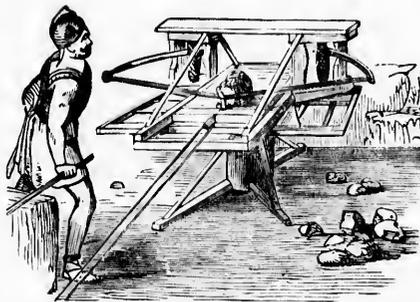
Paul was now given in charge of Julius, a Roman centurion, and sent on board a ship of Adramyttium to sail for Rome. Adramyttium was a seaport town in Mysia, a part of the province of Asia.



ANCIENT WAR-ENGINE.

He was accompanied in his voyage by a Christian brother named Aristarchus. They touched at Sidon, a famous city of Phœnicia, where Paul having some friends, Julius handsomely allowed him permission to go and visit them. Thence they sailed under the island of Cyprus and crossed the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and then came to Myra, a city of Lycia. Here the centurion found a ship of Alexandria which was bound for Italy. Alexandria was the chief city of Egypt, built by Alexander the Great immediately after his conquest of Egypt, and it was peopled with Greeks. It had many magnificent buildings and a library—built by Ptolemy Philadelphus, one of the kings of Egypt—containing 700,000 volumes, which was, unfortunately,

burnt in a war between Julius Cæsar, who was the Roman dictator, and Pompey, a great Roman general.



ANCIENT WAR-ENGINE FOR THROWING STONES.

In order to make a short cut to Italy, the master of the ship now stood toward Cnidus, a place in Asia Minor; but the wind being contrary, he altered his course, and so sailed below Crete, one of the noblest isles in the Mediterranean Sea, which is now better known

by the name of Candia, and then he passed over against Salmone, known latterly by the name of Cape Salmone, a piece of land in the island of Crete. They next came to a place called the Fair Havens, near Lasea, a city on the seashore of Crete.

Having lost much time in sailing slowly against the wind or stopping at the Fair Havens, the captain wished to proceed on his voyage, although the time of the year was now very unfavorable. Paul advised the centurion not to proceed, for there was great danger; but the captain persisted, and in the end found he had done wrong in not taking the apostle's advice. Rash people have often to repent of not taking kind and wise advice, when it is too late.

As the haven was not commodious to winter in, they proceeded on

their course toward Phenice, a haven of Crete, having a favorable wind. In a short time, however, the wind changed, and "a tempestuous wind" blew, "called Euroclydon." Here the ship, becoming unmanageable, was left to the mercy of the wind, and she ran under an island called Clauda. Fearing they should be wrecked, with some difficulty they secured their boat to go ashore; and they passed ropes and chains round about the ship to keep her from going to pieces, and they took down their sails, and so were driven about in the sea, wherever the wind might bear them, having only what the sailors call bare poles.

Still the tempest increased, and it was found necessary to throw everything burdensome overboard to lighten the ship, that she might the more easily float on the tossing waves. The sailors, in that age, steered their course by the sun, moon, and stars; but the skies were so darkened by this storm, and that for many days, that they could see none of the heavenly bodies, and therefore knew not whither they went; and in this uncertain state they gave themselves up for lost, expecting that the ship must at last strike on rocks or quicksands.

While they were all in a state of despair, God showed Paul, in a vision, that he should not perish by the storm, but should yet bear witness to his truth before Cesar at Rome. Then Paul told his companions that they would have acted wisely had they taken his advice; however, now they must be shipwrecked, but their lives would all be saved.

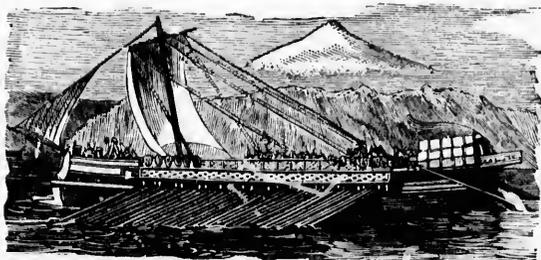
On the fourteenth night the seamen found, by sounding, that they were approaching some land, and so to prevent being wrecked they cast anchor. In sounding, a weight, attached to a rope, is cast into the sea, and by the depth to which it sinks, as indicated by the marks or knots on the rope, the sailors know whether they are near land. The iron anchor, whose shape every one knows, is attached to a heavy rope cable and thrown into the sea, and its flukes burying themselves in the sandy or gravelly bottom of the sea, it holds the ship, so that it can not be easily moved from its place or drift upon the rocks or sand. In this case four anchors were cast, to hold the ship the more firmly.

The sailors now attempted to escape for their lives, and were steal-

ing off with the boat, when Paul declared that their continuance was absolutely necessary to save the rest; so the soldiers cut the rope by which the boat was tied to the ship and let it go, that the sailors might not get into it.

They had now all fasted a long time, and the apostle urged them to eat before the ship was wrecked, and to gather a little strength for the toils they would have to undergo; and then he solemnly gave God thanks before them all, and began himself to eat. We ought never to take our food without giving God thanks; for, as good Mr. Henry says, we can not put a morsel of food into our mouths till God first puts it into our hands.

The number of the crew and passengers was 276. Having satisfied their appetites, the last thing which they could do to lighten the ship was to throw away the wheat and provisions; this they now did.



WAR-GALLEY IN BIBLE TIMES.

At daylight they saw a little creek of water, with a shore, and taking up the anchor, hoisted a sail and tried to run the

ship in. In doing this they ran upon some sands where two seas met, and the fore part stuck fast, but the hinder part was broken by the furious waves.

The soldiers now proposed to kill the prisoners lest any of them should escape and they should be answerable for them, and the apostle Paul was to have been killed among the rest. But the centurion, who by this time greatly respected Paul, opposed the wicked, cruel, and ungrateful scheme; he therefore ordered those who could swim to escape to the shore, and that the others should ride on boards and broken pieces of timber from the ship, and escape the best way they could; and so they all got "safe to land."

The place at which they landed was called Melita, which has gener-

ally been supposed to be the island now called Malta. Here the natives, though uncivilized, showed the shipwrecked mariners a great deal of kindness; and as it was rainy and they were fatigued and cold, they made a fire to warm them. As all helped to gather wood for it, Paul had also gathered a bundle, and while he was laying it on the fire a viper came out of it, being driven by the heat, and fastened upon his hand. The bite of this serpent is exceedingly venomous and its poison the most dangerous. The natives, being very superstitious, thought that this was a judgment on Paul, whom they took for some murderer God was now punishing, though he had escaped shipwreck. Paul shook off the reptile into the fire, and they all looked on expecting to see him fall down dead; but when they saw he had received no hurt, they then looked upon him as no less than a god.

This island had a governor named Publius, who very hospitably received the unfortunate strangers. But his hospitality was well repaid; for the father of Publius, laying at the time sick of a fever, Paul "prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him." As soon as this was known many applied for and obtained a cure, and so the apostle and his companions were much respected during their stay, and received help for their voyage.

Here they remained during three months, when they sailed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle. They next landed at Syracuse, a famous city in Sicily, where they stopped three days. They then sailed round Sicily and came to Rhegium, a city in Calabria; thence to Puteoli, a large seaport town not far from where Naples now stands; here Paul met with some Christian brethren, and stayed seven days with them—Julius, most probably, kindly consenting to gratify their wishes that Paul might so stay. Thence they went to Appii Forum, which was fifty miles from Rome, and to which place some of the Christians of Rome, hearing of their approach, went to meet the apostle, as others did also at the Three Taverns, which was thirty miles from Rome. The sight of these Christians greatly encouraged Paul's heart, for he was glad to see they were not ashamed of him as a prisoner for the cause of Christ.

On arriving at Rome Paul was allowed to have an apartment to himself, that he might not be annoyed by the common prisoners; perhaps he owed this favor to the kindness of Julius, the centurion, who had behaved toward him very handsomely throughout his whole voyage. He had, however, a soldier with him, and according to the Roman custom this man was constantly chained to the apostle, as men are handcuffed together in our country.

Here Paul sent for the Jews at Rome, and told them how unjustly he had been treated by their brethren and how he had been obliged to appeal to Cesar; and he informed them about Christ, the true Messiah; and finding them disposed to hear him he met many that visited him and instructed them in the Gospel, and numbers of them believed in Jesus. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

In these facts we have constantly presented to our minds the faithfulness of this great and valiant worker in the establishment of Christianity; and therein, too, are reminded of the similar energy and steadfastness of others of the apostles, shown in their unconcern for the threatenings and persecutions directed against them. It seems truly wonderful that those who were selected to do the work of the Master were not only inspired and strengthened for it, but were also filled with a boldness that shrank not from the face of kings and emperors and turned not away from the gaze of death. This especially appears in the case of several who, unlike Paul, seemed influenced by ignorance and temerity.

THE EPISTLES

ARE letters, either to particular persons or churches; or are what are sometimes called "circular letters" to the churches in general. It is believed they were all written by Apostles; and, indeed, each has the name of an Apostle affixed to it, excepting that to the Hebrews and the two ascribed to John. Paul is named as the writer of thirteen of them. The Epistles were certainly divinely inspired. The churches, in the early times, received them as the word of God; and neither heretics nor opposers of the ancient churches denied that they were the genuine writings of the Apostles and the plain truths of Christianity. All the Epistles, excepting the several mentioned above, begin with the names of the writer and of those to whom the Epistle is addressed; then follows the salutation, then the letter, and then the individual messages. It is everywhere agreed to that this part of the New Testament shows the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies even more than what is called the historical part. These Epistles also contain a number of wonderful prophecies, thus proving that they were inspired by our God, who alone sees the end from the beginning.

The Epistle to the Romans.



HIS Epistle is placed first in the list of the Epistles, probably because Rome was a place of very great importance; but the Epistles to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and the first Epistle to Timothy, that to Titus, and perhaps some others, were all written before it.

It is generally thought that the Apostle Paul had never seen the Roman Christians when he wrote to them, but he felt a great interest in them; and they must have loved him very much for it, for they traveled from thirty to fifty miles from that city to meet him when he was going as a prisoner there.

You are not to suppose from the title that the people to whom this Epistle was written were native Romans, some of them were so, and were converted from heathenism; but they were merely persons dwelling in Rome, most of whom were converted Jews. The Apostle calls them neither Jews nor Romans, but addressed them as "all that he at Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints."

The chief design of this Epistle was to show these dwellers at Rome, and us, how a poor sinner may be justified or accounted righteous and

good in the sight of God. Then, as in the other Epistles, after having explained the grand subject he had in his mind, he exhorts the Christians to practise various duties. These duties are named frequently in his various Epistles, and are such as obedience to parents and rulers, respect to ministers, kindness and charity toward one another, and love to all saints.

The First and Second Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians.

Corinth has been noticed when we treated on the Acts. It was a large and crowded city, and the capital or chief city of Achaia; and Achaia was a province of Greece. The apostle Paul was at this place about two years, and, having converted many Jews and Gentiles, and left them united together in a Christian church, he now wrote to them to correct some wrong things which he heard were practised among them.



BRAZEN LAVER.

Corinth was celebrated for its games, called the Isthmian games, because the place itself stood on an isthmus, or neck of land joining two larger bodies of land, as we are told in the geographies. These

games were practised every fourth year. There were other games of a similar kind celebrated in Greece, called the Olympic, Pythæan, and Nemæan. Those who engaged in these games were trained for twelve months before; and they had suitable food and exercise, to prevent them from growing too fat or too indolent, and so becoming unfit to endure the hardships they had to undergo; for they

had to run, to wrestle, to leap, and to box. The boxers used their arms, frequently beating the air, as if they were beating their opponents, that so they might be skilful and strong. The path of the racers was marked out by white lines or posts; he who did not keep within them, though he was first at the goal, or winning post, lost the prize. Garlands or crowns made of leaves of pine, olive, laurel, or parsley were given to the conquerors by the judges appointed to decide who had won; and other honors and privileges belonged to them. Large numbers of spectators were present to see these games, which drew as much attention in Greece as the greatest sights do among us.

The apostle Paul often alludes to these games, to show how much the Christian should struggle, by prayer, self-denial, and other means, against sin in order to obtain superior honors. So you will, from knowing what has been here mentioned about them, understand his meaning in many parts of his Epistles where otherwise it would not have appeared quite plain. The following texts are among those in which the apostle alludes to these games: 1 Cor. ix, 24; Gal. v, 7; Phil. ii, 16; iii, 13, 14; Heb. xii, 1.

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians.

Galatia was a province of Asia Minor, and this Epistle was not written to the inhabitants of any particular city or town, but to the Christians in the whole province. It is not certain by whom their several churches were founded, but it is thought probable that they were founded by the apostle. The reason why the Epistle was written was this: some converted Jews had joined the Galatians, and, not having a clear knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, had taught them they must, in becoming Christians, attend to some things which were peculiar to the religion of the Jews. Now, as Christ had done away with all the rites of the Jewish Church,—which were only shadows or types and figures of the spiritual worship of his new church,—this was a great mistake, and the apostle wrote to correct it.

The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

Some account of the city of Ephesus has been given in the remarks on the nineteenth chapter of the Acts. The apostle Paul went to this city after he had been at Corinth, but he made only a short stay. The next time he visited it he found twelve disciples, and made many more. He continued two or three years, and formed a Christian church, to whom this Epistle was written. The apostle foresaw that teachers of untruths would spring up after his death, and his design in writing to the Ephesians was to fix their minds in the pure truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians.

You read something about Philippi in the commentary on the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Philippi was a Roman colony, which had, for several reasons, received great favors from the Roman emperors and senate. It was situated in Macedonia, a country near Greece. The Gospel was first preached here by the apostle Paul. The design of this Epistle was to exhort the Philippians to live in love toward one another, and to comfort them under those troubles which they were called to endure from the persecutors of the Christians.

The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians.

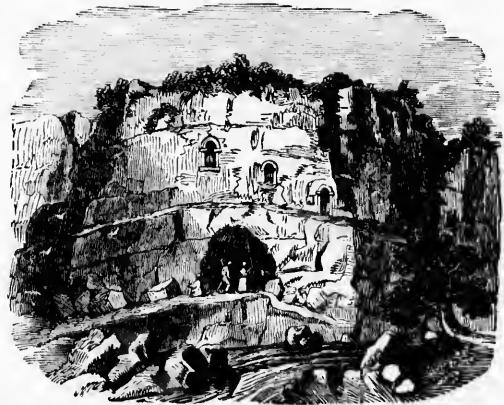
Colosse was a city in Asia Minor, which perished by an earthquake with several other cities. Soon after this Epistle was written a new city was built on its ruins. It is not known how the Christian faith reached this place, and it is thought by some that the apostle Paul was not known there in person, because in the second chapter and first verse he seems to imply that they had not seen his face in the flesh; but this language is not quite certain, and does not exactly state any such thing. Some, therefore, think that the apostle Paul did preach here, for during three years that he dwelt at Ephesus he employed himself with so much zeal and diligence that we are told in the nine-

teenth chapter of the Acts that "all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." This, like some of the Epistles, is chiefly written to warn against making mistakes in religion and to encourage to constancy in the profession of faith in Christ. It is to be noticed that this Epistle and that to the Ephesians are very much alike, from which it is thought that they were both written at the same time, while the same inspired thoughts were fresh in the mind of the apostle.

The First and Second Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians.

Thessalonica was a very large and flourishing city, where trade was free, and the capital of Macedonia. The place is now called Salonica.

Here the apostle came after he had been at Philippi, and stayed there about three weeks, and preached every Sabbath day. Many Jews, Greeks, and chief women of the place readily received the glad tidings of salvation which he declared, and the foundation was laid of a Gospel church. The wicked Jews, who despised the apostle's message, raised a mob and assaulted the house



THE RIVER JORDAN NEAR ITS SOURCE.

of Jason, where Paul and Silas were, and they were sent away for safety by night out of the city. Timothy was soon after sent by the apostles to comfort and instruct the converts at this city. He was pleased with what he saw, and took back to the apostle a report of the faith and charity which appeared among the Thessalonians. The apostle then wrote the First Epistle, and some months afterward he also wrote a second, comforting the Christians in their troubles and urging them to hold fast their profession.

The First and Second Epistles of Paul to Timothy.

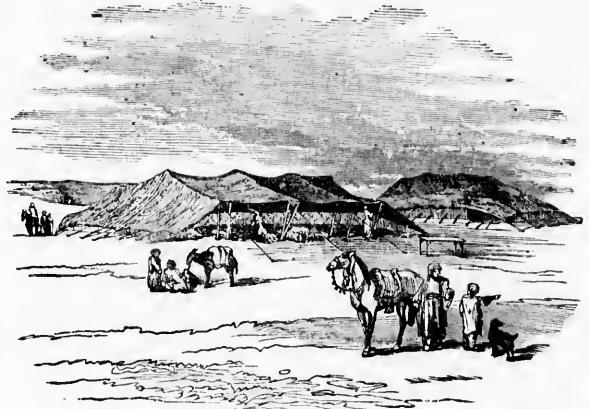
Timothy was remarkable for his early piety and acquaintance with the Scriptures. The apostle in writing to him says: "From a child thou hast known the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Timothy's mother, Eunice, was a Jewess, and his father was a Greek. When in his travels the apostle Paul came from Antioch the second time to Lystra, Timothy was so warmly recommended to him by the church in that place that he took him with him as a traveling companion. He was set apart for the work of an Evangelist, in order to be a fellow-laborer with Paul in preaching the Gospel. The apostle evidently had a tender regard for him, and these Epistles were written to him to give him useful advice in the work of the ministry.

The Epistle of Paul to Titus.

Titus was a Greek, to whom the apostle Paul had been the honored messenger of preaching the Gospel, and he had not received it in vain. Paul dearly loved him, and employed him much in assisting him to do his work; we read of his sending him to Corinth, to finish a collection there to assist the poor saints at Jerusalem, and to Dalmatia, to inquire after the saints there and to comfort them. We do not read in the apostle's history that he ever was at Crete, but from this Epistle it is thought that he was, for he says to Titus, "I left thee at Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders, or ministers, in every city, as I had appointed thee." Crete is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, and is now called Candia. This island has a considerable number of inhabitants, and is remarkable for producing no ferocious or poisonous creature. This Epistle was evidently written to teach Titus how to choose good men for pastors, and how to act himself as a minister of Jesus Christ.

The Epistle of Paul to Philemon.

This is a very short but a very interesting Epistle. It is, in fact, a story about Onesimus, a converted slave, who ran away from his master Philemon, whom some think he robbed, and then went to Rome, where he heard the apostle Paul preach, when his heart was changed. The kind apostle then wrote this most tender Epistle to Philemon, whom he knew, begging him to take his slave back into his service, for Onesimus was now become a truly good man, and what loss Philemon had sustained by his absence, the apostle assured him he was quite ready to pay. It is supposed that Philemon lived at Colosse.



SYRIAN TENTS.

The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews.

This does not bear the name of the apostle Paul, but, if not written by him, it manifests much of his spirit. The design of writing it was to explain to them—the converted Hebrews, or Jews—the superiority of Christ to Moses, to Joshua, or Aaron; to prove that in his priesthood and death all the work of the priests was completed; that he had made a perfect offering for sin; and that from henceforth there was no other way in which salvation could be expected but through Christ.

The General Epistle of James.

The Epistle of James is called "general" because it was not written to any particular person. It was addressed "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." These were not Christian Jews scattered abroad by persecution, but Jews who had been scattered over all countries by the captivity, numbers of whom never returned, in consequence of Cyrus' decree, but remained among the Gentiles. The author of this Epistle is thought to be James, the brother of Jude, known by the name of James the Less, probably because he was less in stature or younger than James, the son of Zebedee, who was slain by Herod. Some of the Jews here addressed were pious men and some not. This is clear from the different sorts of address which we find in the Epistle, some consoling and comforting, others warning and rebuking.

The First and Second Epistles General of Peter.

These Epistles, like that of James, were addressed to scattered Jews, "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." These might include some remains of the ten tribes carried captive by the Assyrians and of the two tribes carried captive by the Babylonians; but more especially are the Epistles addressed to suffering Christians, chiefly converted Jews and some Gentiles, who were scattered abroad in the early persecutions of the Christian Church.

The apostle Peter was more especially sent to minister to the Jews, as the apostle Paul was to the Gentiles; and Peter, meeting with a faithful brother, Silvanus, who had been the companion of Paul, takes an opportunity of sending a letter by him, chiefly addressed to the converted Jews dispersed among the Gentile countries where he with Paul and others traveled, the design of which was to show that both taught the same glorious doctrines. This was the First Epistle.

The Second Epistle was to urge those to whom the apostle wrote to be anxious after divine knowledge, to fix their minds on the Gospel,

to guard them against teachers that would instruct them in error, and to warn them of the approaching end of all things.

The First Epistle General of John.

The author of this Epistle was John, the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved; he was the youngest of the apostles and survived them all. The design of writing it was to promote brotherly love, to warn against doctrines that allowed men to live in sin, and to give clear notions of the nature of God and of the divine glory of Jesus Christ. There is an anecdote of this apostle worthy of being remembered, both by young and old, whom the venerable John was used to address alike by the tender names of little children. It is said in some early histories that he spent his last days at Ephesus, where he died; and that when he was too old to walk he was carried to the place of worship in the arms of some of the disciples. He could then only speak a few words very feebly, and these words always were, "Little children, love one another."



SEFULCHRAL CAVE IN JERUSALEM.

The Second Epistle of John.

This, you see, is not called "general." It was written to a pious lady. The object of it was to urge this pious lady to hold fast her Christian faith, to avoid error, and to love God and those who loved him.

The Third Epistle of John.

This Epistle was to a particular person also. His name was Gaius or Caius, and, most likely, the same mentioned by the apostle Paul for

his kindness in receiving and lodging and entertaining good people. See the sixteenth chapter of Romans, near the end. In this Epistle John speaks of one "Diotrephes," who was a very haughty man, which was not a proper mark of a Christian, and of one "Demetrius," who had a good report of all men, as every Christian should have, as far as respects his life, temper, and behavior. The former he mentions that Gaius may not imitate him, and the latter he holds up as an excellent example. We should always imitate the example of the truly wise and good.

The General Epistle of Jude.

This is also an epistle written to no particular person, but chiefly designed for the Jews who believed in Jesus Christ. Jude, or rather Judas, was the son of Alpheus, and brother of James the Less, or the younger. He was also called Lebbeus and Thaddeus, for it was a frequent custom in those days to have two or more names; so Peter was sometimes called Simon and sometimes Cephas.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

OK, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," etc., "unto his servant John," as is told us in the first verse of the first chapter. It was written by John, and divinely given to him to show the prophetic history of Christ's church in the world to the end. Many things in this book seem dark and hard to understand, because they tell of things that have not yet happened; but if we will read and study devoutly, we will gather as much of instruction from them as the old Jews did from their prophetic writings—enough to cause us to praise God, and cling closer to our glorified Saviour in love and worship. The descriptions given in this book of our Heavenly Father and his kingdom, of our Messiah King and his glory, of the eternal joys and grandeur belonging to his followers, as well as of the confusion and terrible ruin of the wicked, are highly interesting, and will call forth healthful thought and inquiry, even in the minds of careless readers, whereas the devoted, humble, and prayerful will be improved by a continual insight into new and fresh truths of the most comforting nature.



DOMITIAN, a Roman tyrant, banished the Apostle John, for being a Christian, to a solitary and rocky island called Patmos, about thirty miles from the western coast of Asia Minor. The good man is never alone, for God is with him everywhere. Here God favored John with wonderful visions of what should hereafter happen to the Church and the world.

The first three chapters of this book contain a sort of preface, addressed to the seven Churches in Asia Minor—namely, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The remaining chapters are accounts of his vision.

We shall first notice the seven Churches in Asia. These were not the only Churches in Asia Minor; for there were Churches in Phrygia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Pontus, Cappadocia, etc., which were also in Asia Minor; but the Apostle knew and wrote to these seven Churches in particular. The first was *Ephesus*, of which we have made mention on several occasions. The second is still known as *Smyrna*, the largest and richest city of Asia Minor. It contains about one hundred and ninety thousand inhabitants, the largest number of which are Turks; the rest are Greeks, Jews (of whom there are eleven thousand),

Armenians, Roman Catholics, and Protestants. It is a beautiful city, but frequently ravaged by the plague, and has suffered by repeated earthquakes.

The third Church named is that of *Pergamos*. This city is now called Bergamo. It must in John's time have been a city of great importance, for it then had a manuscript library of 200,000 volumes, which Antony and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, sent to Alexandria. It has now 14,000 inhabitants of different nations, but the houses are of wood, and look small and mean.

The fourth Church named is *Thyatira*. This place is situated in the midst of an extensive plain, which is nearly surrounded by mountains. Its houses are low, and chiefly of mud or earth. It now looks poor and mean. It was anciently, and still is, famous for dyeing, especially in scarlet.

The fifth Church mentioned is *Sardis*. This famed city was once the capital of King Cræsus, the richest monarch that ever lived. He was defeated by Cyrus in the plain before the city, when it passed to the Persians. After the Persians were defeated by Alexander the Great it surrendered to him, and then in time to the Romans. It was destroyed by a terrible earthquake in the reign of Tiberius, the Roman Emperor, who rebuilt it. Afterward the different nations of Goths, Saracens, and Turks, one after another, ruined it in their wars, and it is nothing but desolation. A mere sprinkle of ruins of its former greatness remains. No Christians dwell on the spot: two Greeks only were lately living there to work a mill, and a few wretched Turkish huts were scattered among the ruins.

The sixth Church addressed was in *Philadelphia*. The Turks call this place Allah Shehr, or "city of God." There are now about three thousand houses on the spot, covering a space of ground running up the slope of three or four hills. The streets are filthy and the houses mean.

The seventh Church was that of *Laodicea*. There were two places so called in Asia Minor. This place is more desolate than any of the others, having been completely ruined by earthquakes. Its ruins cover three or four small hills, and are of very great extent, consisting of an aqueduct, theater, amphitheater, and other public buildings.

Some remarkable fulfilments of what God said by the apostle John must also be noticed.

The Ephesians had gone back in their religion, which is what is meant by leaving their first love. God threatened them by his prophet, and he told them that he would remove their "candlestick out of its place" if they did not repent. By this he meant that he would take the light of the Gospel away from them; and he did so. Ephesus is now a forlorn spot—it is no more. Its ruins are of vast extent.

Smyrna was mentioned in terms of approval, and no judgment was denounced against it. So, though they have but little Gospel light, yet the candlestick has not been wholly removed out of its place, and the city itself is still large and flourishing. Of this Church the venerable Polycarp was one of the pastors. In the year one hundred and sixty-two, about seventy years after this Book of the Bible was written, a persecution broke out against the Christians at Smyrna; and the Roman Emperors, who had then dominion of those parts, treated them with shocking cruelty because they would not serve their idols. The gray-headed Polycarp was marked for destruction. His friends concealed

him in a village, but they were put to the torture to make them tell where he could be found. The old man could not bear that they should all suffer for him, and delivered himself up, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." When he was brought before the proconsul, one of the governors of Smyrna wished him not to be injured, and, when he was examined, made signs that he should deny he was Polycarp, but Polycarp would not tell a falsehood. He then urged him to deny Christ, and promised him safety. "No," said the brave old man,



ASHTAROTH, THE PHILISTINE GODDESS.

"fourscore and six years have I served Christ; neither hath he ever wronged me at any time; how then can I deny my Saviour and King?" He was threatened with being thrown to the wild beasts, being burned and tormented, but he stood unmoved, saying, "You threaten me with fire, which shall last but an hour, and is quickly quenched; but you are ignorant of the everlasting fire of the day of judgment, and of those endless torments which are reserved for the wicked! But why do you delay? appoint me what death you please." The proconsul was astonished. He then commanded the crier to proclaim three times that Polycarp owned himself a Christian, and he was sentenced to the flames. In the midst of the flames he thus prayed to his Father in heaven: "O God! the Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and through whom we have received the knowledge of thee! O God, the Creator of all things, upon thee I call, thee I confess to be the true God; thee I glorify! O Lord, receive me, and make me a partaker of the resurrection of thy saints, through the merits of our Great High Priest, thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever, Amen." Here was courage more than mortal; God helping his servant to put on the martyr's crown: and here was fulfilled what God said to Smyrna, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The rest of this book is very difficult to explain, and can only in part be understood by those who are of riper years and who well study and pray over it. This book, like the Prophecies, is written in dark terms on purpose, because otherwise all the world would know them; and this book and the Prophecies are only designed to be a guide to those who wish to know the mind of God and to mark his providence in his dealings with his Church.

We can not, therefore, attempt to do more than to tell you that most of the language here used is the language of signs; that is, certain things are used to signify other things. John in his inspired visions saw all that he states; but then what he saw only represented realities in other forms.

In the eighth chapter the seven seals which were opened and the

seven trumpets which were to be blown are descriptions of seven periods of Christ's Church on earth and of the divisions of those periods. They tell of the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world; of the triumphs of Paganism and rise and fall of Popery and other great errors; of the final triumph of the Gospel, the happy state of the Church of Christ, the Day of Judgment, and the eternal blessedness of the saints.

May we, dear young readers be found among the happy number, adoring Jesus, "the Lamb of God," who died for sinners, and singing forever, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!" And may we, more than this, so try to do and finish our life's work that we shall reap the reward set before us in one of the most beautiful of the Old Testament prophecies: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

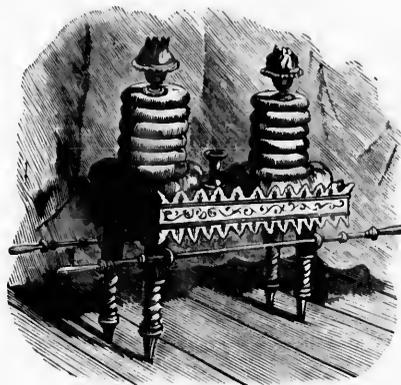


TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD.

ASIA MINOR.

The Scene of the Labors of the Apostles Paul, Peter, and John.

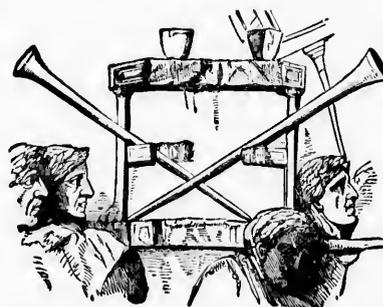


IN the fulfilment of our purpose of furnishing all necessary assistance to our readers for understanding and being profited by the word of God, we have thought it best to give such a description of the regions in which the Gospel was preached by the apostles and especially by Paul, John, and Peter, as should enable those who may read the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles to know definitely where, and under what difficulties, they performed their labors.

The missionary labors of Paul commenced at Antioch (which was his Christian home in a higher sense than Jerusalem), and extending at first to his native city, Tarsus, and his native province, Cilicia, led, in his successive missionary journeys, to his traversing five of the seven provinces which then comprised the peninsula now known as Asia Minor, and his subsequent visits to Macedonia, Attica, Achaia, and eventually Illyricum, and his compulsory residence in Rome. That he extended his labors in later life to Spain, and perhaps to other portions of western Europe, is possible but not certain; but we can only, in this place, concern ourselves with his work in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. The Apostle John, after many years of active labor in Jerusalem and Judea, subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem, continued his work in Ephesus and its vicinity, and after the martyrdom of Paul and Timothy continued their work in the Roman province of Asia, the western province of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital. The seven churches of Asia were all in this province. He was banished by Domitian to the isle of Patmos in the Ægean Sea, at no great

distance from Ephesus, but returned to that city after the death of the tyrant. The Apostle Peter, aside from occasional visits to Antioch, spent the earlier years of his ministry in Palestine, but finally crossed the Tigris into Mesopotamia, and at Edessa, Nisibis, and Babylon preached, founded schools, and wrote his epistles, visiting also Ephesus and Corinth, and ending his ministry by imprisonment and martyrdom at Rome.

It will be seen, then, that the regions which we have to describe in connection with the apostolic labors, as recorded in the New Testament, are Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, and Syria and Mesopotamia. Let us first understand where Asia Minor is. If you will look at any good map of Asia, or, what will be better, at any of the recent maps of the Turkish empire, you will notice that the Mediterranean Sea extends almost due eastward to the Syrian coast, and that the coast line runs nearly from north to south, as the eastern boundary of the great sea. Now look farther north on the same map, and about 350 miles to the north you will find the Black Sea, which in old times was called the Euxine Sea. Running your finger westward, along the south shore of the Black Sea, you come to the Bosphorus, or strait leading into the Sea of Marmora, in which Constantinople is situated. Passing down this strait, into and through the whole length of the Sea of Marmora, which in Bible times was called the Propontis, you come to another strait now called the Dardanelles, but in former times the Hellespont, which leads into a sea full of islands, called the Ægean Sea or Archipelago, which is really a part of the Mediterranean. If you have followed my directions carefully, you will see that you have passed around three sides of a peninsula or tract of land bounded by water on the north, the west, and the south sides. This great peninsula, nearly 700 miles long from east to west, and about 400



ROMANS CARRYING THE TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD.

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miles wide, is ASIA MINOR. It is separated from Syria and Armenia on the east by the mountains of the lofty Taurus range. Its history for the past two thousand years has been full of interest; some of the most renowned cities of the world, such as ancient Troy, Ephesus, Tarsus, and Smyrna, were within its boundaries; many of the largest and most influential of the early Christian churches were founded here by the apostles and their successors; for five or six hundred years after the Christian era, the churches of Asia Minor exerted a powerful influence over all Christian Europe. At a later period the country fell into the hands of the Turkomans, and finally was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, who have held it to the present time, and have reduced much of it to the condition of a desert. It is still, however, the most populous and wealthy part of their empire.

But we have only to describe the country as it was in the time of the apostles. If you will look again at the map (our map of Asia Minor in this book), you will see in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea that there is a gulf projecting into the land; this is called the Gulf of Issus, and that part of the Mediterranean below it, the Sea of Cilicia. From the south a river flows down from the Syrian Mountains, and discharges its waters into this Cilician Sea; it is the river Orontes, and a few miles above its mouth you will find the city of Antioch. That city did not belong to Asia Minor, but was one of the capitals of Syria. It was a very rich, beautiful, and populous city. Here the disciples of Christ were first called Christians, and the Christian church of Antioch, soon after Paul's time, had 100,000 members and 3000 pastors and teachers. At this point were started the first Christian missions to the heathen. This was not far from A. D. 45. Previous to this time, Paul (or, as he was then called, Saul) had spent considerable time in his native city of Tarsus in Cilicia, preaching the Gospel, and probably establishing churches in that city and its vicinity, among the refined and intelligent people who had made it noted for its learning. But the first missionaries sent out from Antioch were Saul, or Paul, Barnabas, a converted Levite from Cyprus, and his nephew John Mark (the evangelist), a native of Jerusalem. Passing down the Orontes to Seleucia, the magnificent port

of Antioch, they sailed from thence to Salamis, on the island of Cyprus, and commenced their labors among the kinsmen and friends of Barnabas. After spending a few days there they passed along the southern coast of the island, which was then very populous, to Paphos, at its western end. Paphos was a large and very wicked city, wholly given up to the worship of the heathen goddess Venus; here Paul, by a miracle, caused a Jewish magician who was opposing the work of Christ to become blind, and the word preached was blessed to the conversion of many of the people of Paphos. We have recently had the most convincing proofs of the idolatry of the people of Cyprus, in the discoveries made by General di Cesnola of temples, idols, shrines, amulets, and votive offerings, at Paphos, which is now in ruins, and in other parts of the island.

Without visiting the northern portion of the island, Paul and his companions sailed directly from Paphos to Perga, a city of Pamphylia, situated on the river Cestrus, on the main land, northwest from Paphos. Here they first entered Asia Minor, Cyprus being a separate Roman province, governed by a proconsul, or officer appointed by the Roman senate. Asia Minor, as we now call this peninsula, consisted at the time it was visited by Paul and his companions of seven Roman provinces, which, beginning at the west, were named Asia, Bithynia, Galatia, Pamphylia, Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Pontus. These provinces, some of them under other names, had been independent kingdoms before the time of Alexander the Great, and some of them had continued to be tributary kingdoms, first to Alexander and his successors, and afterward to Rome, until near this time. We find the old names remaining, though without definite boundaries, in the western provinces, at the time of Paul's journeys through them. Thus, Antioch in Pisidia is spoken of (in distinction from the Syrian



EASTERN WOMEN WITH TIMBRELS, DANCING.

Antioch), Pisidia being the old name for the northern part of the province of Pamphylia, as Lycia (whose chief cities, Myra and Patara, were visited by Paul at a later period) was, of the southern part of that province. Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe are said to be cities of Lycaonia, that being the former name of the southwestern part of the province of Galatia. Phrygia was the old name of the eastern half of the province of Asia, and the Phrygians, like the Galatians, were a tribe or nation of different origin from the people who surrounded them.* Mysia was the former name of a tract in the north of the province of Asia, and extended to the shores of the Hellespont and the Propontis, the present Dardanelles, and Sea of Marmora. Of these seven provinces, Paul, in his several missionary journeys, traversed five. There is no evidence that he ever entered Pontus or Bithynia, though he attempted to go into both. These two provinces, forming the entire northern districts of Asia Minor, have for their northern boundary the entire southern shore of the Euxine or Black Sea, and the now important cities of Trebizond, Tocat, Batoum, and Erzeroum are within their limits.

Of the southern and western provinces, Cilicia was his native province and often the scene of his labors; Cappadocia, north of Cilicia, was visited and crossed in his second and third journeys; Galatia was traversed and its principal cities visited in his first, second, and third journeys; and to the churches in Galatia his Epistle to the Galatians was addressed; † Pamphylia was crossed in his first

*The Galatians were of the same stock as the Gauls, or inhabitants of France, and the resemblance between the two nations was very strong in form and figure, in language and in their excitability and emotional tendency, and their fickleness and levity. The Epistle to the Galatians gives many illustrations of these traits of character.

† Paul's first visit to the cities of southern Galatia, or Lycaonia, as the region is called in Acts xiv, 6, was connected with his early experiences of the hostility and malignity of the unconverted Jews, which grew in intensity with every subsequent year of his life. Driven by their persecutions out of Antioch in Pisidia, where he had established a large and growing church, he was followed by his persistent foes to Iconium, and after long and successful labors there, forced to fly from a mixed mob of Jews and Gentiles to Lystra, where a miracle of healing wrought by him caused the heathen inhabitants to attempt to pay divine honors to him; but Jewish malignity again prevailed, and he was stoned by the mob. Escaping with his life by a miracle he went on to Derbe, where he was not molested, and after planting a church there he went back to Lystra, Iconium,

journey, both in going and returning, and its two principal cities, Perga and Attalia, visited; in his third journey he spent some time at Patara, and crossed thence to the island of Rhodes; in his last journey recorded in the Acts, that from Jerusalem to Rome, he touched at Myra, in the southern part of the province, and was there transferred to another ship. The province of Asia was the scene of his longest and most arduous labors. In three of his missionary journeys he passed through portions of its territory; in his first journey visiting some of its eastern cities; in his second, traversing the northern part, or Mysia, stopping for some time at Adramyttium, Assos, and Alexandria Troas, from whence he first entered Europe; in his third journey he entered the province from Galatia, visiting Philadelphia and Sardis, making his headquarters for two or three years at Ephesus, and preaching and organizing churches at Trogyllium and Miletus, and possibly also visiting Crete, whither he afterward sent Titus. Mitylene, in the island of Lesbos, was visited, possibly twice in these journeys, and very possibly Samos also. Laodicea and Colossæ, to the churches in both which cities he addressed epistles (the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians having been probably a circular letter written to the several churches in Asia; see Colossians iv, 13-16), had not been visited by Paul in either of these journeys, nor, apparently, had Hierapolis, a large city near Laodicea, noted for



EASTERN LOAVES OF BREAD.

and the Pisidian Antioch, and confirmed the disciples in their faith. In his subsequent journeys (his second and third) he returned first to Derbe, Lystra (where he found among the converts his young but greatly beloved companion, Timothy), and Iconium, and thence proceeded through the mountain passes into the ancient Phrygia, now the eastern part of the province of Asia, and after planting some churches there turned northeastward to Pessinus and Ancyra, cities of Galatia, to the churches in which the Epistle to the Galatians may have been addressed. In his third journey he is supposed to have visited also Tavia, another Galatian city, almost on the border of Pontus. It is supposed that there were Christian churches in Pontus at this time, for among the 3000 converted at the day of Pentecost were Jews from Pontus. Acts ii, 9.

its mineral springs. Philemon, to whom a short epistle is also addressed, was a convert under Paul's preaching, perhaps at Ephesus, and seems to have been the founder of the church at Colossæ.

His second and third missionary journeys extended into Europe; in the second he went, by way of Samothracia and Neapolis, to Philippi, the chief city of eastern Macedonia, where he and Silas were imprisoned in violation of the Roman law, and the next day, after a miracle and the conversion of the jailer and his family, were released with honor by the terrified magistrates. The epistle of Paul to the Philippian church was one of the results of his labors here. From thence they proceeded to Amphipolis and Apollonia, and without much delay went forward to Thessalonica (the Salonika of the present



EASTERN BAKER SELLING THIN CAKES.

day), where their labors were abundantly blessed. The church at Thessalonica became one of the largest and most efficient of those planted by the apostle in Europe. To it were addressed two of his epistles. Driven from this city by the persecution of the Jews, Paul and Silas went on to Berea, where another church was planted. These Macedonian churches were revisited several times by the apostle, and

there is reason to believe that after his acquittal at Rome he went to Macedonia, and from thence into Illyricum (the present Dalmatia and Montenegro).

From Berea Paul went alone by ship to Cenchrea, where he planted a church, and thence to Athens; and in that chief city of the Greek learning and philosophy preached Christ before its most brilliant scholars. His success here, however, was not so great as in Corinth, which he next visited, and where he remained nearly two years, and founded a church, which was for several centuries the largest and most influential in Greece. To this church his two longest epistles are addressed. His labors at this period were not confined to Corinth. Other cities of Achaia had the benefit of his zealous efforts. More

than once he visited Ephesus, and continued his watch-care over the churches of Asia. In his last return to Jerusalem he was unable to stop at Ephesus, but met the elders of the Ephesian church at Miletus, and gave them his parting blessing. If our readers have followed, on our excellent map of Asia Minor, these journeys of the Apostle Paul, they can not fail to have formed a very clear idea of the regions traversed by this early missionary.

Let us now briefly refer to the labors of the Apostle John in the province of Asia, at a considerably later date. As the chief pastor or bishop at Ephesus, the apostle's age and infirmity of body seem to have restricted him to a much narrower sphere of action than that of the Apostle Paul. Still the province of Asia was at this time very populous, and the great church at Ephesus, and the large and flourishing ones at Trogyllium, Miletus, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossæ, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Sardis, Thyatira, Pergamos, and Mitylene, all of them within a distance of about 100 miles, might well require all his waning strength. To seven of these churches he addressed those letters dictated by our Lord and recorded in the Revelation. Those churches, so flourishing and prosperous at that time, were a few centuries later extinct, and the cities themselves are nearly all now in ruins.

The journeyings of Peter outside of Palestine were perhaps less extensive than those of Paul. He was often at Antioch, was probably for a time in Corinth, from which he departed in consequence of the attempt of Jewish partisans to make out that there was a conflict between his teachings and those of Paul. There is a possibility, but very little probability, that he visited Rome at this time; his later years were spent in Mesopotamia, probably in Edessa and Nisibis, where he is said to have founded schools of Christian disciples, and in Babylon, from whence his epistles were written. In the year of his death he was taken to Rome, where, after being at liberty for a short time, he was sentenced to death, and was crucified, tradition says, with his head downward. His intercourse with Paul, in the later years of his ministry, was frequent and cordial. There is no reason to suppose, indeed, that it was ever otherwise, except on the occasion at Antioch,

when Paul, though much younger, "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Galatians ii, 11-19.

Of the journeyings and missionary labors of the other apostles we have no certain knowledge. Two of them, James, the son of Zebedee, and James, the brother of our Lord, died in Jerusalem, one slain by Herod Agrippa I, the other by the Jews. Jude, the brother of James, from certain passages in his epistle, is supposed to have been with or near Peter in Mesopotamia. Of the rest we have only vague and conflicting traditions.

CHRONOLOGY OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

PLACE WHERE WRITTEN AND AUTHORS.

HISTORICAL BOOKS.

DATE.	TITLE.	AUTHOR.	WHERE WRITTEN.
A. D. 38-61	Gospel of St. Matthew,	St. Matthew, . . .	Jerusalem.
61	Gospel of St. Mark,	St. Mark,	Alexandria.
63-64	Gospel of St. Luke,	St. Luke,	Rome.
64	Acts of the Apostles,	St. Luke,	Rome (probably).
97	Gospel of St. John,	St. John,	Ephesus.

THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

DATE.	TITLE.	AUTHOR.	WHERE WRITTEN.
A. D. 52	First Epistle to the Thessalonians, . . .	St. Paul,	Corinth.
52	Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, . .	St. Paul,	Corinth.
56-57	Epistle to the Galatians,	St. Paul,	Ephesus.
57	First Epistle to the Corinthians,	St. Paul,	Ephesus.
58	Second Epistle to the Corinthians, . . .	St. Paul,	Philippi.
58	Epistle to the Romans,	St. Paul,	Corinth.
61	Epistle to the Ephesians,	St. Paul,	Rome.
62	Epistle to the Philippians,	St. Paul,	Rome.
62	Epistle to the Colossians,	St. Paul,	Rome.
63	Epistle to Philemon,	St. Paul,	Rome.
63	Epistle to the Hebrews,	St. Paul,	Rome.
64	First Epistle to Timothy,	St. Paul,	Laodicea.
64	Epistle to Titus,	St. Paul,	Ephesus (probably).
65	Second Epistle to Timothy,	St. Paul,	Rome (probably).
95-96 Published in 97.	REVELATION,	St. John,	PATMOS.

THE GENERAL EPISTLES.

DATE.	TITLE.	AUTHOR.	WHERE WRITTEN.
A. D. 61	Epistle of St. James,	St. James,	Jerusalem.
63	First Epistle of St. Peter,	St. Peter,	Babylon.
65	Second Epistle of St. Peter,	St. Peter,	Babylon.
65	Epistle of St. Jude,	St. Jude,	Syria.
97-98	First Epistle of St. John,	St. John,	Ephesus.
97-98	Second Epistle of St. John,	St. John,	Ephesus.
97-98	Third Epistle of St. John,	St. John,	Ephesus.

PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

PLACE.	SUBJECT.	TEXT.
Galilee,	Mote and Beam,	Matt. vii, 3-5; Luke vi, 19-42.
Galilee,	Foundation of Rock and Sand,	Matt. vii, 24-27; Luke vi, 48-49.
<i>via</i> ,	The Two Debtors,	Luke vii, 41-50.
Galilee,	The Barren Fig Tree,	Luke xiii, 6-9.
Galilee,	The Sower,	Matt. xiii; Mark iv; Luke viii.
Galilee,	Wheat and Tares,	Matt. xiii, 24-30.
Galilee,	Seed Cast in the Ground,	Mark iv, 26-29.
Galilee,	The Mustard-seed,	Matt. xiii, 31-32; Mark iv, 30-32; Luke xiii, 19.
Galilee,	The Leaven,	Matt. xiii, 33; Luke xiii, 20-21.
Galilee,	The Buried Treasure,	Matt. xiii, 44.
Galilee,	Pearl of Great Price,	Matt. xiii, 45-46.
Galilee,	Casting of the Net,	Matt. xiii, 47-50.
Capernaum } and <i>via</i> }	Parables of the Lost Sheep,	Matt. xviii, 12-14; and Luke xv, 3-7.
Capernaum, . . .	The Merciless Debtor,	Matt. xviii, 23-35.
Jerusalem, . . .	Good Samaritan,	Luke x, 30-37.
<i>via</i> ,	Chief Seats at the Wedding,	Luke xiv, 7-12.
<i>via</i> ,	The Midnight Friend,	Luke xi, 5-13.
Capernaum, . . .	Return of Unclean Spirit,	Luke xi, 24-26.
<i>via</i> ,	The Rich Fool,	Luke xii, 16-21.
Jerusalem, . . .	The Shepherd and Sheep,	John x, 1-18.
Jerusalem, <i>via</i> ,	The Faithful Servants,	Luke xii, 37-39.
<i>via</i> ,	The Faithful Steward,	Luke xii, 42-48.
<i>via</i> ,	The Closed Door,	Luke xiii, 24-27.
<i>via</i> ,	The Great Supper,	Luke xiv, 16-25.
<i>via</i> ,	Building a Tower,	Luke xiv, 28-30.
<i>via</i> ,	A King Going to War,	Luke xiv, 31-33.
<i>via</i> ,	The Lost Piece of Money,	Luke xv, 8-9.
<i>via</i> ,	The Prodigal Son,	Luke xv, 11-32.
<i>via</i> ,	The Unjust Steward,	Luke xvi, 1-8.
<i>via</i> ,	Rich Man and Lazarus,	Luke xvi, 19-31.
<i>via</i> ,	The Unjust Judge,	Luke xviii, 1-8.
<i>via</i> ,	Pharisee and Publican,	Luke xviii, 9-14.
<i>via</i> ,	Laborers in the Vineyard,	Matt. xx, 1-16.
<i>via</i> ,	Ten Servants and Ten Pounds,	Luke xix, 12-17.
Jerusalem, . . .	The Two Sons,	Matt. xxi, 28-32.
Jerusalem, . . .	The Leased Vineyard,	Matt. xxi, 33-46.
Jerusalem, . . .	The Marriage Feast,	Matt. xxii, 1-14.
Jerusalem, . . .	The Fig Tree,	Matt. xxiv, 32.
Jerusalem, . . .	Faithful and False Servant,	Matt. xxiv, 45-51.
Jerusalem, . . .	Wise and Foolish Virgins,	Matt. xxv, 1-13.
Jerusalem, . . .	The Talents,	Matt. xxv, 14-30.
Jerusalem, . . .	Sheep and Goats,	Matt. xxv, 31-46.

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THE APOSTLES OF JESUS

BY MRS. CLERE

Our Lord, soon after his baptism, gathered about him a small company of disciples, to whom he taught the more important truths illustrative of his ministry. Of these he commissioned seventy to go into all the cities and villages where he himself intended to preach the gospel; but out of them all he ordained twelve men, whom he named apostles, that they should be with him, and that he might more fully instruct them in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. These are they who continued with him in his temptations, and to whom the Lord appointed a kingdom, as his Father had appointed unto him. (Luke xxii. 28.) The apostle Judas Iscariot, who had taken part of this ministry and by transgression fell, is not included in the list here given. The remaining apostles, after the Lord's ascension, selected Matthias to take his place; but as the Lord himself called and sent out Paul, he is here reckoned as the twelfth apostle.

THE THORVALDSEN GALLERY

OF

CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.



BERTHEL THORVALDSEN (1770-1844), a very able Danish sculptor, was the son of an Icelander who had settled in Copenhagen, and there carried on the trade of a wood-carver. While very young, Bertel Thorvaldsen learned to assist his father; at the age of eleven he entered the Copenhagen School of Art, and soon began to show his exceptional talents. In 1792 he won the highest prize, the traveling studentship, and in 1796 he started for Italy. On the 8th of March, 1797, he arrived in Rome, where Canova was at the height of his popularity.

Thorvaldsen's first success was the model for a statue, which was highly praised by Canova, and he received the commission to execute it in marble for Thomas Hope, a wealthy English art patron. From that time Thorvaldsen's success was assured, and he did not leave Italy for twenty-three years. In 1819 he returned to Denmark, where he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. He was then commissioned to make the colossal series of statues of Christ and His Apostles, which are now in the "Fruekirke" (The Church of our Lady) in Copenhagen. These were executed after his return to Rome, and were not completed till 1838, when Thorvaldsen again returned to Denmark. He died suddenly in Copenhagen, 1844, and bequeathed a great part of his fortune for the building and endowment of a museum in Copenhagen, and also left to fill it all his collection of works of art, and the models of all his sculptures—a very large collection, exhibited to the greatest possible advantage. Thorvaldsen is buried in the courtyard of this museum, under a bed of roses, by his own special wish.

A very prominent critic says about Thorvaldsen: "He belonged to the Scandinavian race, its genius and character were his. This race of the extreme North, simple and proud, kind and hospitable, has in all ages delighted in noble things. The poetry of its earliest bards was warlike and chaste. It was indeed the pure and vigorous sap of the Scandinavian race which flowed in the veins of the Danish artist.

"His works will always maintain a high rank in the esteem of man, not only because they are the highest and most complete expression of the tendencies of the age, but also because they are the product of an original mind—of genius true and individual."

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ST. JOHN,

(THE BELOVED DISCIPLE, THE APOSTLE, PROPHET, AND EVANGELIST)
HIS LIFE, CHARACTER, AND EXAMPLE.



IN THIS wonderful book, the New Testament, the life, the teachings, the sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the divine Redeemer necessarily and appropriately occupy the first place; and are followed by a history of the origin and development of the church of the Redeemed, which he founded. But in his work and mission here on earth, and in the work which he committed to his disciples to be done after his ascension, we find three persons named with especial honor, and their labors narrated with particular care and minuteness. These three were; PETER, bold, impulsive, warm-hearted, but fickle and wayward in his early career; the apostle of the circumcision; JOHN, ardent, manly, loving and beloved, and modest and retiring in his disposition; but with strong prejudices and ambitions; the man who had understanding of the visions of God; PAUL, stern, resolute, uncompromising, and heroic, yet tender and sympathizing with those who were in sorrow; the great apostle to the Gentiles. All of the three were apostles, though one received his commission from his risen and ascended Lord. All contributed to the number of the inspired books of the New Testament; Peter, according to generally received tradition, furnishing to his young companion, Mark, the material which was wrought so skilfully into the second gospel; and, in his later years, writing those two general

epistles to the churches, which are so full of instruction, reproof, and consolation; John, writing, first, that remarkable collection of prophecies and warnings, which we know as the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, and, some twenty years later, the fourth gospel, so full in its demonstrations that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and, later still, when he had upon his head the snows of nearly a hundred years, those three epistles, which fitly and fully round out the gospel he had given to the church; Paul, in the midst of his arduous and incessant labors, writing thirteen and perhaps fourteen epistles to the churches which he had founded, and the individuals converted under his preaching: epistles which contain in themselves a whole body of divinity, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. Thus, with the exception of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, the Acts, the short Epistles of James and Jude, and possibly the Epistle to the Hebrews, the whole New Testament was written by these three men, and the book of Acts is almost wholly occupied with the record of their labors.

Of these three mighty leaders of the sacramental host, the pillars of the early church, we have elsewhere given the principal particulars in the life of Peter; we have traced, in following the sacred record, the abundant labors, toils, sacrifices, trials, and triumphs, of the heroic and undaunted Paul; and it now only remains to us to portray, as well as we may, the exquisite beauty of the life and character of "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

In doing this we must of necessity go back to his birth and childhood, and see for ourselves what were the circumstances by which these were surrounded: for the early training has often much to do with the later character and life of the man.

Galilee, the region in which James and John, Peter and Andrew, and indeed most of the apostles, were born, was, in the time of our Lord, very populous, and its population, far from being wholly Jewish, was made up of a great variety of nationalities. This was particularly true of the cities and towns around the sea of Galilee, or lake of Gennesaret, as it was often called. Here might be found jostling each other in the narrow streets, Syrians from Damascus

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Greeks from Antioch, Asia Minor and the Grecian isles; Arabs from the Eastern desert, on errands of plunder; Idumæans and Moabites from the regions around the Dead sea; the various tribes of Asia Minor, Galatians, Phrygians, Cappadocians, Cilicians, Lycaonians, Mysians and Ionians; and mingling with them as fishermen, carpenters, farmers, tent-makers, and sometimes bankers, tax-gatherers, and usurers, the Jews, who here made up perhaps one-third or one-half of the population; while in the towns and villages of the hills they were much more numerous. Above all in power and authority, though but few in number, were the hated Romans, the rulers of this mixed population.

But what the Galilean Jews lacked in numbers they made up in their ardent patriotism, and their abundant religious zeal. Though it was the habit of the proud and conceited Pharisees of Jerusalem to speak slightly of the Galilean Jews, to ridicule their peculiar dialect, and to represent them as ignorant of the law, there was really no occasion for such reproaches. The Galilean Jew could generally speak Greek, while the Jew of Judæa was often ignorant of it; to the wider culture which he thus obtained, he added a most thorough knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, which were taught, both in the families and synagogues of Galilee, more carefully than anywhere else in Palestine. There had also been made there very thorough provision for a good general education in all the studies of that time; and the rabbis of the temple at Jerusalem had established everywhere schools and colleges, for instruction in those traditions of the elders known as the oral or unwritten law, with which they sought to burden the consciences of devout Jews, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Nowhere in Palestine were there to be found men more zealous for the law, or more ready to suffer imprisonment, tortures, and death for their religion, than among the Jews of Galilee. And with them, religious zeal and the love of freedom went hand in hand. They were the brave and patriotic soldiers of the Maccabæan brothers, men who had no idea of defeat, and who would attack and conquer an army of ten times their number; men like Cromwell's Ironsides, who would go into battle singing the Psalms

of David, while, with giant strokes, they hewed down their enemies. And when their country came under the power of the Romans, they were restless and constantly rising in insurrection. To them, the idea of a coming Messiah was ever present, and as they would only recognize the rule of God himself, through his priests, their idea of the Messiah was, that though he should possess divine, or at least archangelic attributes, he should be to his chosen people a deliverer from the Roman despotism, and should rule and reign over them, as a temporal prince, and high priest on the throne of David, exalting to positions of trust and power in his kingdom or government those devout and patriotic Jews whom he might select as best qualified for such a service. That the Messiah would be a spiritual prince, that his dominion was to be over the minds and souls of men; that he would have nothing to do with the administration of temporal power, and that the Gentile believer would enjoy equal privileges with the Jew who trusted in him, both in this life and the life to come, and that he was to redeem to himself a chosen people, a spiritual Israel, from all nations that dwelt on the face of the earth—were ideas which the Galilean Jew was incapable of comprehending, until his heart was enlightened from on high; and even then, he would ever and anon turn back to his old belief in a temporal Messiah.

The country or region of Galilee, which comprised the ancient territory of Issachar, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali, was, in the time of our Lord, surpassingly beautiful. The combination of lake, river and sea, of elevated mountain slopes, broad fertile plains, and valleys clad in living green, made up landscapes of remarkable loveliness. The hills were terraced almost to their tops; and the latitude, which was that of Florida, was rendered more diverse in its temperature and its productions by the varying heights of surface found within a few miles. Little Hermon, the loftiest mountain west of the sea of Galilee, was about 4000 feet above the sea; Tabor and Carmel, the one overlooking the sea of Galilee, the other the Mediterranean, were about 1800 feet above the Mediterranean, while the sea of Galilee was 635 feet below that level. Yet the mountain slopes are not usually precipitous, and on some of these plains, valleys, and hillsides, were

to be found the fruits, grains, flowers, and forest trees of most of the temperate and semi-tropical countries of the world.

In the small city of Bethsaida, on the northwest shore of the sea of Galilee, resided at this time two Jewish families, both strict observers of the law, and remarkable, even among their countrymen, for their patriotism and devotion. The names of the heads of these families were Jonas and Zebedee, or Zabdai, as his Jewish neighbors preferred to call him. Each had two sons; those of Jonas were named Simon, afterward called also Peter or Cephias, and Andrew; those of Zabdai, James and John. Neither family was abjectly poor; that of Zabdai was, for the time and place, comparatively wealthy; owning not only some property at Bethsaida, but also a dwelling at Jerusalem. Both, in accordance with the Jewish custom, that every man must have a trade or calling, pursued the business of fishing in the lake or sea of Galilee, at that time a profitable occupation, followed by many of the inhabitants on the shores of the lake. The sons of Jonas were somewhat older than those of Zabdai, but the two families were very intimate. They were all taught to read the law before their sixth year, and were then sent to the synagogue school, where they remained till they were fourteen or sixteen, and acquired a good general education. If either of the four ever attended the higher schools or colleges of the rabbis, of which there was one at Sepphoris, some eighteen miles away, and possibly one also at Capernaum, it must have been John, whose disposition for study was strongly marked, and who in later years was a scholar of good repute. As they grew up the young men adopted the calling of their fathers, and were for a time in partnership. Of the two sons of Zabdai, James, the elder, was about the age of Jesus, while John was four or five years younger. Their mother, Salome, a woman of great energy and perseverance, and withal of an earnest and devotional spirit, was, according to the universal tradition of the early church, a kinswoman of Mary, the mother of our Lord, though there is a difference of opinion as to what was the exact relationship. Some believe her to have been a daughter of Joseph by a former wife, while others, with more probability, regard her as an elder sister of Mary. The intimacy

between the two families may not have been kept up during the childhood of the sons of Zabdai, as Nazareth was among the hills, twelve or fifteen miles from Bethsaida; but that John, and probably James, were among the earliest disciples of Jesus, that Salome had become well acquainted with Jesus, and claimed from him the privileges of



TWO WOMEN GRINDING

kinship for her sons, and that, apparently after her husband's death, she devoted her time and her property to ministrations to the bodily welfare of our Lord, and, with the constancy and love of a faithful woman's heart, followed him to the cross and the tomb, we know from the gospels.

John and his brother James had undoubtedly, in accordance with

the custom of the devout Jews, gone up to the temple at Jerusalem at the great feasts, and especially at the passover, from the time they attained their twelfth year. The journey, the songs of their pilgrimage, the first sight of Jerusalem, and of the temple, which was then nearing its completion, the architectural beauty of the buildings of the holy city, and the grand sublimity of the temple worship, were all well adapted to impress deeply the thoughtful mind of a child like John, and these impressions would be rendered more permanent by his subsequent visits. That they did thus impress him is evident, not only from his eager inquiries of his Divine Master concerning the temple and the city, and their predicted destruction, but also in a greater degree from his vivid descriptions of the New Jerusalem, with its gates of pearl, its walls of precious stones, and its streets of gold, all written at a time when both the city and the temple of Jerusalem were tottering to their downfall.

But as they attained to the years of manhood, and the rumors began to gather strength that the Messiah, so long promised, was coming, and was perhaps indeed already upon the earth; that the fulness of time had come, and that possibly from their own kindred (for rumors of the wonderful events at Nazareth could hardly have failed to reach the ears of Salome) was to spring that blessed one, the Hope of Israel, the expectation of whose birth had beautified and glorified the face of every mother of the tribe of Judah for centuries; these young men began to watch eagerly for the dawn of the Messianic day. In their early childhood had come into their own vicinity a brave, patriotic man, a hero of the Maccabæan type, Judas of Gaulonitis, oftener called Judas of Galilee; a man whom their fathers had hoped was he that should deliver Israel; and the sons of Galilee, ever eager for freedom, had gone out to swell his ranks by thousands, in the expectation that they should succeed in throwing off the Roman yoke; but the Roman legions under Cyrenius proved too strong for the unskilled insurgent leader, and he and his troops perished, or were scattered, at the first shock of battle. Would such a fate befall the coming, the promised Messiah? Not if he were indeed the chosen of God, the great deliverer, who, as they read the

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prophecies, was to be their champion against the Roman hosts. The blood thrilled through the veins of these sons of Zabdai, as they thought of the coming of this prince Messiah; for they were young and brave, they loved their country and their faith, and as Galilean Jews they were willing to fight to the death under a gallant leader to throw off the Roman yoke, and to restore the sway of Jehovah over the chosen people of God.

Tell me not that this fervid, warlike spirit is inconsistent with the character of the pure, gentle, lamb-like John! John was a Galilean and a Pharisee; to him there was no holier cause than that of insurrection against the hated Roman, no duty more sacred than that of fighting for his country, his faith, and his God. For these he would have fought to the death, would have endured the severest tortures, or suffered death on the cross. There was nothing weak, cowardly, or effeminate about this young man. We shall see evidence enough of this further on.

But just at this time there comes intelligence to him which changes the whole current of his thoughts. A great prophet and reformer has appeared at the fords of the Jordan—perhaps the upper ford, only thirty-five or forty miles distant; he is urging upon the people that they should repent and be baptized as the indication of their purpose to begin a new life; and as a reason for this repentance and baptism hitherto only required of proselytes to the Jewish faith, he tells them that the kingdom of heaven is at hand; that the Messiah is coming speedily, and this repentance must precede his coming. This reformer's name is John, and because of his practice of baptizing he is called "John the Baptist;" he is of priestly family, though he does not himself engage in the work of the priesthood, but appears like one of the old prophets; most of all like Elijah, whom in his rough dress and his coarse and sparing diet, his earnestness, and his fearful denunciations of sin and hypocrisy, he strongly resembles John, and Andrew, his friend and townsman, resolve at once to go and listen to this new prophet. Passing along the plain of Genesaret, on the western shore of the lake, they soon come to the Jordan valley, with its rough and volcanic rocks, its frequent cataracts, and its

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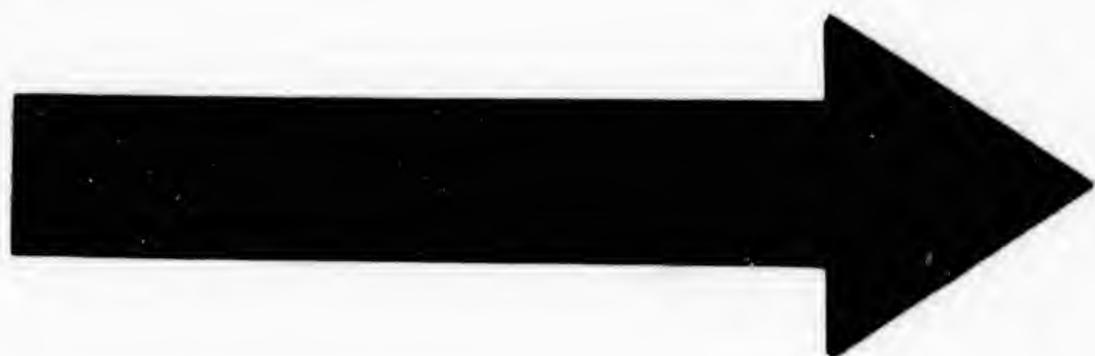
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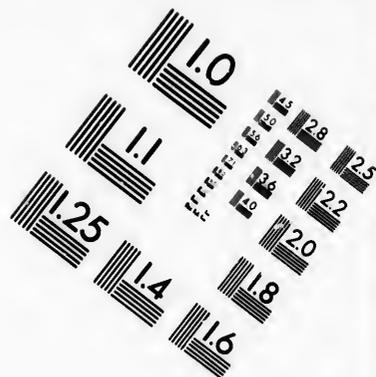
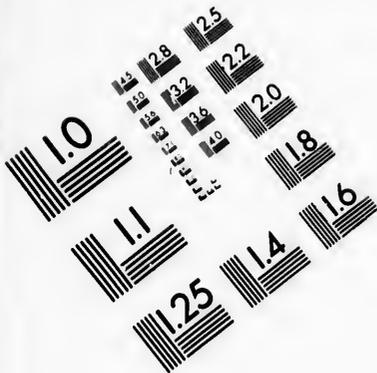
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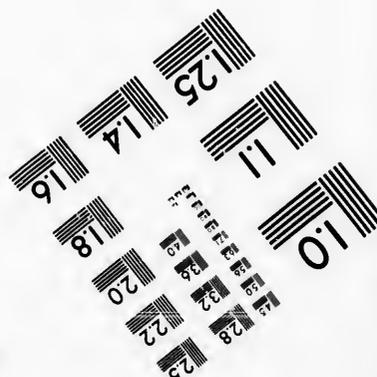
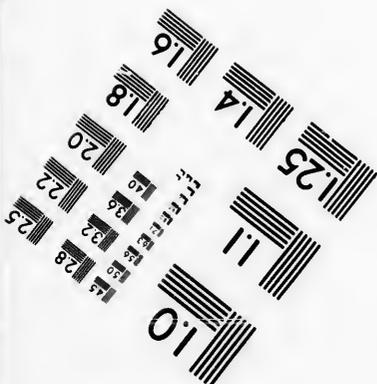
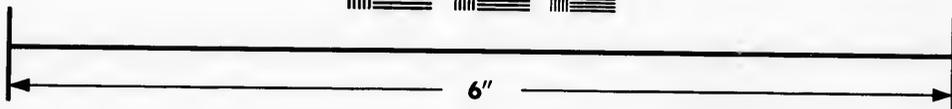
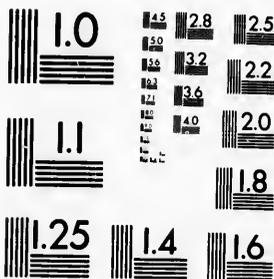


"THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE." Matt. 13: 46.





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thick, jungle-like forests. By what road they find their way to the wider plain at the ford we know not, but they reach it at last, and listen with intense interest to the ringing appeals of this "voice from the wilderness." Their own life, which they had deemed so pure and blameless, now presents itself to them as full of sin; and with repentant hearts, and an earnest desire to do the will of God, they present themselves to the prophet for baptism. They are accepted and seal their vows before God and men in the waters of the Jordan. To the major part of the multitudes who listened to the preaching of John the Baptist, his constant references to him who should come after him, one far mightier than himself, the latchet of whose sandals he was not worthy to unloose, were but imperfectly comprehended. They knew, indeed, that the Messiah was soon to come, and that these words probably referred to him, but they believed that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince; and while they were impressed with the earnestness of him who proclaimed himself as merely the forerunner of this Messiah, they half believed that he was himself the long predicted prince, and that ere long, casting away his rough robe of camel's hair, and abandoning his scanty desert fare of locusts and wild honey, he would appear as the glorious Messiah, the King of kings; and till this transformation took place, having taken all the steps of preparation for his coming which they knew, the confession of their sins and baptism, they were content to await, at their own homes, the commencement of his reign. But there were some who—reverencing and honoring the son of Zacharias as a true prophet and the forerunner of the Messiah, and believing that his holy and abstemious life, his humble and devout spirit, and his evident consecration to the service of God, had given him a clearer insight into the mysteries of the future—desired a nearer intimacy with him, and sought from his lips fuller instruction and information concerning this coming Messiah. Among the most earnest and eager of these were the two young Galileans, John and Andrew, whom he had so recently baptized; and their simple and ingenuous natures, and their evident desire for instruction, won the heart of the great reformer. In his wild desert life, John the Baptist had been a zealous student

of the Scriptures, and God had revealed to him, as he always does to those who seek wisdom from above in an humble spirit, much of the character and work of the Divine Redeemer. To him Jesus was the Light of the World, the Ancient of Days, the Judge who should discriminate between the wheat and the chaff, the pure and holy and the hypocritical. He did not fully comprehend the plan of salvation, but he knew that Jesus was the one sacrifice, the atoning lamb, whom all the sacrifices slain on Jewish altars typified, who should take away the sin of the world. All this and more he communicated, in the intervals of his preaching, to the two disciples, who drank in his words with the deepest interest. He told them, moreover, that, six or seven weeks before, there had come to him for baptism one whom from his wondrous grace and dignity he believed to be the Messiah and that he at first refused to baptize him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" but that this gracious and God-like one had said, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." "It had been revealed to him," he said, "that he should be able to recognize the Messiah when he should be called to baptize him, by the descent of the Holy Spirit in the semblance of a dove, and its resting upon his head." When he baptized this mysterious person, not only was there this manifestation of the descent of the Holy Spirit in visible form, but the heavens opened above him, and from out of the excellent glory there came a voice, which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then John the Baptist knew that on him had been conferred the highest honor which had ever been bestowed on mortal man, that of administering baptism to the Son of God. And from this time he had ever been ready to testify that the Hope of Israel had come.

On the next day after this interview with the two disciples, Jesus, who had but just returned from the mount of the temptation, passed near where John was baptizing, and John immediately pointed him out to the wondering multitude, with the impressive words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" He then explained briefly what he had already stated more fully to the

two disciples, of the circumstances attending Christ's baptism. It is hardly probable that Andrew and John were present on this occasion; but the next morning John was standing near the river's bank with the two disciples, and Jesus again passed, and he pointed him out to them, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." This was enough for them; their eyes were greeted with the sight of the long-expected Messiah. Eagerly, yet timidly, they followed his footsteps, and presently he turned and said to them in that gracious voice of his, "What seek ye?" Awe-struck, yet encouraged, they answer his question by another, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" His answer was still more gracious, "Come and see." Thus encouraged they followed to his temporary home, and as it was but ten o'clock in the morning,* they had nearly the whole day for their interview with him. What a visit that was! How did the hearts of these young men burn within them as they realized that they had thus held converse with the Messiah, he whose coming patriarchs and prophets, kings and holy ones, in all the ages, had so longed to see, and yet had died without the sight. It does not seem that either John or Andrew ever doubted, from that time, that Jesus was the Messiah, though it was not till long after that they fully realized who and what the Messiah was.

Much as they had been drawn to John the Baptist, and greatly indebted as they were to him for thus bringing them to Christ, they had now found a new and higher love, a Master to whom they were drawn by a stronger and more enduring tie. Henceforward they were the disciples, not of John, but of Christ. And their zeal constrained them, as the love of Christ has always since done, to bring their friends to him. Andrew sought for his brother Simon, who was among the multitude who were listening to John, and having found him, brought him at once to Jesus, saying only, "We have found the Messias." Jesus welcomed him with a new name, Cephas, or, in its Greek translation, Peter. John, with that modesty

*John says in his gospel, "It was about the tenth hour," but it is to be observed that, unlike the other evangelists (probably from the fact that his gospel was not written till some years after the destruction of Jerusalem), John always uses the Roman reckoning, which made the day begin at midnight, instead of the Jewish, which began at six o'clock in the morning.

which is one of his most beautiful traits, says nothing of his own efforts to bring his kindred to Christ, but we may well believe that if James was anywhere within his reach, at the fords of the Jordan, as he may very well have been, he did not rest till he had brought him also to Christ, with the announcement, "We have found the Messiah."

Jesus had determined the next day to leave Bethabara for his old home in Galilee, and his new disciples were delighted to accompany him. On the way two more were added to their number, Philip and Nathanael, or Bartholomew, both afterwards apostles.

Immediately on his return to Galilee, Jesus and his disciples were invited to a wedding at Cana, a small town not far from Nazareth. Here was performed the miracle of changing the water into wine, of which John was an eye-witness, and which is recorded only by him. After this miracle Jesus went with his family and his disciples to Capernaum, then the principal city of the Gennesaret plain, and not far from Bethsaida. This was subsequently his Galilean home, and the place where many of his miracles were performed. His stay there at this time was brief, probably mainly for the purpose of joining one of the great caravans or companies which were going to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover. Their route would be, at this time, through the Jordan valley, at least from Bethshan or Scythopolis, in order to avoid going through Samaria. John had doubtless been often to Jerusalem at the season of the great feasts, but never before in such goodly company as at this time. As a constant companion of his Master, he was privileged to hear from his lips such words of wisdom and instruction "as never man spake;" and as they climbed the rugged cliffs from Jericho to Jerusalem, how his heart must have leaped for joy as the temple came in sight from the height of Olivet, for, for the first time in the world's history, could it be said that the vision and the words of the inspired prophet were about to be fulfilled, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." But, alas! though a few devout souls, like John, had recognized the Lord of the temple, and were prepared to give him their worship and homage, yet Israel did not know, his people did not consider. The priests and Levites, who ministered at the altars and

performed the service of the sanctuary, were wholly unaware that he, to whom that temple was dedicated, had come down from the temple not made with hands, and had deigned to grace this earthly house with his presence. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. There was, however, one scene in connection with this passover feast, which made so vivid an impression upon John that, more than fifty years later, he describes it as if it had occurred but the day before. Jesus, on his arrival at Jerusalem, had entered the temple as its rightful heir. It was his Father's house, the one temple in the wide world consecrated to the pure worship of Jehovah; and yet there in its courts were lowing oxen, calves and heifers, sheep and goats, lambs and kids; and on one side great numbers of doves and pigeons, which the high priest himself had caused to be brought there for sale from his own extensive dove-cotes on the Mount of Olives; and the bargaining of the men who had these in charge with the eager worshippers created the greatest confusion; added to this was the babble of the money changers, Jewish usurers, who made large commissions by exchanging shekels of the sanctuary, which alone could be paid for the temple dues, for the Roman, Greek, and other foreign coins, brought by the Jews of the dispersion who thronged to Jerusalem at these times from all parts of the Roman empire. All this traffic was forbidden by the law, but the Jews, and especially the priests, were proverbially greedy of gain, and Annas, the high priest, cared more for gold than for the honor of God or the purity of the sanctuary.

All this desecration of the temple was apparent to Jesus at a glance, and it roused his righteous indignation. Seizing some of the small cords or bands of rushes, which bound the animals to be sacrificed, he plaited them into a scourge or whip, and as the dignity and sublime anger of the divine nature gleamed forth from those eyes, ordinarily so mild and gentle, he drove the animals and their owners out of the temple area, and into the streets of Jerusalem; poured out the changers' money, overthrew the tables, and said unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." The venders of this merchandise, and the

money changers, awe-struck by his evident right to command, and fearing to encounter those terrible eyes, fled in haste, and ventured no resistance or even remonstrance; and it was not till hours after that some of the priestly party, who had probably been heavy losers by this summary ejection, ventured, without questioning the righteousness of the transaction, to ask for some sign or proof of his authority to thus drive out those who desecrated the temple. His reply was a memorable one: "Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up." The answer was an enigma to them; he who had called the world into existence could doubtless have reared anew the beautiful temple of Herod, in three days or three hours, had it been needful to do so, but there was a deeper and holier meaning to his words. The temple of Herod was but the outward covering or shell, in whose Holy of Holies, the Jews believed, was enshrined the divine Shechinah; so now he, the God whom they professed to worship, had come to earth in human form; his body, a nobler temple than that of Herod, enshrined the divine nature; and as they would, within a short time, destroy this human temple, he would demonstrate to them his divine authority, by raising it from the tomb in a more wondrous body within three days after its destruction. The saying was not forgotten by the priests or by John, who had listened to it. The former sought to make it the ground of a charge against him, just before his crucifixion, of conspiracy to destroy the temple; while to John, after the event, it was seen to be a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ.

The miracles wrought by Jesus in the temple and in Jerusalem had attracted the attention of many of the ruling class; and one of them, Nicodemus, the teacher or "wise man" of the Sanhedrim, or great council of Jerusalem, the third officer in rank of that body, ventured to visit Jesus by night, during his stay in Jerusalem, impelled by a variety of motives. He had admitted to himself, evidently, that Jesus might be the Messiah; if he should prove to be (and, like all the Pharisees, he had no other idea of the Messiah than that he was to be a temporal prince, and the deliverer of the Jewish nation from the Romans), there would be a fine opportunity for him, a counsellor, a Pharisee, and a man of learning and influence, by attaching himself

thus early to his cause, to become one of the chief officers of his realm. There may have been, also, some desire to know more of this kingdom of heaven or of God, of which both Christ and John the Baptist had so much to say, and a lurking suspicion down in the depths of his heart that even he, with all his strictness of ritual observances, was not quite perfect, and that this great Teacher might be able to fill an aching void which he found in his heart. John was present at this interview, and his interesting narrative of Christ's method of laying bare the needs, cravings and experiences of a self-righteous soul, though written after the lapse of half a century, show that even then he had a very clear conception of the omniscience of his Divine Master. The stay of Jesus at Jerusalem was brief; he had declared himself as the Messiah, by his deeds and miracles, and had awakened the active enmity of the Pharisaic or priestly party thereby; and not being desirous of further provoking their hostility at this time, he withdrew quietly to one of the towns of Judæa, north of Jerusalem, where, very soon, the people flocked to him to receive instruction, in even greater numbers than had attended the preaching of John the Baptist. Here, under his direction, his disciples, and John among the number, administered baptism to those who acknowledged him as the Messiah, and ere long his personal following had exceeded that of his forerunner. An incident which occurred at this time, and is recorded in the Gospel of John, indicates very clearly that neither jealousy nor envy had any place in the soul of John the Baptist. Some of his disciples, who had been having an angry discussion with the Pharisees about the oral law and the traditions of the rabbis, came to John the Baptist with a grievance, which had evidently been aggravated by the taunts of their adversaries: "Rabbi," said they, "he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come unto him." John calmly replied, "that he had always declared that he was not the Christ, but only his forerunner; and that, as the Christ or Messiah was now come, his own mission was drawing to a close. Christ must increase, he must decrease, and that he rejoiced in this result." He continued with an ascription of praise to Jesus, fully recognizing his

divine nature and origin, and silencing forever the complaints of his disciples. Shortly after this, John the Baptist was seized and imprisoned in the castle Machærus by Herod Antipas, probably in part, at least, at the instigation of the Pharisees, and a few months later beheaded. The hostility of the enemies of Christ was so strongly manifested that he left his retreat, in the foot-hills of Mount Ephraim, and set out on his return to Galilee. "And he must needs go through Samaria." This was not the usual route from Judæa to Galilee, as the hatred which existed between the Jews and Samaritans was so intense, that it often led to bloodshed, and almost always to the withholding of all the courtesies of life between the two nations. The Jews, under John Hyrcanus, had burned the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, and the Samaritans, within a few years before the public ministry of our Lord, had by some means entered the temple at Jerusalem at night, and strewed dead men's bones in the holy place, and on the altar of sacrifice. It was therefore, undoubtedly, a surprise to John and the other disciples of Jesus, when he announced his determination to return to Galilee by way of Samaria. The sons of Zabdai and the sons of Jonas, as devout Jews, entertained, as in duty bound, the bitterest hatred of the Samaritans, and must have been reluctant to pass through their country; but they were too much attached to their Lord to draw back from any peril to which he saw fit to expose himself.

It was on this journey, and during the absence of his disciples in the neighboring city to purchase provisions, that Jesus held that conversation with the Samaritan woman, at Jacob's well, which John has so faithfully reproduced in the fourth chapter of his gospel, and the rehearsal of which he doubtless received from the lips of his Divine Master. Their journey was delayed for two days, while the first fruits of his labors in Samaria were gathered in, and the foundation laid for that extensive work of grace in Samaria, six or seven years later, when John and Peter reaped an abundant harvest.

The journey to Galilee was now resumed, and Jesus entered upon his beneficent work of preaching the gospel, and performing miracles

of healing, and blessing the multitudes who thronged around him in Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin, and the other populous towns of the plain of Gennesaret. His home, at this time, was at Capernaum, whither Andrew and Peter certainly, and James and John probably, had removed. During this period of six or eight months, before Jesus again visited Jerusalem, he was very active. Besides his labors at the towns and cities around the lake, he had delivered his sermon on that mount which, from its double peak, was known as the Horns of Hattin; had visited and taught the people on the eastern and northeastern shores of the lake; had selected and commissioned his twelve apostles, and had made, either in person, or by his disciples, whom he sent out two and two, a circuit of the Galilean towns. In all this time, except possibly a very few weeks, John was his constant companion, and received, perhaps in larger measure than either of the other apostles, constant instruction from his lips. Peter, Andrew and James, who were next to him in their intimacy with their Lord, had for a time, and until they received a second call, resumed their former occupation; but after they were chosen apostles, they too were constantly in attendance upon him, or engaged in missionary labors, performed at his command. The two sons of Jonas and the two sons of Zabdai hold the first place in all the lists of the apostles, and were undoubtedly the first chosen by Jesus. Of the four, Peter, both from age and impulsiveness, was the acknowledged leader, though John was the most beloved and cherished. An English writer of great ability, Professor Plumptre, draws a very fine distinction between the relation which these two disciples held to the lord: "Peter," he says, "was the friend of *Christ* as the Messiah, the first to acknowledge his divine character, and to adore him as the Son of God; John on the other hand was the friend of *Jesus*; clinging with the most intense affection to his humanity, and recognizing him as the incarnate Saviour." It is a somewhat remarkable commentary on these ideas, that the gospel which is regarded as containing in substance Peter's narrative of the life of Christ, speaks of him most frequently as the Son of man, and is most definite in its descriptions of his earthly life; while the Gospel of John is almost wholly occupied with the

demonstration of his divine nature. To John he is the "Son of God," "the Word who was with God and who was God," but who "was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Whatever we may think of this distinction, it cannot be denied that to Peter, James and John was granted a closer special intimacy with their Master, than to any other of the apostles. They were with him in the chamber of death (Mark v, 37); in the glorious scene of the transfiguration (Matt xvii, 1); when he forewarned them of the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke xxi, 7); and in the agony of Gethsemane (Matt xxvi, 36-56); John was the disciple who reclined next to Jesus at the passover feast, and at the Lord's supper then instituted; and it is noteworthy that when Jesus had declared to the twelve, in that sad hour, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me," and the other disciples were questioning, "Lord is it I?" as if in doubt of their own fidelity under the pressure of a terrible temptation, John alone, of them all, does not ask this question; the union of soul between him and his Master is so complete that, as he himself said long afterward, in his first epistle, "perfect love casteth out fear." He knows that it is impossible for him to betray Christ, and though not boastful like Peter, he looks up frankly and lovingly into the eyes of Jesus, and when Peter who understood the intimacy of his relation to Christ, beckons to him he asks with perfect confidence, "Lord, who is it?"

And yet, we grieve to say, that ardent as was his love for Jesus, he could not maintain his watchfulness for even an hour, when his Lord was passing through that fearful agony in the garden of Gethsemane. This may have been the result of intense weariness and sorrow; to this cause Jesus, in mercy, attributed it; but he was more self-possessed and brave than any other of the disciples after the arrest of his Lord. He followed him to the palace of the high priest, and having been in former years acquainted with the high priest, he readily obtained admission, and seems to have been the only one of the disciples who witnessed the entire trial, both before the high priest and before Pilate: for though Peter was, for a short time, in the ante-room of the palace, he was in such fear, and so frequent in

his denials of Christ, that he could hardly be said to be a witness. John followed on to the cross, where again he was the only one of the twelve who was present, his companions being those noble women



"AND FROM THAT HOUR, THAT DISCIPLE TOOK HER UNTO HIS OWN HOME"—JOHN XIX, 27.

who, more courageous than any of the chosen apostles except John were "last at the cross and earliest at the grave," and it was there, amid his dying agonies, that Jesus committed to this faithful disciple the sacred trust of caring for that dear mother whose heart was so rent with sorrow

On the morning of the resurrection, when the first tidings came that the grave had been despoiled of its prey, John and Peter set out for the sepulchre, and for once John's zeal sur-

passed that of Peter, and out-running him, he came first to the sepulchre. His recognition of his risen Lord was perfect, and in that

memorable interview after the resurrection, at the sea of Galilee, his quick and loving eye detected his Master, before Peter or any other of the seven disciples, who were in the company. It was at this time that our Lord, by those searching questions, tested the love of Peter for him, and then revealed to him his future, with the martyr's pains and the martyr's crown, and to John the prolongation of his life beyond the period of Jerusalem's destruction.

But in thus rapidly glancing over the evidences of the intense love which filled the hearts alike of the disciple and his Master, we have passed over several incidents in his early training as an apostle, which show most conclusively that John's was no soft, impressible, plastic nature, which adapts itself readily to each new impress of a stronger mind, without possessing any positive character of its own. On the contrary he was a man of great energy, and of a fiery, ambitious nature, full of strong prejudices, retaining with great tenacity his early ideas, and even recurring to them again and again after their falsity had been demonstrated to him. That these traits of a willful and perverse disposition were in the end so completely eradicated as to make him an example to the church in all ages, of all that was pure and lovely and of good report, is due, in the first place, to the moulding and controlling influence which Jesus exerted over him in a greater degree than over any other of his disciples; and, in the second place, to the affection which this intense love of Christ for him had developed in his soul, and which made it his highest ambition to do always those things which would please his Lord and Master. "We love him because he hath first loved us."

He who "knew what was in man" better than any man could know and who read the entire nature and history of every man who came into his presence at a glance, when he called James and John to be apostles, named them *Boanerges*, "sons of thunder," a title indicative of their character. They were not like the fleecy cloud which melts and disappears when the sun's rays fall directly upon it nor like those cloud banks that lie athwart the western sky at the close of day, and, clad in hues of purple and gold and violet, make more beautiful the sun's decline; rather, they were the dark threaten-

ing clouds, heavy with the coming rain, and from out whose jagged rifts leap the live thunder and the swift lightning-stroke, vehement for the right, like the old prophets; men of strong, earnest, intense natures, who would "not handle the word of God," the truths which he had revealed, "deceitfully." Very soon did they give evidence that the name he had bestowed upon them was not misapplied.

It was not till the two brothers had been for nearly a year under his training, that he sent them forth to preach and teach in the towns and villages of Galilee; and their first mission was one of many limitations. They were not to enter any Samaritan or Gentile village; full well he knew their bitter hatred and contempt of the Samaritans; and though he had showed them, by his own labors in Samaria, that these despised people were not beyond the pale of his mercy, their prejudices were as yet too strong to make it safe to trust them, even with the gospel message, to those for whom they entertained such loathing; they were sent at this time only to their Jewish brethren who were already to some extent informed concerning the character and mission of Christ; they were to proclaim him as the Messiah and, where it was needful, to perform in his name the simpler miracles of healing. They knew and comprehended but little of the scheme of salvation, but what they knew they told correctly. On their return from this circuit, they came to Jesus, somewhat elated, not that so many had received the gospel message, but that the devils, the demons which had taken possession of the bodies of men, had been subject to them through his name. Gently rebuking their exuberant joy at this result of their labors, Jesus reminded them that they had occasion for a higher joy, that their names were written in heaven. They proceeded with their report, and here it is John that speaks: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us." Jesus said: "Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me."

In their second mission the powers of the apostles were somewhat enlarged, and in a part, at least of this circuit of Galilee, which extended also to Tyre and Sidon, and to the half-heathen villages of

the eastern side of the lake, Jesus himself accompanied them. They saw the miracles which he did, heard his parables, and listened to his explanation of them, and were daily instructed by him in private; yet as they journeyed by his side, or followed in his footsteps, what was the most common theme of their discussion, and sometimes of angry debate? not the salvation of the souls of those to whom they proclaimed the gospel, not the overthrow of the powers of evil, or the banishment of the sins which were everywhere so rife. None of these. It was, which of them should be the greatest, should occupy the highest station in the coming reign of the Messiah, and receive the highest rewards of money and power for their fidelity to Christ. 'Lo!' said Peter, "we have left all and followed thee; what shall we have theretofore?" The idea that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince, who should deliver them from the sway of the hated Romans, and should thereafter reign in great glory and power over the Jews, sitting on the throne of David, was thoroughly ingrained into their minds; Jesus, they were sure, was the Messiah, and they were daily looking for his assumption of kingly power, and when the multitudes were disposed, with loud acclaim, to take him by force and make him king, they were rejoiced, and wondered at his refusal to yield to their urgency. If he did, as they were persuaded he would, at last accept the offered throne, they, who had abandoned all to serve him, were entitled to the best places in his kingdom, and the only question was, what should be the division of the offices? It is painful to think that James and John, who had seen so much of the meek and humble spirit of Christ, who had so often been assured by him that his kingdom was not of this world, but that it was a rule and government over the hearts and minds of men, and that the whole nature must be renewed before any one could enter it, should have engaged in this unseemly wrangle, but so it was. Jesus had said, perhaps before this



SYRIAN SHEEP.

time, for the encouragement of the twelve, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Overlooking the wholly spiritual character of this promise, and regarding it solely as the guarantee of temporal advancement soon to come, the disciples looked forward eagerly to their several shares in the offered rewards. Among the twelve none had been nearer or apparently dearer to Christ, than the two sons of Zabdai, and their ambition was roused to obtain the highest places in this new kingdom.

Accordingly they communicated their wishes to their mother Salome, who had followed Christ throughout Galilee, and had ministered to him of her substance or property. The mother was not less ambitious for her sons than they were for themselves; and the three came to Jesus when he was alone and offered their request, the mother urging and the sons seconding it. At first she desired a certain thing of him, but seemed reluctant to name her request, but when Jesus said to her, "What wilt thou?" she answered, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." The immediate right and left hands of the monarch were the places of highest honor; and thus these two young men desired for themselves—for they repeated the request—the highest positions in that kingdom, which they persisted in believing he was about to found in Palestine. The reply of Jesus was a sterner rebuke than he had yet given to any of his disciples, yet it was administered in love. "Ye know not," he said, "what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Utterly ignorant of the sorrow and suffering which these significant words included, they replied confidently, "We are able." Jesus said unto them, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on

my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." The other members of the apostolic band were very indignant at this request of the two brothers; not that they had any clearer ideas of the spiritual character of the kingdom of Christ, but that they regarded this as an effort, on the part of James and John, to steal a march on them and prefer a prior claim to the dignities of the new kingdom. And this was after these two disciples and Peter had witnessed the glories of the transfiguration, and but a few weeks, or months at the furthest, before his crucifixion!

We may notice, incidentally, that even the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord did not wholly dispel this idea of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah from the minds of his disciples. The two disciples who went to Emmaus, on the day of the resurrection, said to Jesus, of himself, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," that is, from the Roman power; and the question put by the eleven to our Lord, on the very day of his ascension, after having received from his lips the great commission, shows with what tenacity they still clung to the idea of a temporal kingdom: "Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?"

One more example of the fiery spirit and the abiding prejudices of James and John, will show how much need there was of a deeper sanctification in their hearts; when Jesus had commenced that last journey toward Jerusalem, which was to close with his arrest and crucifixion, he sent James and John into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for his stay over night; but the inhabitants, supposing that his intention was to go to Jerusalem, refused to receive him. This was churlish; yet had it occurred in any Jewish village, the disciples would have found some excuse for it, but it was the hated Samaritans who had refused shelter to the Messiah; and the loyalty of the brothers to their Master joined with their hate of these people, and they asked, and we may easily believe that it was John who put the question: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not what manner of

spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went to another village

We might multiply these instances, which illustrate the narrow and sordid views which, at times, gained the ascendancy over the minds of the twelve disciples, and James and John nearly as much as the others, up to the very day of the ascension; but what we have already adduced are sufficient to show that, notwithstanding all the preaching and teaching of Christ, notwithstanding their daily personal intercourse with him for three years, and the powerful influence he exerted over them, they were still under the bondage of Jewish prejudices, of personal and unhallowed ambition, and of a zeal not according to knowledge. They were not as yet wholly sanctified nor consecrated for the work in which they were to engage. Our Lord knew this, and hence he commanded them to remain at Jerusalem, until they should receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost

They obeyed, and after ten days of earnest prayer, the promised descent of the Holy Spirit came, and they were fitted to enter upon their great work. A wondrous change had come upon them all. They were in the city of Jerusalem, and it was the feast of Pentecost, one of the great Jewish feasts, when, from all parts of the Roman empire the Jews of the dispersion came up to Jerusalem and presented themselves at the temple. Fifty days before, these eleven apostles, and the believers who were now with them, had fled affrighted, at the arrest of their Master; far from attempting any resistance or rescue, they had concealed themselves, and met but stealthily, with barred and bolted doors, lest they also should suffer arrest. Their Master had been crucified by Roman authority, at the urgent solicitation of the Jewish Sanhedrim; and their hopes had fallen to the dust. But he had risen from the dead, and though he had not, as of old, led them through the streets of Jerusalem and the villages of Galilee, showing himself openly to the multitudes, his resurrection and his ascension had put new faith and courage into their hearts, and this mysterious but all powerful influence which they now experienced had consecrated them to their work, and they were ready for any labor, any sacrifice, which might be required of them.

The most timid of the apostolic band was now ready to face the Sanhedrim, or the Roman authorities, charge upon them the murder of Jesus, and defy their power. To the multitudes who thronged the Jewish capital, they preached boldly the crucified and risen Christ, and urged them to repent and believe on him.

And if this change had come upon all the disciples, it was especially marked in the case of Peter and John. Peter was, as before the crucifixion, the leader, but his boastful spirit was gone; he was meek and humble, yet full of zeal, courage and energy, and henceforth his chosen associate was John; together the two preached unto the people administered baptism to the new converts, performed miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, charged home upon the rulers their responsibility for the death of Christ, stood undaunted before the Sanhedrim, endured their threatenings without alarm, and without yielding for a moment to their demands; suffered imprisonment, and were beaten with rods, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame in and for the Master's name. Meanwhile, the church, which they, in accordance with their Master's command, had founded at Jerusalem had grown so rapidly that it numbered many thousands of joyful believers; it was fully organized, and had been consecrated by the blood of its first martyr, and a violent persecution had scattered many of its prominent members; but Peter and John remained at Jerusalem and cared for the remainder of the flock. Now came one of those questions which tested the completeness of the change wrought in them. Philip, one of the seven deacons (not the apostle), had left Jerusalem in consequence of the persecution, and gone to Samaria where he had preached Christ with great success,—the recollection of the Saviour's visit there undoubtedly rendering the people more ready to receive the gospel. He had baptized great numbers, and was in need of assistance. Thereupon, the church at Jerusalem sent their two chief pastors to aid Philip in his work. Peter and John hastened on this mission of love, received the Samaritans warmly as brethren in Christ, and ere they returned preached the gospel in many of the Samaritan villages. And yet this same John, only six years

before, had desired to call down fire from heaven on one of these Samaritan villages for a real or fancied slight.

Other events, following thick and fast, gave evidence of the great change which had come upon these two apostles; Saul the persecutor had become Paul the apostle, and was received lovingly by John and Peter and James; Peter had had his vision of the beasts let down from heaven, and its fulfilment, in the conversion and admission into the church of Cornelius, the Roman centurion; Herod Agrippa had seized and put to death James, the brother of John, and had then seized Peter, intending to kill him also, and martyrdom seemed to await John and the other apostles; but, unmoved by his personal danger, he and the whole church wrestled in prayer for Peter's deliverance, and it came. Peter left Jerusalem for a time, but John remained at his post, and the persecutor soon died.

For the next fifteen or twenty years we have but very slight record of the labors of John; he was not, probably, at the council at Jerusalem which decided the important question of the relations between the Gentile churches and those composed of converted Jews, or we should have heard from him as well as from Peter; but, before their departure from Jerusalem, Paul speaks of John as having given the hand of fellowship to Barnabas and himself. John remained at Jerusalem, it is supposed, with occasional visits to other parts of the great field of labor before him, until perhaps A. D. 64, when the evidences of the speedy destruction of Jerusalem led the Christians there to obey the Saviour's command and flee to the mountains. Many of these, and probably the apostle among the number, took refuge in Pella, a mountain fastness on the east side of the Jordan, about eighteen miles south of the sea of Galilee. His stay here could not have been long, and having learned that, by the imprisonment of Paul, and possibly of Timothy also, the great church of Ephesus, as well as the other churches of the province of Asia, was left without a chief pastor, he departed for that city, sailing probably from Cæsarea some time in the year A. D. 65. Soon after his arrival at Ephesus he was, by the orders of Nero, banished to the little rocky islet of Patmos, about

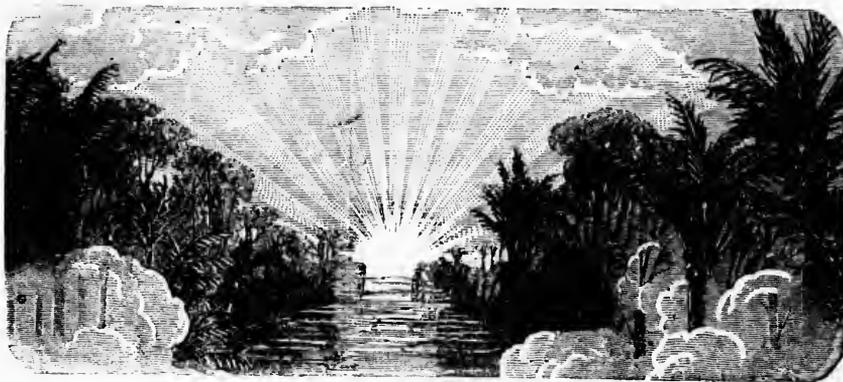
sixty miles southwest of Ephesus.* His banishment lasted probably three or four years, terminating with the death of Nero. It was during his exile on this island that he wrote the Book of Revelation in which, after detailing the view he had of his now glorified Master in a view far more sublime and overwhelming than that which he had witnessed on Mount Hermon at the transfiguration, though one in which he recognized at once his adorable Lord, he gives the messages received from him to the seven principal churches of the province of Asia, messages of warning, reproof, exhortation, and encouragement. In his subsequent visions he was permitted to see the glories of heaven, and to see and hear the events and judgments which were to come on the earth; before his eyes was unrolled the vision of the future progress of the church militant; the rise, growth, progress, and final destruction of the papal power; before him the judgment was set, and the books were opened; the dead, small and great, were raised from their graves, and the terrors of that fearful day were all portrayed; the names written in the Lamb's book of life were rehearsed in his hearing; the first resurrection, the millennial glories, the final destruction of the wicked, and the unspeakable and indescribable beauty of the new Jerusalem, illumined by the radiance which proceeded from the throne of God, whose walls were of precious stones, whose gates were pearls, and whose streets were of pure gold, were shown to his eager eyes. The river of the water of life pure as crystal, its banks shaded by the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded its fruit every month, the whole illuminated by the divine Light, and needing no temple, since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were the only objects of worship, were also presented to his enraptured vision.

Little need we wonder that the rough and rocky island of Patmos lost all its roughness and discomfort to him in these visions, which

*This date accords with one tradition, though another makes the banishment to Patmos the result of some local persecution, and to have occurred several years later, and possibly in the time of Domitian. The date of the banishment really turns upon the question whether the Apocalypse or Revelation was written before or after the fall of Jerusalem. The weight of evidence seems to favor the idea that it was written before that event.

transformed it into the very gate of heaven; nor that, when recalled to his apostolic work at Ephesus, he should have left with reluctance its rugged cliffs.

But there was yet much for him to do. Paul and Peter, his own brother James, and James, the Lord's brother, that James the Just who had so long and ably presided as the chief pastor of the church at Jerusalem, had all gone, through the martyr's chariot of fire, to their home above. To him there was given a longer service, more abundant trials, but at last a peaceful and quiet death. He probably returned to Ephesus about the beginning of the year A. D.



THE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE.

69, and though not far from sixty-eight years of age, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." Vigorous and active, he visited in turn the fifteen or twenty churches of the province of Asia, counselled their pastors, and very possibly extended his apostolic labors to Crete, to Cenchrea, to Athens, to Corinth, and to the churches of Macedonia. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the wide dispersion of the Judean Christians, many of whom migrated to Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, must have greatly increased his labors, since to most of them he was personally known.

There seems to be good reason to believe the testimony of the early fathers, some of whom were in direct communication with the

now venerable apostle, that his gospel was written about A. D. 85 or 86, at the request of the elders of the church at Ephesus, who though possessing the other gospels, desired to preserve his recollections of his beloved Master, and to obtain from him also those particulars which had not been recorded by the others. His own purpose in writing it seems to have been, not so much to supplement the other gospels, though he does this incidentally, as to prove, in this life of Jesus, that he was the Christ, the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh. Having this object in view, he divides his gospel into two parts: the first, extending from the first to the thirteenth chapter, consists of a series of proofs or signs that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, the appointed Saviour of the world; or, in other words, it is a record of what Jesus made known of himself to convince the unbelieving; the second part, extending from chapter thirteenth to the end of the book, consists of evidence that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, derived from his intercourse and discourses in private with his chosen friends, and especially as seen in the great sacrifice offered by him, and its acceptance for the salvation of the world. When we consider that this gospel must have been written when he was eighty-five or eighty-six years old, and possibly nearer ninety; that its detail of these conversations and discourses of Christ is very clear and minute, and not marred in the slightest degree by the garrulity of old age, and that the style of its composition is superior, even, to that of the accomplished and learned Paul, while the Greek, in which it is written, is as pure as that of the best classic Greek writers; we can come to no other conclusions than these: that John was intellectually a man of remarkable genius and extensive culture, and that he was especially inspired of the Holy Spirit to write this and the other books which he contributed to the New Testament.

The Gospel of John is, indeed, so far as any book or document can be, one of the main pillars of the Christian system. More than any other of the books of the New Testament it is devoted to the doctrines of the divinity of Jesus Christ and of the Trinity in unity and hence it has been the citadel against which infidelity and rationalism have made their most vigorous and determined assaults.

but they have assailed it in vain : it stands to-day unharmed, as it has stood through all the Christian ages, and as it shall continue to stand, until the last foe shall have hurled his last missile against it.

But, though already past the allotted age of man, John had still work to do for the Master he loved, and for the church of God. He was, it is supposed, past his ninetieth year when he wrote the three epistles which bear his name. They show on their pages evidence of advanced age, but not of senility or weakened mental powers. The theme of the first epistle is *fellowship*, the union of believers with God and his Son Jesus Christ, and their union with one another. Like all of John's writings, it is thoroughly systematic. He treats first of the nature of fellowship, in both its aspects ; second, of its fruit, holiness ; third, of its law, truth ; fourth, of its life, love ; fifth, of its root, faith. In reading it we are often reminded, by the vigor and almost explosive force of its language, that this old man, whose head has been whitened by the snows of almost a hundred winters, has not yet wholly lost that fiery zeal which gave him, in his youth, the title of *Boanerges*, a "son of thunder." His heart, great and loving as it is, has been sorely wounded by the professions of false disciples, who claim to be the children of God, and to be perfect and sinless, while their lives are impure and their hearts full of malice, bitterness and hate ; and he denounces them in such terms as these : "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. . . . If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. . . . He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. . . . Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. . . . He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer ; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The honor of his blessed Lord was assailed, and this loving and gentle disciple was roused to wrath and denunciation, as he was in his youth, when a word was said against him whom he loved. And yet, in other portions of this epistle,

how tender and sweet is his spirit! "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." . . . "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

The second and third epistles are short, and addressed to individual disciples. They were probably written at a date still later than the first, but breathe the same spirit.

The exact date of the death of the loving and venerable apostle is unknown; different authorities differing more than twenty years in their dates; but the most probable conjecture seems to be that he died at Ephesus, in the third or fourth year of Trajan, and after passing his hundredth year.

Jerome relates that when, in extreme old age, he was too weak to walk into the church, he was still borne thither; and unable to deliver a long discourse, he would lift his trembling hands and simply say, "Little children, love one another;" and repeat these words again and again. When asked why he constantly repeated this expression, his answer was, "Because this is the command of the Lord, and nothing is done unless this thing be done."

So passed away the last and most Christ-like of the apostles. From the day of his Lord's ascension to that in which he too joined the assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in the book of life, there is no stain or blemish on his character. His life, for that period of more than seventy years, was as pure and spotless as any recorded in the Scriptures, except only that of the Blessed One, to whom through life he clung in adoring love. Innumerable are the legends which have come down to us concerning this holy servant of God; some of them are absurd and puerile, and unworthy to be recorded, as they are totally at variance with his character. These are probably the inventions of idle monks, who, in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, spent their abundant leisure in the concoction of all manner of legends concerning the apostles, and even concerning Christ himself. A few are deserving of notice.

because of their apparent harmony with the spirit of the apostle, and because, from their earlier date, there is a stronger possibility of their truth. Whether true or not, they are not inconsistent with his character.

The tradition of his shipwreck on his first voyage to Ephesus, when near that port, is not improbable, for the *Ægean* sea was often a tempestuous one, and its many rocky islands, and its harbors and roadsteads so liable to be filled up with silt from the mountain streams, made shipwrecks there very frequent. The legend that he was taken to Rome, and, by the orders of Nero, or some other Roman tyrant, plunged in a caldron of boiling oil, from which he emerged entirely uninjured, rests only on the doubtful authority of Tertullian, and is believed by many of the most careful critics to be a misinterpretation of the words of some earlier writer.

One of the most beautiful, as it is one of the most probable of these traditions, is that which relates that, as he was visiting the church at Pergamos, he saw a young man in the congregation to whom he was powerfully drawn, and that, turning to the pastor of the church, he said, "I commit this young man to you, before Christ and the congregation." The minister accepted the charge, took the youth home, instructed, and finally baptized him. Subsequently he fell into bad company, led a profligate life, and at last, renouncing all his religious professions, joined a band of robbers, and became their captain. After some years John again visited Pergamos, and while there, made inquiry of the pastor concerning the young man whom he had committed to his charge. The minister sighed heavily, and his tears flowed, as he replied, "He is dead." "Dead!" said John; "in what way did he die?" "He is dead to God," answered the pastor; "he became godless, and finally a robber, and is now with his companions in the fastnesses of the mountains." The venerable apostle, hearing this, started at once, and saying, "I must go after this lost sheep," procured a horse and guide, and went to the mountain in which was the robbers' haunt. Being seized, as he had expected, by the band, he demanded to be carried into the presence of their captain. The outlaw chief, recognizing John as he

approached, attempted to fly; but John hastened after him, crying, "Why do you flee from me? Stop! stop! Do not be afraid. If need be, I will lay down my life for you, as Christ laid down his life for us. Believe, Christ hath sent me to you." The robber stopped, threw away his arms, and began to tremble and weep bitterly. John finally let him back to the church, of which he subsequently became one of the pillars, demonstrating the genuineness of his penitence and conversion by his holy life and earnest zeal.

It remains that we should seek to ascertain what are the lessons to be drawn from the character and example of this beloved and eminently holy servant of Christ.

We have seen that, though possessed of rare gifts and of a tender and loving nature, he was in his youth impulsive, full of strong prejudices, and ambitious. Yet withal, there must have been something very attractive in him, some winning charm in his ways, which, with his strong affections and his pure and truthful disposition, drew the human heart of Jesus to him in a love which many waters could not quench. He was the most loyal to Jesus of all the disciples, and he gives this grand reason for his loyalty: "We love him because he hath first loved us." His fidelity to his Lord was unquestioned and unquestionable. No doubts of the perfect and abiding love which existed between them ever caused a shadow upon his brow, or for a moment beclouded his spirit.

And yet it required three years of instruction and training by the divine Master, and the death, resurrection, and ascension of that Master, to rid him of his expectations of the temporal reign of the Messiah, to overcome his narrow and bitter prejudices, and to control his vehement and passionate nature.

But when the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, had come, and imparted its sanctifying and elevating influences to his soul, he was created anew in Christ Jesus. He was no longer a *Boanerges*, a "son of thunder," but "a son of consolation." He had power with God and prevailed. Where miracles were needed for the confirmation of the truth, they were wrought in the name of his Master; but to those with whom he was brought in contact his pure and holy life was greater

than any miracle. Both Peter and John *had been with Jesus*, as the Sanhedrim perceived (Acts iv, 13), and from him they had learned far better than the Jewish rabbis could have taught them, to rebuke sin, but to love and labor for the sinner; and by a pure and holy example to enforce the truths they preached.

We cannot suppose that any man, except our adorable Redeemer, has ever trod our earth who was perfectly free from sin, but it is worthy of notice that the inspired writers, who, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, noticed so freely the errors and shortcomings of even the purest and holiest, and were most severe of all upon their own sins, nowhere, after the day of our Lord's ascension, pass a word of censure upon John. Peter, the great apostle of the circumcision, was led astray in his course in regard to the Jewish and Gentile disciples at Antioch; and even Paul, with his zealous and fervent spirit and his overcoming faith, was not wholly exempt from those infirmities of the flesh, which at times led him to cry out, "Oh! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But John dwelt perpetually in that higher atmosphere of the divine love. No cloud obscured the Sun of Righteousness from his vision; and cheered by its blessed rays, toil for his Lord was a delight, pain was a pleasure, and he could say with the poet—

"E'en sorrow, touched by thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

Nor can we doubt that the visions of God which were set before him in Patmos were among the minor rewards, the "hundred-fold in this life," which were given to him for his unfaltering faith and his undying love for his Redeemer. To him, as to Daniel, the message might have come, "O man, greatly beloved, fear not."

And when this "disciple whom Jesus loved" was at last received into the mansion prepared for him above, does it transcend the grace of our blessed Lord to suppose that the position which he ignorantly sought on earth, in the days of his early ambition, was reserved for him in the heavenly kingdom? That, having drank of the cup of

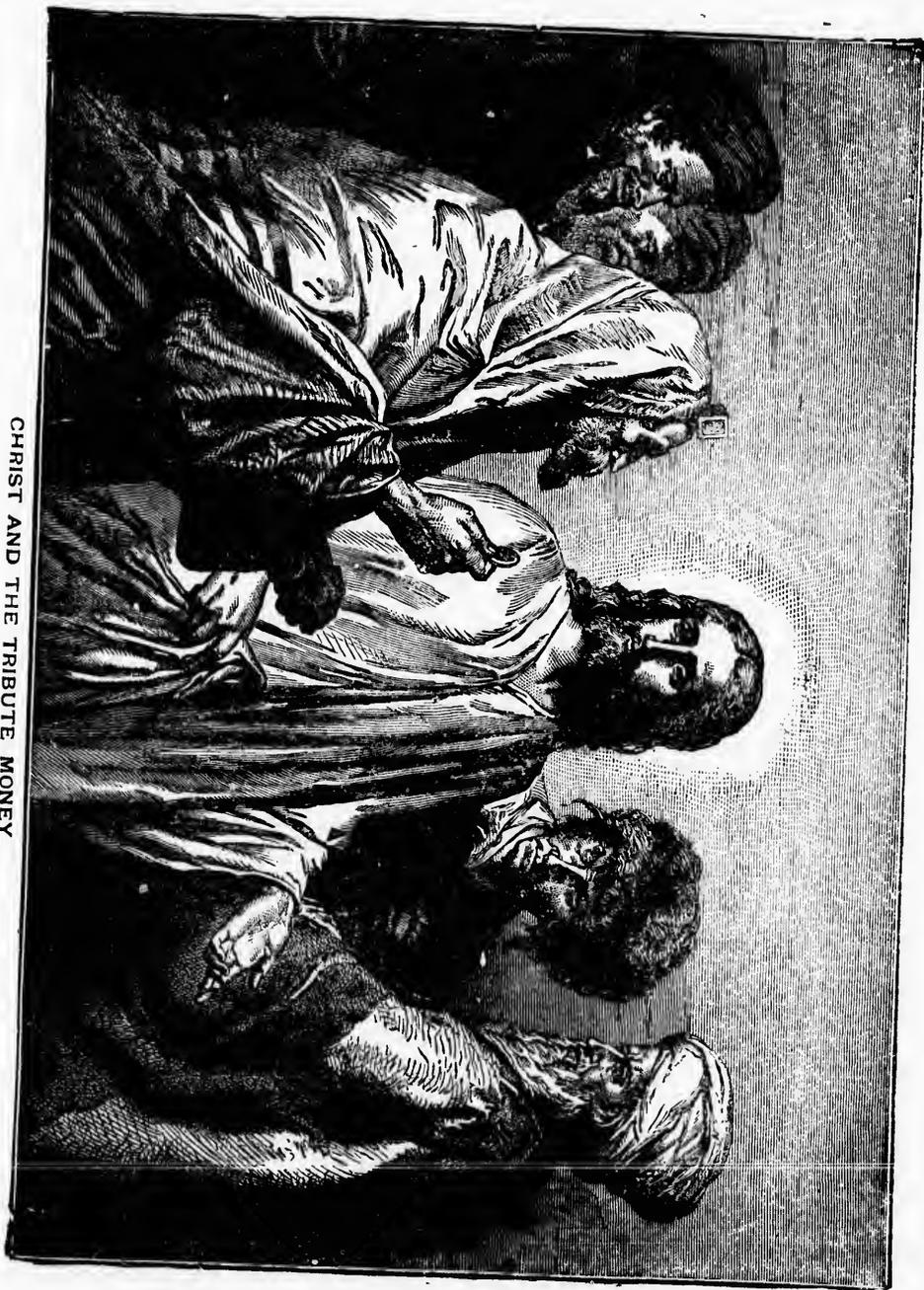
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CHRIST AND THE TRIBUTE MONEY.



Christ's earthly sufferings, and having undergone his baptism of sorrows, this saint of God, so greatly beloved, was called, not as a matter of right, nor because of any claim he could bring, but of the free grace of the Redeemer, to sit at his right hand as one of the prime ministers of the now glorified and reigning Messiah? If such is his blessed lot, no seraph of the heavenly host will utter with more melodious notes the new song, or with a more reverent and adoring spirit will ascribe "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

The lessons of this beautiful life, then, are briefly these: That, however pure and amiable are our natural dispositions, we need to be taught of Christ, and to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, before we can do our Master's work effectively.

That, since Christ hath loved us and given himself for us, the only measure of our love for him should be his love for us; and that the nearer we attain to a perfect and all-absorbing love for him, the fewer will be the clouds and doubts over our pathway, and the more perfect and complete our peace and joy.

That it is only to those who, by long and constant trust in Christ have won this peace which passeth all understanding, that the heavens are opened and they are permitted to know the blessedness of the redeemed in glory, while they are still within this earthly tabernacle.

That if we would have an open and abundant entrance administered to us into the New Jerusalem above, we must imitate the example of the obedient, faithful, loving, and holy John, and, like him, be known to all around us as the disciples whom Jesus loves. God has promised, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

May God give to each of the readers of this book grace thus to overcome.

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THE APOSTLES OF JESUS.

SIMON PETER.



ON the western shore of the Sea of Galilee lay Bethsaida, a city deeply interesting to all Christians as having been the birth-place of several of the Apostles, and afterward the scene of many of the mighty works of Jesus. Here, in a dwelling perhaps scarcely better than the stable at Bethlehem, the great Apostle Simon Peter first saw the light. How little would the humble Jona and his wife imagine, as they looked upon their infant son, that when he became a man he would be a chosen companion, friend, and Apostle of the long looked-for Messiah!

I am compelled, though unwillingly, to pass over the youthful days of Simon (the name given to this Apostle by his parents), no particulars of them having been handed down to us. His father Jona was very poor, and is generally believed to have been a fisherman; and we may readily suppose that his sons, at a very early age, assisted him in his dangerous calling. It is thought that Simon was about ten years old when Jesus was born, so possibly he and his father were fishing on the Lake of Tiberias when the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and told them the joyful news that the Saviour was born. No divine intimation, so far as we know, had the fisher-

men of Galilee that night of the birth of the Redeemer. But perhaps they, to whom every star would be familiar, pointed out to each other a brilliant meteor they had never seen before. Ah! little thought they then that that star was guiding the sages of the East to the cradle of the infant Saviour. In after years, when the events of that wondrous night became known, they would often, perhaps, remind each other of the star of Bethlehem. In the sacred history, years intervene between that time and the period when Simon is first introduced to us. Years were to the poor fisherman of toil and hardship, still not without their blessings. Domestic ties had Simon formed, and there was a dear wife, and it is believed children, to welcome him home after his nights of labor. He had quitted the parental roof, and had removed, it is supposed, on the occasion of his marriage to Capernaum. But thoughts higher and nobler than those connected with the pleasures of the domestic hearth, or the dangers and hardships of his calling, occupied the active mind of Simon. A mighty preacher had appeared on the banks of the Jordan who proclaimed that the Messiah was at hand. The glorious news reached the ears of the sons of Jona. Andrew, and it is believed Simon also, went to hear the Baptist in the wilderness. Certain it is that the brothers were among the first to welcome Jesus when he appeared to John and his disciples, they believing him to be the Christ, the Saviour of the world. It was Andrew who had first the honor of conversing with Jesus, but no sooner had he left the presence of our Lord than he sought his "brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."* Willingly did Simon accompany his brother to the place where Jesus was, who no sooner saw him than he said to him, "Thou shalt be called Cephas."† Cephas in Syriac means a stone or rock; Petros in Greek also means a stone or rock; and so Simon was sometimes called Cephas, but much more generally Peter. This name was given him by our Lord as an honorable title, denoting the firmness and constancy for which, through the grace given him, his faith would be generally

* John i. 41.

† John i. 42.

noted, and which would distinguish his labors and sufferings in the cause of Christ.

Peter did not at his first interview remain long with our Saviour. Oh, what joyful news had the poor fisherman to tell his dear ones at home when he returned to Capernaum. Can we not imagine his wife listening in wondering silence to her husband's account of his meeting with the Lord, while her aged mother would pray that she might, ere she closed her eyes in death, be blessed with the sight of him whom prophets and kings had long desired to see?

We hear nothing more of Peter for a year, but we may suppose, that though during that period he continued to pursue his calling as a fisherman, he spent much of his time in the society of Jesus. Nay, it is not at all improbable that our Lord made the abode of Peter his home whenever he stayed in Capernaum, even before the time when he miraculously cured Peter's mother-in-law. During this year Jesus had been actively employed in his ministry, not alone in Capernaum, but in the region round about, preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and casting out devils. His fame had spread not only throughout Galilee, but in the countries beyond, and multitudes flocked after him wherever he went. We read that they not only followed him, but "pressed upon him"* in their great anxiety to hear the word of God. In Jerusalem, the people heard of Jesus, and went to Galilee to hear him. In Syria, the people heard of Jesus, and went to Galilee to hear him. The Tyrians and Sidonians left their coasts and flocked to the shores of Tiberias to listen to the tidings of salvation. Distance with these poor sinners seemed to be no consideration. How different it is with many professing Christians at the present day! Let the house of God be only a mile or two from their homes, and their constant excuse for not attending upon his service is that the length of the way is wearisome.

Our Saviour one day, to avoid the crowd, stepped into a boat which lay on the beach. This boat belonged to the brothers Peter and Andrew, but they were not in her. They were, however, near on the

shore, washing their nets after a night of fruitless toil. Jesus asked Peter to "thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship."* After he had done speaking, he told Peter to launch the boat into deeper water, and let the net into the sea. Peter replied that he had been toiling all night, which is the best time for fishing, and had caught nothing. However, as Jesus had bidden him, he let down the net.

" 'The livelong night we've toil'd in vain,
But at thy gracious word
I will let down the net again:—
Do thou thy will, O Lord!'

"So spake the weary fisher, spent
With bootless darkling toil,
Yet on his Master's bidding bent
For love and not for spoil."

His obedience was well rewarded, for immediately the net enclosed so many fishes that they could not draw them up into the boat, and they beckoned to their partners, James and John, who were in another ship, to come and help them. When all the fishes were drawn up they filled both the ships. Peter was so struck with the divine power of Jesus, that he fell down at his feet and exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"† He felt himself altogether unworthy of being near so great a personage. But Jesus said, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."‡ And how did he succeed? If you will look at the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you will see that he was in one day the blessed means of bringing three thousand souls to the Lord Jesus Christ.

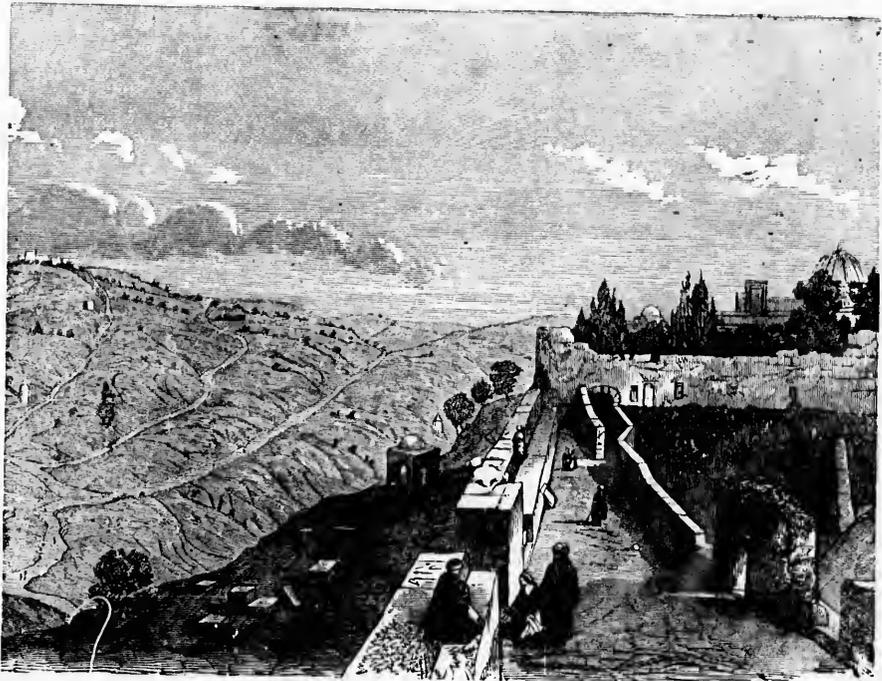
From this time Peter became the constant companion of our Saviour, who soon gave him another proof of his divine power and favor. It was this: The home of Peter, at that time the honored abode of our Lord, was visited by fever. Peter's wife's mother, who, it would appear, resided with her daughter and son-in-law, was seized with the deadly

* Luke v. 3.

† Luke v. 8.

‡ Luke v. 10.

malady. No time, however, was lost in letting Jesus know of her illness. He was in the city, healing the sick and casting out devils, but he no sooner heard of the calamity which had befallen Peter's household, than he went to the bedside of the sick woman, "and stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her."* Yes, it left her! Not, as you might think, weak, and needing rest, but so well that she could



MOUNT OF OLIVES.

at once wait upon Jesus and his disciples, for we read that "immediately she arose and ministered unto them." †

Not long after this Jesus chose his twelve Apostles. The word Apostle means a person sent forth. To these favored ones, among whom was Peter, our Saviour gave "power against unclean spirits, to

* Luke iv. 39.

† Luke iv. 39.

cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." * Intimately associated with Jesus were all the Apostles, but three of them were specially selected by our Lord to be his constant companions. They were Peter, James, and John, who were often allowed to remain with their divine Master when he desired the other Apostles to leave him, or withdrew himself from them. The first time he showed this mark of favor was when he restored the daughter of Jairus to life. The story is this: There was a great man, a ruler of the synagogue of Capernaum, called Jairus. He had a daughter, about twelve years of age, whom he loved very much. Now this dear child was very ill, indeed dying. Jairus had, of course, heard of the wonderful things Jesus had done; so he went to the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where our Lord was, and fell down at his feet, entreating him to go directly to his daughter and lay his hands on her, that she might live. Jesus at once went with him, his disciples accompanying him, and a great number of people following. Before the anxious father, however, could reach home, a servant met him with the tidings that his daughter was dead. This was sad news, but Jairus had a friend near who could at once cheer him with the words, "Be not afraid; only believe." † Jesus allowed no one to proceed any further with him, excepting Jairus, Peter, James, and John. When they reached the ruler's house, the minstrels were playing, and the people making lamentations for the dead, as was the custom in that country when any one of great consequence died. Jesus told them that the maid only slept, but "they laughed him to scorn." ‡ Did their eyes deceive them? Could those stiffened limbs and pale and rigid features belong to any but one from whom the soul had departed? No! they could not believe that she only slept. Soon, however, their scorn was to be turned into astonishment. Jesus put them all out, and with only the father and mother of the maid, and Peter, James, and John, he entered the room where the damsel lay, and, taking her by the hand, "said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise. And straightway the damsel arose and walked." § Can you be surprised to

* Matt. x. 1.

† Mar.: v. 36.

‡ Mark v. 40.

§ Mark v. 41, 42.

read that "they were astonished with a great astonishment?"* Peter ought by this time to have had most perfect confidence in the power of Jesus under all circumstances; but soon his faith was tried till it wavered. He was one night with the other Apostles in a ship on the sea of Galilee. It was dark. They were toiling in rowing; for the wind was against them. Jesus was not with them; he was on a mountain, praying. A violent storm arose, and Peter and his friends were in great danger. They continued in this state of fear and distress till after three o'clock in the morning, when they saw a figure walking on the raging sea towards them. This figure was none other than Jesus, but they did not know him. Their terror was very great, for they thought it was a spirit. Jesus came close to the ship in order that they might see him distinctly; but still they did not know him, and they cried out with fear. The Saviour immediately said, "It is I; be not afraid."† No sooner did Peter hear the voice of his beloved Master, than he begged to be allowed to go to him. Jesus gave him permission. Peter got out of the ship, and walked on the sea towards Jesus; before, however, he reached him, he began to be afraid. Perhaps a high wave arose between them, and prevented him for a moment seeing the Lord. Be that as it may, his faith wavered; and, as he lost his faith, he lost his footing, and began to sink. Then, in an agony, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"‡ Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him; at the same time reproving him for his want of faith. Jesus and Peter entered the ship; the wind ceased, and immediately the ship reached the shore. Then all that were in the ship worshipped Jesus, and said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."§



JESUS AND PETER.

I am sure you will suppose that the disciples could not help think-

* Mark v. 42.

† Matt. xiv. 27.

‡ Matt. xiv. 30.

§ Matt. xiv. 33.

ing Jesus was, indeed, the Son of God; and yet, the very next day after he had been walking on the sea, he told them that some of them did not believe; but Peter assured him that he and the rest of the Apostles believed that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Our Lord knew better than Peter did what was in the hearts of those about him, and although he did not tell them all he knew, he replied, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"* Judas was among them.

One day, when Jesus was walking with his disciples, he said to them, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." † Our Saviour here confirms to the son of Jona the title he had before given him, "Thou art Peter," a stone or rock. Jesus then goes on to say, "and upon this rock (that is upon the confession ‡ which Peter had made that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God) I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The last few words are understood by some to mean that all the assaults and attempts which the powers of darkness can make against Christ's Church shall not be able to overthrow it. And by others the expression, "gates of hell," is understood to signify death as the entrance into hades, or the place of departed spirits. Securely as these gates may be barred, they shall have no power to confine

* John vi. 70.

† Matt. xvi. 13-19.

‡ This view is favored by the changing of the Greek word *petros* in this text into *petra*.

Christ's departed saints when the archangel shall sound the trump of judgment, but all that are within those gates shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth. You are aware, I suppose, that all who were not Jews were called Gentiles. God intended the Jewish religion only for his own peculiar people; but the religion of Jesus Christ was for the whole world, Jews and Gentiles. Christianity broke down the middle-wall of partition between them, and the kingdom of heaven was opened to all believers. Now, the keys of the kingdom of heaven being given to Peter by our Lord, means that it should be his happy



MOUNT TABOR, IN GALILEE.

lot to be the first to open the door of Christ's kingdom to the Gentiles, and persuade them to enter in, and become participators in the glorious privileges of the gospel. In the seventh verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we find Peter reminding the members of the council of the Apostles of this. But the way being opened by Peter, preaching to and baptizing the Gentiles was not confined to him, as you will read hereafter. The expression, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," means that Jesus gave Peter power to retain or do away with whatever portion of the Mosaic law

relating to ceremonies the circumstances of his religion might require. The power which is here confined to things was afterwards extended by our Lord to persons (John xx. 23). The authority given to Peter was not restricted to him, but was given to the other Apostles also. "Whatsoever *ye* shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever *ye* shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,"* said our Saviour, when conversing with his disciples on a future occasion. In the Talmud, a book highly valued by the Jews, the words to bind and to loose are used in the same manner as above, namely, to retain or do away with anything. The extended expression of our Lord relates to the authority the Apostles possessed as the representatives of Christ. The Apostles themselves had not, except when the power was specially given to them, an infallible insight into the characters of men; but they were kept from error in stating the way of salvation, and in administering the discipline of the Church. In such cases their decision was confirmed by their great Master in heaven.

When Jesus first told his disciples that he would have to suffer many things, and be put to death at Jerusalem, Peter, who could not bear to hear him say so, rebuked him with the words, "Be it far from thee," † or, God forbid it. Peter and the rest of the Apostles had still a hope that Jesus would reign as a great king in this world. But Jesus, turning to Peter, said unto him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence to me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." ‡ Satan here signifies an enemy, and the word offence a hinderance; so our Saviour meant to say that Peter, led away with human weakness, would place a hinderance in his way, and tempt him from the path of sorrow which he must tread if mankind were to be saved.

A few days after this the transfiguration on the mount took place. Within about two hours' walk from Nazareth is Tabor, a mountain rising out of the valley of Esdraelon (Jezreel), and celebrated in the Old Testament history as having been the spot selected by Deborah whereon Barak was to assemble his army of ten thousand men before

* Matt. xviii. 18.

† Matt. xvi. 22.

‡ Matt. xvi. 23.

giving battle to Sisera. This mountain is supposed to have been the one on which our Saviour was transfigured. It is described by modern travellers as being about a mile in height, and its sides rugged and precipitous. The shape of the mountain is that of a cone with the top cut off, the summit being a plain about a mile in circumference.

"And it came to pass, about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory and spake of his

decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep."* The apostles slept though it was day. Perhaps the journey up the steep and rugged mountain had taxed their strength too



MOUNT TABOR.

much, and when they reached the top they yielded to the sense of fatigue. Oh, what conflicting feelings must have been theirs when they awoke, and beheld the glorious sight of Christ transfigured! Amazement, joy, and devotion would fill their breasts as they looked upon their beloved Lord, clothed with divine splendor, and attended by two heavenly beings. But, alas! what did their ears hear? That the face of their dear Master, then shining as the sun, must be insultingly spat upon by his enemies, and disfigured by cruel blows; that his temples, then radiant with glory, must be pricked with a thorny

* Luke ix. 28-32.

crown ; that his garments, then glistening with celestial brightness, must be stripped from off his holy body, and be divided among rude soldiers ; and that, as he was then seen between Moses and Elias, he would afterwards be seen between two malefactors.

No two such fitting companions as Moses and Elias could have been found in heaven to attend upon our Saviour when he was glorified upon earth, the one representing the law and the other the prophets. Both of them were noted throughout their lives for their faith and holiness ; both were types of Christ ; both fasted forty days ; both suffered much for the glory of God ; both divided the waters ; both were the messengers of God to kings ; both heard the voice of God in Horeb, and both were wonderful in the mode of their departure from this world.

Moses and Elias appeared as attendants upon the glorified Jesus, to show the agreement of the law and the prophets with Christ, and their fulfillment in him.

It is evident that the impression made upon Peter by what he saw on the mount was greater than that produced upon him by what he heard, for he (supposing that Christ had begun to reign on earth, and that Elias had come as Malachi had foretold he should) said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here ; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."* It was the deeply-rooted opinion of all the disciples that, even after the introduction of the gospel, the whole of the Mosaic law, both moral and ceremonial, would be retained in conjunction with the law of Christ. Now, one of the designs of the transfiguration was to show Peter, James, and John that they were in error on this point. When they awoke, and saw Moses, the Jewish Lawgiver, and Elijah, or Elias, the chief of the prophets, talking with Jesus, they would naturally conclude that they were right in their opinion ; so Peter, ever ready with his speech, proposed that all three, Jesus, Moses, and Elias, should make the holy mount their place of abode. But even while he yet spake, a bright cloud, the Shekinah, or Divine presence, overshadowed

* Matt. xvii. 4.

them. "And, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid."* Moses and Elias vanished. St. Mark tells us that "*suddenly*, when they (Peter, James, and John) had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only." † There stood their unrivalled and undisputed sovereign, whom they were to hear, not Moses nor Elias, but he whom God had just declared was his beloved Son. They were to hear him and him alone, the great Prophet and Teacher of the Church of God. They were to adore him and him alone as their Saviour, and obey him and him alone as their Lawgiver and King.

Much might be written upon this subject that could not fail to interest you. I must, however, confine myself to a few remarks. Tabor has been called the



MOUNT SINAI.

Gospel Sinai, and the resemblance between the transactions which took place on the two mountains, Sinai and Tabor, is striking. On the former, the law was given by God to Moses; on the latter, God preached the gospel to the three disciples. When Moses went up into Sinai, not even the priests were allowed to go up with him; when Jesus went up Tabor, his attendants were not suffered to accompany him, except the three favored ones as witnesses. On Sinai the face of Moses shone when God talked with him; on Tabor the

* Matt. xvii. 5, 6.

† Mark ix. 8.

face of Jesus shone as the sun. Out of the midst of a cloud on Sinai, Moses heard the voice of God; out of the midst of a cloud on Tabor, Peter, James, and John heard the voice of God. But there was this difference, the cloud on Sinai was a thick one, that on Tabor a bright one. There was darkness in the law, but light in the gospel. The people at the foot of Sinai trembled when they heard the thunderings and the noise of the trumpet, and saw the lightnings and the mountain smoking. Peter, James, and John feared when they entered the cloud on Tabor. And, lastly, Moses encouraged the people with the words, "Fear not;"* and Jesus comforted the three Apostles with the words, "Be not afraid."†

So long as the world endureth will these two mountains remain as monuments of the terrible majesty and the exceeding great love of our Father in heaven. Neither you nor I, dear reader, will probably ever, like some of our more privileged countrymen, ascend Sinai or Tabor. But we are all, I trust, journeying to the heavenly Zion (which is far better), where we shall see the blessed Jesus, the glorified Redeemer, attended not only by Moses and Elias, but by a great multitude which cannot be numbered. Oh, may we then be ready to exclaim, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!"‡

The venerable Bede tells us that, in accordance with Peter's wish, there were afterward built three churches on the top of Tabor, which in later times were held in great veneration.

Peter, James, and John remained with our Saviour all night on the mountain. The other Apostles were in the valley below. And you will agree with me, if you will read the ninth chapter of St. Luke, that it must have been a most welcome sight to the nine, that of Jesus descending Tabor with the three greatly favored ones; even Judas would be glad to see the Lord to help him with the rest out of a difficulty.

Shortly after this our Saviour and his Apostles arrived at Capernaum, and "they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute? He saith, Yes."§ The tribute of half a

* Exod. xx. 20.

† Matt. xvii. 7.

‡ Rev. v. 13.

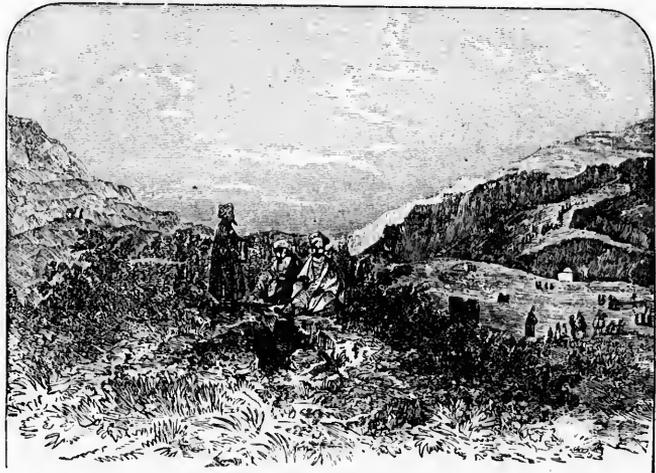
§ Matt. xvii. 24, 25.

shkel (equal to thirty cents of our money) was commanded by God to be paid annually by every Jew above twenty years of age. This money was to be devoted to the service of the tabernacle (and of course afterward to the service of the temple), and with it was bought everything that was necessary for public worship. No sooner had Peter answered the tribute gatherers than he went into his house where Jesus was. Our Lord, though inside the dwelling, knew what had passed in the street, and before Peter could speak said, "What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?"

Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.* When a king subdued a country, and laid a tribute upon the inhabitants, he did not tax his own people or children who might happen

afterwards to live in that country, but the strangers whom he had conquered. So Jesus argued that, as earthly kings did not receive tribute from their own people or children, so he, the Son of God, was exempt from paying tribute to God.

Jesus was by this time well known in Capernaum as a great prophet. The people were enraptured by his preaching, and astonished at his miracles. The story of the restoration of the daughter of Jairus, no



EASTERN SCENERY.

* Matt. xvii. 25, 26.

doubt, had spread rapidly from house to house. The death of the beloved child of the ruler of the synagogue would cause no little sensation in the city. What, then, must have been the effect upon the minds of the people when they heard that she was miraculously restored to life? This miracle was followed by many others, and we cannot wonder that the tribute gatherers hesitated about demanding tribute from the Lord Jesus. Our Saviour did not wish to give offense by appearing to despise the temple, and not to respect the authority which had originally commanded this tribute to be paid. And as he and his poor host had no money, or at least not sufficient, he said to Peter, "Go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: * that take, and give unto them for me and thee." † St. Matthew (the only Evangelist who mentions this miracle) says no more on the subject; but we infer, even from his silence, that Peter did as he was commanded by our Lord.

It was not every poor Jew who had a divine Master near him to miraculously provide him with the means of paying the tribute; and doubtless many were often unprepared to meet the demands of the collectors, although all, when they could, would cheerfully give money that was devoted to the maintenance of their beautiful and beloved temple. How different must their feelings have been when, after Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of the Romans, and its glorious temple had been destroyed, they (so Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us) were compelled to pay every year into the Capitol in Rome the same sum they had annually paid to the Temple in Jerusalem.

After the miracle of the fish and the tribute money, St. Matthew relates Christ's discourse with his disciples about humility and forgiveness, and tells us that Peter asked Jesus how often he should forgive his brother. "Lord, how oft," said the Apostle, "shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times

* A stater, or shekel of silver, value sixty cents.

† Matt. xvii. 27.

seven." * Jesus meant Peter to understand that, however often his Christian brother offended or harmed him, he was to forgive him if he repented of what he had done, and sought his forgiveness. Our Lord then illustrated what he had said by the beautiful parable of the king and his servants, which you can read in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel.

One day a rich young man, a ruler, came running to Jesus, and when he had reached him, he "said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" † Our Saviour told him that he must keep the commandments. He inquired, Which? Jesus answered, "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." ‡ The young man replied, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" § "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." || Several times before had Jesus given this invitation, and it had always been accepted. To Peter and Andrew he had said, "Follow me," ¶ and they forsook all and followed him. Our Lord called James and John, we may suppose, with the words, "Follow me;" "and they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." ** Philip and Matthew heard the same gracious words, and needed not a second invitation. But the young rich ruler whom Jesus loved refused to obey the voice of the divine Redeemer. True, he felt sorrowful, nay more, grieved, but still he went away. He longed to follow Jesus, and to obtain eternal life, but he loved his earthly treasures more than the Saviour or his own precious soul. He went away, and never again, in all probability, saw Jesus. Upon our Saviour remarking, after the young ruler had gone, how hard it was for a rich man, or one who trusted in riches, to enter the kingdom of God, Peter asked him what

* Matt. xviii. 21, 22.

† Matt. xix. 16.

‡ Matt. xix. 18, 19.

§ Matt. xix. 20.

|| Mark x. 21.

¶ Matt. iv. 19.

** Matt. iv. 22.

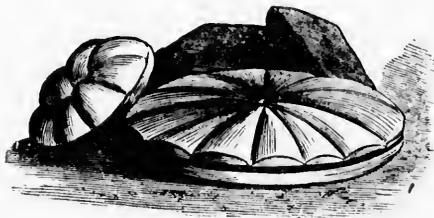
reward he and his companions should have who had forsaken all and followed him. Our Lord answered, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."* "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."† This promise Jesus repeated to his Apostles on the night of his betrayal. The promise made by Christ to his followers of temporal blessings in such abundance, must not be taken literally, it means that more, a hundredfold more, than houses, or brethren, or sisters, or fathers, or mothers, or wives, or children, or lands, should those who had forsaken all for his sake have in the peace of conscience, the fellowship with God, the communion with the saints, and the glorious and blissful prospect of heaven which they should enjoy. The chief promise of our Saviour to his faithful followers relates to their future state, and by-and-by, in the day of regeneration, when God shall make all things new, and when Christ shall come with his holy angels, and shall sit in the throne of his glory, the Apostles shall be seated upon thrones "judging the twelve tribes of Israel," that is, the Jews. The Apostles will bear witness to the acceptance of the gospel, or its rejection, by the twelve tribes, and they will join in the justness of the sentence the Lord Jesus will then pronounce. Here is, doubtless, an honor spoken of to which other saints are not to be raised. Our Saviour evidently alludes to the custom of princes having their great men ranged around them as assessors or assistants, when they sit in judgment or council.

In writing the life of Peter, so far as it is recorded in the sacred narrative, I must confine myself as much as possible to the events in which he is individually mentioned. But it must not be forgotten that, in doing this, I omit many, very many, deeply interesting scenes in which he, as one of the twelve, took a part.

* Mark x. 29, 30.

† Matt. xix. 28.

The time approached when Jesus would give his life a sacrifice for the sins of men. He made a solemn progress from Galilee to Jerusalem; and when his journey was near its end, he came to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives. When there he sent two of his disciples (supposed to have been Peter and John), "saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."*

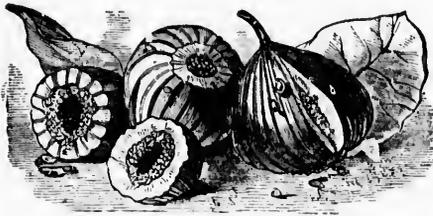


UNLEAVENED BREAD.

The sight of our Saviour entering Jerusalem amidst the hosannas of the multitude, and riding upon an ass, must have confirmed, in the minds of many wavering Jews, the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the long-looked-for Messiah. The Jews always understood that Zechariah, in the passage the Evangelists quote, meant the Messiah. It was customary for the Hebrew rulers and princes to make use of asses, which in Eastern countries were much higher and more beautiful than those we are in the habit of seeing. Deborah, the prophetess of Israel, in her exquisite hymn of thanksgiving for the

* Luke xix. 30-38.

deliverance of Israel from Jabin and Sisera, describes the chief governors of Israel as riding on white asses. Jair "judged Israel twenty and two years, and he had thirty sons who rode on thirty ass colts."* Another judge we read of, Abdon, "had forty sons and thirty nephews that rode on threescore and ten ass colts."† But from the building of the temple after the Babylonian captivity to its destruction by Titus, no one but Jesus ever entered the gates of Jerusalem sitting upon an ass and attended by a multitude proclaiming him king. And yet the rulers of the city, with the priests and scribes, would not acknowledge the Messiah when he did come. Pride and envy made them willfully blind; and instead of welcoming their long-looked-for king when he at length appeared, as their prophets had said he should, they only "sought how they might kill him."‡



FIGS.

The humble village of Bethany had the honor of affording a resting-place for our Saviour during the last few nights which preceded his arrest in Gethsemane. The Mount of Olives lay between Jerusalem and

Bethany, and the morning after Jesus had entered the city in triumph, saw him and his disciples passing over Olivet on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus, we read, "was hungry: and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it."§ On the following morning, as they passed by the same spot, "they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away."|| When you have read the words "the time of figs

* Judges x. 3, 4.

§ Mark xi. 12-14.

† Judges xii. 14.

|| Mark xi. 20, 21.

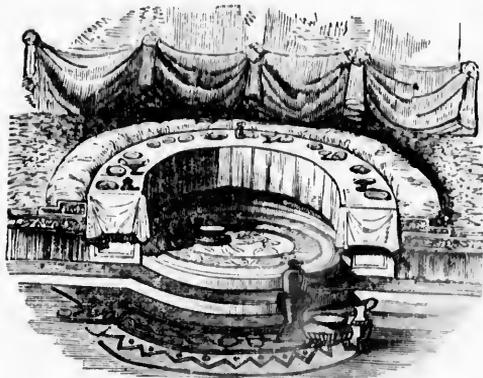
‡ Luke xxii. 2.

was not yet," you will have supposed that they mean it was not the season for figs to be on the tree, and may have wondered why Jesus was disappointed at not finding any fruit. The expression means, that it was not the time for the in-gathering of figs, and as the fig tree forms its early fruit as soon as its leaves, and the time of gathering the fruit had not arrived, there being no fruit on the tree was an evident proof that it was barren. Whatever the season might have been, our Lord had reason to expect to find fruit ripe or unripe on the tree, as it is the nature of the fig tree in a favorable climate to be always bearing, and while one fig is ripe another is green. But this tree had no fruit of any description upon it. Our Saviour consequently cursed it, and the tree immediately withered away. This was a parable *performed*. Jesus wished his disciples to understand the fig tree as a significant symbol of the Jewish nation, which had then but a formal profession of religion, possessing the leaves but not the fruits of holiness, and that like the fig tree it should be suddenly cursed and rooted out. Peter did not live to see the fulfillment of the prophecy, but one at least of his companions did.

Three days after his public entry into Jerusalem, Jesus told Peter and John to go into the city, and they would meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him, and if he went into a house, they were to go in also, and say to the master of the house, "Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?"* The guestchamber was a room set apart for company. Apartments in Jerusalem were not, at the season of the Passover (when the city would be crowded with strangers from all parts), to be let, but were at the service of any who wished to partake of the feast. Peter and John did as our Lord directed them. They went into the city; met a man carrying a pitcher of water; saw him go into a house, and followed him; delivered the message of Jesus to the master, who showed them the guestchamber furnished and prepared. There they made ready the Passover. In the evening Jesus, with his twelve Apostles, sat down to eat the Passover. What a solemn meeting!

* Mark xiv. 14.

Jesus knew that before the next evening he would be in paradise; but his poor disciples would be scattered and frightened as sheep having lost their shepherd. The feast of the Passover, you will remember, was a festival kept in commemoration of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, and took its name from the destroying angel passing over the houses of the Israelites, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. The feast consisted of a lamb, roasted, which was eaten with bitter herbs. These bitter herbs were dipped into a sauce called charoseth, which was composed of dates, figs, or raisins, beaten into a pulp, and then mixed with vinegar and other ingredients to the consistency of thick mustard.



AN EASTERN DINING-ROOM.

This sauce was a memorial of the clay with which the Israelites made bricks in Egypt, and the herbs of the bitter trials they there endured. The guests at the feast of the Passover also dipped the unleavened bread in the charoseth and then ate it. It is supposed that it was in this sauce that Christ dipped the sop which he gave to Judas.

The Jews observed the following ceremonies at their solemn feasts: When the party who were to partake of the feast met they were first to salute each other either with a bow or such words as, "Peace be unto thee," or by kissing one another. Paul calls the last mode of salutation a "holy kiss,"* and Peter "a kiss of charity,"† or love. The next ceremony was washing the feet. This was only done once, excepting at the feast of the Passover, when the feet were washed both before and after the feast. This office was performed by servants and the meanest of the family. Indeed, the very vessels which had been

* 1 Cor. xvi. 20.

† 1 Peter v. 14.

used for the purpose were considered vile. They were called wash-pots. The Psalmist wishing to show his contempt for the Moabites, said, "Moab is my wash-pot,"* which means that he would reduce that people to the vilest servitude. After the feet were washed, oil was poured upon them and upon the heads of the guests. When these preparatory ceremonies were over, the guests arranged themselves in a reclining posture round the table. The master of the house then took a cup of wine in his right hand and blessed it, using these words, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, the King of all the world, which createst the fruit of the vine." After saying this he tasted the wine, and from him it was passed round the table. The master then took a piece of bread, which was lightly cut, but not through, so that it could be easily broken, and holding it in both his hands he consecrated it, using these words, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, which bringeth forth bread out of the earth." He then broke it in pieces, and gave to each guest a morsel. The bread and wine having been partaken of, the guests with the master of the house began to eat the paschal lamb. When they were satisfied they gave thanks in the following manner: The master took a cup of wine in both his hands and said, "Let us bless him who hath fed us with his own, and of whose goodness we live." Then all the guests answered, "Blessed be he of whose meat we have eaten, and of whose goodness we live." The master then added a long prayer, after which the guests said to themselves in a soft, low voice, "Fear ye the Lord, all ye his holy ones, because there is no penury to those that fear him; the young lions do want and suffer hunger, but those who seek the Lord want no good thing." † The master then blessed the cup, using the same words he did at the beginning of the feast, and after drinking a little of the wine passed it round the table. This is believed to have been the cup our Saviour used when instituting the holy sacrament. They then concluded by singing the great hallel or hymn of praise, the words of which you will find in the hundred and fifteenth and three following psalms.

* Ps. lx. 8.

† Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10.

You will, I think, after reading this account of the feast of the Passover, better understand the transactions of our Lord and his disciples at "the last supper." We read that after Jesus had sat down with the twelve Apostles "he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my



AN EASTERN FEAST.

body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."* Jesus did not, as you will have observed, when he instituted the sacrament of his most blessed body and

blood, appoint a new rite, but appropriated an old one to answer a new purpose. His followers were no longer to eat the consecrated bread and drink the consecrated wine in remembrance of the deliverance of their forefathers out of Egypt, but in remembrance of their dear Master, who, by dying for them delivered them from spiritual bondage, a bondage far worse than the Egyptian one. The feast of the Passover was restricted to Jews, but all Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, may partake of the gospel feast. Jesus invites all his dis-

* Luke xxii. 15-20.

ciples to come to the holy supper. Can it be possible that any of them refuse so gracious an invitation? Alas, it is often too true that it is unheeded. In vain is the feast provided. The messengers of Christ point to the bread and wine, and remind their flocks of all the touching scenes connected with their Saviour's almost dying command, "This do in remembrance of me." They are eloquent in a cause of such vital importance to the souls of their hearers; and what is the result? Many, very many, as soon as the pleaders are silent, turn their backs upon the sacred feast, as though it were an idle tale they had been listening to.

Toward the end of the paschal supper, Jesus arose and took off his outer garment. This piece of dress was long, and would be in the way when the bearer wanted to do any work. Our Lord then poured some water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet. He wished to set them an example of love and humility, telling them that they ought to wash one another's feet, or, in other words, be willing to assist each other in any way, however humble the task might be. When he came to Peter, the Apostle said in astonishment, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"* How characteristic of the impetuous Peter was this question. He loved and revered his Divine Master, and felt his own unworthiness too much to allow Jesus to perform such a menial office for him. But our Lord, in order to remove his scruples, said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."† Peter ought at once, after hearing this, to have allowed Jesus to proceed with the ceremony, as our Saviour plainly intimated that there was a hidden meaning in what he wished to do. But Peter was obstinate in his refusal, and said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," Jesus answered him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."‡ This was an awful threat, but light at once dawned upon Peter's mind. "If I wash *thee* not," that is, unless thou art washed in my blood and renewed by my spirit, represented by my washing thy feet, "thou hast no part with me." Peter at once "saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."§ He would rather be washed

* John xiii. 6.

† John xiii. 7.

‡ John xiii. 8.

§ John xiii. 9.

all over than not to belong to the Saviour. "Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." * In consequence of it being the custom for the people of the East in our Lord's time to go abroad barefoot or with thin sandals, the feet required to be washed much more frequently than other parts of the body. So a pardoned sinner, though pardoned completely, has still pollutions daily contracted to be daily washed away.

When Jesus had sat down again, he told his Apostles that one of them should betray him. The disciples looked at each other, wondering which of them could do such a wicked deed. They were very much grieved, and each began to say, "Lord, is it I?" † "Now, there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.



ROMANS AT TABLE IN TIME OF PAUL.

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then, lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to

Judas Iscariot." ‡ The traitor very shortly after this left the room, and then Jesus told his disciples that he would before long leave them. Peter asked him where he was going to? Our Lord said, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." § Peter would remember these words when he was, like Jesus, fastened to the cross. But, not knowing his future fate, he said, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." || Jesus answered him, with a countenance and voice more expressive of pity than severity, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?" ** As much as though our Lord had said, Ah,

* John xiii. 10.

§ John xiii. 36.

† Matt. xxvi. 22.

|| John xiii. 37.

‡ John xiii. 23-26.

** John xiii. 38.

Peter, this is sooner said than done. Life is not so readily parted with. You trembled upon the water; and beginning to sink, you cried out, "Lord, save me."* Be not so confident now. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." † Peter had too much confidence in his own strength, so, notwithstanding what Jesus had said, he declared, that though he should die with him, he would not deny him. "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I," ‡ he said. He doubted the faith and courage of other, but had no doubt about his own.

The paschal hymn having been sung by our Saviour and the eleven Apostles, they all went to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus, with many sweet words, comforted and instructed his sorrowing disciples; and after offering up a fervent prayer for them, "he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron." § "And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy." || And now our Saviour suffered that bitter agony which caused him to sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."** He was taking upon himself the sins of mankind. He knew he was going to be sacrificed, to suffer a slow and most painful death, and he prayed that if it were possible the cup of sorrow might pass from him; but at the same time added, "Not my will, but thine be done." † † Oh, whenever we think of Jesus on that dreadful night, kneeling in agony on the ground, how must we hate sin! When you are tempted to sin, rather than submit to any evil, think of Jesus in the garden—

"Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the tempter's power,"

And Jesus, who is now reigning in all his glorious majesty in heaven, will send the Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen you.

While Jesus was passing through such dreadful sufferings, his wearied

* Matt. xiv. 30.

† John xiii. 38.

‡ Mark xiv. 29.

§ John xviii. 1.

|| Mark xiv. 32, 33.

** Luke xxii. 44.

† † Luke xxii. 42.

disciples had fallen asleep. Our Lord went to them and said to Peter "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again (for their eyes were heavy), neither wist they what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on



POTTER'S FIELD, OR FIELD OF BLOOD.

now, and take your rest; it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.* We can easily suppose how Peter, James, and John would start to their feet. But we can scarcely imagine their surprise and horror when they saw Judas leading armed

* Mark xiv. 37-42.

soldiers to the spot where their dear Master was standing. A servant of the high priest, named Malchus, tried to take hold of Jesus. Peter was so indignant that he struck Malchus with his sword, possibly intending to kill him, but he only cut off his ear. Our Lord reproved Peter for using his sword, and touching the ear of Malchus he healed him. The disciples fled. Peter, however, summoned resolution to return and follow Jesus and his captors, though afar off. The Saviour was taken to the palace of Caiaphas the high priest, where he was to be tried by his cruel judges. Another disciple (supposed to have been John) also followed Jesus, and went with him into the palace. Peter, we find, stood outside, and could not gain admittance until the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, "spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter."* A favor, doubtless, Peter thought it, to be allowed to enter the palace. Alas! what misery and self-reproach he would have escaped if he had remained shivering in the cold without. "And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly."† The glance of Jesus had pierced his heart. And well might he weep! He, a disciple, an apostle, and a special favorite, had denied his beloved Master his Saviour and Redeemer. Peter shed tears of true penitence. He remembered how, a few hours before, when Jesus told him he had prayed for him that his faith might not fail, he had declared that he was ready to

* Joh. xviii. 16.

† Luke xxii. 55-62.

go with his dear Lord to prison and to death, and how, when the time of trial came, he had bent as a reed in the wind. His faith was assaulted, it gave way, but it did not utterly fail. He repented, and became again the faithful and affectionate disciple he was before. With the remembrance of his fall, which lasted through his life, Peter never forgot the Saviour's injunction, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."* By his faithfulness, his preaching, his courage, his love, his devotion, his zeal, his firmness, his patience, his humility, and, lastly, by his cheerfully submitting to death on the cross, Peter strengthened his brethren.

After his fall and repentance we hear nothing more of Peter till the resurrection morn. The holy women who had gone to the sepulchre with spices to anoint the body of Jesus, saw an angel, who said unto them, "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him as he said unto you."† Why was Peter specially mentioned? That he might be comforted by the assurance that his dear Master had forgiven him and still regarded him with favor as one of his chosen ones. How Peter spent the hours which intervened between his denial and his meeting with the women, we know not. But most probably he was bowed down to the earth with grief, not only on account of the condemnation and death of his beloved Master, but also on account of his own baseness. Neither do we know where he went to when he left the palace of Caiaphas, but we may suppose that the gentle and affectionate John took his humbled and penitent brother to his own home, for we find these two disciples running together to the sepulchre after Mary Magdalene had told them that the body of Jesus was gone. "And the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple,

* Luke xxii. 32.

† Mark xvi. 7.

which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed."* They believed that the body had, as Mary Magdalene had told them, been taken away. They did not believe that Christ had risen, and yet they could scarcely have supposed that the grave-clothes of Jesus would have been left in such order had the body been stolen; fear and haste would have caused the riflers of the tomb to leave all behind them in confusion. Before that day drew to its close, Jesus appeared to Peter when he was alone, but what passed between the risen Saviour and his penitent Apostle we are not informed.

I cannot tell you exactly how long it was after the resurrection that Peter and the disciples saw Jesus by appointment in Galilee; but certainly it was more than eight days, for it was after eight days that our Lord appeared to the Apostles in a room in Jerusalem, when Thomas was with them, and this occurred before the meeting in Galilee. This meeting is generally believed to have taken place on Mount Tabor, and it is supposed that many disciples besides the Apostles saw Jesus on the mountain; indeed, it is thought by some that this was the occasion Paul speaks of when he tells the Corinthians that Jesus "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once." † St. Matthew says, "And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted." ‡ It is conjectured that the reason why some doubted was because they were at a greater distance from Jesus than others, and could not as distinctly see him.

Once again we find Peter on the sea of Galilee engaged in his old trade of fishing. Several of the Apostles were with him. All night long they toiled, and caught nothing. "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now, when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt

* John xx. 4-8.

† 1 Cor. xv. 6.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 17.

his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea." * Peter's impatience and eagerness would not let him wait till the ship neared the shore. The expression "he was naked" means that he had only his under dress on, which was a close-fitting garment. The people of the East wore over the tunic, or under garment, a loose square piece of cloth, which they girded about their waists in time of work or action. When they had not this *upper*



"WHEN THE MORNING WAS NOW COME, JESUS STOOD ON THE SHORE."

garment on they were spoken of as being naked. David, we read, danced before the ark uncovered or naked, which means he only wore his tunic when he danced, and that he had put off his royal robes.

Regardless of the wet and cold, the devoted Apostle waded through the water to Jesus, and we can imagine him with feelings of rapture,

* John xxi. 4-7.

love, and reverence, prostrating himself before his Saviour on the beach. In the meantime the other disciples reached the shore in a little ship, dragging the net with fishes. When they landed they saw a fire of coals, "and fish laid thereon and bread,"*—no doubt miraculously provided. Jesus told them to bring the fish they had caught. The ever-ready and active Peter "went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine." † "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." ‡ Peter did not now presume to say that he loved Jesus more than the other Apostles did, but appealed to our Lord's divine knowledge of his heart. "Lord, thou *knowest* that I love thee." Blessed Peter, who feared not the all-searching eye of his Saviour, but could appeal to his Omniscience to confirm the truth of his sincerity. Three times did our Saviour ask him the same question, thus reminding Peter of his threefold denial of him. Each time Jesus received the same answer. No wonder Peter was grieved. But in order that he might know that he was forgiven, and that Jesus had again confidence in him, our Lord three times commanded him to feed his flock. He was to instruct and guide all of Christ's fold. To feed the lambs, by giving them the sincere milk of the word, by comforting the feeble-minded, and supporting the weak. The sheep, by leading them to the rich pastures of God's word and ordinances, and encouraging them to grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This commission had been given, in other words, to all the Apostles, and Peter only received it now from the lips of Jesus that he might know he was fully restored to his former position. Our Lord again foretold to Peter the mode of his death. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird

* John xxi. 9.

† John xxi. 11-13.

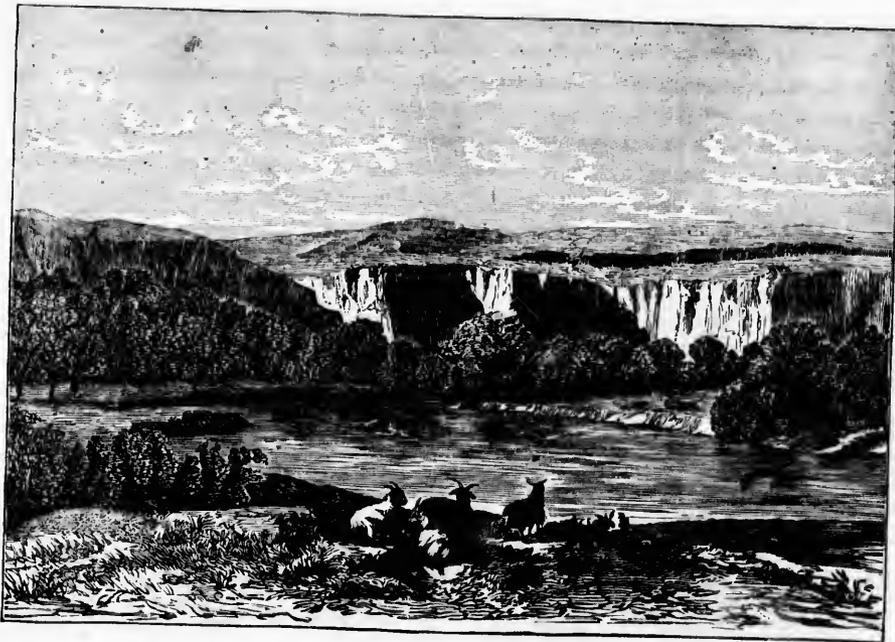
‡ John xxi. 15.

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thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."* Two years before had Peter, as now, stood on the shore of Galilee, with his fishing net miraculously filled with fishes, and listening to the gracious words, "Follow me." Where to, Lord? might the poor fisherman have asked. To where poverty, sickness, ignorance, and vice dwell; to the solitude of the



THE RIVER JORDAN.

barren wilderness and the lonely mountain, to prison, and to Calvary, would be the reply. "Follow me," said the risen Saviour. How? might the Apostle have asked. By walking in the paths of active obedience, by obeying my precepts, by imitating my example. Follow me to the cross, from whence thou shalt follow me to my glorious home above, and there occupy the throne awaiting thee.

* John xxi. 18, 19.

The prospect of suffering even unto death for Christ's sake did not now, it appears, alarm the so lately cowardly Apostle, for Peter, immediately after hearing the prediction of his martyrdom, only betrayed anxiety to know what would befall his companion, John. "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."* Our Saviour mildly rebuked Peter's curiosity; he would have him know that what might happen to John was no concern of his, and that he would have enough to do if he attended to his own duty.

We are not told how long Jesus remained with the Apostles on the shore of Galilee. But it is evident that Peter and his companions did not pursue their trade of fishing, for we next find the eleven with our Saviour near Jerusalem. And Jesus "led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."† "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."‡ These angels were mercifully sent to the Apostles to instruct and console them at a moment when they would naturally be keenly feeling their desolate condition. They were not only consoled, but cheered, for St. Luke at the close of his Gospel tells us that "they returned to Jerusalem with great joy." §

The Apostles remained at Jerusalem according to the command of Jesus until the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. They and many of the disciples met in an upper room where they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter

* John xxi. 20-22.

† Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

‡ Acts. i. 10, 11.

§ Luke xxiv. 52.

stood up in the midst of the disciples,"* and addressed them on the subject of electing an Apostle in the place of the traitor Judas.

When the Apostles had received the gift of the Holy Ghost and had begun to speak many languages, the people said they had been taking too much wine. Peter boldly defended himself and his friends, and spoke with such power that three thousand of his listeners became Christians. Before multitudes, Peter now gloried in being a follower of Christ.

The first miracle recorded as having been performed by the Apostles after the conversion of the three thousand was the healing of the crippled beggar. St. Luke (who wrote the Acts of the Apostles) gives



THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

the following account of it:—"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he

gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate

* Acts i. 14, 15.

of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering."* No marvel that this miracle made so great a sensation. Daily for some time, perhaps for many years, had the worshippers at the temple been in the habit of seeing this poor man, and listening to his piteous tale. And now at the name of Jesus Christ his distorted limbs had become straight and his ankle bones had received strength, and he who had from his birth, a period of forty years, been a helpless cripple, now walked. Those who have been always blessed with the use of their limbs can scarcely imagine the gratitude and joy of this poor man, when as if testing the new power just given to him he went into the temple "walking, and leaping." Often perhaps had he seen the blessed Jesus enter the temple through the Beautiful gate, and often perhaps his outstretched hand had almost touched the hem of the Saviour's garment; and though his body had not been made whole, his soul may have felt the influence of the Divine presence; and when Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," he was prepared to acknowledge him by whose power he obeyed the command.

The address of Peter to the astonished multitude you will find in the third chapter of the Acts. Who can read it without being struck



SEA OF GALILEE.

* Acts iii. 1-11.

with the boldness and courage of the once timid Apostle? He spoke to a vast assembly, to many who only a few weeks before had joined in the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him,"* and who hated and despised the very name of Jesus of Nazareth. These the dauntless Apostle accused of being murderers, of having killed the Prince of Life. He then told them that it was through faith in Jesus that the man whom they both saw and knew had been made strong. With irresistible arguments he exhorted them to repent. The result was that very many became Christians, and that the company of believers now numbered five thousand men. But the priests and Sadducees, though strongly opposed to each other in their religious belief, united in their opposition to the Apostles. Peter and John were seized and put into prison. On the morrow they were brought before the rulers, elders, and scribes, "and when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" † Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost, who both strengthened and instructed him. The words of Jesus never fail. He had told his disciples that they should be brought before kings and rulers for his sake, and that he would give them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay nor resist. With inspired words Peter answered his judges. He told them the simple truth, and the priests, elders, and scribes could say nothing against it. They were at a loss to know what to do, so they ordered all to leave the council-chamber while they consulted together. They agreed to threaten Peter and John and then let them go. "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done." ‡ "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests

* Luke xxiii. 21.

† Acts iv. 7.

‡ Acts iv. 18-21.

and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where



VALLEY OF JEZREEL.

they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* Oh, what a thrilling scene this must have been! Where it took place we do not exactly know, but most probably the same upper room in which the band of believers met after the ascension was still the meeting-place of the followers of the crucified One. We can imagine with what consternation the disciples heard of the arrest of Peter and John, and how they would immediately convene together, and with prayer and supplication entreat the Lord to

* Acts iv. 23-31.

protect his servants. Their prayers were answered. Peter and John, unfettered and free, joined them. The two Apostles soon told their story, and then the whole assembly lifted up their voices to God. We would gladly know whose voices joined in that fervent prayer. We are not told, but we may reasonably suppose, that in addition to the Apostles, most if not all the seventy disciples were of the company. Salome, the mother of John, was perhaps there, and the other devoted women who had followed Jesus from Galilee. And possibly the mother of Jesus, who had trembled for the safety of her only earthly protector, now lifted up her voice in prayer and praise with the rest; and perhaps Lazarus and his sisters were there, and many whom Jesus had healed of their infirmities; and possibly some of the mothers who had taken their little ones to the Saviour to be blessed by him formed part of the company. Far above the noisy city, far above the loftiest pinnacle of the temple, their voices rose. In heaven their prayer was heard. "The place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

We now come to a very, very sad story. The followers of Jesus increased rapidly, and the majority of them being poor, "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."* There were among the believers a man and his wife named Ananias and Sapphira, who, though professing to be disciples, had not the grace of God in their hearts. They had landed possessions, which they sold avowedly for the same purpose as the rest, not wishing to appear behind their companions in zeal and benevolence. But they were not willing to part with all their money; so they agreed between themselves to give the Apostles only a portion of it. They were quite at liberty to do so if they chose, and as they had not faith enough to trust in the Lord providing for their future wants, they only acted with common worldly prudence. Had they brought a part of the money, and

* Acts iv. 34, 35.

said they willingly gave so much, all might have been well : they would but have had the reputation of not being wholly disinterested. Grace might ere long have been given them, and they would then have been both ready and willing, from the purest motives, to lend *all* they possessed to the Lord. But covetousness and vainglory tempted them to commit a fearful sin. They took part of the money to the Apostles, declaring it was all their estate had produced. One of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost was the power of discerning spirits,—that is, of seeing the inward purposes of men's hearts. Peter at this time possessed this power, so when Ananias laid the money at the Apostles' feet, "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.



ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."*

The speedy and awful display of God's vengeance upon this guilty pair was necessary to prevent the intrusion of hypocrites into the society of the believers. The desired effect was produced, for very shortly after the account of this transaction we read the words, "and of the rest durst no man join himself to them."† Many hypocrites would doubtless have made an effort to join the disciples, from no other motive but the prospect of being maintained out of the believers' treasury. But with the terrible fate of Ananias and Sapphira before them, they dared not attempt to pollute the assembly of God's saints with their presence. Peter charged Ananias with having lied to the Holy Ghost, and directly afterwards says, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God," thereby showing that the Holy Ghost is God. The young men, we read, wound Ananias up and buried him. These last sad duties were also performed for Sapphira. In their graveclothes the corpses were wound, and, as is the custom still in hot eastern countries, were buried almost immediately after their souls had departed.

The judgment of the Almighty upon Ananias and Sapphira was immediately followed by numerous acts of mercy, as though to invite people to love Christianity, and so join the believers without fear. Many wonders were wrought by the Apostles, insomuch that the people "brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them."‡ It is not said that his shadow *cured* the sick, neither are we told that it did not. But if God did make use of the shadow to display his power and goodness, there was nothing to marvel at, more than at the fact that the handkerchiefs and aprons which had touched Paul's body were used as instruments to cure diseases and cast out devils. Multitudes became believers. Then the high priest, an ungodly man, if not a Sadducee, rose, and they that were with him, and, seizing upon the Apostles, "put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison

* Acts v. 3-11.

† Acts v. 13.

‡ Acts v. 15.

doors, and brought them forth." * The next morning the Apostles were found in the temple teaching the people. The high priest had them again seized, and they were brought before the Sanhedrim or chief council of the Jews. Peter and his companions boldly replied to the charge made against them, which so enraged their judges that the Apostles would have been put to death; but, by the advice of one of the council (Gamaliel), they were only beaten, and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then set at liberty. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." †

The Church now began to be much persecuted. The blood of the first martyr, Stephen, had been shed; and Saul of Tarsus was imprisoning all he could lay hands upon who would not deny that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. The believers were obliged to leave Jerusalem: they "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and



THE HIGH PRIEST IN ROBES.

* Acts v. 18, 19.

† Acts v. 41, 42.

Samaria, except the Apostles."* "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."† God brought good out of evil, for as the disciples were dispersed, so was the Gospel. Among those who went to Samaria was Philip—not the Apostle of that name, for he was with the other Apostles at Jerusalem, but Philip the deacon. About that time there was in Samaria a very wicked man called Simon, better known as Simon Magus or Simon the sorcerer, who so bewitched the people with his diabolical arts that they believed him to be a deity. But when Philip appeared among them and preached Jesus, and the Samaritans saw that unclean spirits obeyed his voice, and that those who were afflicted with diseases were healed by him, they believed what he taught "concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ; they were baptized, both men and women."‡ Simon Magus could not help believing like the rest, and he was likewise baptized.

"When the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."§ Simon's greedy eyes at once saw the rich harvest in store for him, if he could only by laying on his hands endow men with miraculous powers. What would not even the nobles and princes of the land offer him for his services, besides the honor that would accrue to himself! Yes, avarice and pride would be abundantly gratified if Peter would sell him the gift of God. But Peter, with the greatest indignation, refused him his request. He felt the most thorough contempt for such a character, and, with his usual zeal, said, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may

* Acts viii. 1.

† Acts viii. 4.

‡ Acts viii. 12.

§ Acts viii. 14-19.

oe purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."* Peter then exhorted Simon to repent, who besought the Apostle to pray for him, not that he (Simon) might repent, but that the judgment denounced upon him might be averted. There is no further notice of Simon Magus in the sacred writings, but ecclesiastical history speaks of him as the father of all heresy. To the end of his days, he remained in the bonds of iniquity. He was by birth a Samaritan, and, travelling into Egypt, there studied oriental philosophy. He returned to Samaria, eminently skilled in medicine, astrology, and other abstruse sciences. He made use of his knowledge to impose upon his countrymen. He was the bitterest enemy to the Church. He allowed that Jesus was a divine person, but not equal to himself. "I am," he says, in one of his books, "the word of God; I am the beauty of God; I am the Comforter; I am the Almighty; I am the whole essence of God." He taught the people not to trouble about doing what are called good works, and pretended



LYDDA.

that men could not be saved unless they offered to God abominable sacrifices. He is spoken of as the first of the false Christs our Saviour prophesied should rise up.

Peter and John preached the gospel in Samaria, and then returned to Jerusalem. But, before following them there, I am tempted to linger with Philip, and dwell upon one of the most interesting scenes St. Luke has recorded in his Acts of the Apostles: "The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went." †

* Acts viii. 20, 21.

† Acts viii. 26, 27.

“ ‘Twas silent all and dead,
 Beside the barren sea,
 Where Philip's steps were led,
 Led by a voice from thee—
 He rose and went, nor ask'd thee why,
 Nor stay'd to heave one faithless sigh.”

“And, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.”* Ethiopia, now Abyssinia and Nubia, was one of the great kingdoms of Africa, governed at the time of which we are reading by a queen. For long the queens of Ethiopia had been called Candace, as the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh, and the emperors of Rome, Cæsar. Now, the treasurer of Candace had been converted to the Jewish faith, probably by Jews from Alexandria. This pious nobleman allowed neither the cares of his high office, nor the attractions of the court, nor the long and tedious journey of many hundred miles, to prevent him going up to Jerusalem to worship in its holy temple. Most probably, when there, he heard of the crucifixion of our Saviour, and of the supernatural occurrences which took place at his death. And he might have listened to the preaching, and have witnessed some of the miracles of the followers of him whom the priests, the scribes, and the elders had crucified. We can imagine this Ethiopian lord, in his chariot, entering Jerusalem, full of pious rapture at the sight of the glorious temple, and we can imagine him leaving the city on his return home, full of earnest thought about all he had heard and seen. The greatest treasure he possessed, the holy Scriptures, he had with him in his chariot. And as he rode, he “read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias.”† The Ethiopian had approached the deserted Gaza, the forsaken city. Perhaps, as he was journeying from Africa to Jerusalem, he had, when passing the same spot, ordered his charioteer to stop, while he, with the

* Acts viii. 27, 28.

† Acts viii. 28-30.

sacred roll in his hand, climbed the mountain on which Gaza stood, and rambled among the desolate ruins so full of scriptural associations. But now, other thoughts filled his mind than those connected with the once mighty city. He was pondering over the words, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."* God's ever watchful eye was upon the Ethiopian. He saw the longing of his heart to know the truth, and satisfied it. Philip, under divine guidance, overtook the chariot, and, hearing the eunuch reading, said to him, "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." † The Ethiopian then asked the Evangelist of whom the prophet spoke in the passage quoted above, "of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus." ‡ The sudden and miraculous disappearance of Philip would naturally confirm the faith of the new convert, as it would show him that a messenger had indeed been sent by God to instruct and baptize him. Rejoicing, he returned to Candace's court, carrying with him that pearl of great price, with which all the treasures entrusted to his care were not worthy to be compared. He is not again mentioned in holy writ, but ecclesiastical history tells us that in his own country he preached Jesus, and suffered death for

* Acts viii. 32, 33.

† Acts viii. 30, 31.

‡ Acts viii. 34-40.

the cause he had espoused, and that the Church he established in Ethiopia flourished for several ages.

With regard to Philip, after his miraculous removal from the Ethiopian to Azotus, we read that "he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea."* There, in all probability, he resided for the remainder of his life. Certain it is that he was living at Cæsarea with his four inspired daughters twenty-six years after he had baptized the Ethiopian.

To return to Peter. After he and John had preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans they went back to Jerusalem. Hitherto the number of the Apostles had been limited to twelve, but about this time another was added to their company. Saul of Tarsus was miraculously converted, and chosen by the Lord to be one of his Apostles. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."† One great reason why the believers were suffered by their persecutors to have a little peace, was that political troubles at that time wholly occupied the mind of the Jewish nation, so that the followers of Christ could meet together without molestation. During the calm Peter traveled about visiting the brethren, first in one place, and then in another. "He came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately."‡ Are we to suppose that Æneas had never for the period of eight years quitted his bed of suffering? It is very possible that it was even so. Cases have occurred under our own notice in which invalids have lingered for years in a hopeless state of sickness, and have been scarcely able to endure the very slightest movement, much less the removal from one couch to another. This might have been the sad condition of poor Æneas when Peter found him. No longer, however, was he to be a burden to his friends:

* Acts viii. 40.

† Acts ix. 31.

‡ Acts ix. 32-34.

"Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," said the Apostle to him, and then commanded him to arise and make his bed. The palsied limbs which had so long lain useless became at once supple and full of vigor. Æneas must make his bed to prove how complete was his cure, "and all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron (Sharon) saw him, and turned to the Lord."* Not in their own names did the Apostles work miracles, but in the name of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour's divinity is shown by the manner in which he performed miracles. He was the Lord of nature, and when nature heard his voice she obeyed him. "Peace, be still," he said to the raging elements, "and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."†

"Be thou clean," he said to the leper, "and immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed."‡

"Young man, I say unto thee arise," he said to the dead son of the widow of Nain, "and he that was dead sat up and began to speak."§

"Come forth," he said to the putrefying corpse of Lazarus, "and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes."||



JOPPA FROM THE EAST.

How different generally was the language of the Apostles! "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk,"** said Peter to the cripple who lay at the Beautiful gate of the temple. "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," †† Peter said to the bed-ridden Æneas. "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight," †† said Ananias to the blind and humbled convert in Damascus.

* Acts ix. 35.

† Mark iv. 39.

‡ Mark i. 42.

§ Luke vii. 15.

|| John xi. 44.

** Acts iii. 6.

†† Acts ix. 34.

†† Acts ix. 17.

About ten miles from Lydda was a town called Joppa. Here there lived a disciple, a woman rich in good works and noted for her charity. Her name was Tabitha, which in Syriac means a gazelle, an animal remarkable for its beautiful eyes; indeed, the gazelle or antelope was regarded as the emblem of beauty. Tabitha was by the Greeks called Dorcas, the latter name being the Greek for a gazelle. Whether or not Tabitha or Dorcas was so named on account of the beauty and



PLAINS OF JERICHO.

grace of her person I cannot say, but we all know that her life was beautiful. While Peter was at Lydda this charitable woman, whose chief employment appears to have been to help the destitute, sickened and died. With loving hands the corpse was prepared for its burial, and laid in an upper chamber, "and forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.* The clothes which the mourners showed to the Apostle had doubtless been made by Dorcas for charitable purposes. "But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and, turning him to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive."† On the bosom of her Saviour Tabitha had rested from her labors; therefore it was more for the good of others than for her own, that she was roused from that peaceful sleep. How would the lamentations cease, and the widows' hearts rejoice, when Tabitha, restored to life and health, and her weeping friends as they re-entered the chamber. The effect of this miracle was that many believed in the Lord.



RUINS OF CAESAREA.

Peter stayed some time in Joppa, and lodged with one Simon a tanner. So far the gospel had been preached to Jews only; no others had been taught or invited to become disciples of Christ. But the time had now arrived when he, who had appeared that he might be "the glory of his people Israel," should also be "a light to lighten the Gentiles."‡ It was unlawful for a Jew to have anything to do in matters of religion with a Gentile or unclean person. The Jewish prejudices were, however, to give way under the religion of that gospel which was for Gentile as well as for Jew. The first Gentile convert was Cornelius, a centurion of the Roman army. He lived at Caesarea, and was a "devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in

* Acts ix. 38, 39.

† Acts ix. 40, 41.

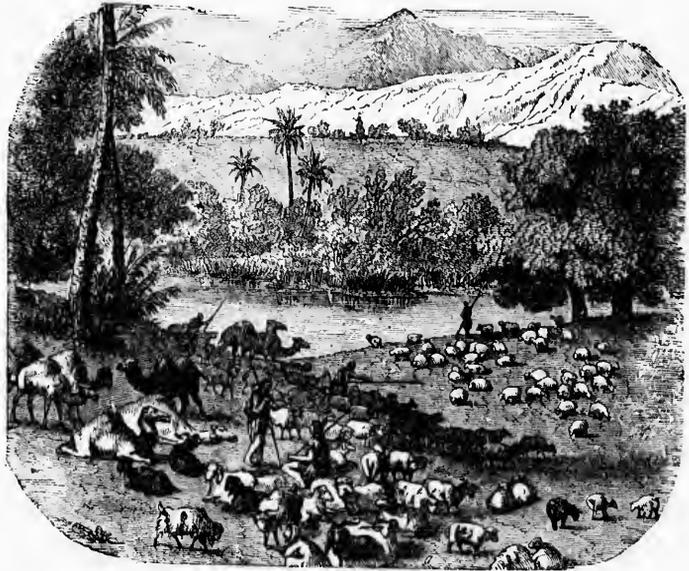
‡ Luke ii. 32.

a vision, evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa."* Cornelius, who is supposed to have been a member of the great Roman family of the Corneli, was one of a class of persons called "proselytes of the gate." He was a convert from heathenism who had adopted the Hebrew belief, but did not conform to the Mosaic law. He was not circumcised; therefore, though a worshipper of the true God, he was, in the eye of the Jew, a Gentile. The Ethiopian eunuch was one of those who are called "proselytes of righteousness." He had not only embraced the Jewish faith, but had adopted its ceremonies. Now, although Cornelius did not observe the ceremonies of the Jews, he evidently conformed to some of their customs. He observed their hours of prayer, for we read that "he prayed to God alway," which means at the stated Jewish hours of prayer. By the word hour, as used in the Bible, you must not understand what we call an hour, that is, sixty minutes. By an hour was meant any allotted portion of time. The Jews divided the day into greater and lesser hours. Of the former there were four, namely, the third hour, which was from six o'clock in the morning till nine; the sixth hour, which was from nine till twelve; the ninth hour, which was from twelve till three in the afternoon; the twelfth hour, which was from three till six in the evening. You will have observed these divisions of the day in our Lord's parable of the laborers in the vineyard, as recorded in the twentieth chapter of St. Matthew. In that parable our Saviour called the last

* Acts x. 2-8.

hour the eleventh, to teach us that though God in his mercy accepts laborers into his vineyard eleven hours of the day, yet he seldom calls any at the twelfth, as that is the hour in which rather to discharge servants than to admit new ones. The lesser hours were twelve in number, and these were regulated by the time of the rising and setting of the sun. In summer the hours would be longer than in the winter. The night was divided into four greater hours or watches. The first watch was

from six till nine o'clock at night. The second watch was from nine till twelve. The third watch, or cock-crowing, was from twelve till three in the morning, and the fourth or morning watch was from three till six. "Arise," said Jeremiah,



EASTERN SCENERY.

"cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches."* "If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch," † said our Saviour. "And about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea." ‡ These passages will suffice to confirm what I have said. Our Lord alludes to all four watches in the following verse: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when

* Lam. ii. 19.

† Luke xiii. 38.

‡ Mark vi. 48.

the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning." *

Cornelius sent three messengers (who were doubtless worshippers of the true God) to Peter. Their route lay through the lovely vale of Sharon, which extended from Cæsarea to Joppa, a distance of about thirty miles. In this valley blossomed the beautiful rose, and the lily of which Israel's king had sung. The messengers did not reach their destination till near noon the next day. They must have rested for the night in one of the many villages which studded the valley. Perhaps they might from time to time have stayed to listen to the account of the miracles wrought by him to whom their master's message was sent. Each stranger they met would be able to tell them something about Jesus, whose gospel the Apostle was preaching in Joppa. And ere they neared the city, possibly the truth had dawned upon their minds, that he who had died upon the cross in Jerusalem, and in whom all Sharon and Lydda believed, was indeed *their* Saviour.

Peter, you have read, lodged, while staying at Joppa, with a tanner, a man who prepared the skins of animals for domestic use. The trade of tanning was held in great abhorrence by the Jews, because those who followed it had so constantly to come in contact with dead bodies, which rendered them ceremonially unclean. So infamous was the occupation considered by the Jews, that if a tanner did not announce his calling before his marriage the contract was void. Simon, the tanner of Joppa, was compelled to live at the sea-side, not only because his business required a great quantity of water, but because the law forbade him carrying on his trade within the walls of the city. It was on the flat roof of the despised tanner's dwelling that Peter was praying when the messengers of Cornelius were drawing nigh to Joppa. As the Apostle prayed he "became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild

* Mark xiii. 35.

beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.* There were in the vessel pigs, hares, camels, swans, owls, vultures, storks, and many other creatures which were called unclean, and there might have been many animals called clean, which the Jews as a rule were permitted to eat, for the holy story tells us that the vessel contained "all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." But Peter would consider it unlawful to touch even them, because they would have become unclean by their contact with unclean animals. "Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them."† Peter went down to the messengers, who told him their errand, and from whence they had come. Then Peter, with some of the brethren, at once set off for Cæsarea, and reached there the following day. In the meantime the centurion had called together his kinsmen and friends, and was anxiously waiting for the arrival of the Apostle. "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come unto one of another nation: but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was

* Acts x. 10-16.

† Acts x. 17-20.

sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?"* Cornelius told Peter his vision. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."† The Apostle at once preached Jesus to the devout centurion and all his household. And as he was declaring unto them the way of salvation the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and they began to speak with other tongues. The brethren who had accompanied Peter from Joppa were greatly astonished to find that the gift of the Holy Ghost was bestowed upon uncircumcised Gentiles. Then Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these



MOUNT EPHRAIM.

should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."‡ Thus did Peter exercise the power of the keys,§ given to him by the Lord Jesus, and opened the door of Christ's kingdom to the Gentiles. The believers from Joppa could afterwards bear witness to what had passed in the house of Cornelius, and were useful as witnesses when Peter had to defend himself to the Apostles and brethren in Judea for having eaten with uncircumcised men. After

* Acts x. 25-29.

† Acts x. 34, 35.

‡ Acts x. 47, 48.

§ It is in consequence of our Lord having said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19), that that Apostle is generally represented in pictures carrying keys.

Peter had visited the newly-planted churches he went back to Jerusalem. "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him."*

"Then all himself, all joy and calm,
Though for a while his hand forego,
Just as it touch'd, the martyr's palm,
He turns him to his task below."

He went first "to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel." †

* Acts xii. 1-10.

† Acts xii. 12-15.

Herod, it seems, was determined to secure his intended victim. Peter was not only imprisoned, but was fastened by two chains to two soldiers, while two more soldiers guarded the door of his prison. Four fresh soldiers were provided for each watch, but all in vain. In the night, while Peter was sleeping, the angel of the Lord entered the prison, awoke the captive, and raised him up. The chains fell off from Peter's hands, and he was soon prepared to follow the heavenly messenger. After passing the first and the second ward they came to the iron outer gate of the prison, which opened of its own accord and let them pass into the city. When the angel had conducted Peter safely through one street he left him. The liberated Apostle at once went to

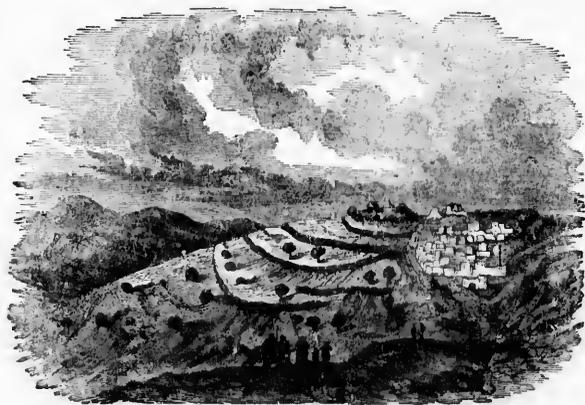


PETER BETWEEN TWO SOLDIERS.

his friends. In the prison, Peter, under sentence of death, slept peacefully, but his anxious friends rested not. They met in the house of Mary, the mother of Mark the Evangelist, and there night and day prayed for the captive Apostle. We are not told who were Mary's guests, but they were truly a party of mourners, and many of them were perhaps already

marked by their enemies for slaughter. No small praise is due to the mother of Mark for opening her doors at such a time to the persecuted flock, and sheltering them from the bloodhounds of the tyrant. No idle threat they knew was Herod's. The head of the dauntless and zealous James had fallen beneath the stroke of the executioner, and Peter's hours they believed were numbered, if even then he had not met with a cruel death. We can imagine how many of the devoted band would start and turn pale, when, in the solemn stillness of the night, a knocking was heard at the gate. How would each with anxious eye gaze upon the maiden Rhoda when she appeared to announce who was standing without! "Peter!" each would exclaim. "It cannot be Peter." And when Rhoda assured them that

it was indeed Peter, they, believing that death alone had set the captive free, said, "It must be his angel." It was an ancient opinion that every good man had a guardian angel appointed him by God, to take special care of him till his life's end; to direct him in his way, to guard him from danger, and to deliver him in distress. We know from the Holy Scriptures that these heavenly beings have an interest in the welfare of men, for Paul asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* A superstitious notion also prevailed among both Jews and Gentiles, that on the death of a person his guardian angel often appeared to his friends in the form of the deceased. Not long did the friends of Peter remain in doubt. "Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of



BETHANY.

the prison." † Peter knew that as soon as Herod had discovered he had escaped, he would search for him in every direction, so, for his own safety, as well as for that of his friends, whose lives would be endangered if they harbored him, he went away. The unfortunate soldiers who had the charge of Peter in prison were by Herod's command put to death for allowing their prisoner to escape.

We hear nothing of Peter for several years. We then find him taking a leading part in the council of the Apostles, which was con-

* Heb. i. 14.

† Acts xii. 16, 17.

vened for the purpose of discussing matters connected with the ceremonial law. A full account of this important meeting you will find in the life of James the Less. Nothing more can be gathered of the history of Peter from the pen of St. Luke, but in the second chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians we find that Peter was with Paul at Antioch, and there met with severe censure from the great Apostle of the Gentiles. After Peter's vision of the vessel from heaven filled with unclean beasts, he, knowing that the partition wall between Jew and Gentile was broken down, ate and drank familiarly with the Gentile converts wherever he met them. This he did at Antioch until some Jewish brethren, sent by James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, arrived at the Syrian capital. Peter, fearful of offending the new comers, separated himself from the Gentile converts as though it were unlawful to hold communion with them. This strange conduct produced many evils, and undid much that had been done. The Jewish zealots were confirmed in their error, the Gentiles were filled with fear and dissatisfaction, and the old feuds and prejudices between Jew and Gentile were revived. All the Jewish converts in Antioch followed Peter's example in their conduct toward the Gentile brethren, and even Barnabas was led away to act in the same manner. Peter was indeed much to blame, and Paul, as he tells the Galatians, "withstood him to the face."* The word "withstood" in the original Greek is a military term signifying to stand against, either by force of arms as among soldiers, or by dint of argument as among disputants. It is a word of defiance, and signifies an opposition, hand to hand and face to face, not yielding a hair's-breadth to the adversary. No answer, it would appear, did the humbled and doubtless penitent Apostle return. In love was the rebuke given, and in love was it received. A few years afterward, very shortly before his crucifixion, Peter in his second epistle, when mentioning Paul, speaks of him as "our beloved brother Paul."† We therefore are assured that no ill feeling was borne by Peter toward his candid, courageous, and resolute reprovcr.

It is not known with certainty where Peter labored after he left

* Gal. ii. 11.

† 2 Peter iii. 15.

Antioch, but as he addressed his first epistle "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,"* it is supposed that he had journeyed into those countries. He wrote from Babylon. This is generally understood to mean Rome, the ancient Assyrian capital of that name being then deserted by men, and a habitation only for wild beasts. Peter and John (the latter in the Book of Revelation) gave to Rome the name of Babylon, figuratively to signify that it would resemble Babylon in its idolatry, and in its opposition to, and persecution of, the Church of God; and that, like Babylon, it will be utterly destroyed.

From Paul's words, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" † it is believed that Peter's wife accompanied him in his missionary journeys. Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived in the second century, tells us that Peter's wife suffered martyrdom, and that her husband, seeing her on the way to execution, rejoiced that she was counted worthy of so great

an honor, and calling her by name he encouraged her, and "bade her to be mindful of our Lord. Such," continues Clemens, "was the wedlock of that blessed couple, and the perfect disposition and agreement in those things that were dearest to them." Clemens also says that Peter had children; the name, however, of only one, Petronilla, is mentioned by early writers.

Peter's two divine epistles are supposed to have been written, the



EASTERN VINEYARD.

* 1 Peter i. 1.

† 1 Cor. ix. 5.

first in the year 64, and the second in the early part of the year 65. In the first he encourages the Christian converts to bear with fortitude all the trials they would have to undergo, and excites them to the practice of particular duties, and to beautify and adorn their holy profession by a holy and becoming conversation. In the second epistle he confirms the doctrines and instructions he delivered in the first, and cautions the Christians against false teachers, whose tenets and practices he largely describes, and he warns the believers to disregard those profane scoffers who made or should make a mock of Christ's coming to judgment. Both of the epistles evidently show their divine origin.

The time arrived when Peter was to follow Jesus. Calmly, as though he were only about to take off his raiment for the night, he speaks of his approaching death: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me."* Not in the sacred story must we look for any particulars of the death of Peter beyond those foretold by our Saviour. It has been generally believed, from the works of Tertullian, Origen, and other early Christian writers, that Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome about the year 65.

It was in the persecution against the followers of Jesus raised by that monster of iniquity, Nero, that Peter was put to death. One cannot read without shuddering of the cruelties inflicted by the tyrannical emperor upon the Christians. But can we wonder that he had no mercy upon those who openly condemned his religion, when he had no pity for those of his own creed, or even for his own flesh and blood? He put to death his mother and his brother-in-law, and murdered his beautiful wife Octavia when she was only twenty years of age. His second wife fared no better, for she fell a victim to his brutal violence. Indeed, the wretched young man, who was but thirty years old when he committed suicide, seemed only to delight in cruelty and every vice. The holy Apostle was crucified, and, it is said, according to his own request, with his head downward, as he did not consider himself **worthy** to suffer in the same posture in which his Lord had suffered

* 2 Peter i. 14.

before him. From our Saviour's predictions we must conclude that Peter submitted to all the degrading and horrible practices inflicted upon criminals who were doomed to the most ignominious and cruel death, that of the cross. It was the custom at Rome to put the necks of those who were to be crucified into a yoke, and to stretch out their hands and fasten them to the ends of it, and having thus led them

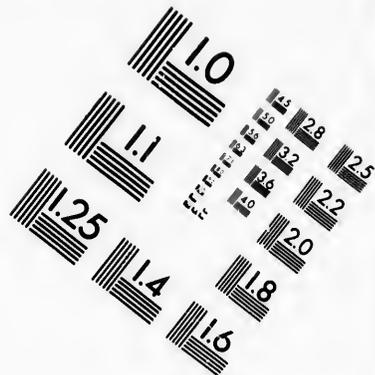
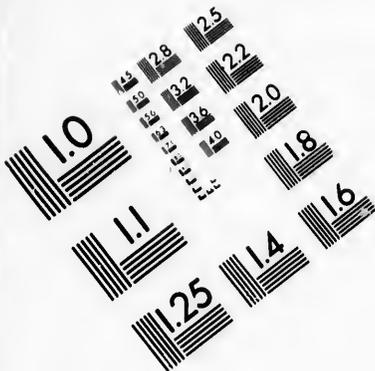


SYMBOLIC UNION OF THE OLD AND NEW DISPENSATION.

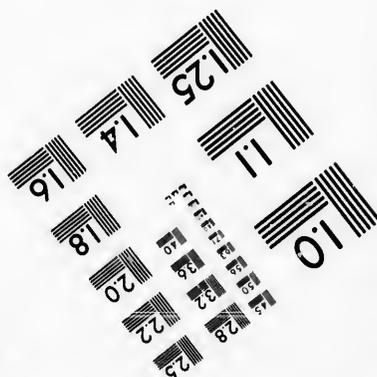
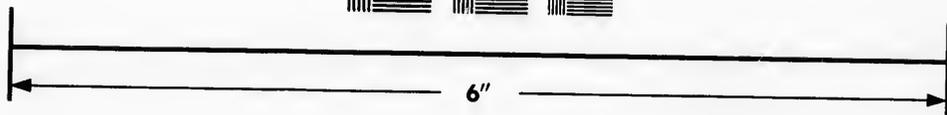
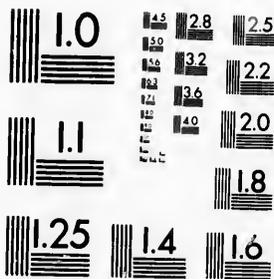
through the city, they were carried out to be crucified. For thirty years or more had the Apostle been looking forward to this last short journey. How would he, when taking it, recall the words of Jesus, "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."* Nature would

* John xxi. 18.





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shrink from the contemplation of the torture of the cross, but the devoted martyr would likewise recall other words of the Saviour, encouraging him to faithfulness even unto death, and would possess the assurance that the crown of life would soon be his. Arrived at the place of execution, he (filled with love and veneration for him who had by his own death opened to him the gates of paradise, and fearing not the pain his enemies might inflict upon him) prayed in his deep humiliation that he might suffer in a still more agonizing posture than that in which his executioners would have placed him. His last request was granted. So died this great and good Apostle. His body was buried in Rome, and we are told that over the spot was built a small church. This has long since disappeared, and in its place stands the magnificent Romish cathedral, which has, for beauty, become one of the wonders of the world



ANCIENT JUDEAN RUINS.

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ANDREW.



HAVE related the principal events in the life of Peter. I will now give you a short account of his brother, Andrew. This Apostle was, before our Saviour began his ministry, a disciple of John the Baptist. He was, as you are aware, the son of poor parents, who were unable to give their children the advantages of education. Andrew was a fisherman, and found leisure to go into the wilderness to hear John preach. He became not merely a listener to, but a companion of, and an attendant upon, the Baptist. How may many of us blush when we think of these fishermen! Surely their calling was not an easy one: a life of hardship is that of a fisherman—often, night and day, must he labor for his bread: and we know that the poor men on the Sea of Galilee occasionally toiled all night long, and caught nothing. Yet some of them thought not of fatigue nor of danger, but traveled many a weary mile to hear the preacher in the wilderness. Do all professing Christians follow their example, as regards their interest in the Word of Life? Alas! no. Though God's messengers are proclaiming the gospel almost at their very doors, business, pleasure, or indolence make them too often refuse to listen.

How long Andrew had been a disciple of the Baptist before he saw Christ, I cannot say. We are simply told that "John stood, and two of his disciples,"* one of whom was Andrew. We can picture to ourselves the Baptist, clothed in sackcloth, or, as the Bible expresses it, having "his raiment of camel's hair,"† and his two companions, in the

* John i. 35.

† Matt. iii. 4.

mean attire of poor fishermen, waiting for him whom prophets and kings had long desired to see. The precise spot where they stood is not known. It might have been where Joshua, the type of Jesus, more than fourteen hundred years before, had led the Israelites over the Jordan into the promised land; and perhaps many of those who had been listening to John that day had, on their return home, to walk over the very ground on which the ark of the covenant rested when their ancestors marched to the gates of Jericho. Or it might have been within sight of the Sea of Galilee, for John not only baptized near Bethabara, but in all the region round about Jordan, and possibly he and his disciples were contemplating the lovely lake so soon to be hallowed by the presence, and rendered famous by the mighty works, of Jesus. Evening approached. The tops of the mountains were tinged with the glow of the setting sun. Can we not imagine a scene of so much beauty being in unison with their feelings, as John and his disciples stood and waited for the appearance of the Holy One? Jesus drew near, and, as he passed them, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"*—the Lamb so soon to be sacrificed as an acceptable offering for the sins of mankind. No sooner was the attention



IN SACKCLOTH.

of Andrew and the other disciple (supposed to be John) called to Christ, than they left their master and followed Jesus, who turned round and spoke to them, asking them whom they sought. "They said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt and abode with him that day; for it was about the tenth hour:† that was two hours before night. After his visit to Jesus, Andrew's first act was to seek out Peter, and tell him the joyful news, "We have found the

* John i. 36

† John i. 38, 39.

Messias,"* thus becoming the first preacher of the gospel. Not content with this, he took Peter to Jesus. Every sincere Christian must sympathize with Andrew, whose warm heart prompted him to lose no time in letting his brother be a participator in his happiness. Surely it is a blessed privilege to be the instrument of leading even one soul to Christ. The brothers visited Jesus together, but only remained with him for a brief space of time. They must earn their living by fishing a little longer, and so they returned to their home at Capernaum. This occurred soon after our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, and not long before John was cast into prison by Herod. The Baptist's work was accomplished when a mightier than he had come forth: and, having prepared the way for the Messiah, he must shortly rest from his labors.

We hear no more of Andrew by name for a year, and then he and his brother received the summons to follow Jesus. A full account of the miraculous draught of fishes you will have read in Peter's life. It was Andrew's boat, as well as Peter's, which was honored by being made the pulpit of the Saviour, when he preached to the people who were on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. And Andrew received, with Peter, the promise, that if he forsook all, and followed Jesus, he should become a fisher of men. Soon after this he was chosen as one of the Apostles.

Only a few times is Andrew mentioned individually in the Holy Scriptures; and yet, as one of the Apostles, a full account of him would occupy a volume. Was he not on the Sea of Galilee when there arose a great tempest, while Jesus, who was also in the ship, was asleep? And did not Andrew, with the other disciples, awake him, exclaiming, "Lord, save us, we perish?"† You know they did not appeal for help in vain. Did not Andrew, at the command of Jesus, go forth to preach the gospel and heal the sick? And cannot we imagine his sorrow-stricken countenance, when he and the other Apostles returned to Jesus, after the cruel execution of his former master? Was he not present at the raising of Lazarus; and did he

* John i. 41.

† Matt. viii. 25.

not shortly afterward stand, though "afar off,"* watching in bitter grief the crucifixion of him for whose sake, a few years later, he cheer-



"THERE WERE ALSO WOMEN LOOKING ON AFAR OFF."—MARK
xv. 40.

about the propriety of taking these Greeks or foreigners to Jesus, for

fully endured the most cruel tortures? But, indeed, I have not space in this book to remind you of one-half that Andrew did and saw. He is especially mentioned in the account of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, as telling Jesus what provision there was for the multitude who had followed them into the wilderness to hear the Saviour preach and to be cured of their infirmities by him. Afterward, Andrew, with Philip, told Jesus that some Greeks desired to see him. The disciples seem to have hesitated

* Luke xxiii. 49.

though they were not idolatrous Gentiles (or they would not have gone up to worship at the feast), yet they were most likely what were called proselytes of the gate. Our Lord had forbidden his Apostles to go into the coasts of the Gentiles. On this account, probably, Philip and Andrew consulted Jesus before ushering the Greeks into his presence. Jesus said to them, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified;"* or, in other words, he would soon be manifested both to Jews and Gentiles.

When Jesus foretold the destruction of the temple, Andrew, with Peter, James, and John, asked him privately, "Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" † Jesus replied that nation should rise against nation, that there should be earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and fearful sights and great signs. Did the four Apostles who questioned Jesus witness the fulfillment of these predictions? Not all. Andrew had sealed his faith with his blood, it is supposed, before the heaviest judgments of God descended upon the wretched Jews. Peter was crucified, as you know, by Nero. This wicked emperor committed suicide before Titus Vespasian entered Judea with his army. James survived our Saviour only fourteen years; but John not only lived till the destruction of the temple, but thirty years afterward. He was probably, at the time when Jerusalem was besieged, residing at Ephesus. Deeply would he mourn over the fearful sufferings of his fellow-countrymen, although he knew they had, by their rejection and crucifixion of Christ, brought all the calamities upon themselves. Can we not imagine one terror-stricken Christian after another arriving at Ephesus, each bringing accounts more harrowing than the last. News traveled comparatively slowly in those days, but too soon would the Apostle hear that the Romans were at the gates of Jerusalem, and that the inhabitants were suffering from sedition, famine, and pestilence; that the Jews who escaped out of the city were caught by their enemies, and were crucified outside the walls in such multitudes that wood enough could not be found for crosses (fearful retribution for having crucified the

* John xii. 23.

† Mark xiii. 4.

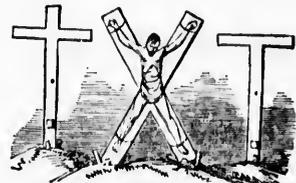
Lord of glory!); that mothers, according to the prediction of Moses* many hundred years before, were rendered so desperate by famine that they devoured their own children; that in one night two thousand Jewish deserters were cut open by the Syrians, who suspected that they had swallowed gold as a means of conveying it away; and that six hundred thousand had perished by famine and sickness. Then would come the fearful news of the burning of the temple, and that all who had taken refuge in it fell victims to the flames, or were slaughtered by their enemies; and, lastly, John would hear that Jerusalem had fallen, and the Romans were in full possession, slaying all they met, and burning the houses, and that the streets ran so with gore that the fires of the burning buildings were, in many places, quenched with men's blood. But the heart sickens at the mere recital of such horrors. Surely it was "tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world."†

To return to Andrew. After the ascension of our blessed Lord, which Andrew with the rest of the Apostles witnessed, his name only occurs once more in the holy writings, when he is simply mentioned as being in the upper room in Jerusalem, where he and others assembled for prayer and supplication. After this we only know what happened to him as one of the twelve; and from the period when the Apostles dispersed we know absolutely nothing of him that is of divine authority. The commission the Apostles received from their great Master was to go into all the world and preach the gospel. It was generally believed by the early Church that the Apostles agreed between themselves, under the special guidance and direction of the Holy Ghost, which parts of the world each should take. Andrew, it is said, preached to the inhabitants of Sebastopol; and Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, tells us he founded a church in that city, then called Byzantium. An early writer says, it was at a place called Patræ, a city of Greece, that his labors ended. A great man, named Ægeas, came to Patræ, where St. Andrew was teaching the people. Ægeas, who was the proconsul of Achaia, was an idolater, and he was

* Deut. xxviii. 56, 57.

† Matt. xxiv. 21.

enraged to find that multitudes had been converted from heathenism to Christianity. He told Andrew that if he would not sacrifice to the gods, he should suffer death upon the cross. Andrew refused, and was put into prison. The people were so indignant that they would have released him, but the Apostle begged them not to prevent him obtaining the crown of martyrdom. The next day Ægeas condemned him to death. Andrew, it would appear, had cured the wife and brother of Ægeas of dreadful diseases, and had been the instrument, in God's hands, of converting them to the faith of Christ. This made Ægeas more angry with Andrew, and he ordered him to be scourged by seven men, who, in turns, whipped his naked body. This torture he bore without a murmur. The proconsul then commanded that he should be tied to a cross—not nailed—that his death might be more lingering and tedious. The cross on which he suffered was in the form of the letter X. A cross in this form is called "St. Andrew's cross." The martyr was composed and cheerful. When he saw the cross in the distance, as he was being led to execution, he exclaimed, "O cross, most welcome and long-looked for; with a willing mind, joyfully and desirously I come to thee, being the scholar of him who did hang on thee: because I have been always thy lover, and have coveted to embrace thee."* The people were so struck with his fortitude that they cried out he was an innocent and good man, and unjustly condemned to die. He hung on the cross two days, instructing the people all the time, and then fell asleep in Jesus. His body was taken from the cross and embalmed, and was then buried with honor by, or at the expense of, a lady named Maximilla. When a corpse was embalmed, it was filled with spices and perfumes, called aromatics, which prevented it from going to decay, and caused the most fragrant exhalation to issue at times from the tomb. Jerome tells us that Andrew's body was afterward taken to Constantinople by the Emperor



FORMS OF CROSSES.

* *Vide* Foxe's "Acts and Monuments."

Constantine, who was a Christian. He buried it in a church he had built in honor of the Apostles.

In the union flag of England, Ireland, and Scotland, the last-named kingdom is represented by the cross of St. Andrew, he having been, in Romish times, regarded as Scotland's patron saint.



THORN-CROWNED CHRIST.

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JAMES, THE GREAT.



DOES it not long to go to Palestine, and tread the ground hallowed by the footsteps of Jesus? Surely no part of the Holy Land, Bethlehem and Calvary excepted, is more interesting than the Sea of Galilee!* It is the same beautiful lake it was when our blessed Lord frequented its shores, and when those poor fishermen, but great Apostles, you are reading about, cast their nets into its waters. You have heard how two of those Apostles received the crown of martyrdom. James did not follow Peter and

Andrew to the martyr's tomb, but went before them. He was, the Evangelists tells us, the son of Zebedee and Salome. He was born in Galilee; in what part is not exactly known. But as Peter and Andrew, James and John were partners in business, they all probably belonged to the same city, Bethsaida. James, the son of Zebedee, is frequently called "James the Great." Perhaps this title was given him because he was much older than the other Apostle of the same name, who is often styled "James the Less."

Zebedee, though a fisherman, was not very poor, for when Jesus called James and John to follow him, they left their father Zebedee in the ship "with the hired servants."† The Jews say that Zebedee had many servants, but be that as it may, whatever were the brothers' worldly prospects, they, like Peter and Andrew, forsook all to become the disciples of Jesus. Happy are those who are able and willing to

* In the Hebrew language all lakes are called seas.

† Mark i. 20.

give up all that hinders them from walking in the path whither Jesus would lead them! What faith these fishermen had in the Saviour! They did not stay to ask him any questions as to how they were to live; what dangers and difficulties they would meet with; or what duties at home they ought rather to attend to. With them it was simply—Jesus calls, and we obey the call. Zebedee was too old to go, but he did not stand in the way of his sons' departure; and their mother, we know, was a believer in Jesus.

Some months after his call, James was promoted to the position of an Apostle, with power to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the



BETHLEHEM.

dead, and cast out devils. He was one of the peculiar favorites of our Lord, being often, like Peter and John, allowed to remain with him when the other Apostles were excluded. He was present at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and at the transfiguration, and was with Jesus in the

garden of Gethsemane. The Saviour gave him and his brother John the name of Boanerges, or the sons of thunder. He knew that their zeal would be so great, that, fearing nothing, they would, as it were, thunder the gospel into men's ears, startling and arousing all who heard them. Some have thought that the name Boanerges was given them because they wished to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans for not receiving Jesus. When we read this incident in the lives of these brothers, we must admire their zeal and devotion to the Saviour, which made them feel such indignation at the want of respect shown to him. Jesus, however, reproved

them. Love and forbearance were what he taught, not revenge. Elijah had indeed called down fire from heaven, but it was to save his life; the Apostles were only led by human passion, and knew not what spirit they were of. Jesus told them he had come to save men's lives, not to destroy them.

It was soon after Jesus had informed his disciples of his approaching death and resurrection that Salome, the mother of James and John, knowing that our Lord had promised to his Apostles that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, came to him and made this request, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom."* She thought Jesus would shortly reign as a king on earth, and was anxious to secure the places nearest his throne for her sons. Our Lord told her that she had mistaken the nature of his kingdom, which was a heavenly, not an earthly one; and the most honorable places in it were not his to give, but they would be given to those for whom they were prepared by his Father. As a mere man, or mediator, Jesus could not promise his disciples places in heaven, but as God he could; for at one time he said, "I appoint unto you a kingdom;" † "I give unto them eternal life." ‡ When the other Apostles heard of Salome's request, they were very indignant. Jesus, however, called them unto him, and told them that, if they wished to be great and honorable, there must be no strife or selfishness among them, but they were to be meek and lowly, and ever willing to minister to the wants of others; to be ready to drink the cup of sorrow he drank of, and in all things to follow the example he set them of humility, love, and patience.

After the transfiguration on the mount, and the scene in Gethsemane, we hear but little more of James individually in the Bible. He was one of the congregation of the faithful who assembled in Jerusalem after the ascension, and from that time his name does not occur in the Scriptures, until his death is recorded by St. Luke; though, for the fourteen years he lived after his divine Master had ascended into

* Matt. xx. 21.

† Luke xxii. 29.

‡ John x. 28.

heaven, he labored indefatigably as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus. On him a cloven tongue of fire sat on the day of Pentecost, and he spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave him utterance, and many wonders and signs were done by him. He was, with the other Apostles, imprisoned by the high priest and the Sadducees, but the Lord was his keeper, and in the night the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and set him and his companions free. No fear had the son of thunder of the terrible Sanhedrim and its instruments of torture and death, but he rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.



JERUSALEM.

Though the religion of Jesus spread rapidly, there were still in Jerusalem multitudes of Jews who would gladly have seen the whole body of believers exterminated. The king of the Jews at that time was Herod Agrippa the First. He was the grandson of Herod the Great, who slew the innocents, and being a favorite with the Emperor Claudius, he was made king of Judea, Samaria, and Abilene. He was a zealous supporter of the Jewish law, and a staunch upholder of the rites and institutions of his country. Being withal a cruel and ambitious prince, he was very willing to please the majority of his subjects

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by harassing the Christians. In the persecution raised by him against the followers of Christ, the holy Apostle James, the zealous and earnest preacher, was called upon to drink his share of the bitter cup Christ had drunk before him. The prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with."* The following is the short account St. Luke gives us of the death of the first Apostolic martyr:—"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword."† In the history of the early Church we learn a few more particulars. Clemens Alexandrinus says that as James was being led to the place of execution, the soldier who had accused him before the tribunal was so struck with the courage and constancy displayed by the Apostle, that he fell at his feet and implored forgiveness for what he had said against him. James raised him up, and embracing him, said, "Peace, my son, peace be to thee, and the pardon of thy faults." The soldier publicly professed himself to be a Christian. He was immediately condemned to death, and was beheaded with the Apostle.

Not for James the martyr would the band of believers weep, but for themselves. He was safe with Jesus, they had yet to pass through the fire which was fast kindling around them. In the Church there was mourning. The Jews were pleased, and the politic king "proceeded further to take Peter also. Then were the days of unleavened bread."‡ The mighty zealot of the Mosaic law, the observer of all legal ceremonies, he who was never absent from the daily sacrifice, knew that it was unlawful at that season to put any one to death, so he had Peter imprisoned in chains, intending after Easter to bring him forth, doubtless with the design of further pleasing the Jews by beheading him as he had done James. His rage was great when he found Peter had escaped out of his hands, and he had no mercy upon the unfortunate soldiers who guarded the prison. Shortly afterward Herod went to Cæsarea, not to trouble himself about the Christians, but to make war against the Tyrians and Sidonians. His mind being

* Matt. xx. 23.

† Acts xii. 1, 2.

‡ Acts xii. 3.

fully occupied with the cares of state, schemes of worldly ambition, and legal ceremonies, Herod probably scarcely bestowed a passing thought upon the miseries he had brought upon the followers of Jesus. But God heard the cry of his chosen ones, and his avenging hand soon fell upon their persecutor. The Tyrians and Sidonians, knowing that it would be greatly against their interest to be at war with Herod, desired peace, so they "made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend,"* probably by bribery. Herod was persuaded to give them an audience. In the morning, he entered the theater magnifi-



HEROD RECEIVING SUPPLICANTS.

cently attired in a robe of cloth, woven with silver, and having ascended a throne he made an oration to the people. The rays of the morning sun, darting upon his shining dress, caused it to be so dazzlingly bright that "the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms." †

He was carried to his palace

by his attendants, where, after enduring the most racking torture for five days, he died.

Enraptured by the glorious prospect before him, the blessed martyr, James, would scarce feel the stroke of the executioner which hurried his happy spirit to paradise. Slowly, as if to prove how utterly worthless wealth and rank are in the hour of suffering and death, the wretched Herod sank into hell. "Let me die the death of the righteous!" ‡

It is remarkable that the Herod who slew the infants of Bethlehem

* Acts xii. 20.

† Acts xii. 22, 23.

‡ Num. xxiii. 10.

and the coasts thereof died, very shortly after that barbarous act of cruelty, of a disease very similar to that which attacked his grandson in the theater of Cæsarea. A short sketch of the life of Herod the Great, though not immediately connected with our subject, must be so interesting that I cannot refrain from giving it. When Herod was made king of the Jews, the beautiful though wicked Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, was in the height of her power, and Herod was not a little mixed up with her affairs, although she failed in her attempts to captivate him. It was about the year 37 B.C. that Herod ascended the throne of Judea, and from that time till his death domestic crimes and troubles formed a great portion of his history. He had a very beautiful and noble-minded wife, named Mariamne, whom he loved most ardently; but his happiness with her was of short duration, for, having three years after his marriage willfully caused her brother, Aristobulus, a very handsome young man, to be drowned while bathing, all her love for Herod turned to indignation and loathing. She upbraided her husband with the murder of her beloved brother, and refused to be reconciled to him. Herod became angry, but his love for Mariamne was so great that he could not long bear any resentment toward her. She, however, had a bitter enemy in Salome, Herod's sister, who did all she could to procure her destruction. Salome accused the innocent Mariamne of the worst crimes, and succeeded in bringing her victim before judges who were resolved upon condemning her. Mariamne was executed, meeting her fate with heroic firmness. No sooner was she dead than all Herod's ardent love for her returned, and he was seized with the most violent remorse for having caused her death. His agony of mind was so great that it seemed as if divine vengeance had fallen upon him. Frequently would he call for her and loudly lament her loss. He sought to divert his mind in feasts and assemblies, but to no purpose, and he would desire his servants to call for their late royal mistress as if she were still alive and could hear them. At length he ceased to give any attention to public affairs. About that time a pestilential disease carried off the greater part of the people, and many of his best and most esteemed friends were among the victims, and all men suspected that this calamity had

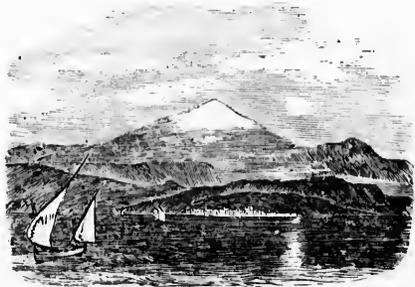
been brought upon them by the anger of God for the murder of Mariamne. Herod became more and more desponding; he retired into a desert place and there lost his reason altogether. Contrary to the expectations of all his physicians, he ultimately recovered, but his heart was in no way softened. He boldly threw off the mask of religion, and tried to do away with the law of Moses. The Jews were very indignant, and a conspiracy was formed to murder him in the theater. The plot, however, was discovered, and Herod found it necessary to provide for his own safety and guard against rebellion. He restored and fortified Samaria, calling it Sebaste, and converted the tower of Strato into a city and seaport, giving it the name of Cæsarea. He built great towers in Jerusalem, calling them by different names. The most beautiful he named after his unfortunate, but never-forgotten Queen, Mariamne. The indignation of the Jews at last rose to such a pitch that Herod found it necessary to conciliate them, so he undertook to rebuild the temple on a scale of the greatest magnificence. For nine years he employed eighteen thousand men constantly upon it, and Josephus says it was the most beautiful edifice that had ever been seen or heard of. In the superstructure there were stones of the whitest marble, upward of sixty-seven feet long, more than seven feet high, and nine broad. Well might the disciples speak of the "goodly stones" * of the temple. The lintels of the doors of the temple were very high, and were adorned with embroidered veils with their flowers of purple; and over these was spread out a golden vine, with its branches hanging down from a great height. There were nine gates, thickly coated inside and out with gold and silver. And there was one without the holy house which far surpassed the others in beauty. It was larger than the rest of the gates, and was made of Corinthian brass, the most precious metal among the ancients, and was ornamented in a most costly manner with gold and silver. This is supposed to have been the gate called "Beautiful," † where sat the lame man who was healed by Peter and John. The inner temple or sanctuary was covered on every side with plates of

* Luke xxi. 5.

† Acts iii. 2.

gold, so that when the sun rose upon it, it reflected such a dazzling luster that the eye of the spectator could not bear its radiance. But it is quite impossible for me to enter into a minute description of this magnificent and immense work of art. Though Herod was said to have finished the temple, yet the Jews continued to add to its splendor many years after that monarch's death, which explains what the Jews said to Jesus, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" *

While the temple was in course of erection, Herod's domestic troubles increased rather than diminished. His two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, inherited the lofty spirit of their mother, Mariamne, and no doubt they often felt bitterly toward their father for the share he had in their mother's death. Their wicked aunt, Salome, hated them as she had done her sister-in-law, and did all she could to incense Herod against them. At last they were by Herod's orders strangled in prison. They were both married men. The younger, Aristobulus, was the grandfather of Drusilla and Bernice, who are



COUNTRY AROUND SAMARIA.

mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as being at Cæsarea when Paul was a prisoner there. Another of his sons Herod ordered to be led to execution when he himself was dying, but this son richly deserved his punishment. The miserable king had entered upon the last year of his life when our Saviour was born. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he

* John ii. 20.

had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.* Oh, how like the treacherous Herod! He who could sport with his brother-in-law after he had made all the arrangements for his murder, and could persuade the unsuspecting youth to plunge into the water and swim to the servants who were waiting to drown him, and could afterward pretend to be overwhelmed with grief at the untimely death of Aristobulus, would find no difficulty in professing to the sages of the east anxiety to worship the infant Saviour. Well might Jesus have called him a fox, as he did his son, Herod Antipas. How Joseph and Mary escaped with the babe into Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod, you know. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." † If we did not know that everything related in the Bible is true, we should doubt the possibility of a civilized man being guilty of such atrocity, which remains an unparalleled instance of cruelty, if one of the last acts of the wretched Herod were not equal to it. Not long after the murder of the innocents, Herod was seized with a dreadful disorder, which caused the most excruciating agony—worms fed upon him, and his breath became so loathsome that no one who could avoid it ventured near him. The more he suffered the fiercer he grew, and a few days before his death, feeling that his end was near, he sent for all the prin-

* Matt. ii. 1-8.

† Matt. ii. 16.

principal men of the Jewish nation wherever they lived. Under pain of death they were to obey the summons. A great number accordingly assembled at Jericho, where Herod was then staying, and were immediately, by the king's command, shut up in the hippodrome. Herod then sent for his sister, Salome, and told her that, as he knew his death would be the cause of great rejoicing, he was determined that it should be also the cause of great mourning. He therefore ordered her that she should, as soon as he had breathed his last, have all the nobles who were confined in the hippodrome shot with darts, and then there would be greater mourning at his funeral than had ever been heard of at the funeral of any king before him. This barbarous order was given only five days before he died. One ineffectual attempt he made to commit suicide, and shortly after expired. Such was the end of Herod the Great. Alas for human greatness! He was carried to his sepulcher on a golden bier, which was inlaid with precious stones and covered with purple. On his head was placed a diadem, and above it a crown of gold. His mortal remains were thus, with all the pomp of royalty, carried to their last resting-place, but whither had fled his black and guilty soul?

I must not omit to say that Salome did not obey Herod's orders, for she, as soon as he was dead, set all the nobles who were confined in the hippodrome at liberty.

Whether or not devout men, as in the case of the first martyr, Stephen, were permitted to carry the Apostle James to his burial, we know not. The stranger who visits Jerusalem is shown a slab upon which, it is said, St. James laid his head when he was about to receive the stroke of the executioner. But if we only reflect a little, we can scarcely suppose that the poor persecuted Christians could have preserved this memorial of the murdered Apostle; or if they did for a few years, how could they, after Jerusalem had been razed to the ground, and presented to the beholder only a confused mass of ruins, say on what particular stone James had been beheaded?

It is more than probable that James the Great never preached the gospel out of the Holy Land, though the Spaniards say that he visited Spain. They regard him as their patron saint, and represent him in

pictures on a white horse, his harness being studded with escalop shells. The Spaniards have an order of knighthood called the Order of St. James.

In England there are about three hundred and sixty churches dedicated to St. James ; possibly some of these may be meant for St. James the Less. though not so stated



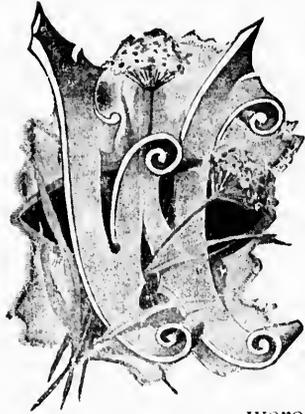
THORN-CROWNED CHRIST.

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PHILIP.



OE unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.* How must three at least of Christ's listeners have trembled when they heard this denunciation from the lips of one who never spake but the truth! Peter and Andrew were, as you know, born in Bethsaida; and St.

John tells us that "Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." † Doubtless all these Apostles had relations and friends near and dear to them in the doomed city—relations and friends whom they had, perhaps with tears, attempted to lead to Christ, but who had refused to listen, and continued hardened and impenitent. Capernaum was also included in the anathema of our Saviour. "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." ‡ How literally all that Christ foretold has come to pass! Bethsaida was then a rich and populous city—now five or six poor cottages, part of a large cistern, the ruins of a church,

* Luke x. 13, 14.

† John i. 44.

‡ Matt. xi. 23, 24.

and a heap of broken columns, are all that remain of it. As to Capernaum, which was, when Jesus honored it as his chief place of residence, in the highest state of prosperity, it has totally disappeared from the face of the earth. No trace of it can be found; though travelers have sought diligently for its ruins, they have failed even to discover its site. From the loftiest pinnacle of glory it has sunk into complete oblivion, and the place thereof knows it no more.

We hear nothing of Philip till his election to the discipleship, which important event of his life occurred the day after Andrew had taken his brother to Jesus.



SUPPOSED RUINS OF CAPERNAUM.

“The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.”* So Philip was the first chosen of the Apostles; for though Peter and Andrew had conversed with Jesus before Philip had seen him, yet they were not invited

to follow our Saviour till some months afterward. There is no explanation given as to how it was that Philip at once obeyed Jesus and followed him, excepting that he was of “the city of Andrew and Peter,” † and consequently might have conversed with them about the expected Messiah. A divine power doubtless accompanied the command, “Follow me,” for Jesus had as yet performed no miraculous works to prove that he was indeed the Son of God. Philip does not seem for

* John i. 43.

† John i. 44.

one moment to have hesitated about what he should do, or to have questioned who it was who called him. No sooner was he elected than he began his labor of love. He "findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."* It is evident from this passage that Philip was well acquainted with the writings of Moses and the prophets; and it has been further stated by ancient writers that he had received an excellent education. Some months after his call to the discipleship, he was promoted to the dignity of an Apostle. His name does not frequently occur in the holy writings.

Before our Saviour fed the multitude in the wilderness, he said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him," † or try his faith. "Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." ‡ It was no small quantity of bread that Philip named as being insufficient to distribute even sparingly among the company. A Roman penny, considered as equal to fifteen cents of our money, would make their two hundred pence equal to about thirty dollars with us. Besides, bread is now fully ten times dearer than it was then, so that in reality, according to our present ideas, Philip remarked that over three hundred dollars' worth of bread would not be sufficient for each to have a little. What a vast multitude there must have been! How many persons we do not know. There were five thousand men, but we are not told how many women and children. Every circumstance connected with this miracle is deeply interesting. John the Baptist had shortly before been beheaded in the Castle of Macherus, which was not far from Bethabara. His faithful disciples (some of them now Apostles of Jesus) were near the scene of his execution, and took up his body and buried it, no doubt at great personal risk. Who can but admire the courage and devotion of these good men, for they had reason to fear that the malice of Herodias would not be confined to John, but would be also extended

* John i. 45.

† John vi. 5, 6.

‡ John vi. 7.

to his disciples and friends. Their sorrowful duty performed, they hastened to tell Jesus. We will suppose, for it was not improbable, that Andrew and John assisted in the burial of their late master. The Apostles had been sent out, two and two, by Jesus to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out devils. Perhaps inclination had led Andrew and John to the neighborhood of Bethabara, so that, while they neglected not the work Jesus had given them to do, they could at the same time visit spots dear to them as associated with the Baptist's ministry. Their labors came to an abrupt conclusion. Their late beloved master was put to death, and they lost no time in hastening to Jesus to tell him the sad story. Many a long mile would they have to travel before they again reached the shore of Galilee; but every journey has an end, and ere very long they arrived at the place where their Lord was. All the Apostles, it seems, returned at the same time, and "gathered themselves together unto Jesus."* Worn out both in body and mind no doubt they were, so how welcome to the wearied ones would be the invitation of Jesus, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."† The little band entered a ship, and sailed to another part of the shore, where they landed, and ascended one of the mountains that slope gently down to the lake, "and there he sat with his disciples."‡ How long they rested I cannot tell, but I fear only a short time. Perhaps those who had assisted at the burial of John had not finished their account of the Baptist's last moments, when Jesus "lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company"§ coming. It appears that the people had seen them enter the ship, and came and ran round by the shore to the place to which Jesus and his disciples had retired. When our Saviour beheld this vast concourse hurrying toward him, how excusable would it have been if he had concealed himself and his jaded disciples. For we find that before he withdrew himself from the cities, the people had been so pressing with their wants that he and his disciples "had no leisure so much as to eat;"|| but no, our Lord's compassionate heart would not allow him to disappoint the multitude, who "were as sheep not

* Mark vi. 30.

† Mark vi. 31.

‡ John vi. 3.

§ John vi. 5.

|| Mark vi. 31.

having a shepherd,"* therefore he came down the mountain and met them, "and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing." † So interested were the multitude in all Jesus was doing and saying that they appear not to have noticed the flight of time, and evening found them still in the desert, far from their homes, listening to the great teacher. Our Saviour must indeed for the time have fascinated them. They had traveled on foot many miles, bringing their sick and children with them, and had passed a whole day without having anything to eat, and yet they complained not of hunger, nor of fatigue. The twelve disciples at length interfered, but not until it was too late to dismiss the people to their homes fasting. The only plan that suggested itself to their minds was to send the multitude to the villages and towns near there, to lodge for the night and buy victuals, and this they advised Jesus to do. But he said, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." ‡ The poor disciples confessed that they had but five barley loaves and two small fishes. How homely was the fare of Jesus and his Apostles,—dry bread and a little fish. Surely we ought not to complain if our table be not provided with dainties. After a little further conversation with Philip and the rest of the disciples, Jesus told them to make the men sit down on the grass. He directed them how they were to be seated, in companies of hundreds and fifties—one hundred facing another hundred, and fifty across each end. Thus arranged, all would be more easily served, and the number more readily ascertained. How the women and children were placed we are not told, but we know they were not overlooked. Not one out of that vast multitude refused to follow the directions of Jesus, but, in perfect order, seated themselves on the grass, as they were told, though doubtless many looked at the five loaves and two fishes, and wondered if that were all the food provided for them. "Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude." § Many agents, doubtless, were employed in this stupendous miracle. The loaves

* Mark vi. 34.

† Luke ix. 11.

‡ Matt. xiv. 16.

§ Luke ix. 16.

and fishes were multiplied in the hands of the Apostles, who must have employed others to assist them; for how could twelve men, in the space of about two hours, serve several thousand hungry people? "And they did eat, and were all filled."* *All*—men, women, and children—partook of a hearty meal, and when their hunger was appeased, more food was left than before they began to break their long fast. They were not, however, allowed to carry any away. The precious relics were given by Jesus to the disciples. The twelve Apostles gathered up the fragments, a basketful each. The multitude were, after seeing this wonderful miracle, so convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, that they wished at once to make him a king, believing that the Messiah, when he did come, would reign as a temporal monarch. But our Saviour would not allow it: his kingdom was not of this world, and he had no wish to disturb the government of any earthly monarch, so he desired his disciples to get into a ship, and go across the lake, while he sent the multitude away.

The feeding five thousand men, and perhaps as many or more women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, was one of the greatest miracles Jesus performed, and is the only one related by all four Evangelists. The place where this mighty work was done is still pointed out to travelers, and is called "the multiplication of bread."

We hear nothing more of Philip by name in the holy writings till the closing scene of our Saviour's life was near at hand; but doubtless every day, from that on which Jesus called him till the ascension, was laden with incident worthy of record. And some of his nights, also, how full of peril and heart-stirring scenes they were! That which followed the day on which was performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes, what a fearful night it was to Philip and the rest of the Apostles! Overtaken by a storm on the lake, they were for hours tossed about, expecting every moment a watery grave. They were stupefied with fear, and when Jesus, walking on the raging sea to them, entered the ship and stilled the winds, Philip and the rest, forgetting the miracle of the loaves, "were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and

* Luke ix. 17.

wondered."* Then think of that fearful night when Philip and the rest forsook Jesus, and fled from Gethsemane; and the nights of sorrow that followed, till that evening when their risen Lord appeared in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you." †

The Greek proselytes, who wished to see Jesus, addressed themselves to Philip, who, with Andrew, delivered their message to our Saviour. Both of the names, Andrew and Philip, are Greek. Why these two Apostles had not names common among the Jews given them is not known, but probably they may have traveled into the neighboring districts, such as Cæsarea, where Greek was the language spoken by the mixed population, and found it advisable to adopt Greek names so long as they sojourned in those parts, and afterward retained their adopted names. This appears probable from the fact of the Greeks, when they wished to speak to Jesus, addressing themselves to Philip, who immediately consulted Andrew, and these two, after telling Jesus that certain Greeks desired to see him, evidently introduced the foreigners to him. It would seem as though Philip and Andrew alone among the Apostles knew the Greek language.

When Jesus was comforting and encouraging his poor disciples, just before the last supper, and was speaking of his Father, Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." ‡ Strange request to fall from the lips of a chosen servant of the Lord, and one who was well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. Had he not read how God had said to Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live?" § And had not Jesus declared that "no man hath seen the Father"? || On Philip betraying this ignorance, our Saviour returned him this gentle reproof, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." **

* Mark vi. 51.

† John xx. 26.

‡ John xiv. 8.

§ Exod. xxxiii. 20.

|| John vi. 46.

** John xiv. 9, 10.

"No man hath seen God at any time."* All the manifestations or appearances of the Deity were made by the Son, one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, the one God. Christ it was who led the Israelites through the wilderness. St. Paul says, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."† He it was who appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and to Moses. He manifested himself under various titles. He was the angel who so often appeared to the patriarchs and others. As the angel of the Lord of hosts he appeared to Joshua at Jericho. Often is he called Jehovah, translated Lord. He is called at least a dozen times by that great name in the chapter which gives an account of his interview with Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Our Lord assures us that God the Father never has appeared to any man at any time, and Jehovah is a name never given to the angels, but is always confined to the great being who made heaven and earth. The Word of God therefore is the Jehovah here spoken of. The prophet Isaiah was favored with a vision of the Almighty, truly sublime and beautiful. "In the year that king Uzziah died," he says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."‡ In the fifth verse of the chapter the same being is called, "The King, the Lord of hosts." The Evangelist St. John tells us that the person whom the prophet saw in this vision was our Saviour Christ. "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."§ Oh, what marvelous love did this mighty Prince, this great Jehovah, this Lord of hosts display when he at length appeared as a weak and helpless infant in the stable of Bethlehem, when he dwelt with, and shared the labors of, the humble Joseph, when he selected as his companions poor fishermen, and mingled with the meanest of the sons of earth! He was the Word who created the world, and yet was led as a lamb to the slaughter. He, the Prince of Israel, was buffeted, spat upon, mocked, and then fastened to the accursed tree, and all to save us, to open to us the gates of Paradise, that we might share with him the glories of his Father's home. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to

* John i. 18.

† 1 Cor. x. 9.

‡ Isa. vi. 1-3.

§ John xii. 41.

receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."* "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." †

Philip is mentioned as being with the rest of the Apostles at Jerusalem after the ascension, and after then his name does not occur in the Holy Scriptures.

He is often confused with Philip the deacon, who preached and baptized in Samaria. It was generally believed by the ancients that Philip was married, and it was said by some that he had daughters, who resolved never to marry; but the women alluded to were, doubtless, the four daughters of Philip the deacon, "virgins which did prophesy." ‡ The Apostle Philip, in the distribution of the different parts of the world that was made by the Apostles under the divine direction, had—so we are told by Nicephorus and others—Upper Asia given to him as the sphere of his ministry. There he labored with the greatest diligence, baptizing the converts, healing the sick, planting churches, and appointing ministers. After remaining in those parts some years, he went, we are told by the same authority, into Phrygia, now part of Turkey in Asia, where he, like Peter, followed his divine Master, and was crucified. It was in a city of Phrygia, named Hierapolis, now called Aleppo, famous for its wealth and



WORSHIPPING JUPITER.

* Rev. v. 12.

† Rev. v. 14.

‡ Acts xxi. 9.

idolatry, that he suffered martyrdom. Clemens Alexandrinus says the inhabitants of Hierapolis were addicted to the grossest idolatry. Philip was much distressed at seeing them so deluded, and prayed constantly for them that they might be brought to the knowledge of Jesus. He then pointed out to the people the folly of their worship, at the same time telling them of the true God, and preaching the Gospel to them. They became quite ashamed of their idolatry, and many of them turned to the Lord. But as was usually the case whenever marked success attended the labors of the early Christians, the rulers of the people rose up to oppose them: so the magistrates of Hierapolis seized upon Philip, put him into prison, and then had him unmercifully whipped and scourged. He was then crucified, and, while hanging on the cross, stoned to death. It is said that, at his execution, the earth began to quake under the feet of the murderers; and they in their terror acknowledged and bewailed their sin, which was bringing the divine vengeance upon them, and the earthquake ceased. Philip had a constant and faithful companion in his beloved sister Mariamne. She, assisted by St. Bartholemew, took the martyred Apostle down from the cross, and buried him in or near Hierapolis.

Surely there could not be many scenes more interesting for a painter to depict than the burial of Philip. It would probably be night when the devoted sister and her friend, the holy Bartholomew, performed the mournful ceremony. Perhaps the Apostle, with his wounded limbs (for he had been fastened to a cross by the cruel Phrygians, but had, when the earth quaked, been taken down and set at liberty), could but little assist Mariamne in the melancholy task of arranging decently the disfigured body, bruised and broken as it would be. They laid Philip in the tomb, and, like their divine Master, prayed for their enemies.

“ Then cheerly to their work again,
 With hearts new-braced and set
 To run, untired, love's blessed race,
 As meet for those who, face to face,
 Over the grave their Lord have met.”

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BARTHOLOMAEUS

BARTHOLOMEW.



YOU cannot have read the life of Philip without wishing to hear more of his fellow-laborer, the holy Apostle Bartholomew, who is also known by the name of Nathanael. It is not distinctly told us in the Bible that Nathanael and Bartholomew were the same person; but there can be little doubt of it, for Matthew, Mark, and Luke speak of Bartholomew, and say nothing of Nathanael, and John speaks only of Nathanael and never mentions the name of Bartholomew.

The three first Evangelists place Bartholomew among the Apostles, and couple him with Philip as John did Philip with Nathanael. And it would seem *Nathanael* was one of the twelve, from the fact of St. John speaking of him as being with the disciples Peter, Thomas, James, John, and two others, who are supposed to be Andrew and Philip, on the Sea of Tiberias, when "Jesus stood on the shore" * after his resurrection; and then John expressly tells us that this was "now the third time that Jesus showed himself to *his disciples* after that he was risen from the dead." † It was evidently only to the Apostles that our Saviour had appeared on the two previous occasions the Evangelist alludes to. The first was on the evening of the day Jesus rose from the dead, when all were assembled in a room but Thomas, "one of the twelve." ‡ The second was eight days afterward, when "again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them." §

The word Bar, in Syriac, signifies son of, hence Bar-Tholmai, or

* John xxi. 4.

† John xxi. 14.

‡ John xx. 24.

§ John xx. 26.

Bartholomew, means son of Tholmai or Tholomew, so that this Apostle might be spoken of as Nathanael Bartholomew, or Bar-Tholmai. Peter was sometimes called Bar-Jona, son of Jona. Bartimæus, the blind beggar, was the "son of Timæus."* In the case of the magician St. Paul struck with blindness, he is called "Bar-Jesus," † son of a man of the name of Jesus. Would that we had been favored with more particulars of the life of Nathanael Bartholomew, if I may so call him, than what can be gathered from the Scriptures and the works of ancient writers; but the little that is known of him cannot fail to inspire every one with the greatest respect for his character. Our Lord himself pointed him out as a pattern of simplicity and sincerity, by saying, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" ‡ A rare sight, and worthy of being admired, was the man that even Jesus, who knew his every thought, pronounced free from deception of any kind, and perfectly upright. Of Nathanael's family, trade, or profession but little is known. St. John tells us that he was "of Cana in Galilee;" § and some have supposed he was descended from a noble family, even the Ptolemies of Egypt, though in our Saviour's time he and his near relations were in humble circumstances. It is most likely that his calling was the same as that of those with whom we find him on the Lake of Galilee after the resurrection of Jesus.

You will remember that Philip had no sooner received the invitation to follow Christ than he sought out Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." || But Nathanael doubted. He was not ignorant of what the law and the prophets had stated relating to the Messiah, but from that he knew that Christ was to come "of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was;" ** and Nazareth was such a notoriously wicked place that he exclaimed, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" † † For thirty years had Jesus, a perfect model of every virtue, dwelt in Nazareth, and yet Nathanael, who lived only four miles off, had never

* Mark x. 46.

† Acts xiii. 6.

‡ John i. 47.

§ John xxi. 2.

|| John i. 45.

** John vii. 42.

†† John i. 46.

even heard of him till now. So strong was the prejudice against the Nazarenes, that no one looked for goodness among them, and the holy family of Joseph passed their days unnoticed and uncared for by the short-sighted world around them. Most likely Nathanael had, from his boyhood, been accustomed to visit Nazareth. He might more than once, perchance, have passed the workshop of the carpenter, Joseph, and have seen the master and a comely youth busily employed with their tools, but he saw no more. Had he known who the youth was, he would have prostrated himself before him, exclaiming, "My Lord and my God;"* or perhaps he might, before entering the city, have stopped at a well to quench his thirst, and while resting there, a matron may have come to the fountain, accompanied by a youth, who, with affectionate care, assisted his mother to raise some water, and then, lest the burden should be too heavy, helped to carry the pitcher back into the city. Such a novel sight in Nazareth would excite the wonder and sympathy of the pious and warm-hearted Nathanael; and we can fancy him following this pattern of filial love to his humble home. Perhaps he would have entered the dwelling, poor as it was, but he had no right to intrude upon the privacy of even a despised Nazarene, and he would pass on, wondering whether there were not, after all, some good in Nazareth. Had he known who that youth was, he would have knelt before him, exclaiming, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."† Or perhaps on one occasion of his visiting Nazareth, a funeral procession may have passed him, and first among the mourners he may have observed a newly-made widow, supported by her son. Out of reverence for the dead, Nathanael may have stood with head uncovered till the melancholy



FOUNTAIN AT NAZARETH.

* John xx. 28.

† John i. 49.

train had gone by. But had he known who the son of the chief mourner was, he would, in solemn awe, have bowed his head to the dust while the Holy One passed. There is abundant scope for the imagination in picturing scenes connected with the private life of our Saviour, but those I have drawn are not altogether imaginative. Jesus, we know, probably worked at his reputed father's trade till he was thirty years of age, for he is not only called "the carpenter's son,"* but "the carpenter;" † and the well now called the Virgin's Well, just outside of Nazareth, still remains. Lord Lindsay, in his "Letters on the Holy Land," says, "Every scene of our Saviour's life at Nazareth is marked by chapels and churches. There is a well, however, named after the Virgin, to the east of the city, which we gazed at with evident interest. It still supplies Nazareth with water, and thither, without a doubt, came the Virgin mother and her Saviour son, day after day, to draw water, as we also saw the daughters of Nazareth coming." And Joseph, we may suppose, died and was buried in Nazareth some time before our Saviour commenced his ministry. There can be no doubt that Mary was a widow when Jesus, while hanging on the cross, consigned her to the care of St. John; and it is believed she had been so for some years. But I must proceed with the history of Nathanael, as the only Evangelist who gives the account of this Apostle's first interview with Christ calls him. He received no direct reply to his question, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith to him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." ‡

Jewish writers tell us that devout persons frequently offered up their prayers under the shade of fig-trees. Probably Nathanael was so occupied when Philip found him, and took him to Jesus:—

"In his own pleasant fig-tree's shade,
Which by his household fountain grew,
Where, at noon-day, his prayer he made,
To know God better than he knew."

* Matt. xiii. 55.

† Mark vi. 3.

‡ John i. 46-48.

Our Lord's knowledge of his secret devotions, though at too great a distance to have seen him with his bodily eyes, convinced Nathanael that it was indeed the Messiah who stood before him; and in an ecstasy he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."* Our Saviour, pleased with his ready faith, said, "Because I said unto thee I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." † Greater things than Christ's knowing he had been at prayer under the fig-tree should Nathanael see in the miracles our Lord intended shortly to perform, and which would so convince him of the heavenly nature of Jesus, that he would in imagination, if not in reality, see angels descending upon our Saviour, and ascending again when their mission was accomplished. How greatly those holy beings rejoiced in the prospect of man's redemption, and, in an inferior sense, assisted in the mighty task, we have abundant proof. At the annunciation, at the birth, after the temptation in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, after the resurrection, and at the ascension, we find these holy messengers were employed, and in visible forms. Within three days after his introduction to Jesus, Nathanael witnessed the first public miracle our Saviour performed. "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage." ‡ The twelve were not all there, of course, several of them not having yet seen Jesus; but Nathanael is generally believed to have been one of the disciples invited to the marriage



ANCIENT VESSELS.

* John i. 49.

† John i. 50, 51.

‡ John ii. 1, 2.

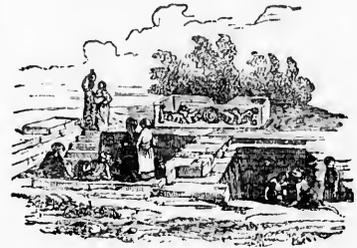
feast in Cana. Who the bridegroom was is not told us, but it is supposed by many to have been St. John. Before the feast was over the wine was exhausted, and "the mother of Jesus saith unto him, 'They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.'"^{*} We are so accustomed to think of Mary only as the meek and lowly Virgin,—first in humble faith receiving the heavenly message; then patiently enduring all the inconveniences of a stable when she most needed the comforts of her own home; then, under the guidance of Joseph, fleeing with the infant Jesus into a foreign country to avoid the cruelty of a tyrant; then, a few years afterward, searching with sorrow-stricken face for her lost child; and lastly, as a desolate widow, gazing upon her crucified son,—that we can scarcely imagine her one of a joyous wedding party; but it is no less true that she was one of the guests at the marriage of Cana, and not merely tolerating the festive scene out of courtesy to the bride and bridegroom, but taking an active part in the entertainment. She enters into the feelings of the host when the wine is exhausted, and appeals to Jesus to help him in his difficulty. Why did Mary tell her son, possibly in a whisper, that there was no wine? Why did she not tell Nathanael, who would know better in his own city from whence more could be procured? Surely Mary must have witnessed some of the miraculous powers of Jesus in her humble home at Nazareth, and now hoped he would, by the same divine power, relieve the bridegroom from his awkward position. There is something in the answer of Jesus to Mary that appears to us rather harsh; but he meant no disrespect; he only wished her to understand that, as he had now entered upon his public ministry, he could no longer be subject to her. The word woman was in those days used to females of the highest rank, and our Lord, when displaying his deep affection for her in his last fearful agonies, addressed his mother as woman. "Woman, behold thy son!"[†] Mary appears not to have been discouraged by the reply she received from Jesus, but privately said to the servants, "Whatever he saith unto you, do it."[‡] "And there were set there six

^{*} John ii. 3, 4.

[†] John xix. 26.

[‡] John ii. 5.

waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews.* The vessels were placed for the guests to wash their hands in before sitting down to the feast, as it was contrary to their custom to sit down to meat with unwashed hands. Jesus told the servants to fill the waterpots with water. "And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast." † The water was, as you are aware, turned into wine. This miracle, no doubt, confirmed the faith of Nathanael, and the other followers of Jesus, for it is said, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." ‡ Among the ruins of Cana may still be seen large stone pots of the same description as those used in our Saviour's time for purification. We hear nothing more of Nathanael till we find him, under the name of Bartholomew, ranked among the Apostles, when he not only saw, but, in the name of Jesus, did many mighty works. Devils trembled at his voice, and dared not disobey him. Disease vanished at his touch, and the soul returned to the stiffened corpse when he commanded it.



FOUNTAIN AT CANA.

His life, from this time till the ascension of our Lord, was one continued scene of self-denial and danger. His Master was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." § And Bartholomew, his faithful follower and servant, endured the same indignities and trials. Twice he escaped shipwreck, only by a miracle each time. Often doubtless, like his Lord, he had nowhere to lay his head. From city to city he accompanied Jesus, and shared with him the hatred and contempt of his wretched countrymen. He was one of the little band who took refuge in Bethabara when the Jews sought to kill Jesus; and he, with the rest, tried to persuade our Saviour not to go to Bethany

* John ii. 6.

† John ii. 7, 8.

‡ John ii. 11.

§ Isa. liii. 3.

when Lazarus was sick. He was at the last supper, and heard the astounding words, "One of you shall betray me;" * and, like the others, said, "Is it I?" † and shortly afterward joined in the last hymn he sang on earth with "the Lamb of God:" ‡ that night he fled from Gethsemane, and unless he were one of those acquaintances who stood afar off beholding the crucifixion of our Lord, the earthquake, the darkened sun, and the rising of the dead from their graves, we know nothing more of him till we find him and the other disciples, "for fear of the Jews," § shut up in a room, when their risen Lord appeared in the midst of them. He, with the rest, was terrified, for they thought they saw a spirit; but Jesus "upbraided them with their unbelief," || and "showed them his hands and his feet." ** Eight days afterward our Saviour again appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem. The doors of the room in which they were assembled were closed, and we are led to believe securely fastened, yet Jesus suddenly stood in the midst of them, and said, "Peace be unto you." † † Shortly afterward we find Nathanael, with some of the other disciples, once more on the hallowed Lake of Galilee. "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing." ‡ ‡ In the morning Jesus stood upon the shore, but they did not know him until he had performed a miracle. For forty days the Apostles saw Jesus at various times after he had risen from the dead, and then he ascended into heaven. I can tell you very little more of Nathanael, or, as I shall for the future call him, Bartholomew, as I believe his name only once occurs in the Acts of the Apostles, and that is when he is mentioned in the list given of those who, according to the command of Jesus, remained in Jerusalem till the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. A few pages back I remarked that, from the time of his call till the ascension of our blessed Lord, Bartholomew's

* John xiii. 21.

† Mark xiv. 19.

‡ John i. 29.

§ John xx. 19.

|| Mark xvi. 14.

** Luke xxiv. 40.

† † John xx. 26.

‡ ‡ John xxi. 2, 3.

life was one continued scene of self-denial and danger, but no one can be in the least acquainted with the history of the early Church and suppose that his labors or his troubles ceased till he had laid down a life devoted to the spread of the Gospel. Socrates, of Constantinople, in his "History of the Church," says that he worked among the most cruel and barbarous heathens on the borders of Africa, near Abyssinia, then called Ethiopia; and Eusebius tells us that more than a hundred years afterward a great philosopher and Christian, named Pantænus, became a missionary, and in his journeyings arrived at the scene of Bartholomew's labors, and there found a copy of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which, according to tradition, St. Bartholomew had left behind him. Has ever traveler since found on the shores of the Red Sea such a peerless gem as that manuscript, carrying as it did the tidings of salvation to millions of immortal creatures? After Bartholomew had been some time in this part, it appears from the history that he removed further north; and now it was that at Hierapolis he worked with Philip. You will remember that the Phrygians were perfectly blinded with idolatry, but the devoted and zealous Apostles succeeded in convincing many of their errors, which so enraged the magistrates that they seized upon Philip and Bartholomew, and crucified them. The life of the latter, however, was saved in consequence of the people being made sensible by the earthquake that God's vengeance was upon them. He was taken down from the cross alive, his heavenly Father having more work for him to do; but Philip's labors were ended, and he rested in the Lord. How Bartholomew assisted Philip's sister, Mariamne, to bury the martyr, I have already told you. After making one more effort to convert the inhabitants of Hierapolis, they left the city. What afterward became of his interesting companion I know not; but probably she is among the noble army of martyrs near the throne of her Saviour, in her robes of spotless white. From Hierapolis Bartholomew removed a little further to the east, and went into Lycaonia, where Chrysostom assures us he established the Christian religion; and, having crossed Cappadocia, he finally reached Armenia, and there, according to Sophronius, his labors ceased. While preaching to the inhabitants of a city, called Albanople, he was seized by the

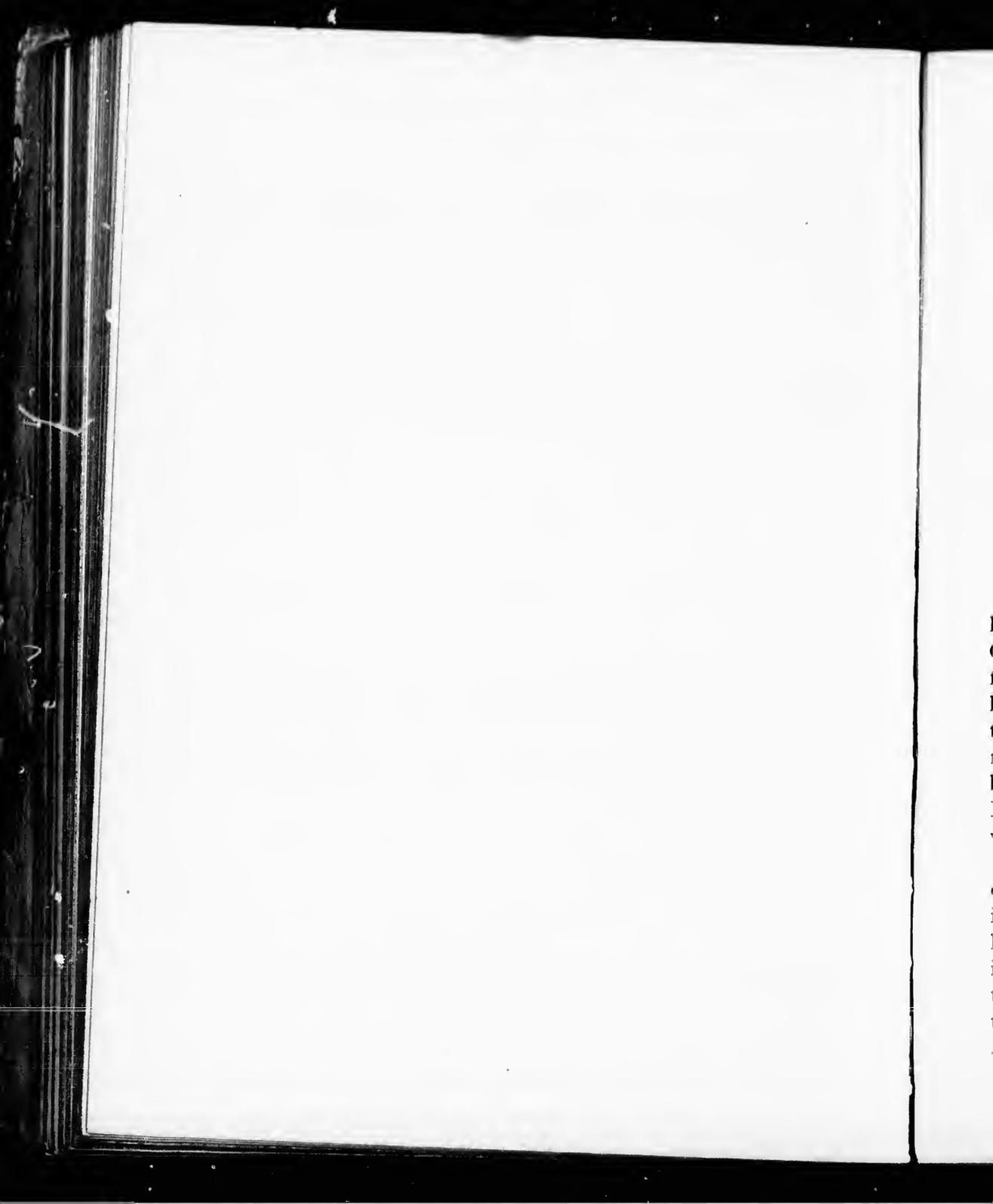
governor, a miserable idolater, who treated his victim with the greatest cruelty. Grievous it is to have to relate how this holy and good man, whom you cannot have read about without loving and admiring, was first beaten to the ground with staves, then, as Hippolytus, a Greek father and martyr of the third century, tells us, crucified with his head downward; then, as others say, taken from the cross alive and flayed, and afterward beheaded. What monsters to have dreamed of such cruelties! But their power was limited. They could not shut out from the martyr's dying gaze that glorious home they were hurrying him to, the prospect of which made him endure cheerfully all the tortures inflicted upon him.

The burial-place of this Apostle is uncertain. It is supposed by some to have been at Rome, but this is very improbable.

The name of Bartholomew sadly reminds us of one of the most terrible massacres we read of in history, that known as "The Bartholomew," because the bloody work began on the festival of that saint. The cruel Catherine de Medicis, for some time Queen Regent of France, and mother of Charles IX., was a bitter enemy to the Protestants, or, as they were called, Huguenots. The burning of Protestants had formed part of the festivities of her coronation, and from that time till her death, which occurred forty years afterward, she never ceased plotting their destruction; but it was the fearful tragedy that commenced on the 24th of August, 1572, which has rendered her name infamous throughout all ages.

It would be out of place here to enter into a minute account of the massacre of St. Bartholomew; suffice it to say, that the wicked queen-mother, aided by one or two others, laid all her plans with the greatest secrecy. In order to allure as many Huguenots as possible to Paris, she pretended to favor them, and many of the highest quality were invited to the Court. On the day before the massacre, a number of the citizens were ordered to appear in the king's presence, and were told that when certain signals were given they were to slay as many of the Huguenots as they could; and if they refused to do so, they would be hanged. At midnight the awful signals were given: bells were rung, torches were put into the windows, and chains placed

across the streets, and the bloody work began. The murderers spared neither age nor sex. Many were slain in their beds, and the headless bodies were thrown through the windows. The badge worn by the inhuman monsters engaged in this tragedy was a white cross in their hats; and they were encouraged by the priests, who each held a sword in one hand and a crucifix in the other. Surely the angels must have wept to have seen the sacred emblem of our salvation thus polluted. The massacre lasted a week. Seventy thousand fell victims to the fury of the ambitious and cruel Catherine de Medicis. Many visitors at the palace were slain; and one goldsmith boasted of having killed four hundred persons with his own hands. Though Catherine de Medicis was the prime mover of this fearful massacre, the heads of the Church in Rome must have been privy to it, for the news of its accomplishment was eagerly expected in the papal city, and when it arrived was received with acclamations, and the firing of cannon announced to the neighboring villages that the bloody work had been done in Paris. The Pope went to church in procession, performed high mass with all the splendor of his court, and ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung in celebration of the event. By his order, a picture of the slaughter was painted, and still hangs on the walls of the papal palace. A medal was also struck in commemoration of the event, the one side of it presenting the head of the Pope, and the other the exterminating angel, with the sword and the cross, destroying the Protestants, and having this inscription in Latin, "Slaughter of the Huguenots, 1572."



THOMAS.



HE more we study the lives of the Apostles, the greater must be our regret that so little is known in reference to their youthful days. Such noble, self-denying, and brave men must in their boyhood have given many instances of the courage, love, and devotion for which they were afterward so eminently distinguished. It is true that the grace of God powerfully influenced them after "they had been with Jesus."* But can we imagine Peter as a youth being anything but warm-hearted, energetic, and generous, as ready to plunge into the Sea of Galilee to save the life of a companion, as he was when a man to leap from his boat and wade through its waters to his dear Lord? And how many affecting stories might not the mother of John have told of the gentleness, goodness, and filial love of her child! But there were no printed books in those days; and though there might be a few biographers, they would only think of writing the life of a Herod, a Pilate, or a Caiaphas. Poor fishermen, however exalted their virtues, would be quite beneath their notice.

We are told the birthplace of many of the Apostles, but as to what city Thomas was a native of, or who his father was, we are left in total ignorance. It is supposed that Thomas was a Galilean, and that his parents were very poor indeed; but, being pious, they carefully instructed him in the knowledge of the holy writings. It is thought that his father was a fisherman, and that he himself was brought up to the same occupation. The Evangelists do not mention him till they

* Acts iv. 13.

give the list of the Apostles, and then always couple him with Matthew. At the command of Jesus, Thomas went forth to preach to men that they should repent, to cast out devils, and to anoint with oil those that were sick, and heal them. But, from the time of his ordination to the Apostleship, he is not individually mentioned in the Scriptures until he was at Bethabara with Jesus shortly before the crucifixion. A touching instance is then given of his willingness to die with his dear Master. Our Lord had, with his disciples, gone up to Jerusalem. He had, by his preaching, offended his unbelieving countrymen, who three times attempted to stone him; but "his hour was not yet come,"* and he escaped out of their hands, and went to Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John had baptized. While he was there with the Apostles, he received a message from the sisters of Bethany, telling him that their brother Lazarus was sick. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," † but he did not at once hasten to the bedside of his friend; not because he was afraid of the Jews (Bethany being only two miles from Jerusalem), nor because he was indifferent, but "that the Son of God might be glorified." ‡ He might have transported himself instantly to Bethany, and raised Lazarus at once from his sick couch, or even have given the word at Bethabara, and the disease would have vanished; but the hardened Jews might have said that the complaint had suddenly taken a favorable turn: and so our Saviour waited till Lazarus was dead. Can we not imagine the state of painful suspense the sisters were kept in? Jesus had received their affecting message, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." § They did not ask him to come, for they felt sure that, if he knew they were in trouble, he would hasten to their assistance. His reply, "This sickness is not unto death," || would, for a time, assure them. But the disease gained strength, the pulse became weaker, and symptoms of death appeared. Oh, how often would Martha leave her dying brother, and with eager gaze look in the direction from whence Jesus should come! but still there were no signs of the Great Physician. The death dew stood on the forehead of the loved one, and

* John vii. 30. † John xi. 5. ‡ John xi. 4. § John xi. 3. || John xi. 4.

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Mary, in an agony of grief, would pray—oh, how fervently!—for Jesus not to tarry; but there was no sound of his coming. At length the parting kiss was given, the eyes were closed, the heart ceased to beat, and the bereaved sisters sat down to weep beside the corpse of their brother. Jesus knew all that was passing in that house of mourning; he heard the prayers and sighs of Martha and Mary, and saw the soul of Lazarus departing; but, notwithstanding, he remained at Bethabara. At length he said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."* Jesus meant them to understand that, until the time had arrived for him to "make his soul an offering for sin,"† the Jews had no power to take him. Afterward, he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well."‡ Thus did the disciples try to persuade Jesus not to go, fearing that they would fall into the hands of the Jews if they ventured near to Jerusalem. "Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him"§—that is, with Jesus. The courage of Thomas inspired the rest of the Apostles, and the devoted party left Bethabara, but did not reach Bethany till Lazarus had been in the grave four days. Bethany was only six miles from Bethabara. Why did Jesus linger on the way? "That the Son of God might be glorified."|| If he raised Lazarus immediately after his death, the Jews might have said that Lazarus had only been in a trance, so he waited till corruption had begun its work. In the meantime, we can imagine that so long as their brother's corpse remained in the house, all hope would not be extinguished in the bosoms of the sisters. Doubtless, they

* John xi. 7-10. † Isa. liii. 10. ‡ John xi. 11, 12. § John xi. 14-16. || John xi. 4.

had heard how Jesus had restored to life Jairus's daughter and the widow's son; and could he not, if he were there, give them their brother back again? But hour after hour passed, and he came not. One day only was the corpse suffered to remain in the house, then was it carried to the tomb. And now the sisters believed that they were indeed parted forever from Lazarus on this side of the grave. This amiable family had many friends who came from Jerusalem "to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother." * Four days of mourning passed away, and then a group of travelers approached the city, and soon the news spread that Jesus was coming. The sisters heard of it, but only Martha went to meet him. With a bright, joyous face had she formerly welcomed him to Bethany; but now, in heart-broken accents, she salutes him with the lamentation, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." † And then, as if hope were not quite abandoned, she continued, "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." ‡ After this full and complete confession of her faith, "she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him." § What new hopes fluttered in the breasts of the sisters as they hurried to Jesus! Martha had told Mary, *secretly*, that Jesus had come. She knew how much reason she had to dread the Jews, knowing that he was so near. But the mourners, whom Mary had left in the house, supposing that she had gone to the grave to weep there, followed her. When Mary had reached the place where Jesus was, she fell at his feet, and, like her sister, exclaimed, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother

* John xi. 19.

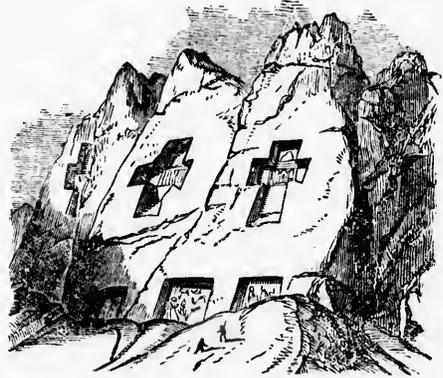
† John xi. 21.

‡ John xi. 22-27.

§ John xi. 28, 29.

had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!"*

Jesus wept: the sisters wept: and the Jews wept. Were the Apostles, do you imagine, unmoved spectators of so much sorrow? Thomas had proved his love to Jesus by coming, as he supposed, to die with him. Would he not weep with Jesus? Peter was ready to lay down his life for his dear Lord's sake: would he not weep with Jesus? And the best beloved disciple, would he not weep when Jesus wept? And Bartholomew and Philip, and the rest, all but the hypocritical Judas, how would their hearts melt within them! They moved to the grave. It was cut in the rock, and a stone was placed at the entrance. Jesus gave orders for the stone to be removed. This was done, and at once revealed the corpse, closely wrapped in linen bandages, the legs bound together, and the arms bound to



ANCIENT TOMBS IN THE ROCKS.

the sides. "And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes."† What must have been the feelings of those who, after hearing the command of Jesus, saw the body immediately begin to move, then leave the tomb and stand before them? We can readily

* John xi. 32-36.

† John xi. 41-44.

suppose how they gazed in silent amazement upon the spectral figure till the voice of Jesus, directing them to "loose him and let him go,"* aroused them. Vain would it be to attempt to describe the gratitude of the sisters, the reverential awe of the disciples, and the wonder of the Jews, when, upon the removal of the napkin which covered the face, they beheld the features of Lazarus, not a mass of corruption, but glowing with health and beaming with intelligence.

All the party, we know, did not accompany Lazarus to his home; but we can readily suppose that Jesus and his disciples became his guests. How would the sisters, on arriving at the house, with trembling joy, bring out the garments of their brother, which they had carefully put away, to be kept as precious relics; and then, after hastily removing all signs of mourning from the dwelling, prepare a feast suitable to the solemn though joyous occasion.

St. John is the only Evangelist who gives an account of this deeply-interesting event. The reason why Matthew, Mark, and Luke were silent on the subject probably was that, when they wrote their Gospels, Lazarus (who, we are told by early writers, lived thirty years after he was raised from the dead) was alive, and would, if they had recorded the miracle, have been exposed to danger through the malice and hatred of the Jews. But, when St. John wrote his Gospel, Lazarus was again laid in the tomb, there to rest till he shall a second time hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth.

Thomas was, as you will have observed, also called Didymus, each name signifying "a twin," or "one of twins." In Hebrew he would be addressed as Thomas, but in Greek as Didymus.

When Jesus was comforting his poor disciples, just after telling them that he must leave them, he said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas

* John xi. 44.

saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.* Thomas was still thinking of an earthly kingdom, and an earthly palace, and wished to know the way that led to them; but Jesus explained to him that he was the way, and it was only through him that they could reach their home—a heavenly one.

After this, we do not hear of Thomas by name till the evening of the day Christ rose from the dead. "Then, the same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." † Thomas was not with them. What occasioned his absence we know not. Perhaps since that night, when, like scattered sheep, the disciples fled from Gethsemane, he had not been seen by any of his companions, so knew not of their arrangement to meet together; or perhaps, though aware of their design, fear of the Jews prevented him, even at night, leaving his hiding-place. We are simply told that "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." ‡ It would seem, however, that but little time was lost before he was informed that the Lord had appeared to the Apostles. But he would not believe. "Except," said he, "I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." § Strange indeed was his incredulity. Had not Jesus himself said to his disciples, as they were going up to Jerusalem, that he would rise from the dead "the third day?" || And could he, after the wonderful miracles he had seen performed, imagine anything impossible with Christ? And, moreover, he had the declaration of *ten* men who had, for more than two years, been the constant companions of Jesus, that they had seen him, and he had showed them his hands and his side. So deeply rooted was

* John xiv. 1-6. † John xx. 19, 20. ‡ John xx. 24. § John xx. 25. || Mark x. 34.

his unbelief, that, for eight days, he obstinately rejected the proof of Christ's resurrection, during which time he must probably have heard, over and over again, how Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene, then to the women who had been at the sepulcher, then to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and that Peter when alone had seen him. How fatal this hardness of belief would have been to Thomas if the compassionate Jesus had not condescended to prove to him, by his own senses, that he had indeed risen from the dead!

"And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."* No sooner was Thomas convinced than his unbelief was changed into rapture; and he confessed that it was not only his Lord and Master who stood before him, but his God.



EASTERN GREETING.

Not much more can be gathered of the life of the Apostle Thomas from the Holy Scriptures. He was one of the party on the Lake of Galilee when Jesus stood on the shore, after his resurrection, and who, when they reached the shore, dined with our Saviour. We may suppose that Jesus chose a secluded spot for this repast, but a stray pedestrian may, perchance, while strolling along the shore, have passed them; and if so how little would the stranger imagine, as he looked at the group of fishermen, the coal fire, the broiled fish, and the bread, that he who presided over that humble feast was "The mighty

* John xx. 26-29.

God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," * and the Saviour of the World.

After the ascension we find Thomas, with others, in a large upper room in Jerusalem, where they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," † and from that time he is not spoken of by name in the Bible. Thomas labored at first in Judea, and afterward, Origen tells us, he traveled into Parthia. He subsequently, Sophronius and others inform us, preached to the Medes and Persians, and other nations. After many journeys, it appears that he reached India. Nicephorus says that at first he was afraid to venture among these dark-colored and cruel heathens, but he was encouraged by a vision that God would be with him and help him, so he not only entered India, but journeyed far into the country. He was, through the divine blessing upon his ministry, most successful in bringing the people out of the grossest darkness into the clear light of the gospel, winning them by his gentleness, patience, and persuasive powers to the obedience of Christ. It was at a city called Malipur, in India, that he began to erect a place for divine worship, when he was forbidden to complete the building by the priests and Segamo, prince of the country. But, after performing several miracles, the work was suffered to proceed, and Segamo himself became a Christian. The idolatrous priests now began to see that their calling was in danger; so they resolved to put Thomas to death, vainly imagining that, if the leader were destroyed, the new religion would soon die away. Not long had the murderers to wait before an opportunity occurred for them to carry out their wicked design. Outside the gates of Malipur was a tomb; who was buried there I know not, but one would suppose some dear friend of the Apostle, for to this tomb Thomas was in the habit of retiring, and, probably because it was a quiet and secluded spot, he there held communion with his God. It was while engaged in prayer in his favorite retreat that the Brahmins and their armed followers attacked him. They shot him with their arrows, stoned him, and at length one of the priests ran him through with a lance. His disciples

* Isaiah ix. 6.

† Acts i. 14.

carried the body to the church Thomas had a little time before completed, and there in great grief interred the holy martyr. The sacred building was afterward improved, till it became a church of great magnificence. The Christians of the East say, and believe, that the body of Thomas was, with great care, dug up by Don Emanuel Frea, governor of the Coast of Coromandel; and it was discovered that Prince Segamo, whom Thomas had been the means of converting, had been buried in the same grave.

In the sixteenth century, Don Alfonso De Souza was viceroy in India, under John the Third, king of Portugal, and resided near the scene of Thomas's death. The Portuguese say that some brass tablets were brought to him, with inscriptions on them so ancient that they could scarcely be read. A Jewish antiquarian at length discovered that they contained a donation from the king to Thomas of a piece of ground to build a church upon. It is said there was also a cross found bearing an inscription, which was interpreted by a learned Brahmin. It gave an account of Thomas's ministry in those parts, and his death, and stated that that cross had been kept as a memorial of the martyred Apostle, it being stained with his blood.

When the Portuguese first arrived in India, more than three hundred years ago, they found great numbers of Christians, called St. Thomas's Christians: no less, some say, than fifteen or sixteen thousand families, successors of the disciples of Thomas. They had churches, were very poor, were governed by patriarchs and bishops, received the two sacraments, and observed many of the seasons of the Church.

The date of Thomas's death is not known. Chrysostom says that this Apostle, who was at first the weakest and most incredulous of all the Apostles, became, through Christ's condescending to satisfy his scruples, and the power of the divine grace, the most active and invincible of them all.



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MATTHEW.



SOLEMN indeed must be the thoughts of the traveler as he strolls on the shores of Galilee. Perfect stillness pervades the scene. Not even a ripple on the beautiful lake disturbs the silence around him. Not a single boat gliding across the sea varies the picture. In solitude he may stand and contemplate the mountains that afforded a retreat to the blessed Jesus from the noisy throng, and the waters that were ever ready to obey the voice of their divine Master. But how different must it have been when our Saviour walked by the sea-side, and multitudes followed him! Look at an ancient map of Palestine, and you will see how many flourishing cities raised their proud heads on the banks of Gennesaret. What a busy scene the lake must have then presented! Vessels of every description were sailing from one side to the other. Boats for passengers, and ships for merchandise; fishermen's boats, and doubtless often boats full of pleasure-seekers from Capernaum, Bethsaida, Tiberias, and other places.

No wonder that the publican, or tax-gatherer, who had the good fortune, speaking in a worldly sense, to be stationed on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, carried on a flourishing trade. It is the history of one of these Roman servants you are about to read. But, first, I must explain what a publican was. He was a collector of the customs, or tribute, from the Jews and others for the Romans, under whose yoke the Jews then were, and had been for sixty years before the birth of Christ. These collectors were called in Latin *publicani* (publicans), because they gathered public payments. The taxes were looked upon by the

Jews, especially the Galileans, as a great grievance. Not only the loss of the money was a consideration, but the impost itself constantly reminded them that they were not free. The Roman publicans, knowing that Jews would better understand the habits of their own people, often employed them as deputies. These deputy publicans were held in great detestation and contempt, for they not only collected what was required by the Romans, but seized every opportunity of extorting money for themselves. Another reason why the Jews despised them was, because they had, in the way of business, to mix with the Gentiles, a Jew thinking it a disgrace to deal with, or even speak to, a Gentile. So much were the Jewish publicans abhorred by their countrymen, that it was considered unlawful for any one to do them an act of kindness, to sit at meat, or to travel with them. A Jew might even cheat a publican without being punished for it, and was not allowed to hold any communion with him in matters of religion. In short, a publican was shunned, detested, and feared. Jesus, in giving directions to his disciples, told them that if a brother trespassed against one of them, he was to reprove him privately; but if that had no effect, he must do so before witnesses; and if the offender still continued hardened, the injured man must, said our Saviour, "tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a *publican*."* It was a common proverb among the Rabbins, "Take not a wife out of that family wherein there is a publican, for such are all publicans," or vile persons. Although the Roman publicans were generally people of consequence, they had no reputation for honesty. So confirmed was their character for fraud and extortion, that when one of them, Sabinus, the father of the Emperor Vespasian, proved an exception to the rule, there were certain statues erected to his memory with this inscription, "For the faithful publican." And, therefore, no wonder if, in the Gospel, publicans and sinners go hand in hand.

Matthew, the Apostle and Evangelist, was a publican. He recorded the fact, that the power of religion might be made known. Read

* Matt xviii. 17.

his own words "And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him."* What astonishment must this event have caused in the minds of those who were standing by! Can we imagine the scene? In a counting-house on the shore, near Capernaum, sat Matthew, busy collecting the taxes due upon merchandise and passengers about to be taken across the lake. Probably he appeared wholly absorbed in his profitable business, and heedless alike of the scorn and hatred of his fellow-countrymen, and any reproaches of his own conscience, as he extorted money both for his masters and for himself. But who can tell what was passing through his mind? Perhaps, as he sat there, he was reflecting upon the wonderful things that were happening at Capernaum, and possibly he had listened to our Lord's discourses, and his heart had been touched with love for, and admiration of, the divine Teacher. We know, however, no more than the Jews who unwillingly paid him the tribute money, and saw in Matthew only a vile tax-gatherer. A man in humble garb approached the spot. He looked upon Matthew, and simply said, "Follow me."†

"At once he rose, and left his gold,
His treasure and his heart
Transferr'd, where he shall safe behold
Earth and her idols part."

What marvelous power had that meek stranger exercised? would the wondering Jews ask, as they looked upon the vacant seat and the neglected heaps of money. They did not reflect that he who could heal the sick, and raise the dead, could, with a word or look, give spiritual life to a heart dead to all but worldly gain. With a cheerful and willing spirit did Matthew sacrifice all for Christ. So overflowing with thankfulness was he at having found the Saviour, that he made a great feast in his own house, inviting his friends to meet Jesus and his disciples, and to rejoice with him. Jesus became the guest of Matthew, and sat down with publicans and

* Matt. ix. 9.

† Luke v. 27.

sinners. You would have supposed that all must have admired the condescension and humility of our Lord; but the haughty Pharisees found fault with him. They insolently asked his disciples why he associated with publicans and sinners. Our Saviour heard them, and at once answered, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* No one blames a physician for the company he is with when his patients compose it, so, as Jesus came to heal those who were afflicted with the disease of sin, and the Pharisees considered themselves righteous, they ought not to have been surprised at finding sinners rather than themselves the Saviour's companions.

The following year Matthew was ordained an Apostle, from which time no special mention is made of him in Scripture. He, like the rest of the holy band, preached the gospel, healed the sick, cast out devils, and took part in, or witnessed, the interesting scenes of our Lord's life, the last of which was that which took place on Olivet, when Jesus, while blessing the Apostles, ascended into heaven.

Matthew was also called Levi. It is not known precisely where he was born, but he was believed to have been a native of Galilee. His father's name was Alphæus, and some have supposed that he also was a publican. The father of Matthew must not be confounded with Alphæus, the father of James the Less. After our Lord's ascension, Matthew preached up and down Judea for eight years or more, and then labored in converting the Gentiles. He wrote his Gospel (the first that was penned) chiefly for his Jewish brethren. In it he proves that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Knowing the faith of his countrymen in the Old Testament Scriptures, he begins his Gospel by pointing out that Jesus of Nazareth was directly descended from Jesse, from whom was to spring the Messiah. (Read the eleventh chapter of Isaiah.) He shows, in many instances, that the events related in his Gospel were the fulfillment of prophecies the Jews acknowledged to be true. When speaking of the birth of Jesus, he reminded them of the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and

* Luke v. 31, 32.

shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."* He told them that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and that the chief priests and scribes said that Christ must be born there, for the prophet Micah had written, "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." † John the Baptist, who, in the wilderness, proclaimed to the Jews that the Messiah was at hand, was, Matthew said, the same spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." ‡ Jesus, he wrote, "came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the Prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." § When he recounted the miracles of Jesus, how he healed the sick and cast out devils, he reminded his countrymen of the prophecy of Esaias, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." || The method of teaching adopted by our Lord was, he wrote, a fulfillment of prophecy. "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."** Jesus entered Jerusalem upon an ass. St. Matthew reminded the Jews of what Zechariah had prophesied. "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." † † Thus this Evangelist lost no opportunity of pointing out the fulfillment of prophecy in the life and ministry of Jesus. And what believer in the Old Testament could, after reading St. Matthew's

* Matt. i. 23.

† Matt. ii. 6.

‡ Matt. iii. 3.

§ Matt. iv. 13-16.

|| Matt. viii. 17.

** Matt. xiii. 34, 35.

† † Matt. xxi. 5.

history of our Saviour, doubt that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Christ?

It is only in St. Matthew's Gospel that you will find an account of the adoration of the magi, the flight into Egypt, the massacre of the innocents, the parable of the ten virgins, the dream of Pilate's wife, the resurrection of many saints at our Saviour's crucifixion, and the bribing of the soldiers by the chief priests after our Lord had risen from the dead.

Of the mode of St. Matthew's death, nothing certain is known; but it is supposed that he was slain with a halberd at Naddaber, in Ethiopia, where he had, by his preaching and miracles, been the means of converting multitudes. He was noted for his humility, and Clemens Alexandrinus says for his temperance and abstemiousness also.

St. Matthew is generally coupled with St. Thomas. St. Mark and St. Luke, in giving the list of the Apostles, place the former before the latter; but Matthew, with his wonted humility, places himself last.



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JAMES THE LESS.



Y no means the least important of the Apostles was James the Less, who was also called James the Just. He was considered a model of virtue; and Josephus, the Jewish historian, speaks of him as a "wonderful person, celebrated of all others for righteousness." It is not known what place he belonged to, excepting that in the Talmud it is said James was a native of Sechania. No trace, however, of even the site of a town of that name can be discovered, so you must be content with simply knowing that he dwelt in Palestine. It is needless to surmise in what part of the Holy Land the deeply-interesting family of which James was a member resided. His mother was sister to the Virgin Mary, so her home, before her marriage, must have been at Sepphoris, a large city near Nazareth, as Anne and Joachim, the supposed parents of the Virgin, are said, by early writers, to have resided there. But this does not tell us where James lived before Christ began his ministry. He and his cousin, the blessed Jesus, might have been companions from their infancy, or they might only have seen each other when they and their parents met at the annual feasts in Jerusalem. James the Less was one of the four sons of Alphæus or Cleophas and Mary. His brothers—Joses or Joseph, Simon or Simeon, and Jude or Judas (the last an Apostle)—are all mentioned in the Gospels, and are spoken of as our Lord's brethren. The word "brethren" in the New Testament must not always be understood as meaning sons of the same parents, as it is sometimes used when a remoter relationship is intended.

No record is left of James's call to the discipleship, and his name

does not occur in the Holy Writings till he was ordained an Apostle. We do not read of any individual act of his in the Gospels, but as one of the twelve selected by our Saviour to be his companions and attendants, he filled a higher position on earth than ever monarch has yet attained to. The Lord of all gave him his commission, and, as a soldier of the cross, he fought bravely against the foes of Christ, and came off more than conqueror through him who loved him.



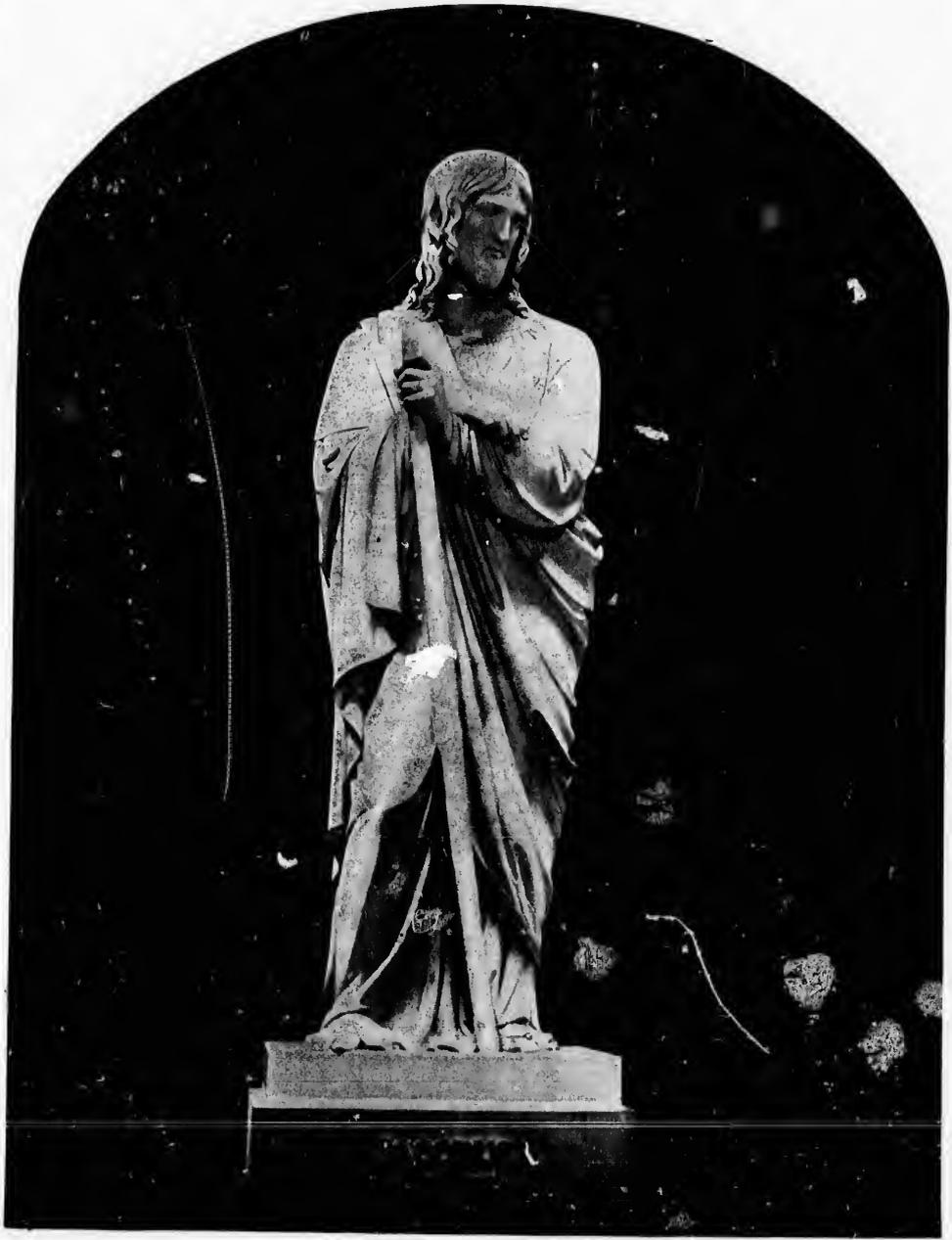
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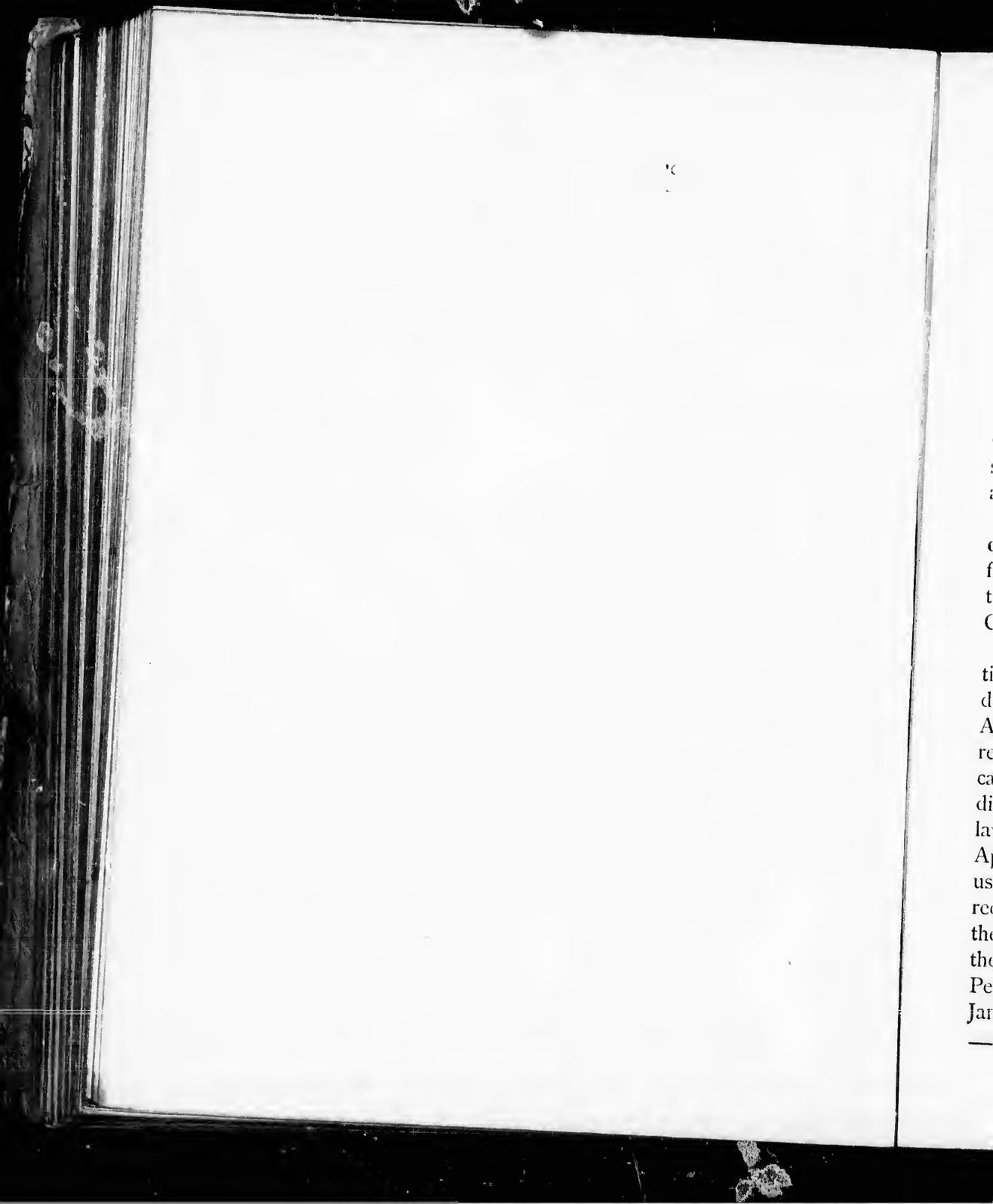
The Saviour, after his resurrection, honored James with a special interview; but what passed on that occasion, or even where the meeting took place, we are not told in the Bible. Not one of the Evangelists speaks of the event, but St. Paul tells us that Jesus "was seen of James; then of all the Apostles."* There was, so early as the first century, a sect of Judaizing Christians (afterward called Nazarenes), who

the Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew, but added much to it that cannot be considered of undoubted authority. The account they give of the interview between our Lord and James, and the circumstance which led to it, is, according to Jerome, that the latter took a

* 1 Cor. xv. 7.

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solemn oath that, from the time he had drunk the wine the Saviour had given him when he instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, he would eat bread no more till he had seen Jesus risen from the dead; and that after his resurrection Jesus appeared to James, and set bread before him, and, having blessed it, he brake it, and gave it to the Apostle, saying, "Eat thy bread, my brother, for the Son of man is truly risen from among them that sleep."

After the ascension of our Lord, James took a very distinguished part in the acts of the Apostles, and was, on account of his exalted character, regarded as a person of the greatest importance in the early Christian Church. He was made Bishop of Jerusalem. Jesus, it is supposed, left behind him an intimation that he wished James to be appointed to this honorable post.

When Peter had been admitted into the house of Mary the mother of Mark, after his delivery out of prison by the angel, he gave his friends an account of his miraculous escape, and then said, "Go, show these things unto James and the brethren;"* meaning the whole Church, and particularly James, the bishop of it.

We have brought forcibly to our minds, in the case of the disputation touching circumcision, the very high position James filled, and the deference which was paid thereto. While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, "certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."† The Apostle and his companions, after a lengthy discussion with these Christians who wished to unite the ceremonial law with faith in Christ, resolved to go up to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles and elders about the question. This they did (St. Paul tells us that he "went up by *revelation*"‡), accompanied by Titus, and were received by "James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars" § of the church, to whom "they declared all things that God had done with them."|| A council was then held, in which there was much disputing. Peter addressed the assembly. Then Barnabas and Paul. Finally, James stood up. How many eager eyes would be fixed upon the

* Acts xii. 17.

† Acts xv. 1.

‡ Gal. ii. 2.

§ Gal. ii. 9.

|| Acts xv. 4.

venerable Apostle! How all present would bend forward to hear the decision of their bishop! James concurred in all that Peter, Paul, and Barnabas had said. His speech was as follows: "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon" (Simon Peter) "hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day."* No further discussion was necessary after James had given his sentence. Peter, John, Paul, Barnabas, and the rest regarded the point as settled. The fact of the Apostles deeming James's sentence as final, is proof of the very high position which this most excellent Apostle occupied in the estimation of his brethren. "Then pleased it the Apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: and they wrote letters by them after this manner: The Apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord

* Acts xv 13 21.

Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."*

This decree of the council of Jerusalem set the question about circumcision completely at rest. No Gentile was required to be circumcised, nor was obedience to any part of the ceremonial law enforced upon them as necessary to salvation. There were, however, certain customs, in themselves indifferent, which few Jews, even after they had become Christians, could be induced to lay entirely aside. Of this nature was their dislike to eat any animal with the blood in it, or that had been strangled, or any meat which had been offered in sacrifice to idols. As regarded these things, the Gentile Christians had no such scruples. But the letter from the council advised that the Jewish prejudices in these matters should be considered, in order that the Jews might not, when they sat down to their meals, be shocked by seeing the Gentile converts pay no regard to so positive a command of Moses.

The letters were written, and every precaution, we may suppose, was taken to guard against any mischance that might happen to travelers passing through a country at that time infested by banditti, and overrun by a conquering enemy. But before the great Apostle and Barnabas took their departure from Jerusalem, can we not imagine them, in company with Peter, John, and James, paying a hasty visit to places, oh, how dear to the devoted followers of Jesus—Gethsemane, Calvary, Olivet, Bethany, and many other spots would possess an irresistible charm to the enthusiastic Paul. But the zealous missionary, anxious to return to his great work, would not linger; and soon he and his three companions were far from the holy city, wending their perilous way to Antioch. Three hundred miles had they to travel. It is probable they took a direct route; and, if so, they would pass the lofty Gibeon, and perhaps gaze at the rock upon which, more than a

* Acts xv. 22-29.

thousand years before, had lain the bodies of the seven sons of Saul. Ere long they would reach Bethel: and perhaps, like the patriarch Jacob, would sleep there. In crossing Samaria, they possibly rested at the well where Jesus talked with the woman of Samaria. When they arrived at Nain, they perhaps entered the city by the gate through which, twenty years before, the corpse of the widow's son was being carried when Jesus restored it to life. From the heights of Nazareth they may have gazed upon the lovely Lake of Galilee, whose clear waters, then sparkling in the distance, would soon be dyed with the blood of those who took no heed of the mighty works Jesus did. In time they would reach the foot of the snow-capped mountains of Lebanon: and now, through dreary wilds and over burning plains, the weary travelers directed their course to the Orontes. Oh, how welcome to them would be the sight of that beautiful river, with its vine-covered banks! The rest of their journey would most likely be by water, and as the splendid city of Antioch, Queen of the East, burst upon their view, can we not imagine the delight of Silas and Judas. The stupendous walls, the gorgeous palaces, the head of Charon, the theaters, baths, colonnades, temples, and groves of laurels, myrtles, and cypresses, above which towered the rocky Mount Sylphius, were new to them. But Paul and Barnabas were not strangers to the beauties of Antioch, so one object alone would attract them—the church of the Christians. The news soon spread that the anxiously-looked-for travelers had arrived, and a multitude quickly assembled to hear the decision of “the council of the Apostles.” The letter was publicly read, the contents of which filled the hearts of the listeners with joy. Ages have passed since that epistle moldered into dust, but the sentence of James continues to be read in the congregations of the faithful, who still rejoice in the liberty where with Christ hath made his people free.

Ten years after Paul's journey to Antioch with the letter from the council, we find him again at Jerusalem, and being welcomed by James and all the elders, to whom “he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.”* But there were

* Acts xxi. 19.

those in the city who no sooner heard of his arrival than they sought to kill him. The gospel had spread rapidly, and "many thousands of Jews"* had become Christians. But still the infant Church was in the midst of foes, who, though with good reason distracted and terrified at the fearful state of their country (famines, wars, massacres, and robberies desolating every part of it), could yet consult with one another how best to overthrow the religion of Jesus. The Jews were not permitted to slay Paul; and he was sent a prisoner to Cæsarea, guarded by two hundred soldiers, two hundred spearmen, and seventy horsemen. The Scribes and Pharisees were enraged because their intended victim had escaped out of their hands, and their malice was turned against James.



HEBREW PRIESTS.



A LEVITE.

Ananus was then high priest. He was a bold, merciless man, and undertook to put James to death, but it was fully four years before he accomplished his purpose. Felix, who kept Paul in prison two years at Cæsarea, was on account of his unpopularity removed from his post, and was succeeded by Festus, who, two years after he was appointed governor, died. It was in the interval between the death of Festus and the arrival of Albanus, the new governor, that Ananus took upon himself to call together the Sanhedrim, which was the chief council of the Jews, formed of seventy members, over whom the high priest usually presided. The Sanhedrim was composed of priests, doctors of the law, and elders. These were "the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders," † who met at the palace of Caiaphas to consult how they might take Jesus. Before these judges James was brought, and was by them condemned to death. They wished, however, to have some plausible reason for killing him, so, Hegesippus,



ROBING A PRIEST.

* Acts xxi. 20.

† Matt. xxvi. 3.

an ecclesiastical historian who lived in the second century informs us, the Scribes and Pharisees hurried him up to the top of the temple, and cunningly said to him, "We beseech thee, restrain the people, for they believe in Jesus as though he were the Christ; we pray thee, persuade the people, that they be not deceived; stand upon the pillar of the temple that thou mayest be seen, and that thy words may be heard by all the people." James was then placed upon the battlements of a wing of the temple, so that the multitude below might both see and hear him. The undaunted Apostle then said, with a loud voice, "What do you ask me of Jesus, the Son of man, seeing that he sitteth on the right hand of God in heaven, and shall come in the clouds of heaven?" Many of his hearers were convinced of the truth of what he said, and cried, "Hosanna in the highest to the Son of David!" The Scribes and Pharisees were so enraged at this, that they flung James from the pinnacle on which he stood. Though much hurt, he was not killed; and, rising upon his knees, he prayed, "O Lord God, Father, I beseech thee to forgive them, for they know not what they do." But his enemies, instead of being softened, only became more inflamed against him, and attacked him as he knelt upon the ground. His brother Simeon, Epiphanius says, was near the fatal spot, and he entreated the brutal murderers to spare the life of the just and righteous man who was praying for them. But, blinded by passion, they cast a shower of stones upon their holy victim, till one, who was a fuller, having in his hand a club which he made use of in his trade, struck the Apostle on the head with it and dashed out his brains. Thus died, in the ninety-sixth year of his age, James the Just, called also Oblias or Ozliam, which means "the defense and fortress of the people." This latter name was given him by the Jews because they considered the safety and happiness of the nation depended upon his prayers. James was slain about the year A.D. 62, eighteen years after James the Great had in the same city been killed by Herod. The people, so Hegesippus tells us, testified their respect for James the Less by placing a monument over the spot where he was murdered. This memorial was highly valued, but it did not long exist, for eight years afterward the Romans, when they took the city, destroyed it.

The death of James was a great grief to all upright men, even to those who were not Christians, and when the hand of God was so heavy upon the Jews, they believed, so it appears from Josephus, that the fearful calamities that befell them were the effects of the vengeance of the Almighty for their having barbarously murdered James the Just. He was buried, according to Gregory of Tours, on the Mount of Olives, in a tomb he had himself built, and in which he had interred the "just and devout" * Simeon, and Zacharias the father of John the Baptist. James, the son of Cleophas, was called James the Less, probably because he was lower in stature and younger than James the Great, and these titles were given them by way of distinction.

James the Less was the author of one of the epistles in the holy volume; when he wrote it is not exactly known, but it is supposed to have been during the year before his martyrdom. Great errors had arisen in consequence of the misinterpretation of the doctrine of justification by faith, as taught by Paul, many believing that moral duties were not necessary, and had, consequently, given themselves up to all manner of evil courses. But James in his epistle undeceived them, for he told them they must be "doers of the word, and not hearers only;" † they must bridle their tongues, and not deceive their own hearts; that they must relieve the afflicted, and keep themselves free from the vices of the world; be "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." ‡ For unless their faith led them to practice these virtues, it was dead, and their religion vain; in other words, that they had no proper faith nor real religion at all; for if the tree be made good, it must produce good fruit; and if the fountain be made pure, it must send forth pure water. In the latter part of his epistle, he alludes to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and exhorts the Jewish Christians to be patient, and to stablish their hearts for the coming of the Lord.

James remained bishop of Jerusalem until his death. He had charge of the mother church about thirty years, during which time he

* Luke ii. 25.

† James i. 22.

‡ James iii. 17.

labored with the greatest diligence and faithfulness, preaching with such success that the most stubborn were convinced, and many of the nobles in Jerusalem became Christians. Hegesippus says that his piety was most fervent, and sincere prayer was his delight, and he constantly retired to the temple to perform his devotions. He was held in such veneration by the people, not only on account of the miracles he wrought, but because of his holiness and purity, that they followed him wherever he went, deeming it a blessed privilege to touch even the hem of his garment. And after his death Eusebius mentions that the episcopal chair in which he used to sit was carefully preserved, and regarded almost as sacred. His charity was great, and his temperance and humility admired by every one. Indeed, he was so much beloved and honored, that almost all Jerusalem united in giving him the title of James the Just.



BLOWING OF TRUMPET AT NEW MOON.

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JUDE.



BLESSED, indeed, were Alphæus and Mary in their children. The history of their first-born you have just read. Simon, or Simeon, was, upon the death of his brother James, unanimously elected bishop of Jerusalem. Alphæus and Mary had, there can be little doubt, long before this honor was conferred upon their son, closed their eyes in death. But we may be assured that he, who was thought worthy of so high a trust, would be, so long as his parents lived, the joy and comfort of their hearts.

Joses is generally believed to have actively devoted himself to the service of the Lord Jesus; and Jude, you know, was an Apostle.

Blessed as Alphæus and Mary were in their children, no less so were the brethren, "James and Joses and Simon and Judas,"* in having such pious parents. I cannot tell you so much of the father as of the mother of Jude, but no one can suppose that Alphæus was aught than a true follower of Jesus. He had trained up his family "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" † and perhaps he was not less eminent than his dear partner, for piety, courage, and devotion.

Alphæus, or Cleophas, was one of the two favored disciples whom our Saviour walked with after his resurrection. He and his companion were on the road to Emmaus, a village about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked they conversed about all the strange things that had happened. "While they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them; but their eyes were

* Matt. xiii. 55.

† Eph. vi. 4.

holden, that they should not know him."* Our Saviour asked them what was the subject of their conversation, and why they were so sad. "And the one of them whose name was Cleophas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" † Jesus asked them, What things? And they told him all about the mighty works Jesus of Nazareth had done, and that he had been crucified, and how astonished they were at the account they had heard of his resurrection. Then Jesus upbraided them with their unbelief, "and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem." ‡ The companion of Cleophas is supposed by many to have been Luke.

I know nothing more of the father of Jude, but his mother was one of those holy women who went with Jesus about Galilee, through every city and village, ministering unto him of their substance. These pious women likewise followed our Saviour on his last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, to attend, so far as lay in their power, to his temporal necessities. It must not be supposed that they devoted themselves exclusively to Jesus; doubtless, the Apostles also participated in the benefits of their thoughtful care. Two, at least, of these females had sons in the little band who accompanied our Lord; and motherly instinct alone would lead them to respect the wants of their children. I need scarcely remind you how much courage and self-denial were required to act as Mary and her friends did. Home and its

* Luke xxiv. 15, 16.

† Luke xxiv. 18.

‡ Luke xxiv. 27-33.

comforts must have been forgotten ; and often, footsore and weary, they would reach a city only to be treated by its inhabitants with contempt ; and, like the blessed Jesus whom they served, would have nowhere to lay their heads. Let us hope that in Jerusalem they met with friends who could hospitably entertain them. Johanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, had ministered to Jesus of her substance in Galilee. She, too, had followed our Saviour to Jerusalem, where, perhaps, she had wealthy friends who offered a temporary home to her and her companions. Joseph, the counselor, who was " a good man and a just,"* and the wealthy Nicodemus, would neither of them, surely, refuse to shelter such true handmaidens of the Lord. These brave women were faithful to the last. The disciples of Jesus forsook him when the hour of trial came, and many of them did not venture to return to him. But Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene were with our Saviour on Calvary. Most probably they had formed part of that great company who, weeping and lamenting, followed Jesus to the place of execution, and then stood afar off, beholding the crucifixion. Love, however, conquered fear ; and, regardless of the rude soldiers and the cruel and excited mob, the three Marys, with the Apostle John, took up their position at the foot of the Cross. Through that day of agony these devoted and loving women were supported from above. Human nature alone could not have sustained them beneath such a weight of sorrow.

John took the mother of Jesus at once to his own home ; but the other Marys remained on Calvary, and attended the funeral of Jesus. The evening of that terrible day arrived. The dead body of Christ hung upon the cross, and the people had returned home ; and a pit, doubtless, was prepared in Golgotha, in which were to be flung the three corpses. But one of them must be rescued from such an ignominious grave, for the prophet had said, " He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." † Joseph of Arimathæa, an honorable member of the Sanhedrim, " being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away

* Luke xxiii. 50.

† Isa. liiii. 9.

the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight.* The body was then, according to the Jewish custom, prepared for its burial, and was wrapped with the aromatic spices in linen clothes. Not far had the sacred corpse to be carried. Joseph had a new sepulcher hewn out of a rock in a garden near Calvary. In this tomb Jesus was laid, and a stone was rolled against the door of it. "And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph beheld where he was laid."†



BETHESDA.

Jesus was entombed. The Sabbath dawned; and Joseph, Nicodemus, and the two Marys left the sepulcher. How they spent the Sabbath we are not told. Perhaps, after a few hours' rest, Mary, the mother of Jude, sought her sister, the Virgin, to sympathize with and comfort her; or perhaps, in perfect retirement, she pondered over all that had happened.

In the meantime the chief priests and Pharisees had, with the permission of Pilate, made the sepulcher, as they thought, secure by sealing the stone, and setting a guard of soldiers to watch. As soon as the Jewish Sabbath was over, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, Mary Magdalene, and Salome, the mother of James and John, bought sweet spices, which they prepared by mixing them into an ointment. With this they intended to embalm the body of Jesus, the funeral rites having been too hastily performed on the Friday evening; and when the day began to dawn, while it was yet dark, they, with the other women, went to the

* John xix. 38, 39.

† Mark xv. 47.

sepulcher. One cannot but be struck with their courage. The Apostles had hidden themselves for fear of the Jews. The counselor Joseph was a disciple, but *secretly*, for fear of the Jews. Nicodemus visited Jesus, but under cover of the night, for fear of the Jews. The women, however, who followed Jesus from Galilee, feared nothing human. Love with them had cast out fear. The night was dark and stormy, but occasionally the moon would emerge from behind a cloud, and throw a faint and sickly light on the surrounding objects. Perhaps, when they had passed through the gate of the city, it showed them Calvary, with its three crosses, on one of which so lately hung the Prince of Life. A shudder, it may be, passed through them as they looked upon the instruments of death, but the only anxiety they felt was with regard to the stone. "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?"* they said among themselves. They knew not of the seal and the watch. Did they, one naturally asks, feel the earthquake? Or were they startled by soldiers, in wild terror, rushing past them? Both were possible, but still they were not to be shaken from their purpose. When they reached the garden, the sun had risen to shed his light and heat alike upon the holy women, the fond disciples, who in the city mourned and wept, and upon the hardened, cruel Jews. The Sun of Righteousness had also risen—the Prince of Love and Peace, "the bright and morning star," † to his beloved; but, to the Jews, with a self-invoked curse upon their heads—a God terrible in his vengeance. The women approached what they supposed to be the abode of the dead, and beheld with surprise the stone rolled away. What would they think? Two of the party had, only a few hours previously, seen the door of the sepulcher made secure by this very great stone. Who had rolled it away? Perhaps the Jews, whose malice extended beyond the grave, were rifling the tomb, in order that they might insult the remains of Jesus. If so, what mercy could a party of females expect, if they fell into their hands? But whatever were their thoughts, they pressed on, and entered the gloomy vault, a room capable of holding ten persons. They found it empty.

* Mark xvi. 3.

† Rev. xxii. 16.

The body of Jesus was gone, and, "as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments."* *Now* they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth. The angels told them that Jesus had risen from the dead, and that they should see him in Galilee. "And they departed quickly from the sepulcher, with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshiped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me." †

I know but little more of Mary the mother of Jude. After the ascension, she was with the disciples in a large upper room in Jerusalem, where they assembled for prayer and supplication, and from that time there is no authentic account of her, but through all ages she must be regarded as a pattern of devotion, self-denial, and courage.

Beyond the fact that he was the son of Cleophas and Mary, the sacred history gives no information about Jude till he was ordained an Apostle. As our Lord's cousin, he had probably known Jesus all his life: but this is simply conjecture.

You will have observed that Jude is called by Matthew Lebbæus and Thaddæus, by Mark Thaddæus, and by Luke and John Judas. The last name had, as being that of the vile traitor, become odious to the disciples, so the two first evangelists avoid it. Thaddæus means the same as Judas, and Lebbæus signifies "lion-hearted." St. John and St. Luke wrote their Gospels some time after the other evangelists, so that, as the feeling of dislike to the name of Judas would as time wore on become weaker, they had less hesitation in using it.

It has been supposed, but not with any degree of certainty, that Jude was born near Mount Carmel. Like several of the Apostles, he is seldom mentioned by name in the sacred history, but as he was eminent for his firmness and boldness, we cannot doubt that while attending upon our Saviour he had many opportunities of proving his zeal and devotion.

* Luke xxiv. 4.

† Matt. xxviii. 8-10.

At the last supper, when Jesus, after telling his disciples that he must leave them, was comforting them, he said that he would manifest himself to them that loved him. "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?"* Jude was like the rest, thinking that Jesus would reign as a temporal monarch, and he could not understand how a king, exalted on a throne, and ruling the nations, should show himself only to a small company of faithful servants. Jesus told him that the manifestation of himself would be his dwelling in the hearts of true believers, and that the Father would, through his intercession, send the Holy Spirit to teach them, and make those things plain which were now difficult for them to understand.

After our Lord's ascension, Jude preached the Gospel in different parts of Judea and Galilee. He then, it is said, went to the cities of Arabia, and afterward into Syria, and from thence, Nicephorus adds, to Edessa, a city of Mesopotamia, about nine miles from the Euphrates. At the last place he found the seeds of Christianity had already been sown by one of the seventy disciples, of the name of Thaddæus. This Thaddæus had been sent, Eusebius relates, by Thomas to Edessa, very shortly after the ascension. There he healed diseases, wrought miracles, and taught the religion of Jesus with such success that the governor, Abgarus, and his people, became converts to the faith. King Abgarus offered him costly gifts, but Thaddæus refused them with scorn, telling him they had little reason to receive from others what they had freely relinquished and given up themselves. Nearly three hundred years afterward there was found among the records of the city of Edessa a full account of this matter. Jude at Edessa perfected what Thaddæus had begun, and by his preaching and miracles confirmed the souls of the faithful. His principal labors, it seems, were in Persia, where it is understood he suffered martyrdom. The manner of his death is unknown, and the time of it uncertain; but it is generally believed he survived his brother James some years.

You will often have read the short Epistle of Jude in the New

* John xiv. 22.

Testament. It is supposed to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and was addressed to all Christians. He in the plainest terms warned them against the vile doctrines of certain heretics who troubled the Church. Jude exposed and denounced those "dreamers,"* as he called them. "Clouds without water, carried about with winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." †

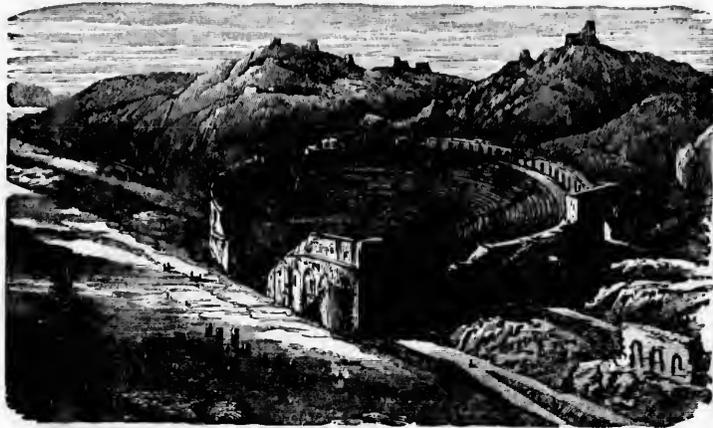
Jude was one of the married Apostles; but who his wife was, I cannot tell you. There is an interesting account given of two of his grandchildren. Hegesippus states that the wicked Emperor Domitian, fearing a claimant might arise for the throne of David, and the Jews rally round him, ordered all to be killed who were of the stock of David. He was informed that there were in Judea some of the kingly line, in the persons of Jude's grandchildren, remaining, and he commanded that they should be brought to him. The Emperor first asked them what was their manner of life. They replied, husbandry. He next inquired concerning the kingdom of Christ, and when it should appear. To this they replied that it was a heavenly and spiritual, not a temporal, kingdom, and that it would not be manifested till the end of the world, when he, coming in glory, should judge the quick and the dead. Domitian, hearing this, dismissed them unbound, and, by edict, stayed the persecution then moved against the Christians. These grandsons of Jude afterward presided over churches, and lived until the time of Trajan.

It can scarcely be considered out of place here to give a brief account of Simeon, the brother of Jude, whose life was by no means less interesting than those of the rest of his family. Eight years after he had been appointed to preside over the affairs of the mother church, Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans. Simeon, however, warned by our Saviour, was one of those who noted the signs of the times. The earthquakes, famines, wars, and pestilences which were desolating the country, he knew were only the forerunners of greater woes. The

* Jude 8.

† Jude 12, 13.

"fearful sights and great signs" * from heaven, which so perplexed the people, were to the Christians intimations that they must prepare for their flight. Of these "fearful sights and great signs" Josephus, in his "Wars of the Jews," gives a most interesting account. He speaks of a star that resembled a sword, which stood over the city for an entire year; and that before the Jewish rebellion, at the feast of unleavened bread, "on the eighth day of the month Nisan, † and at the ninth hour of the night, ‡ so great a light shone on the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright daytime, which light lasted for half an hour. . . . Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner

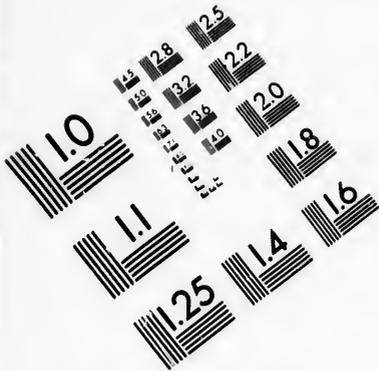


RUINS OF THE THEATER AT EPHESUS.

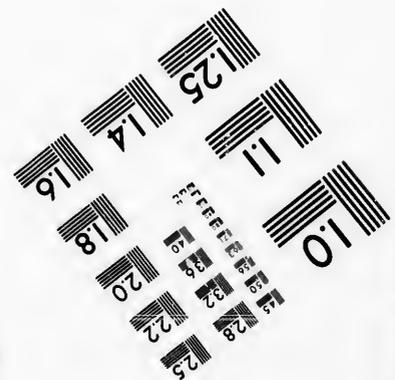
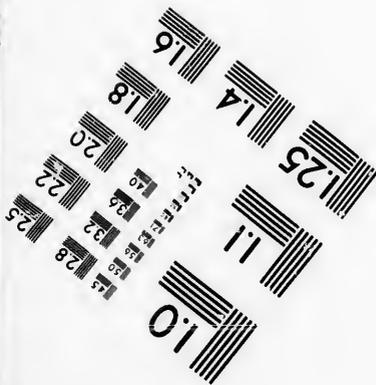
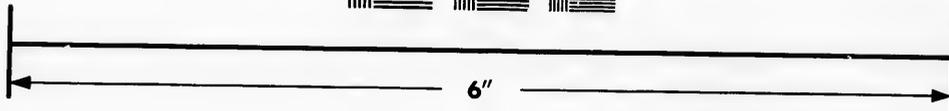
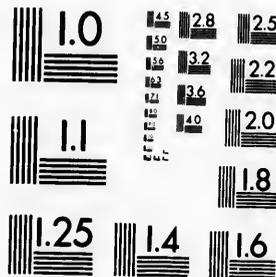
court of the temple, which was of brass and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night." § Josephus also speaks of chariots, and soldiers in their armor, being seen in the heavens. He also says that, at the feast of Pentecost, "as the priests were going by night into the inner court of the temple, as their custom

* Luke xxi. 11. † Part of March and April. ‡ Three o'clock in the morning. § Midnight.





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was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude saying, 'Let us remove hence.'

Tacitus, the Roman historian, who lived in the first century, gives a similar account of these "fearful sights and great signs" * from heaven. He says that "armies were seen engaging in the heavens, arms glittering, and the temple shone with the sudden fire of the clouds; the doors of the temple opened suddenly, and a voice greater than human was heard that the gods were departing, and at the same time a great motion of their departing."

The Jewish historian also speaks of a man who, between seven and eight years before the destruction of Jerusalem, went to the temple and began on a sudden to cry aloud—"A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" This was his cry as he went about by day and by night in all the lanes of the city. In vain did the rulers try to silence him. He was whipped till his bones were laid bare. He shed no tears, but at every stroke of the lash he cried, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem." For seven years and five months, though beaten every day, his melancholy cry still sounded through the city, till the enemy besieged it, when it ceased; for, as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last,—“Woe, woe to myself also!” there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately.

Simeon, with a multitude of Christians, fled from Jerusalem, but not, says Epiphanius, till they had been warned by an angel that they must depart. The enemy unwittingly favored their departure. Josephus says that Cestius Gallus, who was at that time before the walls of Jerusalem, raised the siege and retired, when he could with ease have taken the city. The short-sighted Jewish historian knew

* Luke xxi. 11.

not the cause of this strange conduct on the part of the enemy; but Simeon and his flock were aware that a power the Roman commander could not resist directed his movements, and they would thank God for opening the way for their escape. Even as their forefathers fled from Egypt, did the Jewish Christians flee from Jerusalem when the signal was given. He that was on the house-top went not down into his dwelling to fetch anything, however precious, but hastily pressed from one roof to another till he reached the walls of the city. And he that was in the field went not home to fetch even his clothes (the upper garments which he would not wear over the tunic when working in the fields), but took advantage of his position at once to make his escape. Not only did the Christians avail themselves of the opportunity of the withdrawal of the Roman army, but many of the principal unbelieving Jews did so also. Doubtless, the latter fled in all directions, but the way the Christians were to take had been pointed out by a divine guide. To the mountains of Peræa the followers of Jesus directed their steps. Oh! what a touching sight it must have been, the venerable bishop and his flock—composed of the aged and infirm, the sickly and the strong, mothers with new-born infants, children of all ages, youths and maidens, and those in the prime of life—slowly traversing the banks of the Jordan, to Pella, the Zoar of the Christians! How often would many of the travelers pause on their way, and, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, implore God to protect the friends they had left behind, guilty as they were. Many, many prayers would be offered for parents, husbands, wives, children, brothers, and sisters, who remained in the doomed city. Many supplications that, if they must perish, they might be led to cry at the last hour for mercy, in the name of Jesus, and that their pardon might be sealed in his blood. Past the enemy's camp and the banditti's lair, over rocky steeps and dismal swamps, the Lord guarded his servants; not one Christian, it is said, perished. Jerusalem and her temple were utterly destroyed, only three towers and part of the wall were allowed by the Roman general to remain standing. The magnificent city, whose fame had extended over the world, was "dug up to the foundations," Josephus tells us, "and there was nothing to make those that came thither believe

it had ever been inhabited." The vial of God's vengeance was fully poured out.

When the war was ended, Simeon, and, doubtless, many of his flock, returned to Jerusalem. Possibly, as their journey back drew to its close, they ascended the Mount of Olives, and, from the spot where Jesus forty years before stood when he wept over the city, they gazed upon the vast ruins before them. Vainly would they look for the splendid temple of polished marble, which, like a mountain of snow, had been wont to dazzle their eyes with its brightness. Where was the gorgeous palace of Herod? and where the judgment hall of Pilate? and where, to the Christians how dear, the large upper room, in which had been instituted the holy supper of the Lord, and in which the Christians assembled after the ascension of their Lord? Gone, gone for ever. And as they gazed upon the wreck, and thought of their desolated homes and lost friends, they would, like the captive Jews of old, sit down and weep.

Jerusalem was still dear to the Jewish Christians, and they, with their venerable bishop, made the ruined city their home. And now, we might have supposed that Simeon would have been permitted to pass the remainder of his days in peace. No fear now of encountering hoary-headed sinners who had joined in the cry, "His blood be on us and on our children,"* and who to the last hated the followers of him whom they crucified. No fear now of the cruel scribes and Pharisees who had slain his brother, and thirsted for his blood also. God's vengeance had overtaken them, and they would trouble him no more.

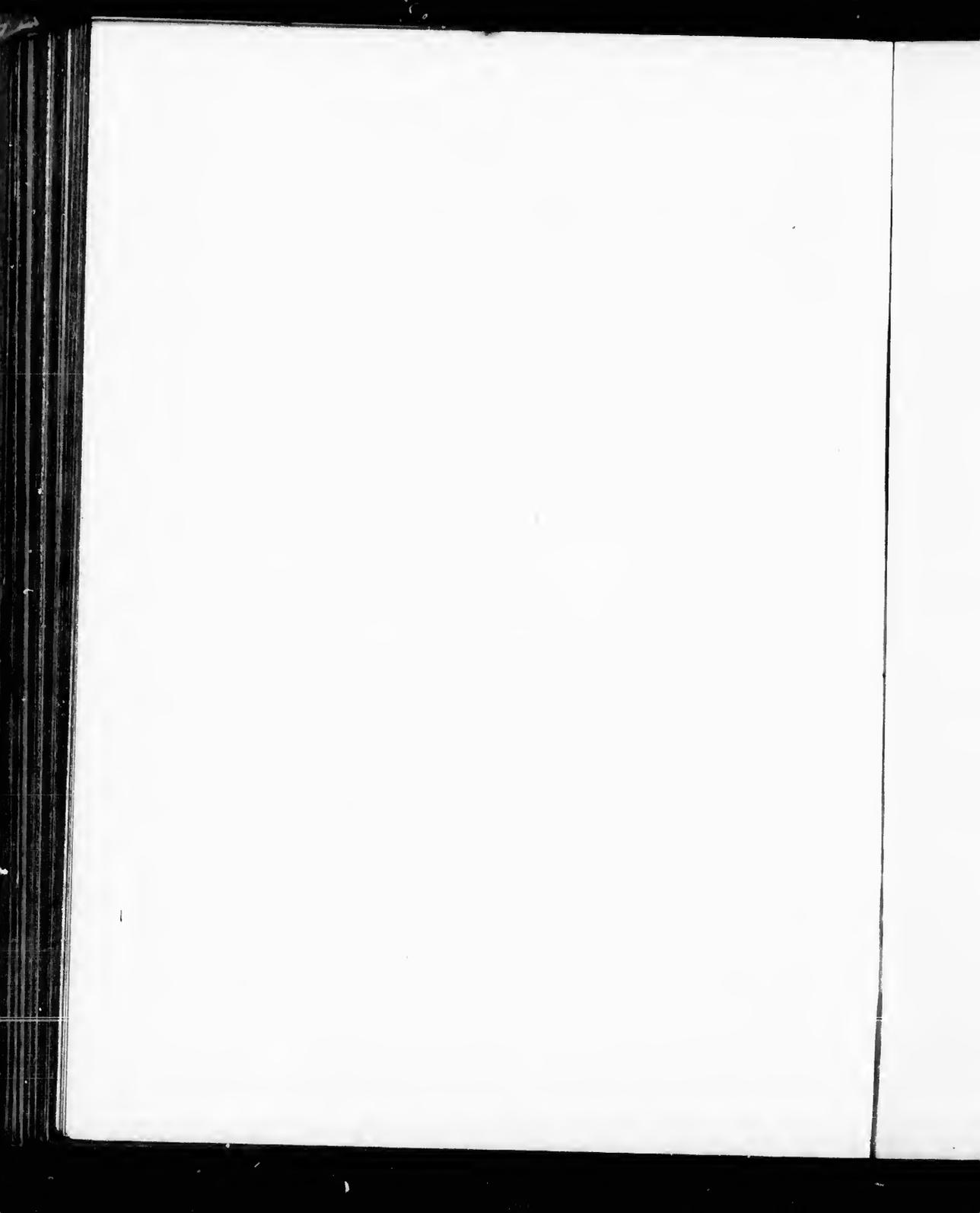
But God willed that his aged servant should be still further tried. The Gnostics, a vile sect, who held many of the doctrines of Simon Magus, became the bane of the Christians. With the most absurd tenets, they admitted that Christ came from God to free the world from evil, and thus they proved a great stumbling-block to those whose faith was not established. Of course, Simeon opposed these false teachers with all his might, and they resolved to destroy him. Eusebius says that the Emperor Trajan was, like his predecessor, Domitian,

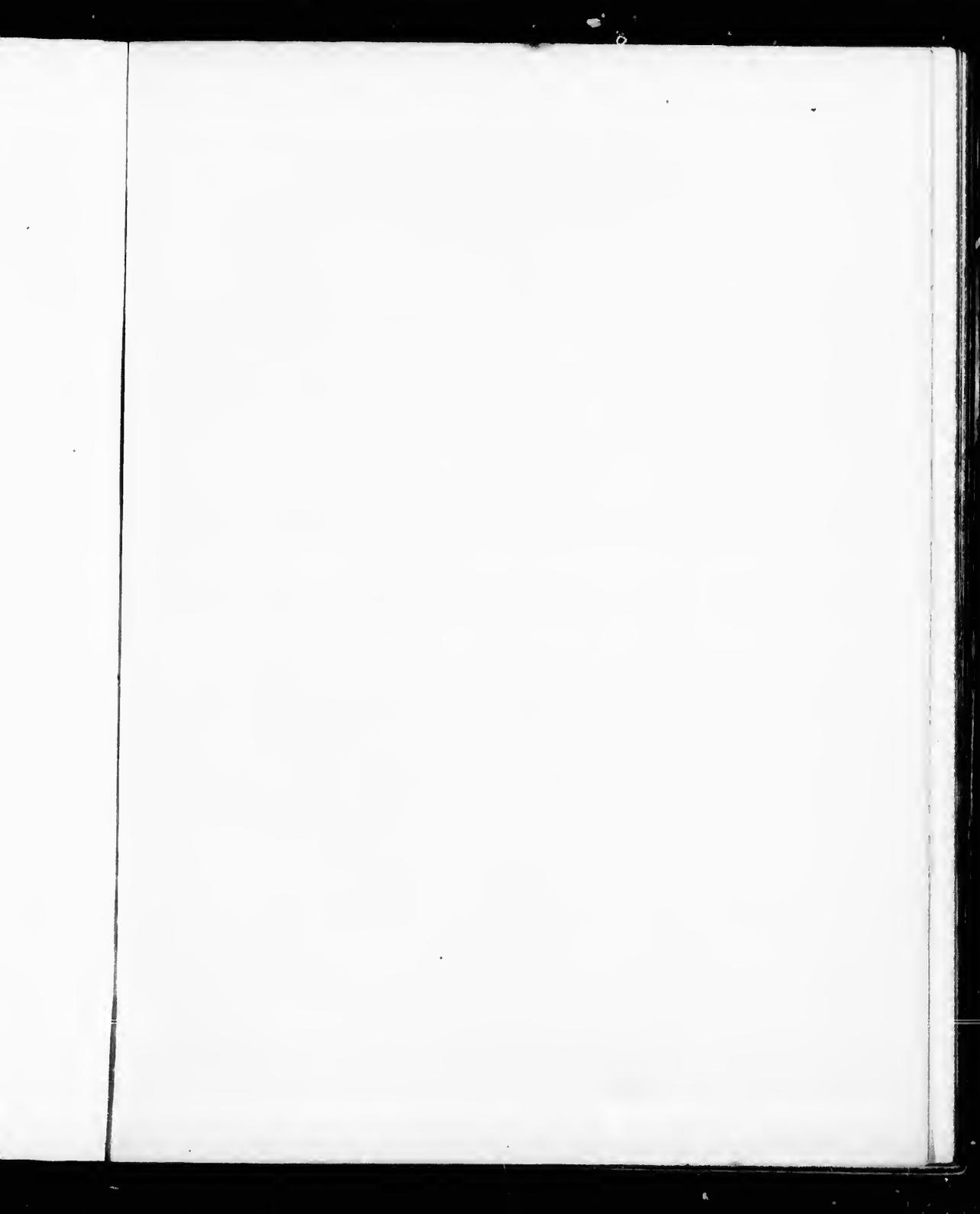
* Matthew xxvii. 25.

very fearful of the Jews revolting, and rallying round some leader of the family of David, so he sent down a command that whoever could be found of the stock of David should be put to death. This was an opportunity the Gnostics seized upon to accomplish their wicked purpose, so they accused Simeon of being a descendant of David. A journey of a hundred miles or more had the venerable bishop, then one hundred and twenty years old, to take in order that he might appear before Atticus, the governor of Syria. He was examined by torture for several days together, and endured his sufferings with the greatest firmness, till they were terminated by death on the cross. Thus died the venerable Simeon, the last, in all probability, of that holy family, the history of which cannot fail to interest those who sympathize with the pious, the zealous, the faithful, the self-denying, the generous, and the brave.



SEALS AND SCROLLS AT BEGINNING OF OUR ERA.







SIMON ZELOTES.



WICE only is the Apostle Simon mentioned by name in the Scriptures, and then but in company with all the other Apostles, and yet he is supposed to have been one of the first disciples of our Lord. Very little indeed is known of his history before Christ began his ministry, or after the ascension, and yet if a book were written, called "Simon Zelotes," containing a full account of all his actions—all he heard and all he witnessed as a chosen disciple of the Lord Jesus—one volume would not contain what would have to be related. How many mighty works of our Saviour must he have witnessed, and how many beautiful discourses from the lips of the divine Teacher must he have listened to? Was he not one of the guests at the feast Matthew made? Did he not at the command of Jesus preach the Gospel, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils? Did not Simon help to distribute the bread and fish to the five thousand men, besides women and children, and afterward to four thousand men, besides women and children? Was not his life twice saved in storms on the Sea of Galilee by the mighty power of Jesus? Was he not with our Saviour at Bethabara when Lazarus died? and did he not go to Bethany to be present at the raising of him whom Jesus loved? Did he not form part of the triumphal procession when our Lord publicly entered into Jerusalem? Were not his feet washed by the holy Jesus before the last supper, and did he not receive from the hands of the Saviour the sacred emblems of his most blessed body and blood? But I cannot even simply enumerate all the interesting events that Simon, as an Apostle, must have been connected with.

Matthew and Mark speak of him as Simon, the Canaanite; and Luke calls him Simon Zelotes. There is a difference of opinion as to why he is called the Canaanite, or why Zelotes. Some think that the word Canaanite is, in our version of the New Testament, wrongly spelt, and that it ought to be Cananite, or a native of Cana; for, as Jesus lived only four miles from Cana in Galilee, it is more than probable he knew many of its inhabitants, and that from among them he would select some of his Apostles. Others are of opinion that being called the Canaanite is no proof that he came from Cana, but that the title was given him by our Saviour, to denote his great zeal. In Hebrew, those versed in the language tell us the word Cana has



EASTERN SOWER.

almost the same letters and the same sound as the word for zeal has, and that it was not unusual in such cases to use one word in place of the other. Our Lord was in the habit of giving names to his disciples, expressive of some peculiar characteristic of, or circumstance connected with, them. Simon, the son of Jona, he surnamed Peter, or a rock. James and John he called Boanerges, or sons of thunder; therefore, it would not be singular if the Apostle Simon had a title given him denoting his burning zeal, his great love for his Master, and his eager wish to advance Christ's religion in the world. The disciples of Christ have not now names conferred upon them, denoting their peculiar gifts, but do not all bear one title—that of Christian? a name given originally, as some suppose, by heathens to the followers of Christ. Let us ask ourselves whether we are so living that, if we were in the society of idolaters, they would—judging from our actions and conversation—pronounce us to be Christians? Alas! too many bear the title, but, whether at home or abroad, have no resemblance either to the great author of their faith, or to those first disciples who not only gloried in being called Christians, but in suffering for the sake of him whose name they bore. Let all those who are ashamed of their title

think of the martyr Attalus, mentioned by Eusebius, who was led about the amphitheater at Rome, that he might be exposed to the hatred and derision of the people. But he triumphed in this, that a tablet was carried before him with the inscription, "This is Attalus, the Christian." And of Sanctus, who, being often asked by the president what his name was, what his city and country, and whether he was a freeman or a servant, only replied that he was a Christian, considering this name to be country, kindred, and everything to him. And let them think of all the noble army of martyrs, who gladly endured every kind of torment rather than disown the name of Christian.

With regard to the title St. Luke gives Simon, that of Zelotes, or the zealous, some have thought that it was conferred upon him by our Saviour, as being of the same signification as that of Canaanite. Others are of opinion that Simon had, before his call to the discipleship, been one of the sect called Zealots, who regarded themselves as the immediate successors of Phineas, who, in his zeal for the honor of God, slew Zimri and Cozbi—an act which "was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore."* The Zealots took upon themselves to protect the law and the religion of the Jews, and considered that they were at liberty to execute capital punishment upon offenders without bringing them before the Sanhedrim. For example, if a blasphemer cursed God by the name of any idol, the Zealot who next met him might immediately kill him. By degrees the Zealots so abused their privileges that they committed all kinds of wild extravagances, and became the pest of the commonwealth. They were continually advising the people to throw off the Roman yoke, and succeeded in creating the greatest confusion. Josephus writes in bitter terms of them. He says that, instead of being zealous in good undertakings, they were zealous in the worst actions. Mercy was with them unknown. They trampled on all the laws of man, and laughed at the laws of God. According to his account the Zealots were one main cause of the greatest calamities that befell Jerusalem. When the Romans were about to besiege the city, the Zealots created

* Ps. cvi. 31.

only tumults and factions within the walls, and, with the help of robbers, murdered twelve thousand of the nobility and principal men of the city for the sake of plunder. Had the Jewish historian been a Christian, he would, when recounting this barbarous act of the Zealots, have reminded his readers of the prophecy of the Christian bishop, the revered and beloved James, "Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasures together for the last days."* The Zealots, we may readily suppose, were not so corrupted at the time when our Saviour selected his Apostles. We need not, therefore, think of Simon, if he were of that sect, as having been such a one as those who were with justice regarded as the curse of their country.

After the ascension we find Simon Zelotes, with the rest of the Apostles, waiting in Jerusalem "for the promise of the Father."† Jesus, before his death, had said to his disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless,"‡ or, as the more literal translation is, "I will not leave you orphans." After the ascension the disciples were indeed orphans. Jesus had gone up into heaven, and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, had not yet come. In a large upper room the Apostles and disciples, numbering about one hundred and twenty persons, met for prayer and supplication, and most probably here, and in the temple, spent the greater part of the ten days which intervened between the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

Among those mentioned as being in the upper room for prayer and supplication was Mary, the mother of Jesus. When last we heard of her, St. John had taken her to his own home. No account is given in the holy story of the interviews she had with our Saviour after his resurrection; but it cannot be supposed that, while so many others were being comforted and cheered by the special notice of their risen Lord, the bereaved mother would not at least be equally favored. After

* James v. 3.

† Acts i. 4.

‡ John xiv. 18.

the Pentecost, she, as it were, disappears, as she is never again mentioned in the Scriptures. Considering her position, very few facts relating to Mary are recorded in the Bible, and no account whatever is given of her death. God dealt with her as with Moses, of whom it is said "no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."* Some are of opinion that the Virgin suffered martyrdom, and that Simeon, in his prophecy, "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also."† had reference to the mode of her death. But the prediction more probably alludes to excessive grief, which pierces like a sword, and which Mary specially endured when she stood by the cross beholding her dying son. To the dregs she drained her cup of misery. The



FIRST FRUITS.

loved one who had for thirty years blessed her peaceful home in Nazareth, and for whom she felt both natural and heaven-born love, the pride and glory of her life, her son, her Saviour, and her God, was, before her eyes, nailed to the accursed tree. Oh, the agony of the poor mother, so near and so helpless! Surely many swords must have pierced her gentle breast.

To return to Simon. Ten days after our Lord's ascension, he, with the other Apostles, received the gift of the Holy Ghost. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all, with one accord, in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a

* Deut. xxxiv. 6.

† Luke ii. 35.

rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

The Pentecost was, as you are probably aware, a Jewish festival, kept in commemoration of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. It was also called the day of first-fruits, because on this day the Jews offered thanksgivings to God for the bounties of harvest, and presented to him the first-fruits of the wheat harvest in bread baked of the new corn.



SHOES AND SANDALS.

This festival was typical of the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the first-fruits of the Christian Church. At the feast of Pentecost, the number of Jews assembled at Jerusalem would be very great—collected from nearly all parts of the world; and they who, at the Passover, had seen Jesus crucified, would have now convincing proof that he was the Lord of glory, the promised Messiah. On Whit-Sunday,

Christians celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. In the early church this was the great day for baptisms, because on it the Apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and the three thousand converts received the holy rite on the same day. It was called Whit-Sunday, or White-Sunday, because candidates for baptism were arrayed in white garments. When the Apostles were endowed with the supernatural power of speaking many languages, the miracle of Babel was reversed; and he who had then confounded the tongues of men for their dispersion, now poured out the gift of them to unite all as one in Christ.

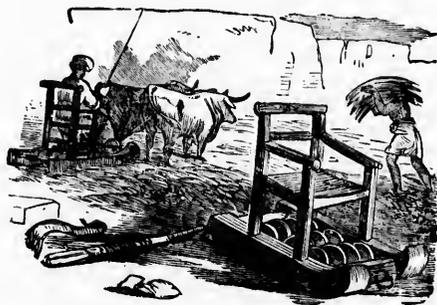
* Acts ii. 1-4.

With what joy would the news spread among the faithful, that the Comforter had come, and that the Apostles had obtained the promised gift. Jesus was then, they knew, not only risen, but glorified; and so his disciples felt fresh power and courage. As lambs among wolves, they had been pent up in Jerusalem; but now they had no fear of their enemies, and endued with the power of the Holy Spirit, boldly came forth and declared their faith. Great was the success of their first day's labor. Three thousand became converts, and were baptized, "and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*

Simon remained with the other Apostles until their dispersion throughout the world, when he, Nicephorus in his history of the Church tells us, went to Africa, and, among the most barbarous nations, preached the Gospel. After then, it is said by the same writer, Dorotheus and others, that he sailed westward, and finally reached Britain. Supposing this to be true (and it is not improbable, for it is certain that Christianity was introduced into Britain in the time of the Apostles), how dear should the name of Simon Zelotes be to the English people! When we read of the Apostles traveling over every part of the world, and preaching in all the cities, we must be forcibly struck with the wisdom and goodness of God in conferring upon them the gift of tongues. Even now, with all the advantages of books, it takes the diligent student years to acquire a perfect knowledge of a foreign language. How much more difficult would it be with the Apostles, in whose days printing was unknown? Picture to yourselves Simon or Paul in England without the gift they had received on the day of Pentecost. Miracles they might perform, but what would be the result, if they could only speak in their native language? Doubtless, the sick would flock after them to be healed, the dead would be brought to them to be raised to life, and crowds, out of curiosity, would attend them; but not a soul would be led to Christ. And how did the Britons treat zealous Simon, who had left his home, friends, and all he most valued on earth, and had traveled many, many miles to convey to

* Acts ii. 42.

the heathen the glad tidings of a Saviour's love? They crucified him! No monument marks the spot where were entombed the precious remains of the martyr, but in every Briton's heart the name of Simon Zelotes should have an enduring place.



EASTERN MODE OF THRESHING.

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Simon

PAUL.



IN the New Testament we read the account of the life, of the death, of the resurrection, and of the ascension of our blessed Saviour; also of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, and of their first labors, before Saul of Tarsus is mentioned. And how is he introduced to us? As a violent persecutor of the followers of Christ, assisting the murderers of Stephen in their bloody work. Saul himself tells us that he was "consenting unto his (Stephen's) death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."* Who was Saul? Let Saul himself answer the question: "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia."† It was no mean city then that Saul boasted as his birthplace—famed as Tarsus was for its learning, magnificence, and the beauty of its position. There he spent his youthful days. Amidst the heights of Taurus, and by the fall of the Cydnus, how often had the young Cilician wandered, gazing upon scenes full to him of associations that roused every feeling of ambition in his ardent bosom. Often would he tread the battle-fields of Alexander and Cæsar; and how often, as he gazed upon the broad Cydnus, would he think of that gorgeous pageant of beauty and luxury, when Cleopatra sailed up the river to meet Antony at Tarsus. Saul did, at length, become a soldier, but not under any earthly commander, and obtained conquests far greater than did ever Alexander.

He was not an only child; possibly his parents had many sons and daughters, but of one dear sister alone we read, whose son, in after

* Acts xxii. 20.

† Acts xxii. 3.

years, was the instrument of saving his uncle's life. The father of Saul was a Jew, a true descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. Why he left the land of his fathers we know not; but in his foreign home he continued a strict Pharisee, and, doubtless, an honest one, who tried to serve God as his ancestors had done. In his own persuasion he trained his son, who lived after the strictest sect of his religion, a Pharisee. The study of the Old Testament Scriptures would not, therefore, be neglected in the education of Saul. The young Jew was likewise taught a trade, that of tent-making, according to the Jewish maxim, "He who teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief." But for a nobler calling was Saul destined by his parents than that of tent-making. Among the learned of their own nation they hoped to see their son hold a high position. Tarsus boasted of possessing one of the three greatest universities in the world, and so we may suppose that, at an early age, Saul took his place among the students of his native city. Why he did not complete his education at home is a matter for conjecture, but probably the rigid Pharisee dreaded the influence unbelieving Gentile youths might exercise over the mind of his son, and so sent him to Jerusalem to be "taught according to the perfect



PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS.

manner of the law of the fathers."* With what emotions would the ardent Saul gaze for the first time upon the holy city! How eagerly would each part of it be visited as the scene of some fact of sacred history! Little thought he then, that in a few years he would gaze upon many of the same spots with feelings of veneration increased tenfold, because they were associated with the life and death of the Lord Jesus.

Saul's teacher was Gamaliel, a learned doctor of the law, a man of eminence, and "had in reputation among all the people."† He is generally believed to have been a son of the devout Simeon who took the infant Jesus in his arms in the temple. The young Cilician soon

* Acts xxii. 3.

† Acts v. 34.

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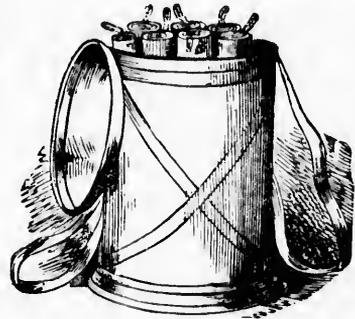
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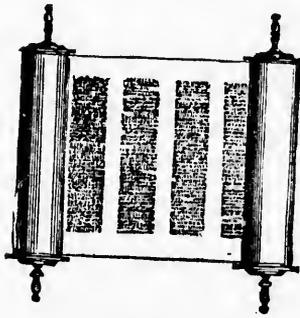
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outstripped his fellow-students. He tells us himself that he made greater progress in the Jews' religion than those of his own years, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers. Gamaliel was a Pharisee, so no wonder that the fiery and active Saul grew up bigoted, narrow-minded, and utterly unable to tolerate any religious sect that differed from his own. Such was the future Apostle's state of mind when he ceased to be a pupil of Gamaliel, and, as is supposed, returned to Tarsus. Nearly four hundred miles north of Jerusalem lay his distant home. Can we not imagine the accomplished scholar pausing now and then, on his long journey, to examine places of particular beauty or interest? If he traveled by land, the famed Sea of Galilee would not be far out of his route, and as he most probably was an enthusiastic admirer of the beauties of nature, he would not deem it lost time to devote a few hours to the con-



ANCIENT BOOKS.



SCROLL OR BOOK

templation of a scene of such grandeur and loveliness as the Lake at all times presented. Perhaps, as he sauntered along its banks, he saw a weather-beaten fisherman, with two intelligent-looking young men, washing their nets in the shallow water; and not far from them another group, composed of a matron with a gentle youth, watching her husband and elder son busily preparing for their night of toil. How little would the proud and learned young Pharisee imagine that, ere many years had passed away, he and those four youths (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) would be dearly beloved brothers in Christ—united heart and soul in one cause, and willing to work and die together to promote the glory of God and the salvation of man. There is no record left as to how Saul spent

the years that intervened from the time he left Gamaliel's school till he appeared as a persecutor of the followers of Jesus; but, probably, he lived with his parents at Tarsus, perfecting himself in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, the Jewish law, and the arts and sciences.

How important in the world's history were those few years! The blessed Redeemer had become a sacrifice for the sins of mankind, and his faithful disciples were teaching the doctrines of the cross throughout Judea. Fondly had the chief priests, the scribes, Pharisees, and all the different sects, hoped that, with the death of their leader, the Nazarenes, as they called the believers in Jesus, would be crushed; but how much they were mistaken. "The word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a



JEWISH SCROLLS USED IN TEACHING THE YOUNG.

great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."* The enemies of Jesus became more and more alarmed; they no longer hesitated, and persecution was resorted to. With all the violence peculiar to his sect, Saul hated the Nazarenes. We have reason to believe that he had never seen Jesus, so that only in a perverted form

did he perhaps hear the doctrines of the holy One; and he had no opportunity of witnessing the divine graces of the Saviour, which inspired many a bigoted Jew with feelings of love, awe, and admiration. No sooner did Saul perceive that his religion was in danger, than studies, home,—all were forgotten but his zeal toward God, which made him think that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." † He scorned the idea that the son of a poor carpenter, who chose a few fishermen as his most intimate friends, should be the Messiah—the Prince of Peace he and his forefathers had looked for.

* Acts vi. 7.

† Acts xxvi. 9.

The first martyr, you know, was Stephen, one of the seven deacons appointed to take charge of the money for the relief of the poor, as well as to preach the Gospel and baptize the converts. He was a man full of faith and power, and who "did great wonders and miracles among the people."* In the synagogue, Stephen argued with men of different nations, among whom were Cilicians; so, perhaps Saul, who was then at Jerusalem, was one of those who disputed with him. But even the learned pupil of Gamaliel could not "resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he (Stephen) spake." † Before the Sanhedrim was the blessed martyr taken, and false witnesses were procured, who accused Stephen of speaking blasphemy against the holy place and the law. He was calm, "and all they that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." ‡ Stephen's eloquent and spirited defense you will find in the seventh chapter of the Acts of the



NAZARETH.

Apostles. At the close of it you read how he accused his judges of being stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart, betrayers and murderers of the just One, who had received the law, but had not kept it. This enraged his enemies to such a degree that they gnashed upon him with their teeth. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said. Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped

* Acts vi. 8.

† Acts vi. 10.

‡ Acts vi. 15.

their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And, when he had said this, he fell asleep."* "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him."† Where the place of his interment was we know not; perhaps the rich counselor, Joseph, provided a tomb for the mangled remains of the martyr. A cavern is still shown in the valley of Jehoshaphat, into which it is said the murderers of Stephen dragged their victim when life was extinct. How bitterly must Saul afterward have mourned over the share he had taken in Stephen's murder! Often, perhaps, even before his conversion, the angelic face of the martyr haunted him, and he marveled at the courage, firmness, love, and forgiveness of the follower of One whom he regarded as an impostor. But whatever his thoughts were at the time of Stephen's death, his heart was not softened, for he afterward "made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison."‡ He himself says: "And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."§ His fury and misguided zeal were insatiable; for, having harassed the poor Christians at Jerusalem in every way, and driven them from the city, he must needs follow them as far as Damascus, in order that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem to be punished. Perhaps many of those who were assembled in the upper room after the ascension were then in prison, victims of Saul's frenzy, or had fled far away from Jerusalem. How many homes must have been made desolate by the bigoted Pharisee! How many families would only dare to worship the crucified Lord *secretly*, for fear of Saul of Tarsus! How would his name strike terror even into the hearts of the brave women who followed Jesus from Galilee to Calvary! How would the sisters of Bethany

* Acts vii. 55-60.

† Acts viii. 2.

‡ Acts viii. 3.

§ Acts xxvi. 11.

tremble for the life of their dear brother, if they saw the persecutor approaching their peaceful village! But it would take too long to enumerate half of the miseries Saul, in his blinded zeal, brought upon the believers.

It was about the year A.D. 35, a few months after Stephen's martyrdom, that "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."* His request was complied with; and he and a few attendants left Jerusalem for Damascus. No inclination would he



DAMASCUS.

feel to linger on the way; yet, eagerly would he note every group of travelers he passed, and, if his suspicions were roused, he would most probably pause to inquire the object of their journey, and not unlikely, if they proved to be followers of the crucified One, he had them seized and carried to the nearest prison, there to await his return from Damascus, when they would help to swell the number of those he hoped to lead into the council chamber to hear their doom. In a few days, his long journey of one hundred and thirty miles drew near its close. Perhaps some fugitives, who had seen him on the road,

* Acts ix. 1, 2.

had reached Damascus before him, and had told the believers there that the merciless Saul of Tarsus was approaching the city. If so, how would the trembling disciples seek for places of refuge wherein to lie concealed so long as the fierce persecutor remained in the Syrian capital. Possibly, from the roofs of houses here and there, anxious eyes gazed along the banks of Abana and Pharpar, to catch the first glimpse of the dreaded one! Oh, how many prayers would ascend to heaven, that God would protect his children, and not let them be delivered as prey into the hands of the destroyer!

It was mid-day when the travelers' journey was suddenly checked. They were within half-a-mile of Damascus. The burning sun was directly over their heads, and, doubtless, they looked forward with no little pleasure to procuring rest, shelter, and refreshment within the walls of the city. Even the over-zealous Saul would, probably, be thinking that he must rest awhile before presenting his letters and commencing his search for the Nazarenes, when "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."* In a moment Saul was a Christian. He never was a hypocrite. He had believed, as he had professed, that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor; but now, from the evidence of his own senses, he was convinced of his error. He had seen Jesus in his glorified human nature, and had conversed with him. This would have been sufficient to have checked him in his persecution of the disciples; but more than this was accomplished. The powerful voice of the Saviour had changed his heart and quickened him to spirit of life.

Saul's companions were speechless with terror: they saw the light, but nothing more, and heard not, or did not understand, what passed

* Acts ix. 3-6.

between the Lord Jesus and Saul. When the new convert arose from the ground he was sightless, and was led by his companions into the city. For three days he remained blind and fasting, and probably neglected by men. No sympathy now would he have with unbelievers, or they with him, and the brethren would not dare to approach him until they had some better evidence of his sudden and recent conversion than his own words. At the end of three days the Lord appeared unto a disciple, named Ananias, a very devout man, supposed to have been one of the seventy, and "said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man, named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."* Ananias hesitated. He knew Saul's reputation as a persecutor, also what had at that time brought him to Damascus; but the Lord told him that he was now a chosen vessel, to preach the gospel both to the Jews and Gentiles. So Ananias went to the house where Saul was, and laid his hands upon him, and told him that the Lord had sent him to him, that he might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received his sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."† He at once joined himself to the disciples, "and



PRACTICING THE CUNNING ARTS.

* Acts ix. 11, 12.

† Acts ix. 18.

straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."*

Damascus is, even at the present day, a rich and beautiful city. In it is still the street called Straight, which is about three miles in length, running in a direct line across the city from east to west. Near the eastern gate is a house, said to be the one which belonged to Judas, where Saul lodged after his conversion. There is in it a very small closet, where, according to tradition, the Apostle passed the three days he remained blind, and without food. There is also, in Straight Street, a fountain, which is believed to have supplied the water for Saul's baptism. To this time the Christians of Damascus make a point of annually walking in procession to the scene of Saul's conversion, and there reading the history of it.

Saul did not stay long in the Syrian capital after he was baptized, but went into Arabia, where he preached the Gospel for three years, and then returned to Damascus, and taught openly in the synagogues, "and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."† Unable to withstand his arguments, the Jews became enraged, and resolved to kill him. Saul, knowing their design, concealed himself, and his enemies watched the gates by day and by night, that he might not escape. It is evident that no little sensation was created in Damascus by the conversion of Saul to the faith he had been once so indefatigable in attempting to crush. In his second epistle to the Corinthians, when recounting the various trials he had gone through, he said, "In Damascus, the governor under Aretas, the king, kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me."‡ Vain, however, were all the efforts of the governor and his soldiers, for the Lord had a mighty work for his servant to accomplish. "Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket."§ The window, or port-hole, in the parapet of the great wall of Damascus, through which, it is said, Saul escaped, is still shown, and is called St. Paul's Gate. Without any human friend to accompany him, and surrounded by

* Acts ix. 20.

† Acts ix. 22.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 32.

§ Acts ix. 25.

dangers of almost every description, Saul of Tarsus commenced his journey back to Jerusalem. He had, however, one friend near him,—the Lord Jesus, who never left him by night nor by day; and he could, with sincerity, say, “I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”*

The weary journey was accomplished. Oh, how welcome to the traveler would be the first glimpse of the glorious and snow-white temple! But no friend greeted him as he entered Jerusalem. His former associates would have shunned him, even if they had recognized, in the humble, penitent pilgrim, the once proud and spirited Saul of Tarsus. And the disciples either had not heard of his conversion, or did not credit it, for, when he wished to join them, “they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.”† Barnabas, however, “brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he (Saul) had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken unto him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.”‡ The fears of the disciples were at once removed, and Saul “was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.”§ Fifteen days only did he remain at Jerusalem. While he was praying one day in the temple, he fell into a trance, and the Lord appeared unto him, and told him to leave Jerusalem quickly, for he must go far away unto the Gentiles. Saul may have hesitated to go out of the city, for the brethren, we read, knowing the evil designs of the Jews, “brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.”|| We cannot help wondering how he was received by his relatives and



SOOTHSAYERS.

* Ps. xxiii. 4.

† Acts ix. 26.

‡ Acts ix. 27.

§ Acts ix. 28, 29.

|| Acts ix. 30.

friends at Tarsus. Did the rigid Pharisee (supposing him to be still alive) disown his son? And did his mother and sister shed tears of sorrow and joy when they once more beheld him? Or had some fugitive Christians been preaching Christ crucified in Tarsus, and the whole of Saul's family been illuminated by the glorious light of the blessed Gospel? Willingly would we hope that the latter were the case, and that, in sweet communion with his kindred, Saul spent the three or four years he remained in his native city. Relations, we know, he had who were Christians, some of whom had embraced the faith before his conversion. But where these lived I cannot tell. Two were in Rome when Paul wrote his epistle to the brethren of that city. "Salute," he says, "Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before me."*

The history of Saul, from this time till his separation from Barnabas, you have read in the life of James the Less. One fact, however, I omitted to note, which is this, after Sergius Paulus, the Governor of Cyprus, had been converted, the great Apostle is always spoken of in the sacred history as Paul. There are various conjectures as to the reason of this change; one of which is, that he himself took the latter name in honor of the noble convert, Sergius Paulus; but it is very probable that, as Saul was a Jewish name, and Paul a Roman one, he adopted the latter because it was among the pagan Romans he was henceforth chiefly to labor.

After Paul and Barnabas had parted, the former, accompanied by Silas, went through Syria and Cilicia, and then came to Derbe and Lystra. At Derbe the Apostle met with Timothy, and chose him for his companion. The father of Timothy was a Greek; but his mother, Eunice, was a Jewess, who had, with her mother and son, been converted to Christianity during Paul's previous visit to those parts. The remembrance of the unfeigned faith of Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and of his mother, Eunice, filled Paul with joy: so he tells Timothy in his second epistle to him. I have not space to write at length of the

* Rom. xvi. 7.

most excellent Timothy. Paul truly loved him, and from remarks he several times made, it is evident that he highly esteemed him. Through various countries the three journeyed, leaving at each city they came to a copy of the decree of the Council of Jerusalem. Their route was directed by the Holy Ghost, who forbade them, after they had been throughout Phrygia and Galatia, preaching in Asia. When they reached Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia; "but the Spirit suffered them not,"* so they went to Troas. It was here that Luke, the Evangelist, is believed to have joined them, as the word *we*, for the future, often takes the place of *they*. Luke (who wrote the Acts of the Apostles) was a physician; and, as Paul had, in Galatia, been attacked with sickness, it is possible he accompanied him, in order that he might not only assist in the ministry, but attend to the health of the great Apostle. At Troas "a vision appeared to Paul in the night: there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." † This was Paul's call to Europe. He obeyed the call; and, with his companions, Timothy, Silas, and Luke, embarked upon the Ægean Sea. Only one island they touched at before they reached the port of Neapolis; from thence they proceeded to Philippi, the capital of Macedonia.

There were so few Jews at Philippi that they had no synagogue, but only an oratory by the river side, wherein they conducted their services, or, as St. Luke expresses it, "where prayer was wont to be made." ‡ In this humble building, to a few poor women, was Christ first preached in Europe; and the first convert we read of was Lydia,



DIANA, JUPITER AND MINERVA.

* Acts xvi. 7.

† Acts xvi. 9.

‡ Acts xvi. 13.

a seller of purple dye. She was baptized, with her household, and constrained Paul and his companions to become her guests. Daily would it appear that Paul and his fellow-laborers went to this place of prayer, and they were often followed by a damsel who was a Pythoness, that is, a sort of witch, who, being possessed with a spirit of divination, cried out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation."* But Paul needed not Satan to be his witness, and he commanded the demon to come out of her, "and he came out the same hour."† Her masters, who had profited much by her diabolical arts, were very indignant when they found their trade was spoiled; and they caught Paul and Silas, and, taking them before the magistrates, falsely accused them. Most cruelly were the devoted missionaries treated; their clothes were torn off, they were beaten with many stripes, and then thrust into a dark, cold, and damp inner prison. No sleep visited the suffering captives. If their bleeding wounds were not sufficient to prevent them closing their eyes, the painful position they were compelled to be in (as it is supposed that not only their feet, but their hands and their necks were confined in the stocks) would prevent them resting. And how did they pass the long, tedious hours. In prayer? Yes; but not, as you might imagine, interrupted by bursts of grief, for "at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them."‡ Perhaps thieves and murderers, waiting for their doom on the morrow, heard the heavenly strains, and wondered what new sounds they were that made them weep who had never shed tears before; and the less guilty criminals possibly listened with clasped hands and streaming eyes to music which, they knew not why, melted their hearts within them. Only the stern jailer slept; but soon he was to be awoke, not only from his temporal, but his spiritual sleep, for "suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out

* Acts xvi. 17.

† Acts xvi. 18.

‡ Acts xvi. 25.

his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house. And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go; now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves, and fetch us out. And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates, and they feared when they heard that they were Romans.

And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.* And so the noble and brave Paul and Silas were brought out of prison by the frightened and humbled magistrates, who were indebted solely to the Christian forbearance of their late victims, that they were not punished for the breach of the law in having scourged Roman citizens.

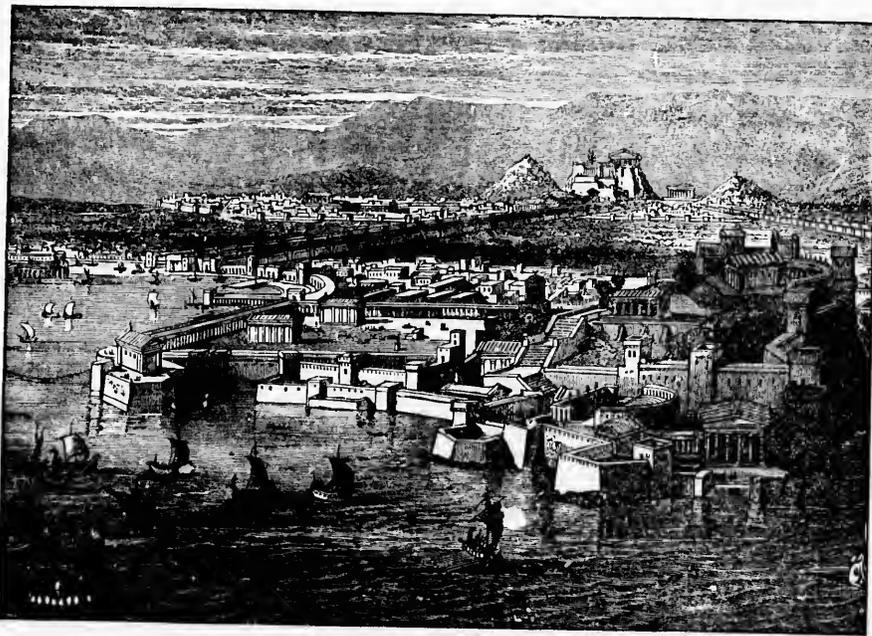
Paul and Silas shortly after this departed from Philippi, leaving Timothy and Luke in charge of the infant church there. At Thessalonica, Paul reasoned with the Jews in their synagogue. He reminds



IN THE STOCKS.

* Acts xvi. 26-39.

the Thessalonian disciples of this in his first epistle to them, "Even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."* Some unbelieving Jews, however, of the lowest class, collected a mob, and set all the city in an uproar, assaulting the house of Jason, where Paul and Silas lodged; but the brethren sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berea. Here



ANCIENT ATHENS.

the great Apostle was much encouraged, for the Jews of Berea "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few." † The Jews, however, of Thessalonica followed

* *Thess. i. 2.*† *Acts xvii. 11, 12.*

Paul and Silas to Berea, and stirred up the people against them. The brethren immediately sent Paul away, but Silas and Timothy (the latter must have joined his two friends again) remained at Berea. Under the care of an escort, Paul traveled south till he arrived at Athens, when his friends from Berea left him, and returned home, conveying a message from Paul to Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed. In a strange city, perhaps still suffering from the ill-treatment he met with at Philippi, no wonder Paul longed for the society of his faithful and tried companions. Idle, however, he could not be. He disputed in the synagogue and in the market daily. He was accused, among other things, of being a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto the people Jesus and the resurrection. They took him to the Areopagus, on Mars' Hill, the principal court of justice in Athens. The Areopagus was an ancient and celebrated tribunal held on a hill of rock, in some of the caverns of which the Furies (spirits supposed to be charged with the infliction of divine vengeance) were reputed to dwell. The Areopagites, who were the chief men of the city, judged murderers and all immoral persons. They also rewarded virtue, and were particularly active in punishing those who set up strange gods. More than four hundred years before Paul was brought to this tribunal, Socrates, having been accused of the crime of introducing strange deities into the state, was condemned by the Areopagites to drink the cup of hemlock.

Paul, we are told, stood in the midst of Mars' Hill. How impressive the scene must have been! The undaunted Apostle beneath the blue canopy of heaven, at the top of the rock, facing his noble judges, who occupied seats hewn out of the stone. Before the prisoner was spread a glorious prospect of mountains, islands, and seas; and behind him arose the lofty Acropolis, crowned with all its marble temples. Having been asked to explain the new doctrine of which he had spoken, he replied that, in passing through their city, he had observed an altar with this inscription, "To the unknown God."* He then, in a few simple words, told his listeners who the unknown God

* Acts xvii. 23.

was whom they ignorantly worshiped, that he was no other than the great God, the creator of all things, the Lord of heaven and earth, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, "neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."* The remainder of Paul's address to the Athenians you will find in the seventeenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The effect produced upon his listeners was that some mocked, "and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter,"† and some believed. Among the last was Dionysius, the Areopagite, who is said to have been afterward made Bishop of Athens, and to



CORINTH.

have been burned to death in that city in the year A.D. 93. The palace he occupied previous to his conversion stood close to Mars' Hill, and upon the site of it a church was afterward built, which is now a ruin. Another person, mentioned as having been converted in Athens, was a woman, named Damaris, supposed by some to have been the wife of Dionysius. Paul, it seems, was allowed to leave Athens without further molestation. He went next to Corinth, and there abode with a Jew of the name of Aquila, and his wife, Priscilla, who had been, with

* Acts xvii. 25.

† Acts xvii. 32.

a great number of other Jews, banished from Rome by the Emperor Claudius. They were tent-makers, and, as Paul would not be burdensome to them, he wrought at his old trade for his daily bread. It was in Corinth, and most probably in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, that he wrote the first of his epistles, which was to the Thessalonians. Shortly after he wrote, also in Corinth, his second epistle to the Thessalonians. The friendship he at this time formed with the excellent Aquila and Priscilla lasted until his death. On the Sabbath days he reasoned in the synagogues, but the unbelieving Jews opposed him so violently that he shook his raiment, and said unto them, "Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean. From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." * The Lord, however, appeared to Paul in a vision in the night, and said, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." † He made use of the house of a convert, of the name of Justus, to preach in, though still living with Aquila and Priscilla. There can be no doubt that Paul worked at tent-making during the whole of the time he stayed at Corinth; and, possibly, notwithstanding this, he suffered from want, as a famine was then prevailing throughout Greece. He was, however, cheered by the arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia, who brought him relief from that country. St. Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, says, "And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man; for that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied." ‡

Among those who believed in Corinth was Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue. The conversion of such an influential person enraged the Jews more and more, so they made an insurrection, and took Paul before Gallio, the pro-consul, but he would not listen to them, and drove them from the judgment seat. And the Greeks took Sosthenes (probably the successor of Crispus), the chief ruler of the synagogue, "and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio

* Acts xviii. 6.

† Acts xviii. 9-11.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 9.

cared for none of those things."* He did not consider it his province to interfere in the disputes between the Jews and the Christians. Well, perhaps, it would have been for him if he had concerned himself in the matter, and given Paul an opportunity of defending himself before him, for he was talented and amiable, and might have been led to believe in Jesus. It may not be uninteresting to you to know that Gallio was the elder brother of Seneca, the philosopher. Having planted the church in Corinth, Paul sailed to Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla accompanying him. The Apostle did not remain long at Ephesus, but left his traveling companions there, and went up to Jerusalem, to one of the feasts. After a very short stay in the holy city, he paid what was, probably, his last visit to Antioch. Many years had Paul labored as a servant of Christ, but still he thought not of rest; and after staying at Antioch some time, he set out on his third missionary journey. He directed his course toward Ephesus. You will remember that he left Aquila and Priscilla in that city. This worthy couple did all they could to promote the spread of the Gospel; and while they were at Ephesus during Paul's absence, "a certain Jew, named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and, being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom, when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." †

For three months, Paul taught in the synagogue at Ephesus; but, meeting with great opposition from the Jews, he left the synagogue, and, taking with him those who had been brought to Christ, he, in the school of one Tyrannus, instructed them and others, "and this con-

* Acts xviii. 17.

† Acts xviii. 24-28.

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BURNING BOOKS.

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tinued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know: but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews, and Greeks also, dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them, also, which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."*

Three years did the great Apostle remain at Ephesus, lodging in all probability with Aquila and Priscilla, and working with them at the trade of tent-making. Shortly before he left the city, a circumstance occurred which rendered it impossible for him to remain longer there with any degree of safety.

The great pride and glory of Ephesus was the temple of Diana, a short description of which will not be out of place here. I must, however, first speak of the false deity for whom this splendid house was prepared. It is difficult to say who she was, as, some hundreds of years before Paul was at Ephesus, she had, according to tradition, fallen from heaven. The priests said Jupiter had sent her. Those who had no faith in her said that she had been made by men who, as soon as she was finished, were put to death or banished by the priests,

* Acts xix. 10-20.

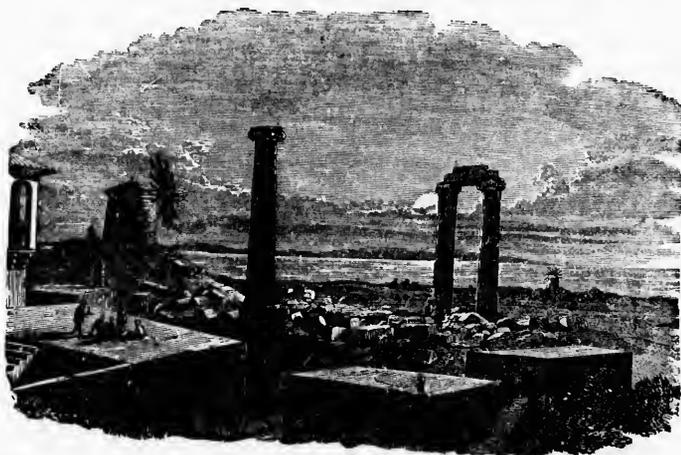
for fear they should betray her humble origin. As she presented, upon her first appearance, a shapeless form that required a stretch of the imagination to regard as anything like human, and in which form she is represented on ancient coins, she probably did fall from heaven, and was neither more nor less than an aerolite, or meteoric stone. I suppose it was sufficient for superstitious people that the priests *said* that the lump of stone was a goddess, and Jupiter's gift. She was magnificently adorned, and I should imagine, when she took possession of her temple, Jupiter himself would scarcely have recognized her. This temple, for beauty and costliness, became one of the seven wonders of the world. It was built entirely of marble, of such pure whiteness that it dazzled the eyes of the beholder; and was four hundred and twenty-nine feet long, and two hundred and twenty broad. The shrine of the goddess was surrounded by a colonnade, open to the sky, composed of a hundred and twenty-seven columns of Parian marble, sixty feet high, each weighing a hundred and fifty tons, and each the gift of a monarch. Inside, it was decorated with cedar, cypress, gold, jewels, and precious stones, pictures, and statues. One picture alone was worth twenty talents of gold.* One of the statues was of pure gold; and the altar was most magnificent. The roof was supported by columns of green jasper.

The silversmiths of Ephesus made multitudes of cabinets or chaplets, little shrines, in the form of the temple, with an image of Diana in each of them. These, and probably silver medals of the splendid temple, they sold to strangers, for the false deity had numerous worshippers in various parts of Greece. At one season of the year in particular, crowds from all parts of Asia, and of Europe, went to Ephesus, to the great annual festival in honor of Diana, and fortunate would any stranger deem himself who could purchase a silver shrine or medal.

The natural consequence of the spread of Christianity was the decline of the gainful trade of the silversmiths. One of these, Demetrius, called his fellow-craftsmen and their workmen together, and told

* \$187,550.

them that, through the preaching of Paul, not only was their trade in danger, but the great goddess Diana would be despised, and they "cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."* The whole city was soon in confusion. The multitude seized two of Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, and rushed with them into the theater, probably with the design of casting them to the wild beasts. The brave and noble Paul, hearing of their danger, would have forced his way into the theater, but the disciples prevented him, knowing that the people would at once throw him to the wild beasts, which were



MILETUS.

kept there for the amusement of the populace. The confusion was very great, the majority not knowing the reason of the tumult. For two hours nothing could be heard but the cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." When the mob had become a little calmer, the town-clerk addressed the people, and succeeded in appeasing them. But it was no longer safe for Paul to remain at Ephesus, so he left the city, and went into Macedonia.

Judea was, at this time, in a fearful state. Evils of almost every

* Acts xix. 28.

description,—famine, wars, and banditti,—were desolating the country. From Macedonia, Paul went into Greece, where he met Titus, who had brought great contributions from the church at Corinth for the poor Christians in Jerusalem. Paul was determined himself to carry the assistance to his suffering brethren in Judea. He was about to sail for Syria, when he heard that some Jews were lying in wait to kill him; so he went back into Macedonia, and embarked, with several others, from that coast to Troas. While at Troas, the indefatigable Apostle preached, on the Sabbath, in an upper room, till midnight. One of his listeners, a young man named Eutychus, who had become drowsy, fell from the window in which he had been sitting, and was taken up dead. "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and, embracing him, said, Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him. When he, therefore, was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted."*

Paul's companions had proceeded on their journey, while he remained an hour or two longer at Troas, instructing and comforting the converts. He went on foot and alone along the shore to Assos, where, according to arrangement, the company were waiting for him. He and his friends embarked on the *Ægean* Sea. Their course lay past the most lovely scenery. They first cast anchor at Mitylene, the capital of the beautiful island of Lesbos (now Mitylene). Sailing from thence, they next touched at Chios, and arrived the next day at Samos. Paul must, when approaching Samos, have been within a very few miles of Ephesus, in which city he had many dear children in the Lord, whom he longed to see; but he "had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost."† At Miletus the travelers landed. Ephesus was thirty miles from this city, and Paul sent, desiring the elders of the church of Ephesus to come to him. They obeyed the summons. We can imagine how affecting would be the meeting. A year before, Paul had been obliged

to hastily leave them, to avoid the fury of the enraged worshipers of Diana, and now he knew it was very probable that they would see his face no more. His touching, beautiful, and affectionate farewell address to them you have often read in the twentieth chapter of the Acts. When he had ceased speaking, "he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship."*

We hear but little more of Ephesus in connection with St. Paul. This once magnificent city, that was considered the metropolis of Asia,



BRIDGE NEAR TYRE.

and was called by Pliny the ornament of Asia, is now a perfect wreck: all is silence and desolation around it. The splendid harbor, that was wont to be filled with vessels from all nations, is now a pestilential marsh, the sea having retired from it. Noble ruins are all now that remain of the theater, and the very site of the temple is uncertain. The call of the partridge may now

be heard where the multitude cried "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The only relics that have been preserved of the magnificent temple of Diana are eight of the green jasper columns which supported the roof of the shrine of the false goddess. These were removed to Constantinople, and may still be seen in the great Mosque of St. Sophia. The few wretched inhabitants of Ephesus, chiefly Greeks, live among the ruins, some occupying the vaults of the once gorgeous edifices, and some the sepulchers hewn out of the precipices. You will remember that the glorified Redeemer sent a message by John to the angel, or bishop, of Ephesus, accusing

* Acts xx. 6-38.

the church of that city of having left her first love, or, in other words, of having declined in religious fervor, and threatening to remove her candlestick if she did not repent. She did not repent, and her light is wholly extinguished; for not a single resident Christian remains at Ephesus, to read either the message from heaven, or the epistle of the great Apostle to its church.

To return to Paul and his companions. On the shore of Miletus the parting kiss was given, but the weeping elders of Ephesus accompanied their beloved father in God to the ship, and even then were unwilling to say farewell. The voyagers sailed straight to Coos, and from thence to Rhodes,* and from Rhodes to Patara, where they found a vessel about to sail for Tyre. In her they took passage, and accomplished in safety the voyage of four hundred miles. At Tyre they found some disciples who had the gift of prophecy. These foresaw what would befall the Apostle at Jerusalem, and tried to persuade him not to go up to the feast; but he was not to be deterred from his purpose. Luke says, "And when we had accomplished those days, we departed, and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city, and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship, and they returned home again." † The next port they stayed at was Ptolemais (Acre), where they found some disciples, and abode with them one day; the next day they landed at Cæsarea. Philip, the deacon, received the weary travelers, and they remained with him many days, his four pious daughters, doubtless, with affectionate care, attending to their comfort. Here another prophetic voice warned the great Apostle not to go to Jerusalem. Agabus, of whom you have heard before, arrived at Cæsarea, and went

* Rhodes was celebrated for the Colossus, a gigantic brazen image, which was made about 300 years B.C. This huge statue was 126 feet high, and each finger was as large as a man. It was used as an observatory, a winding staircase running to the top. It only stood fifty or sixty years, when it was thrown down by an earthquake; and for 894 years it remained where it fell, consequently, when St. Paul visited the island, the monster was lying on the beach. At length the brass was sold to a Jew for \$183,920.00, and the great Colossus was carried away in fragments on nine hundred camels.

† Acts xxi. 5, 6.

to the house of Philip. When he saw the pilgrims, "he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we (Luke continues) heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. And after those days, we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem."* The word carriages here means baggage.

Welcome, indeed, to the suffering Christians in Jerusalem was the sight of Paul and his friends. One day was spent, we may suppose, in mutual inquiries, congratulations, and condolences; and we read that the day following, the strangers went to the house of James the Bishop, where all the elders met him. After saluting them, Paul told them how God had blest his labors among the Gentiles, for which they glorified the Lord. They then informed him that in Jerusalem there were many thousand Jewish converts, who had a great veneration for the law, and that they had heard that he (Paul) had preached against the ceremonies of the law, and consequently, as soon as his arrival was known, multitudes would come together to hear if this were true. It was agreed, in order that the Jewish converts might be convinced that they had heard a false report, that he should join himself to four men who had taken a vow, probably for deliverance from sickness, or from some great danger, and that he should perform the usual ceremonies in such a case. This Paul agreed to; but the next day, when he went into the temple with the four men to make their offerings, some Jews from Asia stirred up the people, and a tumult was raised against the devoted Paul. He was seized, and dragged out of the temple, and would have been murdered by the excited mob, if the chief captain of the garrison had not, with his soldiers,

* Acts xxi. 11-15.

rescued him. Supposing Paul to be a common malefactor, the captain ordered a double chain to be put upon him, and that he should be taken to the castle. So violent were the angry Jews that the soldiers had to bear the Apostle in their arms to prevent him being torn to pieces. As they were going into the castle, Paul begged the governor to allow him to speak to the people. "And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people."* In perfect silence the assembly listened to his defence, until he spoke of his mission to the Gentiles, and then they "lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.



SIDON.

And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" † When the chief captain heard that Paul was a Roman, he gave orders that he should not be whipped. The freedom of the city of Rome was Paul's by birthright, he having inherited it from his ancestors. The next day the Apostle's chains were knocked off, and he was taken to the Sanhedrim. As he stood before his seventy judges, he must have thought of the holy Stephen, who, twenty-four years before, had, on the same spot answered his accusers. "And

* Acts xxi. 40.

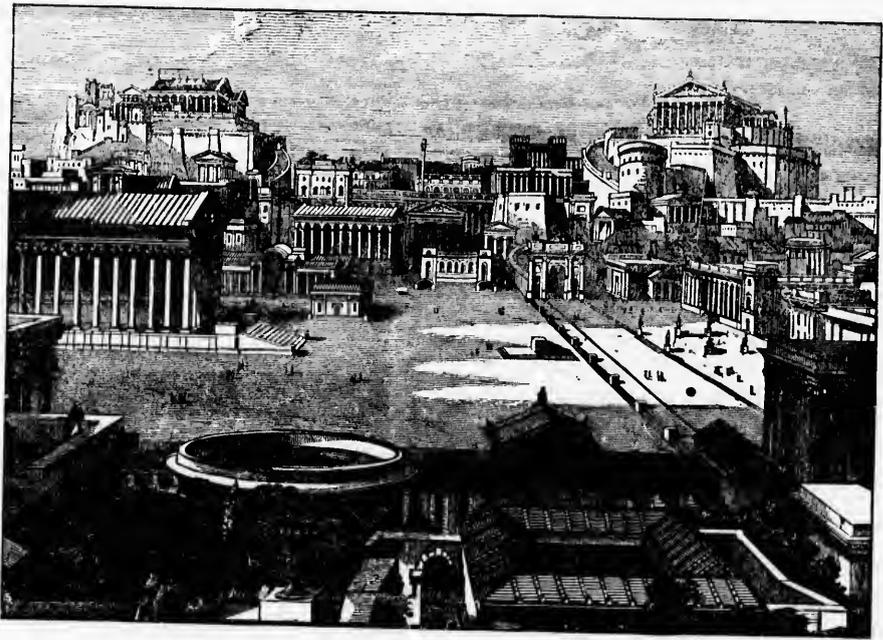
† Acts xxii. 22-25.

Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." * This bold assertion of his innocence so enraged the high priest, that he commanded them that stood by to smite him on the mouth. Paul's spirit was roused at this new insult, and, not knowing that it was the high priest who had spoken, he said, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for, sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" † Twelve years afterward, Ananias was slain, when Jerusalem was besieged. Paul perceived that his judges were composed of Pharisees and Sadducees, and being wise as a serpent, though harmless as a dove, he cried out, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." ‡ In the last few words he had touched upon the doctrine that caused the greatest dissension between the two sects. "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both." § So the latter wished to release Paul. "And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." ||

Forty vagabond Jews bound themselves by an oath that they would eat nothing until they had killed Paul, but the nephew of their intended victim heard of the plot, and he went into the castle and told Paul, who desired one of the centurions to take the young man to the chief captain. This was done; and when the captain had heard how that the Jews were lying in wait to kill Paul, "he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; and provide them beasts, that they may set Paul

* Acts xxiii. 1. † Acts xxiii. 3. ‡ Acts xxiii. 6. § Acts xxiii. 8. || Acts xxiii. 10, 11.

on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor." * Claudius Lysias, the captain, also wrote a letter to Felix, telling him what Paul was accused of, and why he had sent him. When the soldiers with their prisoner arrived at Cæsarea, they delivered the letter to Felix, who, when he had read it, asked Paul what province he was of, and, on being told he was a Cilician, decided to wait till his accusers arrived. After five days, Ananias the priest came to Cæsarea, bringing with him



ROME.

a famous orator, named Tertullus, to speak against Paul. This man said that Paul was guilty of sedition, heresy, and profanation of the temple. Paul defended himself, and proved that he was falsely accused. Most eloquently did he plead his own cause. But Felix refused to give judgment in the case till he had seen Lysias. "And

* Acts xxiii. 23, 24.

he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him."* For two years Paul remained a prisoner at Cæsarea; and doubtless Philip, his four daughters, and many others, not only belonging to Cæsarea, but Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon, and the neighboring places, availed themselves of the privilege of visiting him. Luke was almost his constant companion. Felix often sent for the Apostle to commune with him. At the first interview, Paul, knowing the character of the wicked man in whose presence he stood, reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. The conscience of the unjust, cruel, immoral, and covetous governor was roused. "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." † Frequently afterward did he call for his prisoner; but, alas! not to learn from him the way of salvation, but to endeavor to corrupt him, for he hoped "that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him." ‡ He probably bore in mind that Paul had brought alms and offerings from the Macedonian Christians for their brethren in Jerusalem.

Felix was removed from his office, and Porcius Festus, a just and honorable man, succeeded him as governor of Cæsarea. Three days afterward, business called Festus to Jerusalem. The high priest and the chief of the Jews at once asked him, as a favor, to send for Paul, wickedly intending to lie in wait for the Apostle on the road and assassinate him. Festus did not comply with their request; but, when he returned to Cæsarea, took some of Paul's accusers with him. The Apostle being brought before the judgment-seat, the Jews laid many and grievous complaints against him which they could not prove. Paul asserted his innocence. "But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?" § The Apostle, knowing what would be the consequence if he were sent to Jerusalem, told Festus that he was a Roman, and ought to be judged by the laws of Rome; and he, then, solemnly appealed unto Cæsar.

* Acts xxiv. 23

† Acts xxiv. 25.

‡ Acts xxiv. 26.

§ Acts xxv. 9.

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Some time afterwards, King Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa, who put James the Great to death, came to Cæsarea, with his sister Bernice, on a visit to the new governor, who told them all about Paul. "Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him. And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth,"* chained to the soldier who guarded him. The Roman method of fettering criminals was to fix one end of a chain on the prisoner's right arm, and the other to the left arm of a soldier. The fact of publicly wearing this chain, and being coupled with a soldier, was considered very disgraceful, and the ignominy would naturally occasion the desertion of former friends. Paul experienced the truth of this, and to Timothy, in his second epistle, speaks with gratitude of one who clung to him notwithstanding his humiliating bonds. "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day."† In extreme cases the prisoner was fastened with two chains to two soldiers. Peter was thus confined when he was "sleeping between two soldiers"‡ in prison. Paul, also, was fastened to two soldiers when the Jews in Jerusalem wanted to take him.

To return to Cæsarea. When Paul was brought before Festus and Agrippa, the former began by stating the prisoner's case, and that he did not know what to say in writing to Cæsar when he sent Paul to him. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself."§ After telling the king that he had been brought up a



CÆSAR.

* Acts xxv. 22, 23.

† 2 Tim. i. 16, 17.

‡ Acts vii. 5.

§ Acts xxvi. 1.

Pharisee, he gave him the history of his conversion. Festus, being a heathen, knew nothing of Moses, the prophets, or the expected Redeemer, and believing Paul to be a person deceived by his imagination, he became impatient, and interrupting him, cried out, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I



ROMAN CENTURION.

know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.* How startling must have been the effect of the noble prisoner's words! His voice, his expression, his whole attitude would speak for his sincerity, as he raised his chained hand, and prayed that they, his enemies,

might be altogether such as he was, except those bonds. All the inward peace which passeth understanding, all the joy in his blessed Saviour, and all the hope of an immortal crown, he prayed his enemies might share with him, but not his fetters. How truly did Paul obey the precept of his divine Master, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."†

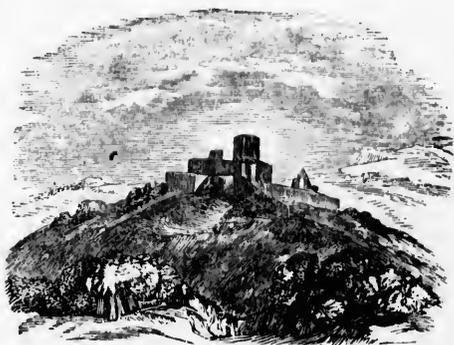
When the great Apostle had ceased speaking, the royal party arose and left the place of hearing. They retired to commune with one

* Acts. xxvi. 24-29.

† Matt. v. 44.

another, and Paul went back to prison to commune with his God. The king, the governor, the officers of state, the magistrates, and the principal men of Cæsarea, unanimously pronounced Paul to be innocent, and he would have been at once set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar. We cannot help wondering whether any of that assembly who had listened to Paul were not only almost, but altogether, persuaded to be Christians. Possibly some were, and afterward testified that, as far as they were concerned, the Apostle's prayer was answered, but Agrippa and Festus were not of the number; and Bernice, if history may be relied upon, many years after Paul had changed his fetters for an immortal crown, was living, not only in an unconverted state, but in open sin.

It was decided to send Paul to Rome in the charge of a centurion, of the name of Julius, who accordingly embarked from Cæsarea with the Apostle, Luke, Timothy, and Aristarchus: the last one of the two Christians who were carried by the mob into the theater at Ephesus. After a sail of eighty miles, they reached Sidon, where Paul was allowed to go on shore to visit his friends. They next crossed the Sea of Cilicia, and, consequently, passed Paul's native country. At Myra, a city of Lycia, they cast anchor, and the prisoners, among whom, doubtless, were many malefactors of the worst description, were removed to a large Alexandrian corn ship, which was about to sail for Italy. When they had arrived at Fair Havens, a harbor of Crete, the wind being very boisterous, and sailing dangerous, Paul, who was, owing to his many voyages, an experienced sailor, said to those who had charge of him, "Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our



CRETE

lives."* The centurion, however, gave more heed to the captain, who thought they might try and reach Phenice, another port of Crete, it being more convenient to winter in than Fair Havens. A soft south wind favored their leaving Fair Havens, and they sailed from thence. But not long after there arose a tempestuous north-east wind, called Euroclydon, which bore down all before it, and they were forced to let the ship drive at the pleasure of the wind. They threw out some of the lading and tackling of the ship. For fourteen days they continued in this state, neither sun nor stars appearing for a great part of the time. "But, after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now, I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.†"

On the fourteenth night, as the ship was being driven up and down in Adria (the Adriatic ‡ Sea), the sailors, fearing lest it might be dashed to pieces on the rocks, cast four anchors, and intended to make their escape in a boat, and leave the passengers to their fate. Paul, seeing this, told the centurion and the soldiers that, unless the sailors remained in the ship, they could not be saved. He meant them to understand that, though God had promised that not one of those in the ship should perish, he expected them to use every effort for their own preservation. The mariners, consequently, were not suffered to forsake the vessel. When the day began to dawn, Paul besought all to take some meat, as, for the past fortnight, they had been so overcome with fear

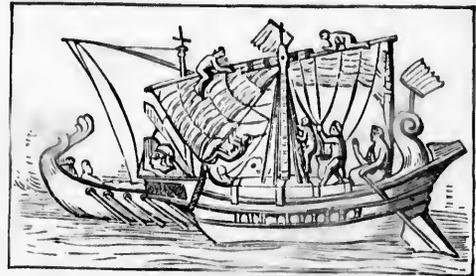
* Acts xxvii. 10.

† Acts xxvii. 21-26.

‡ In St. Paul's time the name Adriatic was not confined, as it is now, to that portion of the Mediterranean which flows between Dalmatia and Italy, but was given to the whole sea lying between Greece, Italy, and Africa, including the Sicilian and Ionian Sea.

and horror at their position, that they had been unable to take their ordinary food. Paul was now the counsellor to whom every one looked up. His directions were followed, and when he spoke words of comfort, all were cheered. What a scene it must have been on that Egyptian vessel at break of day! Between two and three hundred terror-stricken wretches, with pale and haggard faces, resting their entire hope upon one man, and he a prisoner in chains. With the tempest raging around him, and the sea rolling mountains high, the holy Apostle "took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all, and, when he had broken it, he began to eat:"* they all took some meat, and were much refreshed. "And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea." †. Day-

light revealed to them that they were near land, so they took up the anchors, and let the ship run aground, "And the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and



ANCIENT SHIP.

escape. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land, and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land," ‡ and found themselves on an island called Melita (Malta). They were received kindly by the inhabitants, who, because it was wet and cold, made a fire for them. Paul assisted in the work, and, having gathered a bundle of sticks, laid them on the fire. A viper was among them, and it no sooner felt the heat than it sprang out

* Acts xxvii. 35.

† Acts xxvii. 38.

‡ Acts xxvii. 41-44.

of the flame, and fastened on the Apostle's hand. "And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm."* The people, when they saw his hand did not swell, or that he did not drop down dead, thought then that he must be a god. The Greeks and Romans called all foreigners barbarians, which accounts for the inhabitants of Melita being thus styled by St. Luke. They were not barbarians in the sense in which we use the word, for, when Paul was in Melita, its inhabitants were in a high state of prosperity and civilization.

The governor of the island hospitably entertained Paul and his friends for three days. His humanity did not go unrewarded, for his father "lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux, to whom Paul entered in and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him." † It is said that Publius became a Christian, and that he died bishop of Melita. Certain it is that Paul planted a Christian Church in the island, which became famous for its steadfastness in the faith. No mention is made as to how Luke, Timothy, and Aristarchus conducted themselves during the shipwreck, but we may rest assured that with them all was well, and that they exerted themselves to the utmost to assist and comfort their fellow-passengers. They, doubtless, labored with Paul in Melita, and the inhabitants were not ungrateful, for, Luke says, they "honored us with many honors; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary." ‡ Three months did they remain at Melita, and then embarked in an Alexandrian vessel, called Castor and Pollux, which was bound for Italy. In due time they reached Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, where they stayed three days. From thence they sailed to Rhegium, now Reggio, the capital of Calabria, and the next day arrived at Puteoli, a beautiful seaport, situated about one hundred miles south of Rome. The Castor and Pollux had now reached her destination, and the Apostle and his companions, having found brethren, were permitted to remain with their Christian friends seven

* Acts xxviii. 4, 5.

† Acts xxviii. 8.

‡ Acts xxviii. 10.

days, after which they proceeded toward Rome. The disciples in the city had heard of their approach, and some went to meet them as far as Appii Forum, a distance of about fifty miles, others waited for them at the Three Taverns, a village situated about thirty miles from Rome. When Paul saw these devoted Christians, "he thanked God and took courage." * Not only was he rejoiced to meet them, but he was cheered by their zeal and energy. It was also a relief to him to find that the followers of Jesus had so much liberty.

Touching, indeed, must have been the sight of Paul's first entrance into the capital of the world. No herald announced his approach. No acclamation of a multitude told that he had arrived; but a greater conqueror than had ever passed through the gates, with captive princes following his chariot, now might be seen in the form of a prisoner chained to a soldier, and attended by a band of pilgrims, who triumphantly conducted the mighty Apostle into the city. Paul was not treated in Rome like an ordinary prisoner. It is supposed that the centurion Julius spoke favorably of him, for, while the malefactors were secured in the common jail, he was allowed to live in his own hired house, but still chained to the soldier who guarded him. Paul's great desire, expressed in his epistle to the Romans, was now accomplished: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." †

After three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together, and told them the cause of his coming to Rome; that he had been guilty of no violation of the laws of their religion, yet he had been delivered into the hands of the Roman governors, who found him innocent of any capital offense, and would have acquitted him, but the spitefulness of the Jews was such that he was obliged, in order to clear himself, to appeal unto Cæsar, and that he had sent for them to let them know that it was "for the hope of Israel," ‡ or, in other words, for preaching the Messiah and a future state, he was bound with that chain. The Jews replied that they had heard nothing evil of him, either by

* Acts xxviii. 15.

† Rom. i. 11, 12.

‡ Acts xxviii. 30.

letters from Judea or through friends of theirs who had come to Rome; but they wished to be informed about the religion which was everywhere spoken against. A day was accordingly appointed; and Paul discoursed with them from morning till night about the doctrine of Jesus, proving from the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament that he was the Christ. "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."* The latter left the Apostle with a solemn warning from his lips sounding in their ears, and the assurance that henceforth he would turn to the Gentiles. For two years Paul remained in Rome, employing himself constantly in preaching and writing, no one forbidding him.



THE CONQUERORS.

Here St. Luke abruptly closes his history; but, from St. Paul's epistles, we find that great success attended his (Paul's) labors in Rome, many of high rank becoming believers, some of whom belonged even to Nero's court. "All the saints," he says, in his epistle to the Philippians, "salute

you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household."† Among those who did Paul great service during his first imprisonment in Rome was Onesimus, a slave belonging to Philemon, a wealthy citizen of Colosse, who had been converted to Christianity by St. Paul's ministry. Onesimus ran away from his master and went to Rome, carrying some valuables with him. He attended Paul's preaching in that city, repented of his sins, and acknowledged his faults to the Apostle, who instructed him in the doctrines of the Gospel, and, after he had given evidence of his faith in the Lord Jesus, baptized

* Acts xxviii. 24.

† Philip. iv. 22.

him. Paul would have willingly kept him near him, but he thought it would be an act of injustice to Philemon to do so, accordingly he sent Onesimus back to Colosse with a most earnest and affectionate letter to his master, begging him to receive his slave again into his family, and offering to make full compensation for any loss Philemon had sustained through Onesimus. We are not told what was the result of this epistle, but we may reasonably suppose that Paul was right in his conjecture, when he said, "Knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say."* There was a bishop of Ephesus, named Onesimus, and it has been supposed by some that he was the pardoned slave of Philemon. The epistle to Philemon, written by "Paul the aged," † is considered a masterpiece of its kind. We find, from the first and twenty-fourth verses, that Timothy, Mark, and Luke were with him when he wrote it.

During Paul's first imprisonment, the Philippians, knowing that he would be in want of common necessities, raised a sum of money for him, and sent it by Epaphroditus, their bishop, who became dangerously ill in Rome. Upon his recovery, he returned to Philippi, carrying with him the epistle of Paul to the church of that city. Did ever any father write in stronger terms of endearment to his children than the Apostle did to the Philippians? "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." ‡ Such a passage as this shows how deep and earnest his affection was for them. In Rome, he also wrote his epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, and it is supposed that about this time he wrote (possibly from Rome) the epistle to the Hebrews.

His first trial before Nero took place, it is believed, in the early part of the year 63. Calm and dignified, the noble Paul stood in the presence of the cruel and profligate young emperor. There is no record left of the particulars of the trial; but, contrary to the expectation of many, he was acquitted. It is conjectured that the Jews dared not to appear against him. If this were true, they showed their wisdom by

* Philem. ver. 21.

† Philem. ver. 9.

‡ Philip. iv. 1.

keeping out of the way of a monster who seemed ready to devour all who crossed his path.

There is some doubt as to the course the indefatigable Apostle took after he quitted Rome, but the prevailing opinion is, that he went at once to Jerusalem, accompanied, when he set off on his long journey, by Timothy and Titus. The latter, however, he left in Crete, of which island Titus was bishop. Having visited the churches in Judea, the venerable Apostle and his beloved Timothy went through Syria, Cilicia, and Asia Minor. They continued some time at Colosse; and here Paul, probably, again met Philemon and Onesimus. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus, and proceeded to Macedonia, visiting the churches. From Macedonia he wrote his epistle to Titus, and also his first epistle to Timothy, giving his friends full instructions for their conduct as bishops of the Church of God. After visiting Greece, Crete, and other places, he directed his course westward. It is supposed that after remaining some time in Spain, he preached the Gospel in Britain. Clement, bishop of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, a part of which has been handed down to us, says that Paul traveled to the extreme west, and carried salvation to the islands that lie in the ocean, by which he means the British Isles. When the Apostle was first a prisoner in Rome, Britain was suffering much from the ambition of the Romans. Caractacus had been, a few years before, defeated and carried a prisoner to Rome. While Paul was there, the Britons revolted under Boadicea, London was burnt, and several thousands of Romans perished. Ten thousand warriors were at once despatched from Rome against Boadicea, who was defeated, and eighty thousand Britons were massacred. Paul, who had friends in the imperial city of all grades, from the prison to the palace, would doubtless hear the particulars of these sad events. How would his lofty spirit sympathize with the noble Caractacus, and how would he long to comfort the afflicted Boadicea by leading her to the fountain of healing waters. Perhaps he may have become personally acquainted with some of the illustrious Britons who were in Rome at the time he was. But this is mere conjecture.

It was in the eleventh or twelfth year of Nero's reign that Paul was

again a prisoner in Rome; but not as before permitted to live in his own hired house, but cast into the common prison. He knew that he would not again escape out of the lion's mouth. In his second epistle to Timothy, which was written at this time, he says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" * He then entreats his beloved son to hasten to him. Whether Timothy ever again saw his revered friend and preceptor or not, I cannot say.

The enemies of Paul were resolved to put him to death. He went through a form of trial, for he tells Timothy that, at his first answer, all men forsook him. The cruel Nero had struck terror into the hearts of even the brave Christians, for every species of torture that the wretched tyrant could conceive they were made to endure. In the year A. D. 64, a great fire broke out in Rome, which raged for six days, and there were strong suspicions that the emperor himself was the cause of it, many of the buildings not being according to his fastidious taste. His subjects were justly indignant with him, so, to screen himself, he laid the blame of the calamity upon the Christians. The consequence was that the devoted followers of Jesus were most mercilessly persecuted. Some were burnt; others stabbed with forks; some sewn up in skins of beasts, and then devoured by dogs; many were flayed alive; in short, every species of cruelty was practiced upon them. Persecution still raged in the city, when Paul arrived; and he was forthwith thrown into prison. That he was a Christian was a sufficient crime; but it has been said that Nero was chiefly enraged at him because he had converted to the faith a favorite lady of his abandoned court, who henceforth refused to have any intercourse with him. How long Paul remained in prison is not precisely known; but, we may be



ROMAN SOLDIERS

* 2 Tim. iv. 6.

assured, that when his hour of release came he was ready, and in truth he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."*

In the church of St Mary, beyond the bridge, in Rome, a pillar stood so late as the sixteenth century, to which, it was said, the great Apostle was bound when he was scourged, though, as a Roman citizen, he ought to have been spared that degradation. He was sentenced to be beheaded. The scene of his martyrdom was *Aquæ Salvæ*, three miles from Rome. As he was being led forth from the city, it is said that three of the soldiers who guarded him became converts to the faith, and were, a few days afterward, by Nero's command, put to death. Arrived at the fatal spot, Paul solemnly prepared himself, and then cheerfully submitted to the stroke of the executioner, and so entered into his rest

" 'Tis past, 'tis o'er!—now rest how sweet,
His trials all are fled!
Before the Saviour's mercy-seat
(His livelong work of faith complete),
The conqueror bends his head."

By the death of Paul the Christian Church lost its brightest luminary. One whose faith, devotion, learning, humility, temperance, disinterestedness, kindness, charity, zeal, patience, and fidelity were unequalled. No danger, no weariness, nor pain ever caused him to rest from his labors. Above every difficulty he rose triumphant, though the trials he passed through were far greater than those which ordinarily fall to the lot of man. He himself gives a catalogue of the sufferings he had endured up to the time he wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, which epistle was sent two or three years before he was shipwrecked on the coast of Malta. He says, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I

* 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." * But these things were of little consequence to one who could with truth say that he took pleasure in infirmities, in persecutions, and in distresses for Christ's sake, and that he counted not his life dear to himself, so that he might finish his course with joy.

The execution of Paul took place, it is believed, on the 29th of June, A.D. 66, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. He was buried in the Via Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome. Over his grave, Constantine the Great built a stately church, upon a plot of ground which Lucina, a noble Christian matron of Rome, had, long before, settled upon the church. He adorned it with a hundred marble columns, and beautified it with the most exquisite workmanship. This edifice was afterward taken down by the Emperor Theodosius, and a larger and even handsomer church was built in the room of it. This was further beautified by the Empress Placidia.

Space will not permit me to dwell at length upon the writings of Paul; I must therefore confine myself to a few remarks. There are fourteen epistles of his in the New Testament. The first, according as they are placed, is that addressed to the Romans, though it was by no means the first the Apostle wrote. When the Church in Rome was founded is not precisely known, but certain it is that, when Paul sent



ROMAN LICATORS.

* 2 Cor. xi. 24-27.

his epistle to the Christians of that city, their faith was spoken of "throughout the whole world." * The Apostle wrote from Corinth, and the date of the epistle was about the year A.D. 58. It was intrusted to the care of Phœbe, a deaconess, who lived at Cenchrea, a port near Corinth. She carried it to Rome. From St. Paul's words in the beginning of the sixteenth chapter, we gather that Phœbe was a rich lady of influence, who devoted her time and wealth to the service of Jesus. The design of the Epistle to the Romans was chiefly to settle certain differences which existed between the Hebrew Christians and the Roman or Gentile Christians, and to prove the important doctrine of justification by faith.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus † about the year A.D. 57, during the feast of the Passover, as may be inferred from the remarks of the writer in the fifth and sixteenth chapters. When Paul left Corinth he committed the care of that Church to Apollos, who, you will remember, was instructed at Ephesus by Aquila and Priscilla. After the departure of the Apostle the members of the Church in Corinth became divided, some saying they were of Paul, and others of Apollos. False teachers also crept into the Church, and many of the Corinthian converts became affected by very loose notions of morality. Paul was informed of these things, and wrote to them an earnest and affectionate letter, full of love, reproof, and instruction, promising to visit them when he passed through Macedonia. But he delayed doing so longer than he had intended, partly from a wish to hear how they had received his epistle before seeing them. After leaving Ephesus he went to Troas, hoping there to meet Titus and learn from him tidings of the Corinthian Christians. He was, however, disappointed; he says, "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia." ‡ There Titus met his spiritual father, whom he cheered by his account of the manner in which he had been received

* Rom. i. 8.

† The subscription which is found at the end of each of the epistles is not in every case to be relied upon. They did not form part of the original epistles, but were added, it is supposed, about the fifth century.

‡ 2 Cor. ii. 13.

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